

Survey Report on the Quality of Governance in Liberia 2019



Assessing Citizens' Perception on the Quality of Governance in Liberia

Produced by: **Naymote Partners for Democratic Development**



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SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY REPORT

This sixth perception survey report that assesses citizens' perception of the quality of governance in Liberia is released by Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, a leading civil society organization established in 2001 by youth leaders and student activists to enhance democratic participation of citizens and promote political accountability of elected officials.

The survey targeted a sample size of 3,600 (women 47% and 53% men) registered voters from across 46 electoral districts within the 15 counties, which is a statistical representation of citizens' views across the country.

Of the total sample respondents, 58% of respondents were between the ages of 18-35, this means that younger people mostly participated in the survey. This trend aligns with the fact that young people constituted a little over 65 percent of the total number of registered voters in the 2017 elections.¹ Thirty two percent of respondents were between the ages 36-50 and 10% were ages 50 and above.

Overall, 82% of respondents think the country is going or somehow going in the wrong direction while 15% think the country is going or somehow going in the right direction. In the 2018 survey findings, 64% of respondents said the country was going in the wrong direction. The current percent (82%) represents a sharp increase in negative perceptions of the management and governance of the country. When asked about the economy, 89% of the respondents described the current economic conditions in the country as very poor or poor, as compared to 70% who described it as very poor or poor in the 2018 survey report.

There was a sharp reduction in citizens' level of satisfaction with the quality of democracy in the country. 57% of the respondents said they are very satisfied or satisfied with the way democracy is working in the country, 40% said they are not satisfied while 3% said they don't know. In the 2018 survey report, 80% of respondents said they were very satisfied and satisfied with the way democracy was working in the country.

The level of engagement between legislators and their constituents is weak. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said they have not attended any event in their district organized by their lawmakers since January 2018. Despite limited engagement with citizens, most survey respondents were satisfied with opposition legislators' and oppositions political leaders' ability to hold the government accountable. 65% of the respondents said that they are very satisfied or satisfied with the way political parties are engaging and holding the ruling party accountable on commitment to service delivery. On the other hand, 31% said they are not satisfied with the roles of the opposition political parties playing in holding the government to account

Trust in the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) has decreased. Whereas 93% of respondents in the 2018 survey who rated the AFL as the most trusted security institution only 78% of the respondents in this survey rated the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) as the most trusted or fairly trusted security agency in Liberia. **Trust in the Liberia National Police (LNP)** has decreased. In the 2018 survey, 75% of respondents rated the LNP as trusted and fairly trusted security institution in Liberia in the 2019 survey 56% said they trust and fairly trust the Liberia National Police (LNP) while 43% said they don't trust the LNP and 1% of the respondents don't know.

At the same time, mistrust of the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA) has decreased. In the 2018 report, 72% of respondents said they did not trust the LDEA as compared to 57% of respondents in this survey.

Irrespective of gender, the general rating of the economy was poor. Over, 92% (males 2,121 and females 1,190) rated the performance of the government in managing or handling the economy as very poor and poor. In a similar vein, 81% (females 2,365 and males 539) rated the government's performance in managing or handling the health services as very poor and poor and 90% (males 2,049 and females 1,172) of the respondents rated government performance in fighting corruption as very poor and poor.

¹ http://www.necliberia.org/pg_img/FinalVR_Report_2017.pdf

2. INTRODUCTION

Citizens' trust and participation in the democratic processes are necessary for the stability of the state. Over the years, Naymote Partners for Democratic Development has worked to enhance greater civic participation in public affairs, ensuring public officials are more accessible, responsive, and accountable to the needs of citizens and working in the interest of the people.

This citizens' perception survey is conducted every year by Naymote Partners for Democratic Development to assess what citizens across the country think about the quality of governance in the country. The survey focuses on service delivery, the economy, accountability, civic engagement and participation, and security and it was conducted from July 15, 2019 to August 30, 2019 and administered by ten (10) enumerators.

These results represent the sixth survey conducted in 46 out of 73 electoral districts across Liberia's 15 counties. The survey considered the geographic, mobile coverage and economic condition of the respondents and targeted 3,600 registered voters as sample size out of 2.1 million registered voters².

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted using mobile phones and google forms to collect and analyze the data collected from a mobile phone contact database (phone bank) of over 9,235 registered voters within 46 electoral districts across the 15 political sub-divisions of Liberia.

The 3,600 registered voters as a representative sample were randomly selected as respondents for the survey and ten enumerators were trained in random sampling methodology to conduct the survey.

Ten enumerators interviewed 12 persons per day for a period of 30 working days, thereby reaching a total of 3,600 respondents directly from July 15-August 30, 2019. All respondents were registered voters selected through random sampling from a databased/phone bank of 9,235 registered voters.³

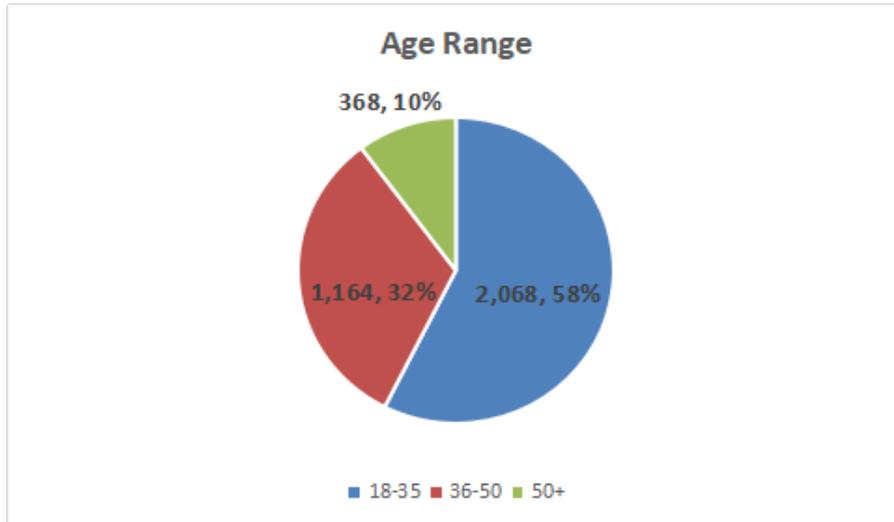
Enumerators used mobile phones to collect and store the data using a google form to analyze the data which was closely monitored by a data entry clerk and verified by a data supervisor on a weekly basis to ensure consistency and accuracy. The data had a confidence level of 95% of a sample size of 3,600 with a margin error of (plus or minus 5%).

² <http://necliberia.org>

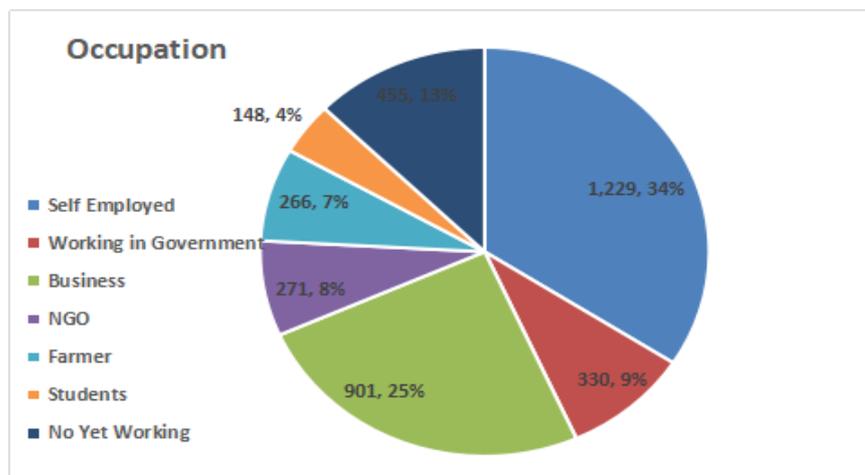
³ Selection of respondents was based on verification of 2017 voter registration card.

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC

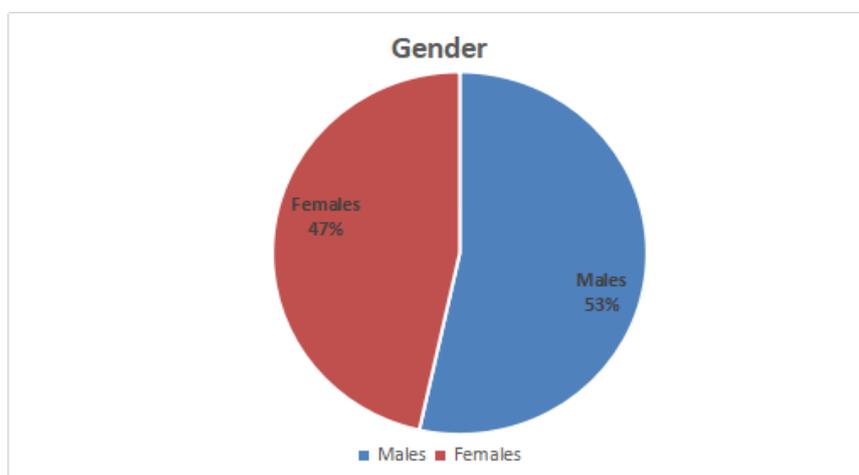
3.1 Age Range



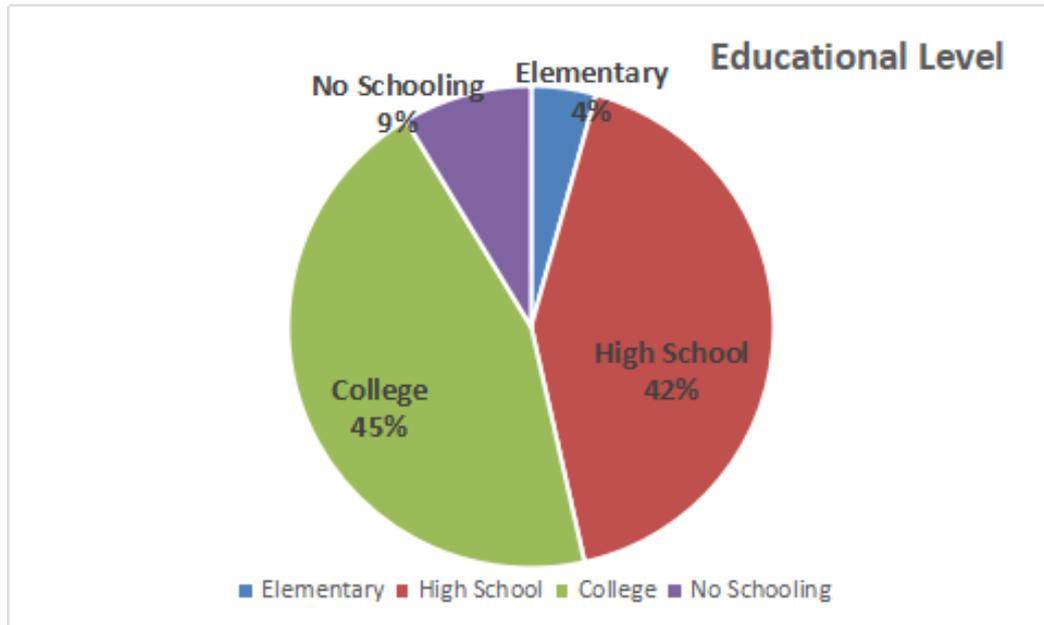
3.2 Occupation



3.3 Gender



3.4 Education



Respondents were taken from a wide range of sectors representing different occupations, including farmers, self-employed, NGOs, government employees, marketers, motorcyclists, community leaders, elders, students, businessmen and women, and professionals in other areas.

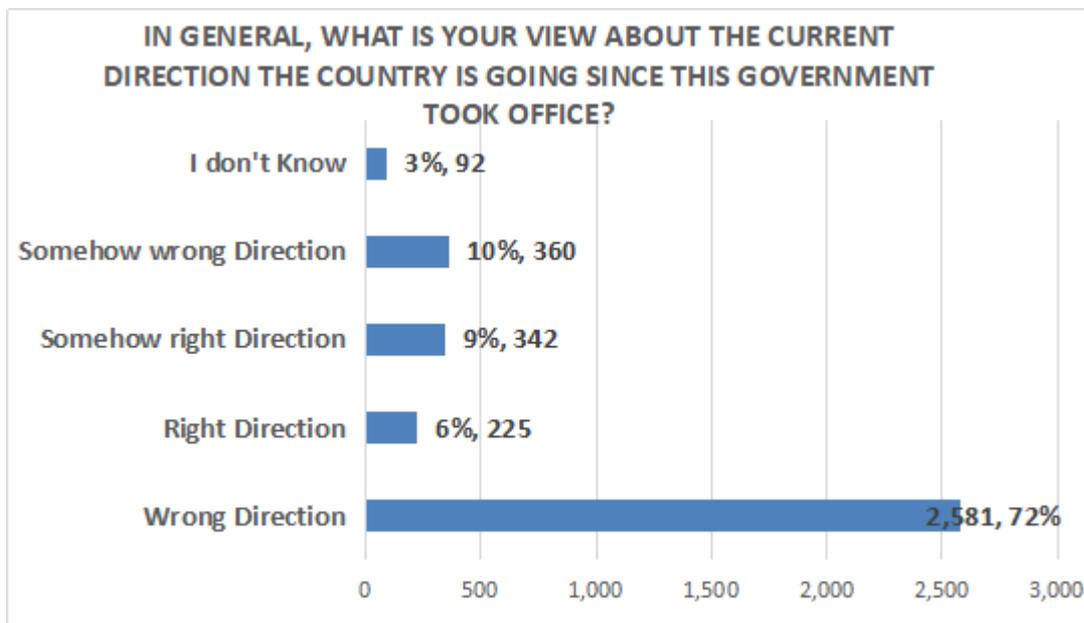
4.0 LIMITATIONS

The survey is generally a perception of what Liberians, particularly registered voters think about the quality of governance in Liberia and the issues they are concerned about. The data collection process was characterized by the following challenges including limited mobile phone network coverage and internet connectivity. Other included unavailability of contacts particularly in some districts in the southeast, movement of registered voters from one location to the other and difficulties for enumerators to contact respondents in hard to reach counties. These challenges, however, did not undermine the quality of data collected. In mitigating these challenges, enumerators were constrained to double their level of efforts in making several calls to respondents.

SURVEY RESPONSE

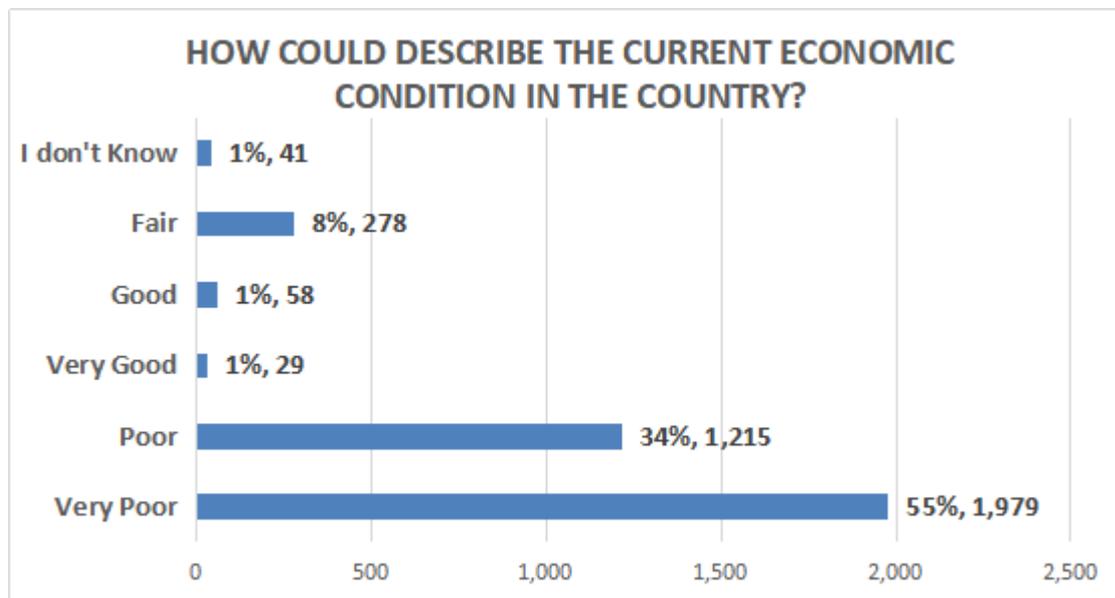
The survey covered key number of questions including citizens' views about the current direction of the country, the current economic condition in the country and citizens' views about democracy in Liberia. The survey also assessed the performance of elected officials, the government performance in handling key national issues, the Local Government Act, citizens trust in security agencies in Liberia, opposition political parties engaging government in holding them accountable on their promise delivery and government performance in the past 18 months, etc.

5.1 IN GENERAL, WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ABOUT THE CURRENT DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY SINCE THIS GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE?



72% (1,694 males and 887 females) of respondents think the country is going in the wrong direction, 10% (237 males and 123 females) said the country is somehow going in the wrong direction while 6% (117 males 108 females) said right direction, 9% (234 males and 108 females) said the country is somehow going in the right direction, and 3% (64 males and 28 females) of the respondents said they don't know.

5.2 HOW COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITION IN THE COUNTRY?



55% of the respondents described the current economic condition in the country as very poor, while 34% 1,126 males and 89 females described the current economic condition as poor, 1% which is 33 males and 25 females of the respondents described the current economic condition in the country as Good, while 1% 12 males and 17 females described the current economic condition in the country as very good, 8% 149 males and 129 females of the respondents described the economic condition in the country as fair and 1% which is 34 males and 7 females don't know.

5.3 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE WAY DEMOCRACY (PARTICIPATION, FREEDOM OF SPEECH etc.) IS WORKING IN LIBERIA?

Options	Males	Females	Percentages	Total
Very Satisfied	163	100	7%	263
Satisfied	1,487	325	50%	1,812
Not Satisfied	947	471	40%	1418
I don't know	87	20	3%	107
	2,684	916	100%	3,600

57% of the total number of respondents said they are satisfied and very satisfied with the way democracy is working in the country, while 40% are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in the country, 3% said they don't know.

There was a sharp reduction in citizens' level of satisfaction with the quality of democracy in the country. 57% of the respondents said they are very satisfied or satisfied with the way democracy is working in the country, 40% said they are not satisfied while 3% said they don't know. In the 2018 survey report, 80% of respondents said they were very satisfied and satisfied with the way democracy was working in the country.

5.4 HAVE YOU ATTENDED ANY EVENT IN YOUR DISTRICT ORGANIZED BY YOUR LAWMAKER?

Options	Males	Females	Percentages	Total
Yes	508	294	22%	802
No	1,819	888	75%	2,707
I don't know	61	30	3%	91

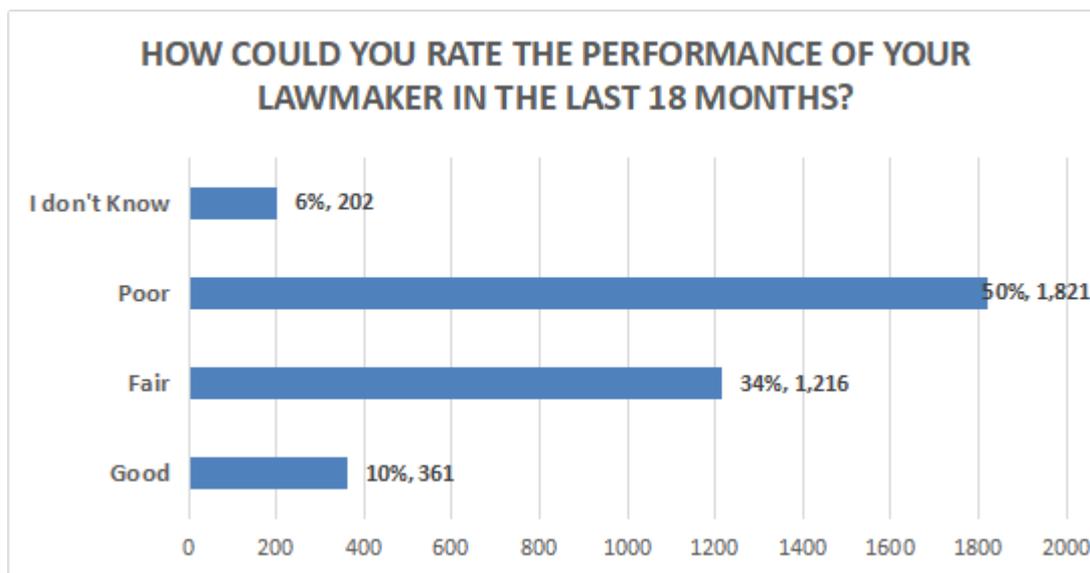
Overall, 75% of the respondents stated that they have not attended any event in their district organized by their lawmaker while 22% have attended meeting organized by their district lawmaker and 3% don't know if they have attended meeting organized by their district lawmaker.

5.5 IF YES, DID YOUR LAWMAKER PROVIDE ANY REPORT ON HIS OR HER ACTIVITIES?

Options	Males	Females	Percentages	Total
Yes	510	197	20%	707
No	1,120	1,587	75%	2,707
I don't know	110	76	5%	186

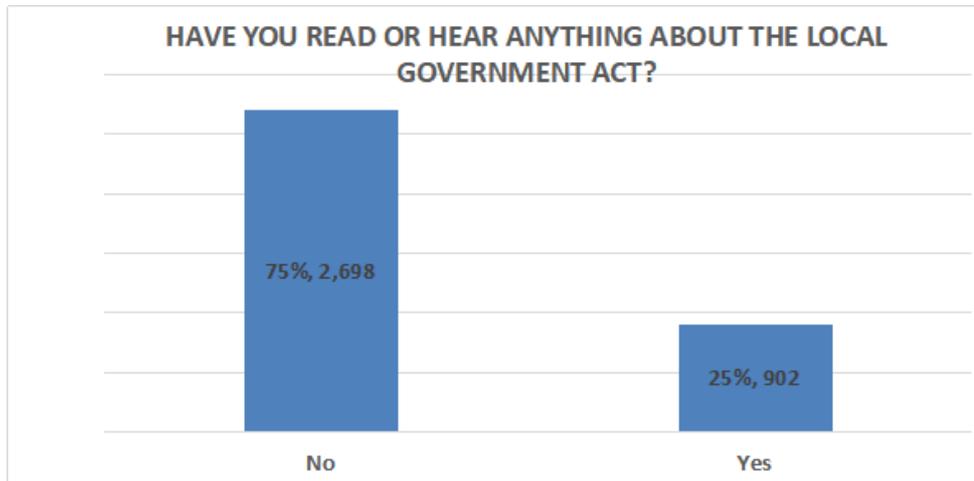
In response to a follow-up question, 20% said their lawmaker provided a report on his or her activities, while 75% said they did not get a report from their lawmaker activities and 5% don't know.

5.6 HOW COULD YOU RATE THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR LAWMAKER IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS?



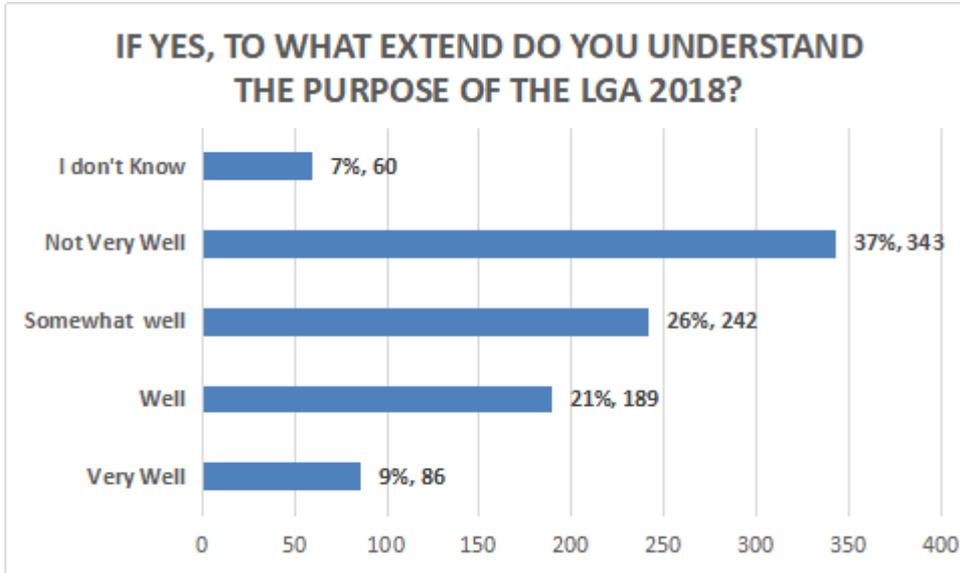
50% of respondents, irrespective of gender and location rated their lawmakers' performance as poor, while 34% 987 males and 229 females rated their performance as fair and 10% which is 220 males and 141 females rated as good, while 6% which is 116 males and 86 females said they don't know.

5.7 HAVE YOU READ OR HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 2018?



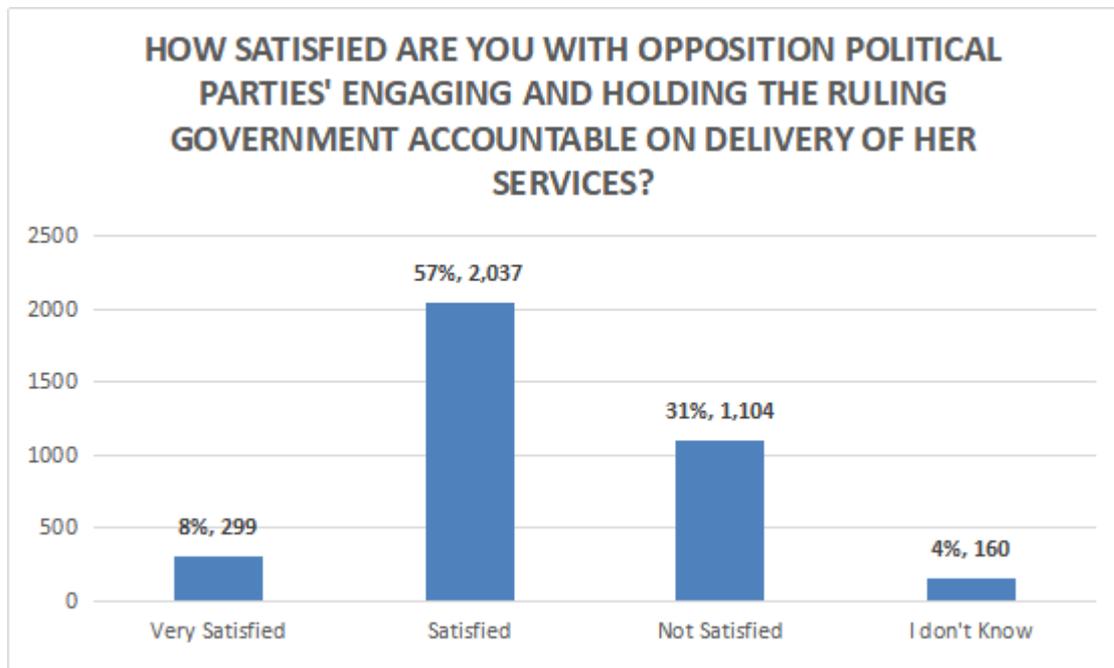
With regards to knowledge of the Local Government Act of 2018 (LGA), 75% of the respondents which is 1,475 males and 1,223 females said that they have not read or heard anything about the LGA of 2018 while 25% of the respondents which is 557 males and 345 females mention that they have read and heard about the LGA.

5.8 IF YES, TO WHAT EXTEND DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2018?



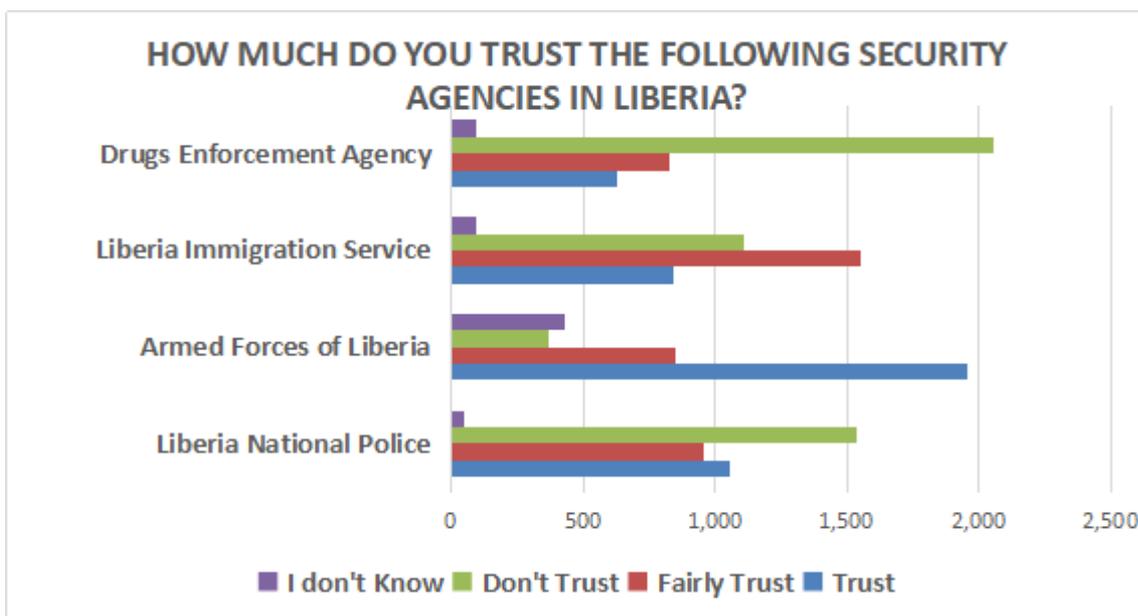
Following up on respondents who have read or hear about the Local Government Act, 37% of the respondents said they understand the purpose of the LGA 2018 Not Very Well. 26% understand the purpose of the LGA Somewhat well while 21% understand the LGA well and 9% of the respondents understand the purpose of the LGA very well. 7% of the respondents stated that they have heard about the LGA but do not know anything about it.

5.10 HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES' ENGAGING AND HOLDING THE RULING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE ON DELIVERY OF HER PROMISES?



57% of the respondents which is 1,002 males and 1,035 females noted that they are satisfied with opposition political parties engagement with the ruling government in holding them accountable on the delivery of their promises to citizens, while 8% which is 149 males and 150 females are very satisfied with opposition political parties engaging the ruling government to deliver on her promises, 31% of the respondents which is 916 males 188 females are not satisfied with opposition political parties and meanwhile 4% of the respondents which is 97 males and 63 females don't know.

5.11 HOW MUCH DO YOU TRUST THE FOLLOWING SECURITY AGENCIES IN LIBERIA?



With regards to security, 78% of the respondents said they trust and fairly trust the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), while 10% don't trust and 12% said they don't know.

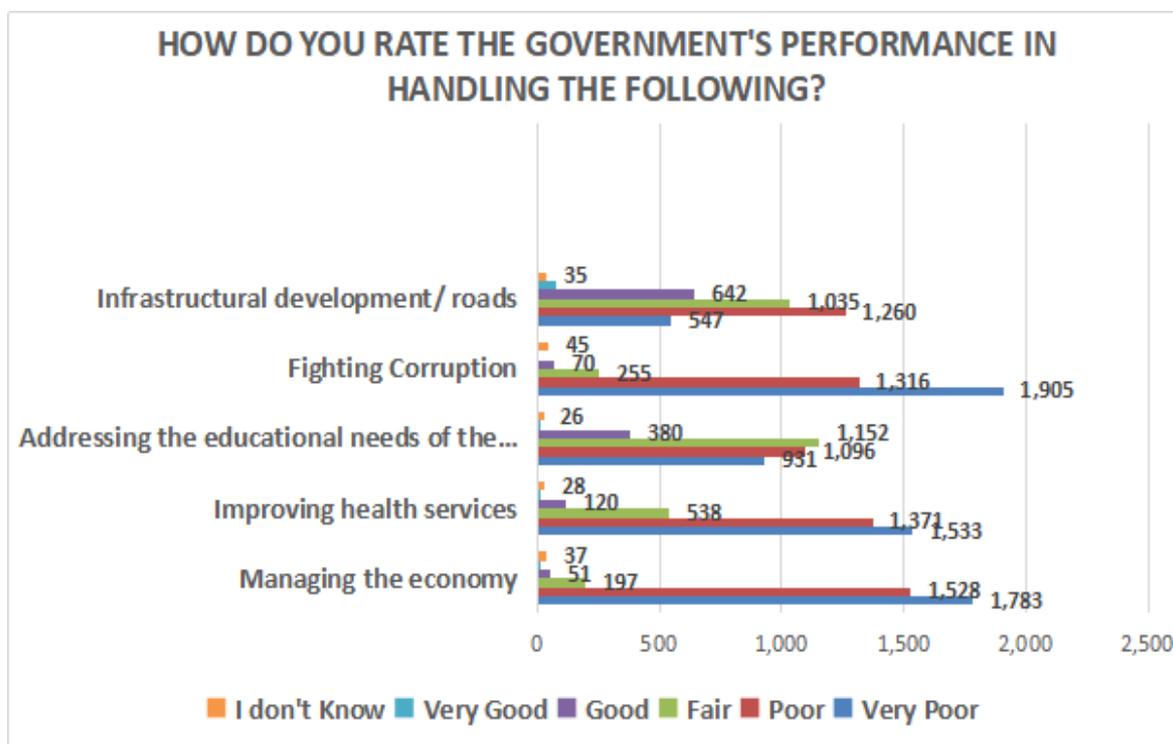
Of the same number of respondents 56% said they trust and fairly trust the Liberia National Police while 43% said they don't trust the LNP and 1% of the respondents don't know.

66% of the respondents said they trust and fairly trust the Liberia Immigration Services, while 31% of the respondents don't trust and 3% don't know.

The Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency is the least trusted security agency in Liberia as 57% of respondents don't trust the DEA, while 40% trust and fairly trust the DEA and 3% of the respondents don't know.

5.12 HOW DO YOU RATE THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE IN HANDLING THE FOLLOWING?

Managing the economy, improving health services, addressing the educational needs in the country, fighting corruption, infrastructural development/ roads.



Overall, 92% of respondents rated the performance of managing or handling the economy as very poor and poor, 6% said fair, 1% said good and 1% said they don't know. Similarly, 81% of respondents (females 2,365 and males 539) rated the government performance in managing or handling the health services as very poor and poor, 15% rated the government as fair, 3%. In a similar vein, 90% (males 2,049 and females 1,172) respondents rated government performance in fighting corruption as very poor and poor, 7% rated the government performance as fair, 3% rated the government as very good and good.

37% of respondents (males 686 and females 491) rated the government performance in addressing the educational needs of citizens as very good and good. 32% of respondents which constitute 1,152 (991 females and 116 males) as fair while 30% which is 1,096 (867 females and 229 males) rated the government as poor, and 1% said don't know.

CONCLUSION

This is an exercise conducted to assess citizens' perception on the quality of governance in Liberia. The institution strongly believes that this report will help strengthen democratic governance, consolidate peace, and improve public service in Liberia if this is considered in good faith by all stakeholders involved. The results are intended to assist national government and stakeholders to make better decisions about governance in Liberia.

This survey as compared to the 2018 revealed several challenges that confront the quality of governance in the country. These challenges need to be addressed by the government and its international development partners in order to sustain the gained made over the past years. In addressing these challenges, however, the government needs to demonstrate leadership and make strategic choices in how decisions are made in the management of resources.

Findings from this survey show a negative trajectory of citizens' views and perception of the quality of governance in Liberia. If not overturned, this negative trend has the potential to further weaken a fragile state. The dividend of participating in democratic processes such as elections is that citizens will see their lives improved through the quality of services that are delivered. To the contrary, the findings of this survey show that the quality of social services including health and education that are provided by the government is low.

The findings of the survey show that generally, citizens do not trust state institutions. This is unhealthy for a fragile state like Liberia because fragility is a sign of vulnerability to instability and the potential for violence. Without addressing the issues described in this report, forms of inequalities will be reinforced and heightened. Inequalities contribute to polarization of society and are triggers of conflict and deeply rooted grievances and where they are not addressed appropriately, they could be exploited negatively by would-be "spoilers".

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the report from the survey, the institution recommends the following:

1. **For the legislature:** Develop a comprehensive program for constituencies' engagement which will create the opportunity and platform for constructive dialogue to take place between lawmakers and citizens. This kind of engagement can contribute to political accountability and strengthen the governance system.
2. **For the Executive Branch of Government:** The government needs to develop fiscal and monetary policies to address the negative trend of the economy and in dealing with the high inflation rate, unemployment and hike in prices of basic commodities.
3. **For the Government:** Invest in training and strengthening the capacity of the Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency (LDEA) in order to reduce the level of illicit drugs in Liberia. The LDEA must demonstrate the will to enforce compliance, setup surveillance at the entry points and prosecute violators.
4. **For International Development Partners:** International Development Partners should continue to engage the Government of Liberia and support its programs to improve the quality of social services including health and education.
5. **For the opposition:** Opposition political parties should continue constructive engagement with the government, holding it to account, but equally prescribing policy options that could address some of the underlying issues affecting the consolidation of peace and development in the country.

About Naymote Partners for Democratic Development

The institution was established in 2001 by student's leaders and activists and has been one of the leading national institution promoting democratic governance, peacebuilding and civic engagement in Liberia. The institution is a member of the World Movement for Democracy, the World Youth Movement for Democracy, the African Movement for Democracy and the National Civil Society Council of Liberia. The survey was undertaken through a grant support from the National Endowment for Democracy.

The institution's executive director holds a master's degree in Public Administration, Finance and Administrative Officer hold a master's degree in Finance from the Cuttington University Graduates School in Liberia Our management team has benefitted from local and international trainings and has developed skills to facilitate research and civic engagement's events, etc.

Eddie D. Jarwolo is the founder of the Naymote Partners for Democratic Development and he has benefitted from United States Government's exchange programs including the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program and the United States Department Community Solutions Fellowship Program. He also benefitted from the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program at the National Endowment for Democracy.

The institution has implemented several projects advancing democracy, governance and youth and women empowerment in Liberia with support from the National Endowment for Democracy, Open Society Initiative for West Africa, the National Democratic Institute, the Development Alternative INC, and the United Nations, etc.

For more information about the survey please contact info@naymote.com or +231770510479.

Partnership

This survey was conducted with technical support from the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), a research and policy advocacy think tank group working on Democracy and Governance issues.

The project is supported through grant from the National Endowment for Democracy.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. Each year, NED makes more than 1,600 grants to support the projects of non-governmental groups abroad who are working for democratic goals in more than 90 countries.

Disclaimer: The survey has been produced with the financial support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The views expressed herein do not reflect the official opinion of the Endowment or NAYMOTE but a reflection of the views of the respondents.

1 TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS PER COUNTY, DISTRICT AND PERCENTAGE

No.	Counties	# of district	Number of Persons Reached	Percentage of respondents per county
1.	Montserrado	10	633	18%
2.	Bong	5	408	11%
3.	Margibi	4	356	10%
4.	Bomi	2	237	7%
5.	Nimba	6	369	10%
6.	Grand Gedeh	2	100	3%
7.	Grand Bassa	4	357	10%
8.	Grand Cape Mount	2	134	3%
9.	Lofa	3	308	8%
10.	Maryland	2	121	3%
11.	Rivergee	1	100	3%
12.	Rivercess	1	106	3%
13.	Gbarpolu	1	141	4%
14.	Grand Kru	2	93	2%
15.	Sinoe	1	137	4%
	GRAND TOTAL	46	3,600	100%