ACT Liberia – Ministry of Justice

Report on the One-Day Capacity-Building Training on Gender-Responsive Justice, Gender Mainstreaming, and Institutional Transformation for Ministry of Justice Staff

Date: October 9, 2026
Venue: Sixth-Floor Conference Room, Ministry of Justice
Participants: More than 40 Ministry of Justice staff, predominantly female, including gender focal persons from various departments.

1. Introduction

This report provides a brief account of the one-day capacity-building training on Gender-Responsive Justice, Gender Mainstreaming, and Institutional Transformation organized for staff of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with particular emphasis on gender focal persons across the Ministry's various departments.

The training was held on October 9, 2026, in the Sixth-Floor Conference Room of the Ministry of Justice. It brought together more than 40 participants, predominantly women, to strengthen their understanding of gender equality, social inclusion, gender-responsive justice, and the integration of gender considerations into institutional policies, programs, planning, and budgeting.

The training also sought to enhance the capacity of gender focal persons to effectively carry out their responsibilities and promote gender-responsive practices within their respective departments.

2. Establishment of Ground Rules

Before the commencement of the training, the facilitator led participants in establishing ground rules to create a respectful, inclusive, and conducive learning environment. The agreed-upon rules included keeping mobile phones on silent mode, seeking recognition before speaking, respecting the opinions and contributions of others, and maintaining active participation throughout the sessions.

These ground rules were intended to promote discipline, mutual respect, and meaningful engagement among participants.

3. Self-Introduction

Following the establishment of the ground rules, the moderator facilitated a self-introduction session. Participants introduced themselves, identified their respective positions, and stated the institutions or departments they represented. This session provided an opportunity for participants to become acquainted and encouraged interaction and collaboration throughout the training.

4. Opening Statements and Welcome Remarks

The training commenced with opening statements and welcome remarks from representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Helping Our People Excel (HOPE).

- **Cllr. Cora Hare Konunwa, Deputy Minister for Administration, Ministry of Justice**, delivered the opening remarks and welcomed participants. She encouraged them to pay close attention to the training, emphasizing their important roles in promoting gender equality and social inclusion within their respective departments.
- **Grace**, representing Helping Our People Excel (HOPE), also delivered opening remarks. She encouraged participants to take full advantage of the training opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and capacity to promote gender inclusivity and gender-responsive practices.
- **Madam Maude M. Soma, Director of the Gender and Social Inclusion Unit (GSIU)**, encouraged her colleagues at the Ministry of Justice to listen attentively to the facilitators and actively participate in the discussions. She emphasized the importance of acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to advance gender equality and social inclusion across the Ministry.

5. Training Sessions and Key Discussions

Session 1: Gender, Sex, Equality, Equity, Inclusion, Gender Justice Barriers, Equal Access to Justice, and Intersectionality

Facilitator: Madam Maude M. Soma, Director, GSIU, Ministry of Justice.

This session focused on fundamental gender-related concepts, including gender, sex, equality, equity, inclusion, barriers to gender justice, equal access to justice, and intersectionality.

The facilitator explained these concepts and highlighted their relevance to the work of gender focal persons within the Ministry of Justice. She emphasized that

individuals appointed to serve as gender focal persons should regard their positions as opportunities to promote gender equality and inclusion within their respective departments.

Participants were encouraged to take ownership of their responsibilities rather than assuming that other individuals or departments would address gender-related issues on their behalf. The session reinforced the importance of understanding gender concepts and applying them in daily institutional practices to improve access to justice and promote equal treatment for all.

Session 2: Gender-Based Violence and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: Legal and Policy Frameworks

Facilitator: Vamah Boakai, Liberia National Police (LNP)/Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS).

Madam Vamah Boakai presented on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), explaining the subject in simple and accessible terms to ensure participants could understand the issues and their implications.

She discussed how GBV can occur in different settings and highlighted ways in which parents and other individuals may unknowingly contribute to the perpetuation of gender-based violence through their actions, attitudes, and practices.

The session helped participants appreciate the importance of identifying harmful practices, understanding the relevant legal and policy frameworks, and strengthening efforts to prevent and respond to GBV and SGBV.

Session 3: Gender Mainstreaming in Ministry of Justice Programs and Activities

Facilitator: Charles F. Johnson, Human Resource Director, Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Charles F. Johnson presented on gender mainstreaming and its application to the programs and activities of the Ministry of Justice. He explained that gender mainstreaming involves systematically considering the needs, experiences, and interests of women and men when designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and activities.

His presentation was delivered in a clear and practical manner, enabling participants to better understand how gender considerations can be incorporated into the Ministry's operations.

Participants expressed appreciation for his simplified approach to the subject and observed that one day was insufficient to fully explore the important issues discussed during the training. This feedback highlighted the need for additional capacity-building opportunities to deepen participants' understanding of gender mainstreaming.

Session 4: The Six Pillars of the Ministry of Justice Gender Policy and Intersectionality in Institutional Transformation

Facilitator: Prince Wnnowon, Director of Planning, Ministry of Justice.

This session examined the six pillars of the Ministry of Justice Gender Policy and their relevance to intersectionality and institutional transformation.

To encourage practical learning and collaboration, the facilitator divided participants into groups of three and assigned group work. The groups were expected to discuss the issues presented, apply the concepts to the Ministry's institutional context, and share their findings through group presentations.

The exercise provided participants with an opportunity to exchange ideas, strengthen their understanding of the policy pillars, and reflect on how gender-responsive approaches can contribute to institutional transformation.

Session 5: Gender Focal Persons and Their Roles and Responsibilities

Facilitator: Pewee J. Laward, Assistant Director, GSIU, Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Pewee J. Laward presented on the roles and responsibilities of gender focal persons, with particular emphasis on their involvement in institutional planning and the promotion of gender-responsive practices.

He explained that gender focal persons have an important role to play in ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into the work of their respective departments. He further emphasized that department heads should provide the necessary support and create an enabling environment for gender focal persons to perform their assigned responsibilities effectively.

The presentation highlighted the importance of coordination between gender focal persons and departmental leadership in promoting gender equality and social inclusion throughout the Ministry.

Session 6: Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting

Facilitator: Pewee J. Laward, Assistant Director, GSIU, Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Laward also facilitated a session on gender-responsive planning and budgeting. He emphasized that gender focal persons should ensure that departmental plans and budgets take into account the different needs and priorities of women and men.

He explained that gender-responsive budgeting requires the allocation and use of resources in ways that support gender equality and social inclusion. Participants were encouraged to work with their respective departments to ensure that gender considerations are reflected in planning processes, budget preparation, and program implementation.

The session underscored the importance of integrating gender perspectives into resource allocation and institutional decision-making.

Session 7: Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Gender Data

This session was deferred to group work due to time constraints. Mr. Pewee J. Laward divided participants into groups of three to work on the assigned subject matter.

The group exercise was intended to enable participants to examine accountability mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation practices, and the collection and use of gender data in institutional planning and program implementation.

Participants were expected to complete the group work and present their findings to the wider team. These activities were also linked to the training's certification process. Further details regarding the completion and presentation of the assignments were not available at the time of preparing this report.

6. Key Issues Identified and Recommendations

The training highlighted the importance of strengthening the capacity of gender focal persons and ensuring that gender equality and social inclusion are integrated

into the operations of the Ministry of Justice. The following recommendations emerged from the discussions and observations during the training:

6.1. Conduct Follow-Up Capacity-Building Training

A follow-up capacity-building program should be organized to deepen participants' understanding of gender-responsive justice, gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and gender data management.

The follow-up training should also involve key gender focal persons from relevant government ministries, agencies, and institutions to promote coordination and the exchange of experiences across government.

6.2. Provide a More Conducive Training Environment

Future training sessions should be organized at a dedicated or suitably isolated venue to minimize interruptions and fluctuations in attendance. A more controlled training environment would enable participants to remain focused and participate fully throughout the program.

6.3. Allow Adequate Time for Training Sessions

Given the breadth of the topics covered and participants' expressed interest in further learning, future capacity-building programs should allocate sufficient time for presentations, discussions, practical exercises, and group work.

6.4. Strengthen Support for Gender Focal Persons

Department heads should provide adequate institutional support to gender focal persons and facilitate their active involvement in departmental planning, budgeting, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

6.5. Integrate Gender Considerations into Institutional Plans and Budgets

The Ministry of Justice should strengthen efforts to ensure that departmental plans, programs, and budgets reflect gender equality and social inclusion priorities. Gender focal persons should be actively involved in these processes to help ensure that gender considerations are incorporated into institutional decision-making.

7. Conclusion

The one-day capacity-building training provided an important opportunity for Ministry of Justice staff, particularly gender focal persons, to strengthen their understanding of gender-responsive justice, gender mainstreaming, gender equality, and social inclusion.

The presentations and group activities emphasized the responsibility of gender focal persons to promote gender-responsive practices within their respective departments and the importance of support from departmental leadership. Participants' positive responses to the training, including their observation that additional time was needed to explore the topics more thoroughly, demonstrated the value of continued capacity development in this area.

To sustain the benefits of the training, it is recommended that follow-up sessions be organized, adequate time be allocated for practical learning, and stronger institutional support be provided to gender focal persons. These measures will contribute to the integration of gender equality and social inclusion into the policies, programs, planning, budgeting, and overall operations of the Ministry of Justice.

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