



# THE MONTHLY MONITOR

APRIL, 2022

## An insight on socio- economic and political trends across Liberia BY LONG-TERM OBSERVERS



### OVERVIEW

Our April edition of the Monthly Monitor covers the Liberia Election Observation Network's (LEON) Long Term Observers' (LTOs) regular uptake of the socio-economic and political trends in electoral districts all over Liberia. Additionally, as the title "SURVEY" suggest, we give readers an overview of our upcoming survey on women political participation and provide insight on how we feel the results of the survey will support stakeholder's programming and activities towards tackling challenges facing women political participation as we draw nearer to the 2023 elections.

Last month, we highlighted persistent reports of illegal drug abuse amongst young people in the country-a vice which is proving more ubiquitous than perhaps policymakers have acknowledged. This month, our focus is on prevalent reports from the districts indicating citizens' perception that lawmakers are slighted in responsive indicators such as constituency visits, reporting and legislative projective projects.

Whilst acknowledging that lawmakers should not stringently be held for implementing "projects," we think it is very important for lawmakers to

arrange more interactions between themselves and their constituencies. This way, they can be objective exchange of viewpoints, consideration of challenges at both ends of the feedback chain, and joint plans to improve on sustainable development in the districts.

LEON is of the thought that failure in this aspect of representation has the propensity to create apathetic voters and this may be ominous for voter turnout in the 2023 general and presidential elections. Legislators should take heed!!!

### CONTENTS

#### Section 1.0:

- Overview - Page 1
- Word from the Secretariat - Page 2
- Methodology - Page 3
- Trending economic activities for the period - Page 3

#### Section 2.0:

- Data in Tables and Charts - Page 3
- Conclusion and Summary - Page 6
- About LEON - Page 6

# A Word from the Head of Secretariat



**E**llen Johnson Sirleaf is the name. Even a brand some may say. At the highest peak, her ascendancy to the Liberian presidency represents the possibilities for women political participation in Liberia. Yet, it is an enigma to even the not-so-critical observer of Liberian politics why a country that has attained such highs for a woman will continue to perform so low in the arena of women political participation (WPP) in all areas of politics-community, political party, legislative representation and governmental appointments. For example, women's representation in the Legislature remains very low, with only seven (7) women members in the House of Representatives and two (2) in the Senate. To understand this adverse reality for women political participation in Liberia, LEON has launched a nationwide survey with objective to identify and document the situation in respect to women's participation in political and electoral processes in Liberia. Using a mixed-method approach, the survey will be conducted across the 73 electoral districts in all 15 counties of Liberia. A Quantitative sample size of 3,000 participants aged 18 and above will be sampled on their perspective on women political participation and a qualitative study of key informant interviews (KIIs)

## **“WPP Survey: Listening is Key”**

and focus group discussions (FGDs) will be carried out. How have we prepared? We first designed our survey methodology and listed key survey areas to study. We developed a comprehensive training of trainer's manual on surveying then formulated key questions for both the quantitative and qualitative studies. We also asked interested partners to send in possible questions for the study. A few did. For this we are grateful.

We have now trained our Regional Coordinators and other staff who will in turn, be training 271 surveyors in survey techniques such as respondent selection, transcription, and data analysis. We are doing all this because we want to LISTEN to what Liberians have to say concerning barriers to women political and electoral participation in the country. We will also pay keen attention to the output from the qualitative survey to enrich our study and for this purpose we have selected to interview key women who are active in politic and others who have tried their hands at it but failed. We want to understand their perspectives. We want to learn.

At the end of the process, we hope to have better understanding of the situation undermining women political participation in the country and the opportunities available for redress. We will then leverage this insight by making actionable recommendations for improvements of the situation of women to encourage increased participation in political and electoral processes. We aim to widely share the report and hold series of stakeholders' discussions that drives new programmes and policy actions towards achieving Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Lets' SURVEY!!!

# Methodology

The basis of the findings in this report comes from observations of Long-Term Observers (LTOs) assigned across the 73 electoral districts of Liberia. In each district, the Liberia Elections Observation Network has recruited one resident whose responsibility it is to periodically move across the district observing the conditions of roads, road repairs, prices of staple consumables, the status of health centers and clinics and other pressing issues in the districts such as lawmakers' interaction with local constituents. LTO findings uploaded weekly to a pre-developed checklist in our data center called ELMO. Data analysts at LEON will clean the data along with LTOs each month and then analyzed the final results for these Monthly Monitors.

## Trending economic activities during this period

For the month of April, we observed the following in the counties.

### The Trends:

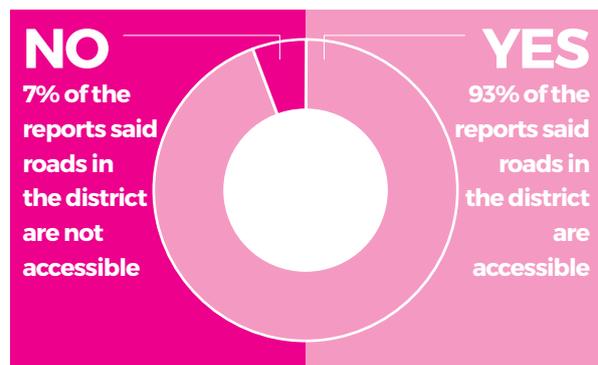
- District accessibility by road
- Road maintenance
- Reasons for non-maintenance of roads
- Inflation in prices of commodities
  - o Prices of commodities
- Drug Abuse
  - o Gender and drug abuse
  - o Drug dealers in the districts
- Lawmakers' activities
- Health related issues
- Active CSOs and CBOs

**Table 1:** Number of checklists submitted per county

Month	County	# of checklists	# of LTOs per county
April	Montserrado	17	17
	Bomi	3	3
	Grand Cape Mount	3	3
	Gbarpolu	3	3
	Lofa	5	5
	Nimba	9	9
	Bong	7	7
	Margibi	5	5
	Grand Bassa	5	5
	Rivercess	0	2
	Grand Gedeh	3	3
	Grand Kru	1	2
	Sinoe	3	3
	Maryland	3	3
	Rivergee	3	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>73</b>

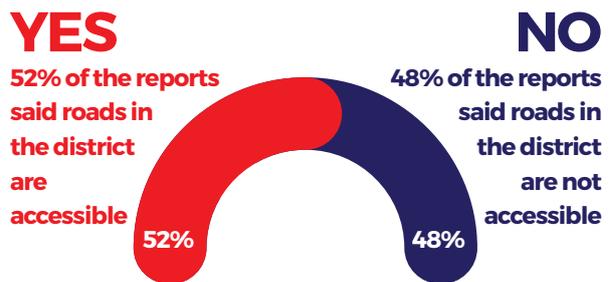
This table show that 70 out of 73 LTOs nationwide send in reports on social economic activities in their districts. We did not receive reports from Rivercess and could only get one from Grand Kru county.

## Is your road accessible?



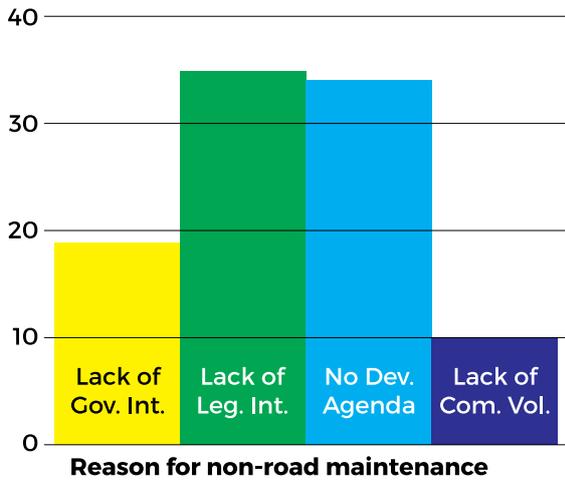
**Fig. 1.0.** Over the last months, a high degree of reports has indicated that roads in the districts are accessible- this is welcoming news. However, as we approach the rainy season, LEON can only hope that the conditions of roads will remain accessible for the larger number of the population.

## Are the roads in your District being maintained?



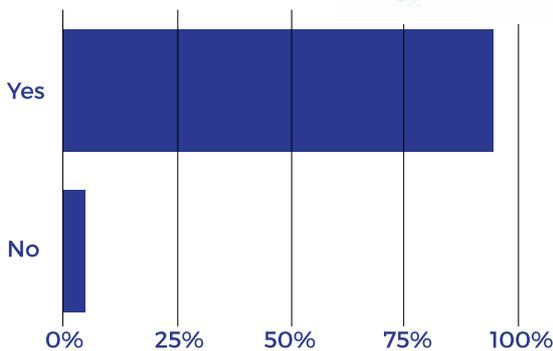
**Fig. 2.0.** Although reports from the districts have indicated that the roads were mostly accessible for this reporting period (Fig. 1.0), of concern should be the findings indicated above showing that almost half of the roads are not being maintained. Again, coming into the rainy season, this may have an adverse impact on social and economic outputs and productivity the districts.

## Reason(s) for Non-Maintenance of Roads



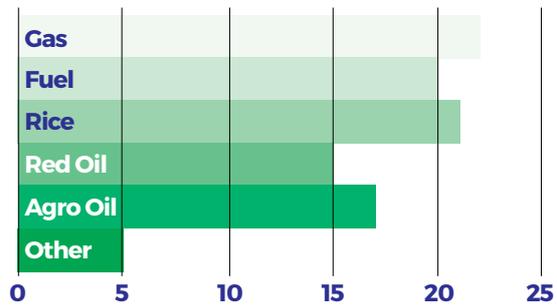
**Fig. 2.1.** Reports from the field indicate that perceptively, the lack of the interest of district representatives was the highest reason for the non-maintenance of roads. This is followed by 35% of reports indicating that districts have no agenda to maintain the roads and 19% of reports stated that government has no interest in maintaining the roads. Finally, 10% of reports said that lack of community volunteering contributed to the non-maintenance of roads.

## Are there Rise in Prices?



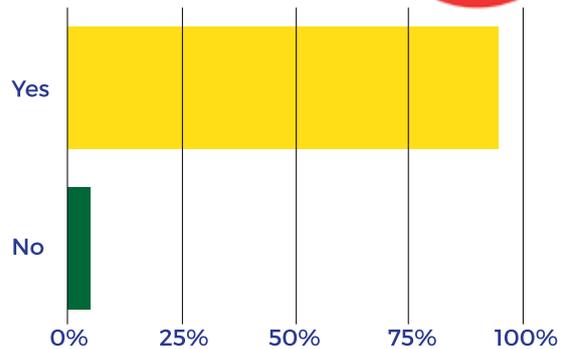
**Fig. 3.0.** Successive reports in our past newsletters including this one show very high levels of report rise in the prices of everyday goods. This month, 96% of reports agree that prices had increased while just 4% report that prices had not increased.

## Which Commodities Price are high?



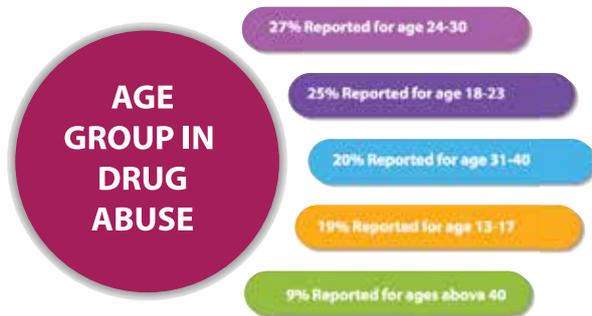
**Fig. 3.1.** As with previous months reports, prices of gasoline, fuel and rice-all basic staples, were reported to be high around the country. 22% of reports show that the price of gas is up, 21% report that rice price is up, 20% report that fuel price is high with red oil and argo oil reported at 15% and 17% respectively. Other commodities account for 5% of reports.

## Are there illegal Drugs Activies in your district?



**Fig. 4.0.** 94% reported illegal drug activities in their districts while 6% reporting no illegal drug activities as shown in the graph chart above.

## Figure 4.0: Drug Abuse



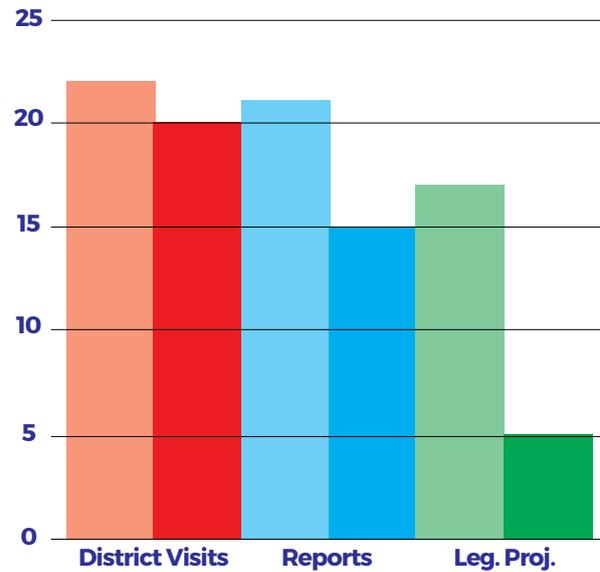
**Fig. 4.1.** LTOs reported that the highest users of illegal drugs in the districts are between the ages of 18-30 years accounting for over half of the reports at 52%. Specifically, 27% of drug abusers are between ages of 24-30 and 25% of abusers are between ages 18-23. 20% of reports labeled ages 31-40. Teens between ages 13-17 were reported at 19% of drug abusers and finally, persons above 40 came lowest at 9% of drug abusers.

## Active CSOS & CBOS in district



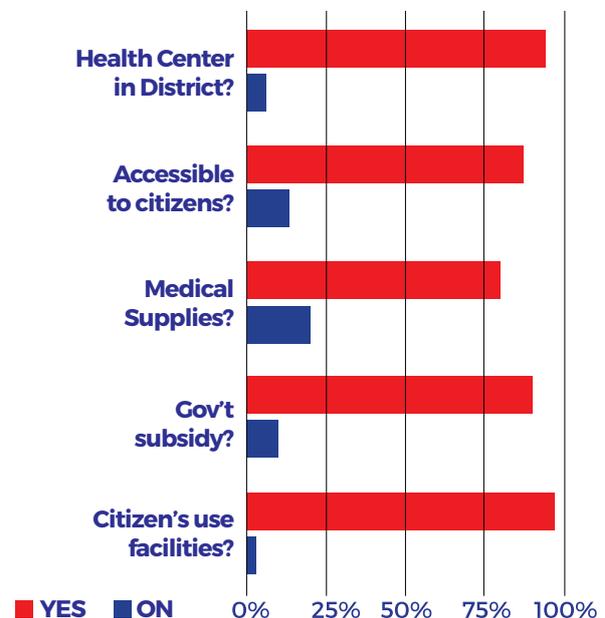
**Fig. 5.0.** 52% of reports received indicated active CSOs & CBOs in districts, while 48% reported inactive CSOs & CBOs in the districts.

## Lawmakers' Activities



**Fig. 6.0.** 48% reported YES to lawmakers' visit in the district while 52% reported NO; 40% of reports indicated Yes to lawmakers reporting back to districts while 60% No, and 25% reported Yes to the implementation of legislative projects, while 75% of reports said No.

## Health Related Issues



**Fig. 7.0:** 94% reported YES to health centers in districts, 87% reported citizens access to government health facilities, 80% reported available government medical supplies, 90% disclosed that government is subsidizing health facilities, and 97% reported the use of drugs/equipment by citizens.

# Summary and Conclusion

We are again thankful to our LTOs for bringing to national recognition socio-economic issues from around the country. As this newsletter evolves, we hope to capture other relevant events not within the checklists so that readers can have a glimpse of other aspects of our work. In our next edition, we will highlight the one of our many LTOs in the field and a data analyst working with LEON. This will be our own way of recognizing their good work and giving our readers insight into the people behind us.

Please look out for the Monthly Monitor in May!

## About LEON

The Liberia Elections Observation Network (LEON) is a platform of four Liberian civil society organizations, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC), Liberia Crusaders for Peace (LCP), Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) and National Union of Organizations for the Disabled (NUOD) with the overall goal of meaningfully contributing to the democratization process in Liberia by providing an avenue for civil society to participate in monitoring and observing elections and democratic processes in Liberia. LEON observed the 2017 and 2020 elections with over 1000 observers and issued statements on pre-election, election day and post- elections activities. In 2019, LEON engaged in monitoring the Legislature with the aim of increasing legislative openness and transparency for better representation that leads to improved social service delivery in constituencies.

LEON has a steering committee comprised of members of the four member organizations and a secretariat of 15 persons including four regional coordinators who will coordinate and oversee the short-term and long-term observers. LEON has a focus on the inclusion of marginalized groups including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Under this project, LEON receives funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and technical support from The Carter Center. However, its findings, reports and other determinations are independent of the two organizations and do not necessarily reflect the views of those organization.

[WWW.LEONOBSERVATION.ORG](http://WWW.LEONOBSERVATION.ORG)

