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Women of Africa Leadership Development Program

3. Research Reports: Liberia & Côte d'Ivoire

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Please note that the views expressed in these reports are those of the research participants and not those of the organizations conducting this study. Where possible, we have used wording as close as possible to the language used by the participants.

1.0 Background

The Leadership Wisdom Initiative (LWI) at Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and its partners – Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa), Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS), the Academy for Educational Development (AED), and Bridges in Organizations – came together to conduct the research in this report as an expression of a shared vision to support African women leaders in acquiring the skills, resources and self-confidence they need for their leadership development. Specifically, these organizations were interested in finding out how best to support women in taking the next step in their leadership journey, whether running for political office and being prepared to be effective once elected, or expanding their ability to influence change from within a current position. These partners recognized that the vision of providing leadership and conflict management development programs needs a strong foundation built on solid research. Therefore, they brought their complementary experiences and wisdom to the delivery of the research phase of creating a Women of Africa Leadership Development Program.

2.0 Research Design

The Women of Africa Leadership Development Program Research Phase was comprised of three main research elements: 1) desktop research, 2) qualitative interviews, and 3) consultative workshops.

In late July and early August, 2008, two half-day consultative meetings were convened in Monrovia and Abidjan, bringing together 36 political, academic and civil society leaders. The research objectives of these workshops were:

- a) To identify current regional barriers to and opportunities for the inclusion, advancement and continuance of women's participation in democratic decision-making; and
- b) To hear from participants what they need to support their leadership development. In addition, the Liberian workshop offered all invited participants on-the-spot coaching.

After each workshop, the research team conducted follow-up qualitative interviews with workshop participants and other leaders unable to attend the workshops. The qualitative interviews sought to identify:

- Barriers and opportunities for women political and civil society;
- Differences between men and women leaders, focusing on the strengths of feminine leadership;
- Leadership development needs, specifically, the current gaps in leadership training; and
- Personal stories of wise leadership in action, bringing to life regional wisdom, models and customs.

After the workshops, the regional researchers conducted desktop research, investigating the following points:

- Obstacles and opportunities for women political and civil society leaders,
- Data on current positions held by women, their scope of influence, relationship to decision-making communities, and range of democratic activities, and
- Regional leadership wisdom, models and customs.

Secondary sources included relevant government offices, donors and NGOs supporting funded women leadership programs.

3.0 Summary of Findings

This summary of findings brings together the research conducted across the entire project, including the two consultative workshops, desktop research and 29 qualitative interviews. Detailed research data can be found in the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Liberian consultative workshop report
- Appendix B – Liberian desktop research and interviews
- Appendix C – Côte d'Ivoire desktop research, consultative workshop and interviews
- Appendix D – Project participants
- Appendix E – Project partners
- Appendix F – List of acronyms

Research findings are grouped by primary research questions. Where responses differed significantly between locations, the country is noted. Overall, the countries shared a lot in common with the general exception that participants in urban Côte d'Ivoire cited more opportunities and fewer barriers to women leaders. On the whole, however, women cited less access to education, lower self-confidence, fewer financial resources, and higher unemployment than their male counterparts across all three countries. Indeed, in all workshops cultural and institutional barriers were reported as primary obstacles to women's leadership pursuits. All workshops included some men participants.

Note that while we cite differences that were expressed in the three countries, these may be more reflective of the issues prioritized by participants during the research rather than intrinsic differences between communities.

3.1 Barriers

What are the barriers for the inclusion, advancement and continuation of women's participation in democratic decision-making?

Women's Roles

In both countries women are expected, first and foremost, to be responsible for the family and managing the home. They are challenged by the need to balance triple roles: home, community and work.

In Liberia, women are considered to be the 'mother of all.' This translates into being responsible not only for themselves, their family, and their extended family, but often also for neighbors and community members. In Côte d'Ivoire, similar roles are defined for women in rural areas but less so in urban areas.

Education

In both countries, access to education is limited and women's educational pursuits are often not encouraged. Instead, as mentioned above, early in life women are expected to take on the responsibilities of caring and supporting their family (for example, taking care of their parents or assisting in earning money to pay for a brother's school fees). These responsibilities can be quite heavy and often deny women important experience and access to strategic information.

Young Parenthood:

Women often do not complete higher levels of education because they have children at a young age and need to earn an income to support their child(ren). Picking up studies at a later time is challenging as evening childcare options either do not exist or are prohibitively expensive. With child security being precarious in many neighborhoods, mothers require committed and trustworthy family members to provide childcare.

Self-Confidence

Many women don't have the self-confidence or ambition to pursue leadership positions. As one interviewee stated, "There needs to be a willingness within one's self to be someone." A strong sense of self is required for success in all leadership positions, especially the field of politics.

Personal Finances

Women in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, including career women, reported that they do not have money left over to invest in themselves, to save, or to simply buy something for pleasure. Instead, earnings go towards supporting the family and, as one interviewee articulated, "what you work for is what you must share." Conversely, men will tend to keep part of their earnings and spend it on themselves.

Financial Support

Men have more money to invest into competing for leadership positions. Men tend to control more of the family financial resources and to receive more financial support from the community.

Competition Instead of Cooperation

Both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire share the challenge of women's organizations and government programs working in isolation from or in competition with each other. Energy is being lost as people working in similar areas compete for funding, recognition and power instead of pooling together their strengths to cooperatively create shared visions.

Decision Making

Men are considered to be decision-makers and these patriarchal societies are still uncomfortable seeing women in political decision-making positions. Even though women rise to executive level positions, decisions may still be made by men.

Connections

In Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, women are not part of the 'old boys' network and do not have the connections to advance themselves, particularly politically.

Migration

Liberian and Côte d'Ivoirean women often migrate to another community upon marriage where they are considered to be outsiders and are not accepted as potential leaders (political or community).

Media Attention

In Liberia, media attention in the form of event attendance and story writing is subject to costs. As one interviewee explained, "You need finances to advance yourself in the media." This creates more obstacles for large populations of unemployed wives and mothers.

Employment

In Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire many women need to 'hustle'(sell) during the day to earn money to provide basic meals. High unemployment rates result in women having a very hard time finding a job.

3.2 Opportunities

What are the opportunities for the inclusion, advancement and continuation of women's participation in democratic decision-making?

Role Models & Mentors

Liberia's highly qualified female president and concentration of women in high-level government positions needs to be leveraged. These role models are setting the standard for Liberian women and inspiring women across the country and around the world to take on new leadership positions. As one high-ranking woman stated, "What is important is not just to be in political office, but to leave a legacy behind."

Head of the Household

As women are natural leaders in the home, this potential can be replicated outside the home as well.

In Côte d'Ivoire, many rural women have become the heads of their households due to the absence of their husbands who are away at war. Women have stepped into this role and gained new leadership skills. These skills have been required to manage both the home and the community. Women have the opportunity to capitalize on these skills and expand the roles that have already begun to change.

Support of Colleagues, Family & Friends

In Liberia, women are supporting women in business start-up initiatives enabling them to earn the resources to run for political office and demonstrate a track record.

Political Will

In Liberia, the government has created the space for more women to move into leadership positions by advertising jobs that specifically encourage women to apply. This situation is creating a demand for more qualified women workers that in turn encourages women to continue their studies. In Côte d'Ivoire, political will has led to new laws being ratified to promote women's rights, promote equality and create equal opportunities.

Gender Awareness

In Liberia, the new Ministry of Gender educates society about new possible roles for women and encourages employees to hire women. Awareness of sexual harassment has increased in Liberian society with the enforcement of sexual harassment laws by the judicial system. It is now understood that if a man makes inappropriate advances towards a woman, there will be ramifications. As a result, men have started to treat women with more respect and women have begun to ask to be treated better. In Côte d'Ivoire, a Directorate of Equity and Gender Mainstreaming was established in 2006 within the Ministry of the Family and Social Affairs.

Peace & Security

Peace in Liberia has brought opportunities for education, employment and security. Although personal security is still an issue for many women and their children, more women have the opportunity to go to school and peace has reduced the risk of doing so.

Invitation to Lead

In both countries women need to be asked into leadership and generally won't step forward until invited. Fortunately, within the current political culture in Liberia, more women are being invited to lead.

Literacy

In both countries there was a strong desire to expand literacy programs into rural areas so that women can learn to write their names, speak for themselves, and gain confidence. Increased literacy levels and better access to well-paid jobs would also result in greater control of personal financial and material resources. In Côte d'Ivoire, programs are in place to help illiterate women get their papers in order and to teach them how to prepare to vote in elections.

3.3 Leadership Developmental Needs

What do women need to support their leadership development, to take them to the next level of leadership?

Visualize New Options

Women do not see pathways to leadership, instead they see pathways towards traditional roles. Some interviewees spoke about needing someone to show them new options through role modeling and mentorship. Others said they themselves need to be able to visualize how they can make a difference or how they can become role models for change. Social networking can address these needs and help women involve themselves in the daily activities of their community.

Mentorship & Guidance

Intentional interaction with other Liberian women at the same level of influence is very difficult, and providing a space where women can interact with other professional women would offer opportunities to build relationships of support. One high level political leader stated, "Older women are a source of strength. We need to create the next generation of leaders who can be mentored by these existing leaders, perhaps through internships opportunities. If we want to empower women then other women must support them. When women attain power and authority, we must support and nurture them."

Self Confidence

Women need to gain experience in speaking out and mobilizing others, whether through training or otherwise. They must learn to be brave – a quality many already have gained through their responsibilities supporting their families. Women also need to learn to trust their experience rather than rely on what they are told is right or true. They need to gain confidence in their inner knowledge.

Advanced Leadership Training

Women need to learn specific, high level skills such as organizational management, leadership fundamentals, skill transfer, and accountability. Leadership coaching on how to be an effective leader and how to market oneself for promotion is needed to compensate for weaknesses in current training modules that focus almost exclusively on 'how to get elected' but not on how to become effective once elected. Greater emphasis on self-improvement through access to educational opportunities such as e-learning and evening/weekend classes would encourage continued skills acquisition. Training in lobbying and negotiation skills would empower women with the skills needed to rally support around an issue or manage conflicts. Lastly, educating women in time management, behavior, and presentation skills (i.e. how to dress, how to choose a language of communication) would also be a great asset to future women leaders.

Communication Skills:

Proposal writing, speech writing, speech delivery, and self-expression are all key leadership skills. Women need to be able to communicate their visions to their families, communities and to the country as a whole in order to bring them to life.

Financial Resources

Women need to learn how to create their own financial resources and garner financial support from their community. Greater access to funding would also help women expand their program work and enhance their ability to get elected.

Support

Families need to support women and girls in pursuing education and leadership opportunities. In particular, families can provide support by caring for children so women can go to work and/or further their education.

Entrepreneurship

Self-sufficiency can start with self-employment. Women need to go beyond working for other people and start working for themselves. Not only will this help progress our women leaders, it will also create new jobs and empower other women to do the same.

Creating a Bigger Vision

Women need to go beyond other people's visions and dream big dreams for themselves. One way of doing so is through studying advocacy at the highest levels of leadership.

Engaging Men

Men who are not used to working alongside women may be uncomfortable or try to keep themselves separate. These men need to be kept engaged as women move into higher leadership positions. The challenge is to avoid isolating men while at the same time enabling women to move into male-dominated positions.

Personal Security

Women need the space to operate freely as women. They need to know their children are safe when they go out to work – that their children are in school and not on the streets selling goods or in a situation where they are vulnerable to sexual abuse. They also need to be able to campaign without the threat of verbal and physical abuse.

On the Job Training

Learning at work or through field training enables women to apply what they have been taught and to advance into higher positions of influence.

Credentials

Training needs to be accredited as certification is the key to acquiring a position and getting promoted.

3.4 Masculine & Feminine Leadership

What are the differences between masculine and feminine leadership? What are the advantages to feminine leadership?

In general terms, participants saw masculine leadership as more ambitious, aggressive, confident, forceful, hierarchical, and even corrupt. This approach to leadership was seen as beneficial for getting things done. The downside noted was that masculine leadership tended to put the individual (usually the leader himself and close friends) first and the needs of the community second. Men were also perceived as being more vulnerable to false promises due to their unwillingness to admit any lack of capacity or influence. Women, on the other hand, were believed to be more honest about their capability to make a difference or solve their constituents' problems.

Feminine leadership was described as presenting a softer approach. Women were described as more trustworthy, participatory, consultative, and complementary in leadership positions. They put family first, listen before acting, and are sensitive to the impact of decisions on the whole society. In

addition, feminine leadership was perceived as being more concerned with the long-term legacy of their work whereas masculine leadership was more concerned with 'becoming a legend.' In Kenya, for example, participants cited male focus on infrastructure as an example of self-serving leadership aiming to acquire fame and recognition. Women, on the other hand, tend to focus on basic needs that serve the whole community such as access to food, water, healthcare, and education.

Whereas leadership was naturally expected from men, women were perceived to be more cautious in taking on leadership positions yet were also more determined to do so. Male leadership was seen as more susceptible to violence compared to the dialogue-centered approach of women. The hierarchical nature of male decision-making was contrasted with the consultative and complementary female equivalent. In general, masculine leadership was described as being more active and out-going while feminine leadership was seen as more reflective.

4.0 Data from Desktop Research

Desktop research was conducted to:

- Identify obstacles and opportunities for women political and civil society leaders in Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire;
- Collect data on current positions held by women, their scope of influence, relationship to decision-making communities, and range of democratic activities, with a specific focus on locating regional leadership wisdom, models and customs; and
- Conduct a survey of funded women leadership development programs.

Obstacles and Opportunities

A literature review on women's leadership in Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire revealed a disproportionate focus on the challenges faced by women in their quest to run for political office and higher or expanded levels of leadership. These challenges, summarized above and elaborated in Appendices A, B, and C, relate to dynamics around unequal power relations, gender roles and socio-cultural stereotypes as well as institutional biases against women. The literature also revealed opportunities to overcome these challenges in both theory and practice, particularly through the *empowerment* school of thought that seeks to diminish the dependency of women on men by increasing their capabilities.

Current Data on Women's Leadership

In Liberia the number of women in leadership positions has continued to increase since the 2005 election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Liberia's first elected woman president. This has been especially true for key positions including associate justice, commissioner, head of police and numerous jobs within the foreign affairs sector.

In Côte d'Ivoire the political participation of women has improved since the International Conference on the Population and the Development of Cairo in 1994 and the Beijing Conference in 1995. Côte d'Ivoire has ratified various international and regional conventions relating to 'equity in dignity and in rights' of all human beings. Indeed, gender issues are increasingly being acknowledged as a strategy to consider in development programs and policy-making.

5.0 Conclusions & Next Steps

The findings of this research clearly point to the need for leadership development programs specifically designed to enable women to advance to their next level of leadership. In our survey of existing women's leadership development programs, we found that very little exists in the way of formalized support or training for woman already in leadership positions. The key leadership development needs identified in our research can be grouped under the following four categories:

1. **Leadership Forums & Social Networking:** Regular facilitated gatherings offering opportunities for women to exchange experience and wisdom with other women in equivalent positions.
2. **Coaching:** One-on-one sessions uniquely tailored to improve an individual's effectiveness and skill sets. This piece would include the training of coaches to strengthen and expand the network of professional support.
3. **Skills Training:** Modules designed to fit leadership development needs as identified by a group. For example, women running for political office indicated training was need not just to enable them to get elected but also to be effective once elected. Specifically some of the modules they envisioned included lobbying, negotiation, and leadership presence.
4. **Mentorship:** Women reaching down to give those behind them a hand up, sharing what they've learnt and offering advice from their experience.

Given the above gaps we found in the existing support of women's leadership development in Kenya, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, we recommend the following next steps:

1. Convene the women in regular, facilitated forums for mutual support, leadership development, and solidarity;
2. Provide coaching and mentoring training to interested women so that they themselves can become coaches and mentors; and
3. Offer extended leadership and conflict management training and training of trainers.

Appendix A

Liberian Consultative Workshop Report

Monrovia, July 2008

**Femmes Afrique Solidarité
Academy for Educational Development
Leadership Wisdom Initiative at Search for Common Ground**

I. INTRODUCTION TO WORKSHOP

The workshop was held on July 29, 2008 from 9 am to 1 pm in Monrovia, Liberia. The workshop began with the introduction of the organizers from Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS), Leadership Wisdom Initiative (LWI) at Search for Common Ground (SFCG), and the Academy for Educational Development (AED). The workshop was presented in the context of the research phase of the Women of Africa Leadership Program sponsored by the International Development Research Center. The research is composed primarily of desk research, consultative workshops, and individual interviews.

Presenters explained that the Liberia research project would be replicated in Côte d'Ivoire and that a report based on the collective West African research would be shared with participants. Participants were also invited to review the final report from a parallel research project in Kenya where facilitators asked women the same questions and raised the same issues. The overall findings were to be made available for the International Colloquium On Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security sponsored by the Presidents of Liberia and Finland in March 2009, and circulated as widely as possible.

The workshop was conducted with the purpose of exploring what women need to develop, nurture, and sustain leadership at all levels of government and throughout society as whole. The goals for the consultative workshop in Monrovia were to gather the leadership wisdom of participants and identify current barriers and opportunities for women's leadership in Liberia. The workshop sought to elicit participants' visions for the development of women leadership in Liberia and identify the resources needed to realize these visions.

The workshop was facilitated by Aminata Dieye from FAS, Sheila Daunt Escandon from LWI, and Beatrice Newland from SFCG-Liberia.

II. LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Participants were asked to reflect upon a time in their lives when they acted as a leader, whether in their homes, communities or workplaces. They were then paired with a fellow participant and asked to share their story. After listening to the stories, participants were asked to share with the group the leadership qualities displayed by their partners that touched them. They were also asked to identify leadership opportunities and challenges. The goal of the activity was to help participants identify their innate leadership qualities that were summoned in the past in the face of leadership challenges.

War violence and conflict were the sources of many of the challenges identified through the storytelling exercise. In these conflict situations the participants took on multiple roles and navigating between them was a highly complex task. A common theme that emerged in the discussion of admirable leadership qualities was having concern for the children caught in the situation. Inner resources such as bravery, courage, resourcefulness, vision, practicality, and strong decision-making were also highlighted. However, in many cases participants lacked experience and guidance when assuming leadership positions. Participants espoused the value of having these support mechanisms already in place.

The following responses were elicited from the exercise:

<i>LEADERSHIP QUALITIES</i>	
Confidence	Tenacity
Competence	Inspiration
Strength	Ingenuity
Intelligence	Faith
Good decision-making	Courage
Adept problem-solving	Self-Discovery
Independence	Resourcefulness
Bravery	Creativity

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Abandonment	Professional counseling
Discrimination	Advice from friends
Limited resources	Support of family, peers
Conflict/crisis	Experience/skills
Familial obligations	Strong female network
Over-tasked	Cultural roles
Creating space for diversity	Higher education
Corruption	Youth
Rape/emotional stress	Employment/career
Balancing multiple interests	Relocation
Illness	Policy
Fear/worry	
Male dominance/intimidation	
Limited education/experience	
Lack of support	
Void in leadership	

III. VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Exercise I:

Each participant was asked to write down his or her personal vision for women leadership development in Liberia. Participation, equality, education, and capacity building were common threads throughout the responses. The visions articulated by participants included the following:

- To advocate for women to participate in decision-making and development.
- To influence political leaders to recognize and embrace women’s leadership and equal participation in decision-making and development.
- To increase women participation in local government and decision-making processes at community level.
- To build women’s capacity and resolve to be more career driven, which will eventually prepare them for leadership roles.
- To inform women of their role in the society and to have the opportunities to get children out of the street.
- To overcome traditional sentiments and forge ahead in building leadership development capacities in young women.
- To continue to have the courage to devote my energy to the development and advancement of women.
- A Liberia where women and girls will be educated and supported to make use of their space to maximize their full leadership potential.

- To see more innovation, creativity and assertiveness in women as they assume leadership roles.
- To educate women in leadership, capacity building and to help decrease the illiteracy rate.
- To help women have a change of mind and attitude about women participation in the society at large.
- 100% literacy to allow women to develop their own skills and make their own decisions.
- For all women to have the opportunity to learn and contribute to the uplifting/development of families, communities, and the nation.
- To have the capacity to help women realize that they are and can become leaders.
- To develop the educational capacity of young women and girls (i.e. girls second chance education program)

Exercise II:

The participants were then divided into breakout groups of three to brainstorm the inner and outer resources needed to realize their visions for the development of women's leadership in Liberia. They were to identify those resources that they already possess as well as those that are still needed. The exercise revealed that the participants already had a wealth of inner resources to call upon but lacked outer resources. The latter include financial support, strong policies that promote participation and empowerment, education and scholarships, mentoring and support of other women, partnerships and networks, and skills training in public speaking, literacy, advocacy, HIV/AIDS, management, and leadership.

IV. CLOSE OF WORKSHOP

After a review of the brainstorming exercise, facilitators thanked participants and informed them that they would be contacting them in the following days to offer leadership coaching and to conduct individual interviews as part of the research initiative. Participants were then asked to share one word that described their feelings about the workshop experience. Their responses were: inspired, powerful, energized, resourceful, motivated, appreciative, hopeful, renewed, encouraged, loving, great, tenacious, fortunate, determined, committed, truthful, wiser, and blessed.

Finally, the workshop closed with song: "The more we are together, together, together, the more we are together the happier we will be. My friend is your friend and your friend is my friend. The more we are together the happier we will be."

Appendix B

Summary of Findings:

Liberian Desktop Research & Qualitative Interviews

Femmes Afrique Solidarité Academy for Educational Development Leadership Wisdom Initiative at Search for Common Ground

Research conducted by Cerue Konah Garlo

Under the leadership of the Leadership Wisdom Initiative (LWI) at Search for Common Ground (SFCG) – Academy for Educational Development (AED) – Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS)

1.0 Introduction

The research contained in this report forms part of a larger study being done on women leaders in West Africa. The part of the study described here covers an investigation into the barriers and opportunities with which women leaders in Liberia are faced. This research will be available to all participants and will be used to guide the direction of Search for Common Ground's Women of Africa leadership development program. Included in this report is a brief contextual background, the results of a mini-literature review, and the findings from the qualitative interviews conducted in Monrovia.

1.1 *Scope and Objectives*

The research was carried out in Monrovia. Qualitative interviews were conducted with selected women leaders from different sectors ranging from government to women rights. Telephone interviews were also completed with rural women residing in Montserrado. The objective of the survey was to provide an analysis of the desktop research and interviews conducted from September 23 to October 3, 2008.

1.2 *Methodology and Limitations*

Literature on women's leadership in Liberia was reviewed and key informant interviews were conducted during the period identified. Interviewees included key members of civil society organizations (both male and female), government ministries and UN agencies. Although respondents were initially pre-selected by LWI/SFCG, the field researcher also used her deep knowledge and extensive network within the women's movement in Liberia to identify further interviewees.

The ability of the researcher to comply with the terms of reference was limited by the time frame and the reluctance of Liberians to share information on the grounds that much of the research they have participated in has not had a feedback loop.

2.0 Research Findings

2.1 Country Context

Population

According to the preliminary results of the 2008 National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) of Liberia, the country has an estimated population of 3.4 million with an annual growth rate of 2.1%¹. The gender composition data indicate that there are slightly more men than women in the country (1,764,555 men to 1,724,517 women). The average household size declined from 6.2 in 1984 to 5.1 in 2008 and the population density of Liberia is 93 citizens per square mile with urban areas more densely populated than rural ones.

Poverty

Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world with GDP per capita estimated at US\$190.² Poverty is pervasive and is particularly acute in rural areas and in the remote corners of the country (67.7% poverty in rural areas versus 55% in urban areas). Since approximately 70% of Liberia's population lives in the rural areas, the degree of deprivation is significant. Indeed, a 2007 study on income and consumption revealed that 63.8% of Liberians—1.7 million people—live on less than \$1 per day.³ Of these, about 1.3 million people are living in extreme poverty (48% of the population). Poverty is multi-dimensional and its indicators include low levels of income and consumption, poor nutrition and food security, weak health and education, and inadequate infrastructure. The situation is reinforced by inequities, especially in access to justice and economic opportunities.

*Infrastructure*⁴

Liberia's infrastructure was severely damaged by the war. Most Liberians have no access to electricity, water and sanitation facilities, acceptable housing, or decent roads. Weak infrastructure undermines income-earning opportunities, limits access to health and education facilities, raises the price of goods and services, and weakens food security. It also places a large burden on women and children as they must spend more time carrying water and other goods, are more vulnerable to crime, and have less access to health facilities which raises

¹ LISGIS National population and Housing Census 2008 (Preliminary Result)

² GOL Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

the risk of child and maternal mortality. Women with disabilities are also disproportionately disadvantaged.

Women's Issues

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that brought an end to the 14 years of civil war in Liberia provided a political and substantive framework for Liberia's post-conflict recovery. The CPA defined the terms of a ceasefire that led to the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and laid out the platform and scope for the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) that guided the country towards democratic elections in 2005.

Although Liberia elected a woman president in 2005, great disparity still exists between women and men in representation and participation at various institutions of governance and decision-making both at the national and local level. Despite the election of a woman to the nation's highest office, the participation of women in political life and decision-making processes remains limited by discriminatory social, cultural and economic conditions.

The war left Liberia a devastated society, struggling to recover from destruction, suffering, pain and death. It is generally agreed that the vast majority of those affected by the war were women and girls. This segment of the society is now alienated from decision-making processes and remains extremely vulnerable. The literacy rate among women and girls is less than 20% compared to an estimated illiteracy rate of 80% across the entire population. Despite the gains made in Liberia's democratic process by the election of a woman president and the election of a considerable number of women in the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament, the presentation of women in the political decision making processes still remains a major challenge. For example, in 2005 women accounted for only 14% of the 762 candidates nominated for elections even though women accounted for 50% of the total registered voters. The elections results were even more unimpressive: In the Senatorial Election only 5 out of the 30 Senators elected were women. In the House of Representatives, there are 9 women accounting for only 12.5% of seats. In other government apparatus', women are unequally represented in decision-making positions with only 0.8% in the judiciary agency, 5.3% in national bureau and agencies and 10.3% in ministries. This data is not comparative since any information about past governments relates to the unrepresentative True Whig Party governments before 1980. The True Whig Party was male dominated and excluded most indigenous Liberians.

Even though this figure of women representation in national politics may look small, it is the best representation of women in politics in Liberia's checkered history. In fact, the above figures constitute the most women that Liberia has ever seen in leadership roles since 1847, particularly in top government positions. Given that the majority of currently elected women are based in Monrovia, the participation of women in national politics should be consolidated

by representation at county and district levels. Of the 14 women currently in parliament, six were elected from Montserrado County (Monrovia and surrounding regions) and the other eight were living and working in Monrovia despite representing their county of birth. These facts will be increasingly important to remember as the government prepares to hold local and municipal elections, initiate reforms through the Governance Reform Commission, implement the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and undertake the decentralization exercise. The success of these processes depends to a large extent on the active representation and participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels.

It is therefore imperative to start addressing the barriers to women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes at all levels of society. Doing so will ensure that the interests and needs of women are represented and protected in the decentralization plans for the channeling of resources.

2.2 Women in Leadership Positions

The literature review found increases in the number of women in leadership positions since the 2005 election of Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Liberia's first woman president. This has been especially true for key positions including associate justice, commissioner, head of police and numerous jobs within the foreign affairs sector. Please refer to the charts below for more details. With the executive branch of government headed by Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and an increasing number of women in parliament, society as a large sees women as powerful. The question remains: are they really powerful? Are they gender sensitive and developing policies that will take women issues into account? Some of the interviewees identified a need for further capacity building in institutional conflict management to handle disputes between women in government, women in civil society, and grassroots women. The need to build the capacity of government leaders in advocacy and policy formulation was another major challenge noted by the participants. Women in major leadership roles are not exempt from the challenges that face Liberian women in general. They too may lack self-confidence, have inadequate funding, and struggle with balancing the roles of work and family. Whether she is a government minister or an executive director, a woman is still expected to engage in household tasks after a long day's work. Thus the persistent cultural expectation for women to be 'mother of all' and the lack of alternative role models is concerning. Indeed, there is a considerable need for new women role models in Liberian society, especially for young women and girls.

A town hall meeting conducted by the Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) in July and August of 2008 in western Liberia showed that women in rural Liberia expressed great interest in assuming leadership roles. They said that the persistent cultural and traditional practices have limited them,

as well as lack of human and food security, education and economic empowerment and limited access to proper health care. An elderly woman who is a town chief said “women are divided on party lines and therefore men use the divisiveness to further divide us and keep us in the kitchen.” Men use the fact that women are not united to maintain the current gender roles and insist that women fulfill their traditional obligations. She also said that there is no link between grassroots women and women in government, and asked how those at the grassroots might feel the impact of the work of women in government. Most women feel very distant from what they call the ‘most powerful women’. No in-depth research has been conducted on this topic.

2.3 Current Women’s Leadership Development Programs

Information gathered from women-led civil society organizations revealed that there are several on-going programs designed to enhance women’s leadership roles in Liberia. These projects include training, town hall meetings and exchange visits. These programs are geared towards addressing the challenges women face in leadership development. They also aim to capitalize on existing opportunities to consolidate the new leadership of women in Liberia. Trainings feature skill building in fundraising, campaigning, selecting a political party, knowing your allies, understanding your opponents, and speech making. Particular emphasis is placed on community conflict resolution, peaceful co-existence, intervening in mob justice and making reports to the police or authorities. Please see table of programs below.

On-going Women’s Leadership Development Programs

Donor	Project	Content	Partners
Women Campaign International (WCI)	Women’s Leadership, Participation in Politics and Increasing Women’s Contribution to Conflict Transformation Programs	Interviewing of women leaders, airing findings and holding town hall meetings on issues arising from radio programs.	Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL)
USAID/NDI	Community Based Women’s Political Mobilization & Democracy	Training women to engage lawmakers on issues affecting them and finding a joint solution.	Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET)
UNDP	Women’s Leadership in Local Government and Gender Training Project	Training rural women in gender and leadership skills	Women and Children Development Association of Liberia
Initiative for Inclusive Security	Facilitating Empowerment of Women through Leadership Skills	Encouraging women to become involved and participate in leadership	Community Habitat Finance (CHF)

3.0 Barriers to and Opportunities for Participation and Inclusion

3.1 Barriers

Against a backdrop of high vulnerability, nine key barriers emerged for women and girls:

1) Stereotypes: Cultural and traditional stereotypes characterize women as child bearers and caregivers who are not supposed to hold decision-making positions in society. Women who step out of the traditional roles assigned to them are regarded as “unwomanly, wearing the shoes of men and not eligible for marriage.”⁵ Respondents pointed out that the majority of the women who are in key positions in Liberia are either single or divorced. This pressure to fulfill cultural expectations was said to influence many women “to turn down jobs that would separate them from their families”.⁶

2) Media: Media places a negative spotlight on women. The largely male dominated media often focuses on mistakes made by women, eliciting public ridicule of female leaders while male leaders are treated with more respect. This makes women fearful of entering the public arena.

3) Insecurity: Some women in powerful positions operate from deep insecurity and, as a result, they work against women in civil society. They sometimes block empowerment programs due to fear of being seen as less incompetent than those leading these programs or as a show of power over women who are dependent on them for funding of their programs.

4) Capacity Building: There is no program to build capacity in the next generation of Liberian women through coaching, mentoring and interest building. Respondents saw this void as a threat to developing the next generation of leadership and new ideas.

5) Gender Insensitivity: Most of the powerful civil society organizations are male lead and gender insensitive. As a result, they do not show solidarity or give substantive support to women’s issues. Instead they pay ‘lip service’ to gain funding and other opportunities but are not actually in partnership with women’s organizations or women’s issues.

6) Violence: The high level of domestic violence experienced in the country is a major obstacle to rural women’s participation. Women who dare step out of the traditional roles of mother and wife to be businesswomen, politicians, or to challenge the perceived authority reported experiencing violence on a daily basis. This violence is a major inhibitor to women who have ambitions to progress out of their current positions in the communities.

⁵ Interview with representative of Liberian Women Media Action Committee (LIWOMAC).

⁶ Interview with leader of young women’s organization (YWCA).

7) Rural Isolation: In addition, rural women feel that they are isolated from the women involved in politics. Many respondents commented that while their mobilization efforts helped elect these women, once in power the women leaders did not maintain their grassroots links and became disconnected from rural issues and concerns. Rural women are now skeptical of the value of getting involved with politics and say that they do not see any benefit coming their way as a result of doing so.

8) Political Stereotypes & Direction: This study also found that political parties were reluctant to put women candidates forward due to claims of incompetency made by male peers. As a result, women are continually forced to justify their inclusion in politics. This divides their focus and distracts them away from participating fully in national issues. Unfortunately, political parties do not work to build female candidates' capacity through mentoring tools that could address these criticisms of incompetency. Men also stated that they preferred to work with what was referred to as 'the old boys' network.'

9) Unclear Gender Mandate: The ministries dealing with gender and women's issues have not developed a clear mandate and as a result politicians and civil society organizations end up competing for the same resources. This competition creates divisions and fragmentation in the overall movement towards gender equality. A clear plan needs to be drawn up indicating who will do what.

3.2 Opportunities

The following opportunities were identified through this research:

1) High Level Role Models: Having a female president and an increased number of females in government was seen to be the most significant opportunity for women in Liberia. This situation has sparked greater political will in women and has led the international community to recognize the achievements and contributions of Liberian women to social development and peace. Having these role models in place has attracted new resources and created new opportunities for women, especially in the form of capacity building and skills development.

2) Greater Interest in Leadership: Women of Liberia are increasingly aware of their rights, roles and responsibilities and are enthusiastic about engaging in learning and becoming leaders. This can be leveraged to create more space for women leaders who are better prepared to take up decision-making positions and roles in society.

3) Greater Awareness and Supportive Environment: Women are also more self-reflective and have a greater awareness of their own weaknesses, challenges, strengths and opportunities. Liberian women in general and women politicians in particular were also described as being more willing now to encourage each other as peers despite the competitive environment (Liberia is a

small country and competition for resources and positions is fierce). Women are open to more in-depth training and development to gain not only knowledge and skills but also wisdom in order to be authentic leaders with integrity. This offers an opportunity to create comprehensive programming for women. These women can then become the role models and open spaces for the future generation of women.

Annex A: Women Representation in High Level Positions

Women Representatives in Government Ministries 2006-2008

Ministry	Name	Position
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	1. Hon. Bernice Dahn	Deputy Minister & Chief
	2. Cllr. Vivian J. Cherue	Medical Officer Deputy Minister, Health & Social Welfare
	3. Hon. Bendu A. Tulay	Assistant Minister, Social Welfare
	4. Hon. Jessie E. Duncan	Ass. Min. & Deputy Chief Medical Officer
	5. Winnie Scott Macdonald	Administrator, John F. Kennedy Medical Center
Ministry of Justice	6. Cllr. Eva Morgan	Deputy Minister for Administration
	7. Hon. Fatumata Sheriff	Assistant Minister for Rehabilitation
Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs	8. Hon. Ann Dora Karbo	Assistant Minister, Regional Planning
Ministry of Education	9. Hon. Josephine T. Porte	Assistant Minister, Planning, Research & Development
	10. Hon. Keturah B. Siebu	Ass. Min., Bureau Primary Education
	11. Hon. Felicia D. Sumah	Ass. Min. Instruction/Bureau, Secondary Education
Ministry of Transport	12. Hon. May Ann Fossung	Assistant Minister for Administration
Ministry of Internal Affairs	13. Hon. Estelle Liberty	Deputy Minister for Administration
	14. Hon. Yah Suah Kialain	Deputy Minister for Operations
Ministry of Youth & Sports	15. Hon. Joyce K. Newman	Assistant Minister for Administration
Ministry of Gender & Development	16. Hon. Varbah Gayflor	Minister
	17. Hon. Anette Kiawu	Deputy Minister, Research & Technical Services
	18. Hon. Patricia Kamara	Ass. Minister, Planning & Administration
Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism	19. Hon. Elizabeth E. Hoff	Deputy Minister for Technical Services
	20. Hon. Scholastical Doe	Ass. Min., Tourism

Ministry	Name	Position
Ministry of Agriculture	21. Hon. Lorpu Kandakai	Deputy Minister for Regional Development, Research & Extension
	22. Hon. Philomena T. Williams	Ass. Minister for Administration
Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs	23. Hon. Madina Wesseh	Director of the Cabinet
Ministry of Commerce	24. Hon Meima S. Kenneh	Ass. Minister for Administration
	25. Hon. Adorkor Coleman	Ass. Min for Commerce
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	26. Hon. Olubankie King Akerele	Minister
Ministry of Labour	27. Hon. Rosetta N. Jackollie	Ass. Minister for Labour Standards

Source: Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia 2007

Women representation in Foreign Missions 2006- 2008

Mission	Name	Position
Cote D'voire	28. Hon. Sedia Bangoura	Ambassador
South Africa –Pretoria	29. Cllr. Lois Bruthus	Ambassador
Netherlands – Belgium, European Union & Luxemburg	30. Hon .Youngor Telewoda	Ambassador

Source: Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia 2007

Women representation in Public Cooperation 2006- 2008

Public Cooperation	Name	Position
Liberia Broadcasting Service	31. Hon. Juliana S. Bouro	Deputy Director General for Broadcasting
National Port Authority	32. Hon. Mary Broh	Deputy Managing Director for Administration

Source: Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia 2007

Women representation at Central Bank of Liberia 2006- 2008

Central Bank of Liberia	Name	Position
Central Bank of Liberia	33. Hon. Ethel Davis	Deputy Governor

Source: Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia 2007

Women representation in Local Government 2006- 2008

County	Name	Position
Montserratado	34. Hon. Nyenekeh B.S. Barcon 35. Hon. Massa Kollie 36. Hon. Lycinda A. E Punii 37. Hon. Henrietta Fugans Nyae 38. Hon. Joanna N. Coleman 39. Hon. Shron B. Kamara 40. Hon. Helena T. Doe 41. Hon. Williametta G. Carlos 42. Hon. Sarah K. Berrian 43. Hon. Amelia C. R Holmes 44. Hon. Esther Belton 45. Hon. Musa Kissi 46. Hon. Kpankpa Boe 47. Hon. Kpennah Yanga 48. Hon. Jemima Washington 49. Dr. Cecil O. Brandy	Superintendent Relieving Commissioner City Mayor Lord Mayor Lord Mayor Township Commissioner Township Commissioner Township Commissioner Township Commissioner Township Commissioner General Town Chief General Town Chief General Town Chief General Town Chief Township Commissioner Township Commissioner
Gbapolu County	50. Hon. Gertrude T. Lamin 51. Hon. Winnie Molly 52. Hon. Massa King	Superintendent Clan Chief Clan Chief
Bomi County	53. Hon. Rebecca T. Benson 54. Hon. Rebecca Sirleaf	Ass. Superintendent Township Commissioner
Grand Bassa County	55. Hon. Julia Duncan Cassell 56. Hon. Agnes L. Artis	Superintendent Commissioner
Mary Land County	57. Hon. Regina Sampson	City Mayor
Rivercess County	58. Hon. Sarah M. Zeo 59. Hon. Narah Gaye 60. Hon. Marhta Garda Wrueah	Mayor Paramount Chief General Town Chief
Bong County	61. Hon. Lucia Herbert 62. Hon. Esther Coaline Warbey	Development Superintendent City Mayor
Grand Kru County	63. Hon. Rosalind Sneh 64. Hon. Gbeh Gmah 65. Hon. Esther K. Wleh 66. Hon. Christiana Togba 67. Hon. Beatrice Kumeh 68. Hon. Theresa Taypoh 69. Hon. Mary G. Tweh 70. Hon. Elizabeth Nyanfore 71. Hon. Lucy Kumeh 72. Hon. Elizabeth Julu 73. Hon. Tuwele Korh 74. Hon. Mary Bliah	Superintendent General Town Chief Clan Chief General Town Chief General Town Chief General Town Chief General Town Chief General Town Chief Clan Chief Clan Chief Clan Chief Clan Chief
Nimba County	75. Hon. Emma Y. Konnah 76. Hon. Anita Diagor 77. Hon. Kou Bolay 78. Hon. Julie Freeman 79. Hon. Rebecca D. Gbor 80. Hon. Helena Diayean 81. Hon. Mary Nya Gonlepa 82. Hon. Norh T. Tensonnon	Commissioners Township Commissioner Clan Chief Clan Chief Clan Chief Clan Chief City Mayor City Mayor

	83. Hon. Angie N. Dopoe 84. Hon. Mary Sonkarlay Yileyon 85. Hon. Sarah Z. Mendoabor	City Mayor City Mayor City Mayor
Grand Cape mount County	86. Catherine N. Watson Khasu 87. Clarissa S. Passawee 88. Roseline Q. Peters 89. Jane White 90. Frances a. Turay	Superintendent Township Commissioner Township Commissioner Township Commissioner Mayor
Sinoe County	91. Frances Mondubue 92. Emma Jabba 93. Elizabeth Nipay 94. Frances Kumon 95. Barbara M. Keah 96. Mary Menvay 97. Ellen Jah 98. Joyce Teh 99. Sarah Kayweah 100. Janet K. Wleh 101. Ruth Chea 102. Marie Wea 103. Rebecca Tarpeh 104. Ellen Mah 105. Annie Duwroh 106. Mary Marwieh 107. Janet Kwen 108. Betty Slewia 109. Lucy Kaydee 110. Lucy Dweh	Paramount Chief Clan Chief Clan Chief Clan Chief Mayor Mayor Mayor Mayor Mayor Mayor Mayor General Town Chief General Town Chief

Women representation in the Judiciary: Judges of the Supreme lower Courts

111. Jamesetta Howard Woklie	Associate Justice
112. Gladys Johnson	Associate justice
113. Cllr. Ceaineh Clinton Johnson	Judge

Source: Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia 2007

Women representation in the Liberian National Police

Name	Position
114. Hon. B. Munah S. Brown	Inspector General
115. Hon. Asatu Bah Kenneth	Deputy Inspector General for Administration

Source: Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia

Women representation in the Bureau of Immigration & Naturalization

Name	Position
116. Cllr. Alaba G. Williams	Commissioner of Bureau Of Immigration & Naturalization

Source: Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia

Women representation in Commissions

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Name	Position
117. Cllr. Pearl Brown Bull	Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Commissioner
118. Hon. Oumu Syllah	Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Commissioner
119. Hon. Massa Washington	Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Commissioner
120. Hon. Dede Dolopei	Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Vice Chair Per

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National Election Commission

Name	Position
121. Cllr. Jeanette Ebba Davidson	National Elections Commission, Commissioner
122. Cllr. Elizabeth J. Nelson	Co-Chair Person, National Elections Commission

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Governance Commission

Name	Position
123. Hon. Elizabeth S. Mulbah	Commissioner
124. Hon. Sandra Howard Kendor	Commissioner
125. Hon. Hawa Goll Kotchi	Commissioner

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National Commission on Disarmament Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Name	Position
126. Hon. Ruth Caesar	Deputy Executive Director- National Commission on Disarmament Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Anti- Corruption Commission

Name	Position
127. Cllr. Francis Johnson Morris	Chairperson of the Commission
128. Hon. Sandra Howard Kendor	Commissioner

National Commission on Disability

Name	Position
129. Roseline Paul	Acting Deputy Commissioner

City of Monrovia

Name	Position
130. Hon. Ophelia Hoff Saytumah	Mayor

Annex B: List of Obstacles

Obstacles for the inclusion and participation of women in political leadership positions:

- Limited availability of training, coaching, mentoring and long-term capacity building;
- Limited genuine support from peers, members, or followers (lots of talk but little action);
- Refusal of members, followers or peers to regularly seek clarification on leadership issues as they arise. As a result, decisions are made based on assumptions;
- Male peers try to challenge the woman leader as a means of proving her incompetence (they think that they are the only ones good enough for the job);
- Low self-esteem on the part of the woman who's leading;
- Challenge of dealing with other competitors who try to undermine leaders;
- Male dominance and stereotyping;
- Inability of women to lobby due to limited skills and funding;
- Inadequate support for women civil society organizations;
- Most male-led civil society organizations are not gender sensitive and as a result do not show solidarity on women's issues;
- Inadequate training of women groups;
- Lack of skills in strategizing, sustaining and sourcing funds, particularly in women-led civil society organizations;
- Lack of preparation of young women leaders;
- Lower skills in technology;
- Poor access to information;
- Traditional women activists hold to practices of gender inequality and non-inclusiveness that harm women;
- Weak links and limited interaction between grassroots women and women in political positions;
- Some women in government see the women in civil society as competitors (for power, resources and recognition) and do not want to recognize their work and include them in programs that empower women;
- Women are family-focused and sometimes turn down jobs that will separate them from their families;
- Women political leaders are always in the negative spotlight of the male-dominated media. For example, if a man makes a mistake the media will not make much noise but if it is a woman the media will bring that woman to public ridicule;
- Sexual exploitation and abuse;
- Political parties that are not willing to put forward women as candidates;

- Women in parliament are told by their male counterparts to justify their inclusion into processes, resulting in them having less time to spend on national issues;
- Women try to act like men leaders, sometimes exhibiting more masculine characteristics than feminine;
- Domestic violence is on the increase (especially in rural Liberia) and this is impeding women from fully realizing their potential;
- Duplication of roles by both government line ministries and women-led civil society groups working on women issues, no clearly defined mandate for these organizations to follow; and
- Women in political positions do not know how and when to engage the media.

Note: All the opportunities captured are part of the main document. This list is of obstacles captured and extracted from the interviews.

Appendix C

Summary of Findings:

Côte d'Ivoire Desktop Research, Consultative Workshop & Qualitative Interviews

Femmes Afrique Solidarité Academy for Educational Development Leadership Wisdom Initiative at Search for Common Ground

Research conducted by Catherine Andela

Under the leadership of the Leadership Wisdom Initiative (LWI) of Search for Common Ground (SFCG) – Academic Education Development (AED) - Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS)

Executive Summary

The Leadership Wisdom Initiative (LWI) at Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in partnership with Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS) and the Academy for Education Development (AED) seek to explore how more Cote d'Ivoire women can be elevated into higher leadership positions across all employment sectors. The partnership aims to develop groundbreaking, transformational leadership development opportunities for West African women leaders. For this purpose FAS, AED, and LWI/SFCG gathered Ivorian women leaders in a consultative workshop to seek their view on challenges, available resources, and needs for more empowerment.

Within this framework, research has been conducted in three Africa countries: Kenya, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire (with Côte d'Ivoire being the only francophone country included in this research). The research in Côte d'Ivoire is based on the review of the legal and institutional frameworks within the national mechanisms for gender equity and mainstreaming.

1. Legal and Institutional Framework: National Context

Côte d'Ivoire has ratified various international and regional conventions relating to 'equity in dignity and in rights' of all human beings. These include the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the 1966 International Pact relating to civil and political rights, the International Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discriminations (ratified in 1973), the 1979 Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination towards women (ratified in September 1995), the 1996 International Pact relating to economical, social and cultural rights, and the 1986 African Charter of human and people's rights (with the

notable exception of the additional protocol to the African Charter relating to women's rights).

In addition, the Principle of Equity between women and men is enclosed in Côte d'Ivoire's second constitution which was ratified July 23, 2000. It forbids all forms of torture, physical and moral violence, mutilations and humiliation towards women.

The participation of women in politics has improved since the International Conference on the Population and the Development of Cairo in 1994 and the Beijing Conference in 1995. Indeed, gender issues are increasingly being acknowledged as a strategy to consider in development programs and policy-making.

Some statistics received from the Ministry of the Family and Social Affairs reveal that:

In 2004,

- 14.13% of the ambassadors were women,
- 13 women were Chief of Village (out of 8549 positions),
- 3 women were magistrates in the Supreme Court (one advisor, one general prosecutor, one general substitute),
- 1 woman out of 7 members of the Constitutional Council.

Some women were also to be found in the private sector as business managers and in the sector of security and national defenses.

In 2005,

- 24 women out of 120 members (20%) composed the Economical and Social Council,
- 6 women out of 50 members (12%) at the Supreme Court,
- 2 women out of 7 (28%) are at the level of the Constitutional Council,
- 3 women out of 58 at the level of Chiefs of Clerks,
- 7 women ministers in the Government of Côte d'Ivoire,
- 1 woman vice president at the National Assembly,
- 1 single woman Presidents of General Councils out a total of 52, a rate of 1.78%,
- 20 women Vice Presidents of districts and Vice Presidents of General Councils out of 295 members, a rate of 8.37%.

The representation of women in decision-making positions of political parties is still weak comparative to their weight in the electorate (more than 70%)

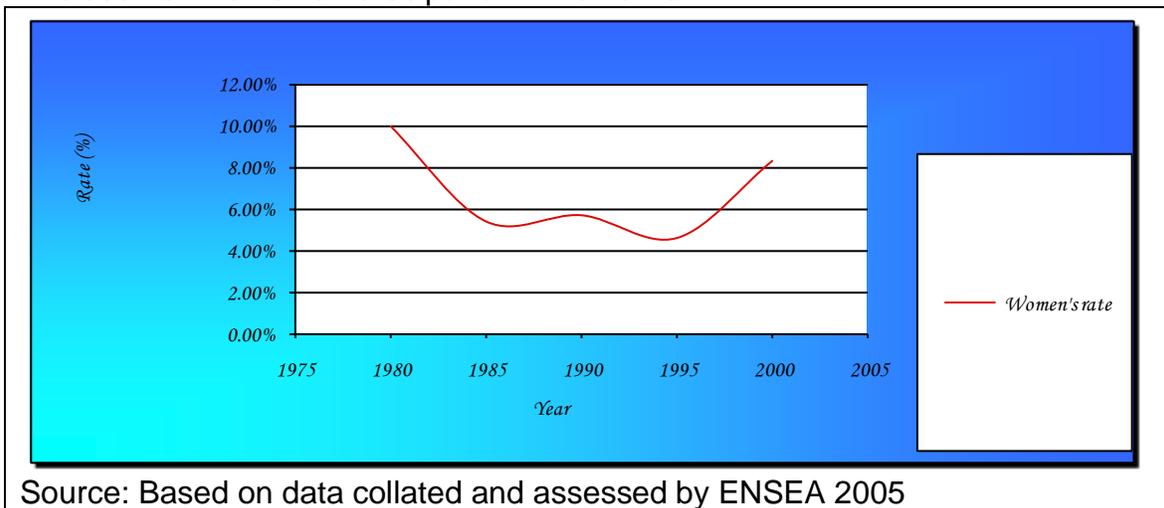
- PDCI: a quota of 10% was recommended to the 10th Congress and there are 41 women out of 414 members (9.90%) in the Political office.
- FPI: 30% in paragraph 12 of its statutes with an increasing revision of this percentage at every congress. The General Secretariat has 15

women and the Monitoring Committee has 9 women representatives out of 31 members (29.03%).

- RDR: 7 women National Secretaries out of 45 members (15.55%) in the Central Committee
- PIT: 1 woman out of 11 members of the National Secretariat (9.09%).
- 3 women out of 45 seats at the Central Committee (6.66%).⁷

Although stipulated in some statutes of political parties (i.e. FPI), the promotion of women to decision-making levels is not reflected within the political parties. Instead the women often play a secondary role, while she constitutes an important electorate of more than 70%. Regarding the representation of women at the parliament, the graph⁸ below clearly indicates the insufficient number of women at decision making levels, who could promote and mainstream gender issues and fight against discriminatory legal practices towards women.

Evolution of Women's Participation in Parliament



From the 1980's until 2005, the proportion of women in Parliament fluctuates between 4% and 10%. In 1980, the strongest rate of parliamentary women was recorded. This rate dropped considerably, reaching a low in 1985. Between 1985 and 1990, the proportion of women in Parliament remained stable with an average of 5%. As of 1995, this rate increased and has been constant since 2000 with a rate around 8%.

Within the civil society, women have organized themselves into networks and associations.

⁷ Ministry of Family, Woman and Children, (to date Ministry of Family and Social Affairs) quinzaine de la femme, April 2002.

⁸ Based on data collated and assessed by ENSEA 2005, Need Analysis Framework Côte d'Ivoire 2006

- Le Réseau Ivoirien des Organisations Féminines (RIOF) – Ivorian Network of Women's Organizations: Created in 1995 and comprised of 45 NGO members.
- L'Association des Femmes Professionnelles de la Communication (APAC-CI) – Association of professional women in communication.
- L'Association des Femmes Ivoiriennes Cadres Supérieurs de la Santé (AFICSS) – Ivorian Women Senior Health Officials.
- Le Réseau des Femmes Africaines Ministres et Parlementaires (REFAMP-CI) – Network of African Women Parliamentarians and Ministers.
- Le Réseau Ivoirien des Femmes Entrepreneurs (RIFEN) – Network of Ivorian Women Entrepreneurs.
- La Coalition des Femmes Leaders (CFELCI) – Coalition of Women Leaders.
- L'AID Afrique.
- Le Réseau International Eau, Femmes et Pouvoir de Décisions (RIEFPD) – International Network for Water, Women and Power of Decision-making.

Networking allows women to voice their concerns and articulate their capacity at the national and international level. This will strengthen country-wide advocacy efforts for gender equity and women's empowerment while denouncing biased legal stipulations.

For instance, the labor code foresees remuneration equity between women and men for jobs in the same category. In civil law, women benefit from the full legal capacity in the same way as men.

However, many inequalities exist. These inequalities are largely the result of cultural values, ignorance and non-application of numerous legal texts, and discrepant judiciary measures favoring men. In penal matters, there is discrimination in the management of evidence in adulterous cases. In the labor market, the legal discrepancy is the opposition right granted only to the man against the work duty performed by his spouse. This legal issue prevents the emancipation of the women and leads to the loss of their dignity. In the area of civil law, the parental right is discriminatory. Men are considered to be the head of the family. Economically, divergent fiscal treatments on salaries earned by women and men also demonstrate the patriarchal domination and prevailing socio-cultural values⁹.

⁹ Ministry of Family and Social Affairs: Document of Gender National Policy, Côte d'Ivoire 2006

2. Evolution of Gender Issues: Strengthened Institutional Capacities in Gender

The Direction de l'Égalité et de la Promotion du Genre (DEPG) – Directorate of Equity and Gender Mainstreaming – was created in 2006 within the Ministry of the Family and Social Affairs with the aim: (i) to ensure the respect of equality and equity between men and women, (ii) to coordinate actions regarding gender issues, (iii) to monitor and evaluate the implementation of actions committed by the government at the international level regarding gender equality and equity.

With technical and financial support from the United Nations and international NGOs the DPEG elaborated:

- The Solemn Declaration of Côte d'Ivoire on equality of opportunity, equity and gender signed by the President of the Republic in 2007,
- The Document of National Policy on equality of opportunity, equity and gender elaborated in 2006,
- The 2007 National Plan regarding the implementing of the UNSC Resolution 1325.

3. Evolution of Gender Issues: Strengthened Operational Capacities

Below is a list of strengthened gender operational capacities:

- 13 gender units set up within the technical ministries,
- Support of training on gender issues of 30 decision-makers, ministry staff and members of the civil society;
- Support of the capacity building in budgeting gender affairs of 45 decision-makers and ministry staff,
- 12 national trainers trained in gender,
- 30 media staff (men & women) trained on gender and development and the UNSC Resolution 1325,
- 40 representatives of state structures, NGO and opinion leaders trained in gender and development and on the implementing of UNSCR 1325,
- 30 service contractors and NGO trained in GBV services,
- Publication of the findings of the study "Gender and Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire,"
- Investigation on gender based violence conducted in 9 departments,
- Training institutes of women revamped,
- Implementation of CEDEF, and
- Set up national coordination of women associations for better participation in the electoral process.

Major Results in 2007

- Institution of a Directorate of Equity and Gender Mainstreaming,
- Solemn Declaration of Côte d'Ivoire on equality of opportunity signed by the President of the Republic; and

- Document of the Gender National Policy elaborated.

Major Challenges in 2007

- The national budget contribution of the Directorate of Equality and Gender Mainstreaming (DEPG), Ministry of the Family, Woman and Social Affairs allocated to gender issues is very weak compared to the portfolio size.
- The DEPG mainly operates through the financing of projects supported by partners (UNFPA and UNDP), which limits the sustainability of actions.

4. Consultative Workshop

Initiative and organization by: Leadership Wisdom Initiative (LWI) at Search for Common Ground Côte d'Ivoire (SFCG), Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS), and Academy for Educational Development (AED). Aminata Dieye from FAS and Sheila Daunt Escandon from LWI/SFCG facilitated the workshop.

This consultative retreat was held on August 5, 2008 at the Hotel Golf in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The day began with:

- Introduction and presentation of the workshop agenda and the facilitators by Spes Manirakiza, the Country Director of SFCG Côte d'Ivoire.
- Welcome wishes by the Susan Collin Marks, SFCG Vice President.
- Presentation of FAS by Aminata Dieye, the Coordinator of the Panafrican Program on Gender, Peace and Development.
- Presentation of AED and its partnership with SFCG and FAS by Vivian Derryck, Vice President of AED,
- Explanation and guidance on the workshop facilitation by Sheila Daunt Escandon, LWI/SFCG.
- Introduction of the participants → see list of participants Table I
- Elaboration of the code of conduct during the workshop.
- Explanation of workshop goal: to identify what women need to enrich and support their leadership development by
 - naming the obstacles and opportunities for women's leadership in Côte d'Ivoire
 - sharing our most ambitious vision for the development of women leadership in Côte d'Ivoire
 - brainstorming what is needed in order to realize these visions.

Workshop Findings

Exercise One: sharing with a partner a personal leadership challenge, the partner reports back to the group with keywords. The objective of the exercise was to define obstacles and opportunities facing women leaders.

Leadership Challenge	Obstacles and Challenges	Opportunities
Set up microfinance in Central & North West Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political leadership vs socio-economic & socio-political activities • How to have a sustainable program? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilization of financial resources for income generating activities for vulnerable populations in need • Engagement of local leaders
Bring women of the different political parties together to achieve common goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusal to collaborate with women of different political parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized good communication skills and developed exchanges to overcome political cleavages
Convince parents to send both brother and sister to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-cultural obstacles • Act of going to school against the wish of parents seen as rebellious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparents served as mediators • Courage by child and grandparents not to accept cultural norm • Creativity to find a solution
Motivate others to protect environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barrier • Leader was young • Low level of interest in and knowledge of the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate ideas effectively & convincingly • Able to connect to other women
Develop and deliver training with a dispersed group over the course of a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of the group (differences culturally, politically, economically, and in language) • Location of participants was not central, great distances between group members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found common interests and captured the imagination of participants • Engaged and encouraged participants through dynamic leadership presence
Build leadership and electoral capacity of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political differences of war affected women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed strategy to gather these women together • Patience in listening to differences • Drew on personal experiences of participants to empower the group
Mobilize and organize an event in two days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited time to prepare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical support of partner organization • Flexibility, confidence and adaptability in organization
Delivering a training in remote area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment unavailable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creatively found solutions • Strong desire for success

Rehabilitation of street children	Limited financing available due to negative stereotypes of street children • Lack of food and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO funding secured • Developed self confidence in street children through interactions with the other children • Strong, successful program delivery
Organize a field activity in two days	• Adversity of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support direction of students • Turn adversity into an advantage
Implement a gender, peace and development program	• Resistance to topic of program, questions on necessity	• Determination to raise awareness

Obstacles and opportunities key words as identified by participants:

Obstacles	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working in isolation instead of partnership • refusal to self acceptance • personal vision • cultural problems • lack of education • difficulties with the local leaders • communication • relational problems between women • lack of support • language barriers • political barriers • division • differences • conflict of interest • lack of time • lack of resources • adversity • funding • prejudices • security • stress • too many tasks • lack of communication • responsibility within the family • lack of confidence • logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication • sharing space • education • family support • youth • creativity • courage • respect • financial resources • community • support of locals leaders • ability to mobilize • knowledge of the environment • being a woman • patience • listening • enlarge the vision • break the barriers • alliances • flexibility • partner organizations • confidence • capacity to find solutions • support of workplace & colleagues • adversity in advantage • determination • tenacity • organizational capacity • tenacity • trust of others • convincing • sharing

Exercise Two: write on a piece of paper your vision of women's leadership in Côte d'Ivoire. Visions were posed on the wall and participants walked around in silence reading the visions. The group then discussed what resources were needed in order to achieve these visions. The following are the visions written by participants:

- Contribute to a strong representation of women in elected positions;
- See a significant presence of women at all levels of decisions-making;
- Presence of the women in all forms of decision-making, knowledge of their rights and development of equal opportunities.
- Reduce poverty in rural regions.
- Support the education and training of mothers and girls.
- Political stability, inclusive of women, in the management of political affairs.
- All the women enjoying their rights in a peaceful Côte d'Ivoire.
- Women in Côte d'Ivoire step into their leadership roles with courage, authenticity & wisdom at all levels of society.
- All women know their rights and opportunities.
- Competent women in decision-making positions.
- Help mothers to balance their professional and family responsibilities, assist young professional women in organizing their work schedules and family activities.
- Develop and ensure strong communication and the exchanges between the cities and the sub-regions.
- Training of women and young people on leadership and why it is important to be a leader.
- Provide assistance to the women in the field, sensitizing them and helping them to obtain birth and nationality certificates.
- 100% of women to be able to make decisions.
- Create funds for the education of girls to help them develop their futures;
- Achieve financial independence for women, send all girls to school, develop solidarity among women.
- Increase women's independence in finances, organizational management and decision-making through education and the revision of laws, all of which require a change of mentality (i.e. 'cultural revolution').
- Develop women's leadership without gender needing to be the focal point; and
- Strengthen the capacity of women in leadership. Women should be able develop and utilize their talents (political, economic, cultural) for their own advancement and that of their country.

Collective brainstorming on the resources (internal/personal and external) required to realize these visions:

- Personal will-power;
- Supportive environment and cultural context;
- Upbringing in childhood that is open to behavior and value shifts;
- Organizational and decision-making frameworks which utilize the unique qualities of women: self-denial, will-power and humility;
- Unique expertise of women: power of social representation, availability, know-how, capacity management, and solidarity;
- External resources: financing for support and capacity building;
- Understanding of the rural environment and reduction of poverty;
- Education and communication across diverse cultures and systems of productions;
- Organization of women and development of their ideas;
- Prepare women to for cultural change by engaging their initiative spirit;
- Conviction, confidence, motivation and engagement;
- Sustainable change through self-initiated leadership;
- Creation of an environment that favors the emergence of good leadership;
- Balance of family and political/external life;
- Promotion of the advancement of women;
- Feminine leadership must be integrated strategically to build the nation;
- Strong notion and understanding of the equality men and women;
- Team building, strategic planning;
- Dropping of stereotypes of boys and girls;
- Self-confidence;
- Partnerships; and
- Networking.

The table below summarizes the internal and external resources identified by participants:

Internal Resources	External Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willingness • determination • respect • change of mentality • humility • courage • expertise • tenacity • know-how • ideas • accountability • motivation for change • engagement • passion • education • generosity • integrity • acceptance of others • honor • respect of women • comprehension of the leadership process • conviction • time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational and decision-making capacity • financial support • capacity building • family support • solidarity • development of income generating activities • communication skills • exchanges • logistical skills • community support • knowledge of the environment • education • capacity to organize • balance of private and public life • availability of friends and neighbors • strategy • need for coaching • increase presence of women • partnerships • networking • suitable environment

Appendix F

Project Participants:

Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire

Femmes Afrique Solidarité Academy for Educational Development Leadership Wisdom Initiative at Search for Common Ground

The following persons participated in the Research Phase of the Women of Africa Leadership Development Program as interview respondents or participants in the two-day consultations:

Liberian Project Participants

Liberian Interview Respondents

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Côte d'Ivoirean Project Participants

Côte d'Ivoire Consultative Workshop Participants

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Côte d'Ivoire List of Interviewees

- Mrs. Coffie Raymonde, 1ère Vice-Présidente de la Coalition des Femmes Leader de Cote d'Ivoire
- Mrs. Deigna Nicole, Vice présidente du conseil économique et social Membre du Conseil Economique et Social
- Mrs. Marguerite YOLIBI Koné, Coordinatrice Nationale de WANEP en CI,
- Mrs. Tapsoba, Business
- Mrs. Monique Traoré, Présidente de la Fédération des ONG Femmes pour le Développement du Grand Nord (President of the NGO federation for the development of the Grand-North)
- Mrs. Fatou Hamsa, Minister of Reconstruction and Reinsertion

Appendix G

Project Partners:

**Femmes Afrique Solidarité
Academy for Educational Development
Leadership Wisdom Initiative at Search for Common Ground
Search for Common Ground in Liberia
Search for Common Ground in Cote d'Ivoire**

Femmes Afrique Solidarité

Femmes Afrique Solidarité is a women's non-governmental organization working to engender the peace process in Africa. Since its inception in 1996, FAS has worked to foster, strengthen and promote the leading role of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the African continent.

FAS recognizes that women are disproportionately affected by violent conflicts. However, rather than perceiving women only as passive victims, FAS acknowledges that women are also active agents with skills, strengths, and the ability to bring about change. With this in mind, FAS works to strengthen the capacities of grassroots women's organizations so that they can participate fully in the processes of peacebuilding and conflict resolution in their countries and communities.

FAS has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). It is also represented in the African Union Women's Committee, originally created by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to bring women's voices into the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. In addition, FAS chairs the Geneva Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which works to monitor the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Academy for Educational Development

Academy for Educational Development (AED) is a bridge, a link between the problem and the solution, the need and the resource, people and their potential. Founded in 1961, AED is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to solving critical social problems and building the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to become more self-sufficient. AED works in all the major areas of human development, with a focus on improving education, health, and economic opportunities for the least advantaged in the United States and developing countries throughout the world.

Search for Common Ground and the Leadership Wisdom Initiative

Founded in 1982, Search for Common Ground is an international NGO working in conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding worldwide, with headquarters in Washington DC and Brussels. SFCG has 350 staff working out of 18 offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the US. Staff are drawn from all sides of the conflict. In sub-Saharan Africa we have offices in Angola, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone.

In our view, current problems – whether ethnic, environmental, or economic – are simply too complex and interconnected to be settled on an adversarial basis. We work across whole countries and take a hands-on, multi-pronged, societal approach to dealing with conflict. Although we believe our overall approach is transformational, we carry out our work on a realistic scale – one step at a time. Our methodology is based on a fundamental operating principle: *Understand the differences; act on the commonalities.*

Out of this experience we have identified the great need to support emerging and current leaders who are seeking to be transformative within their communities, their nations and the world. In response we have established the Leadership Wisdom Initiative offering training and one-on-one support to political and civil society leaders to expand and maintain their inner strength, wisdom and power in the face of the daily challenges and pressures they face. LWI projects to date include, in partnership with the *Global Negotiations Project at Harvard Law School*, delivering a five day transformative executive leadership training for UN Senior Mission Leaders, including on-going individual coaching over many months; providing one-on-one coaching and leadership circles for political and civil society leaders including members of the US Congress; and offering ongoing training-of-trainers and leadership training to excombatants and former child soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Appendix H

List of Acronyms

AED	Academy for Educational Development
AFICSS	Association des Femmes Ivoiriennes Cadres Supérieurs de la Santé
APAC-CI	Association des Femmes Professionnelles de la Communication
ASCAD	Académie des Sciences et Cultures d’Afrique et de la Diaspora
CEDEF	Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes
CFELCI	Coalition des Femmes Leaders
CI	Côte d’Ivoire
DEPG	Direction de l’Égalité et de la Promotion du Genre
ENSEA	Ecole Nationale de Statistique et d’Economie Appliquée
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien
GBV	Gender Based Violence
LWI	Leadership Wisdom Initiative
MDG	Millenium Development Goal
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OFACI	ONG Femme Active de Côte d' Ivoire
PDCI	Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire
PIT	Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs
RDR	Rassemblement Des Républicains
REFAMP-CI	Réseau des Femmes Africaines Ministres et Parlementaires
RIFEN	Réseau Ivoirien des Femmes Entrepreneurs
RIEFPD	Réseau International Eau, Femmes et Pouvoir de Décisions
RIOF	Réseau Ivoirien des Organisations Féminines
SFCG	Search For Common Ground
UN SC	United Nations Security Council
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UE	Union Européenne
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding