



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Transforming the Education System for Teachers and Students in Liberia (TESTS) Preliminary Report

Gender and Disability Assessment of the Eight TESTS
Higher Education Teacher Training Institutions



Submission Date: April 22, 2022
USAID Review Date: April 29, 2022
Revision Submission Date: May 13, 2022
Approved Date: May 16, 2022

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by RTI International, Liberia Ministry of Education, and National Commission on Higher Education for the USAID/TESTS Activity.

Transforming the Education System for Teachers and Students in Liberia (TESTS)

Preliminary Report

Gender and Disability Inclusion Organizational Assessment of the Eight TESTS Higher Education Teacher Training Institutions

Prepared for USAID | Liberia

United States Agency for International Development Office of Acquisition and Assistance
ATTN: Contracting Officer's Representative
502 Benson Street
1000 Monrovia
10 Liberia

Prepared by RTI International

3040 Cornwallis Road Post Office Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194

Written by Hayley Niad and Macdonald Metzger, with support from Ricardia Badio-Dennis, Sainkolo Sondah, Lovette T. Kotee, and Theresa Garwo.
Editorial support from Anne Hayes, Cathy Frazier, Lisa Deyo, and Bidemi Carrol.

RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.
RTI and the RTI logo are U.S. registered trademarks of Research Triangle Institute.

This document is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The authors' views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of RTI International, the Liberia Ministry of Education, and the National Commission on Higher Education and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables.....	iv
Acronyms and Abbreviations	v
1 Transforming the Educational System for Teachers and Students in Liberia Activity Overview	1
2 Executive Summary	1
2.1 Purpose of Assessment	2
2.2 Preliminary Findings.....	2
2.2.1 Staffing	2
2.2.2 Student Body	4
2.2.3 Physical Premises and Materials	6
2.2.4 Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	7
2.2.5 Demonstration Schools	7
3 Background and Purpose	8
4 Assessment Timeline	8
5 Assessment Methodology and Tools	9
5.1 Ethics and Informed Consent.....	9
5.2 Tools	9
5.2.1 Surveys	10
5.2.2 Focus Group Discussions	10
5.2.3 Classroom Lesson Observation	10
5.2.4 Accessibility Checklist	10
5.3 Sampling	11
5.4 Limitations	15
6 COVID-19 Precautionary Measures	16
7 Preliminary Scores per Institution	16
7.1 Methodology for Calculating Scores	16
7.2 Scores by Domain	17
8 Next Steps	21
ANNEX A: Preliminary Findings and Suggestions per Institution	22

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Location of Institutions Assessed.....	2
Table 2. Team A Members and Assigned Locations	9
Table 3. Team B Members and Assigned Locations	9
Table 4. Montserrado County, UL.....	12
Table 5. Montserrado County, AMEU	12
Table 6. Montserrado County, LICOSESS College of Education	13
Table 7. Margibi County, AUWA.....	13
Table 8. Bong County, CU	14
Table 9. Nimba County, NU	14
Table 10. Lofa County, LCCC.....	15
Table 11. Bassa County, GBU.....	15
Table 12. Staffing Scores by Institution	17
Table 13. Student Body Scores by Institution	18
Table 14. Physical Premises Scores by Institution	18
Table 15. Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content Scores by Institution	18
Table 16. Demonstration School Scores by Institution	19
Table 17. Total Aggregate Scores by Institution	19

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMEU	African Methodist Episcopal University
AUWA	Adventist University of West Africa
CU	Cuttington University
DEEP	Diversified Educators Empowerment Program
ECE	Early childhood education
GBU	Grand Bassa University
GESI	Gender equity and social inclusion
HETTI	Higher education teacher training institution
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDP	Inclusive Development Partners
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
LICOSESS	Liberian Cooperative Standard Education School System
MOE	Ministry of Education
MSU	Mississippi State University
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NU	Nimba University
RTI	RTI International (registered trademark and trade name of Research Triangle Institute)
SEL	Social-emotional learning
TESTS	Transforming the Education System for Teachers and Students in Liberia
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UL	University of Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I TRANSFORMING THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN LIBERIA ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Transforming the Educational System for Teachers and Students in Liberia (TESTS) Activity is a 5-year (September 2021–September 2026) program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by RTI International (RTI) with Mississippi State University (MSU), Inclusive Development Partners (IDP), and Diversified Educators Empowerment Program (DEEP) as subcontractors. To support the Liberian Ministry of Education (MOE) and National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in their journey toward improved teacher training and education outcomes across the country, USAID initiated the TESTS Activity. TESTS is implemented by RTI and its partners and will run from September 24, 2021, to September 23, 2026, in USAID/Liberia’s six priority counties—Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba. The Activity is working to achieve and sustain three overarching Intermediate Results (IRs):

IR1: Capacity of selected public, private, and faith-based institutions to train primary and early childhood education teachers strengthened

IR2: Critical skills built and applied for quality teaching

IR3: Enabling environment for teaching practice improved

TESTS will provide 2 years of support to a minimum of 3,500 teacher-aspirants in eight higher education teacher training institutions (HETTIs) across USAID’s priority counties. To fully implement this Activity to the maximum benefit of the Government of Liberia, USAID, the selected HETTIs, and HETTIs’ teacher-aspirants, TESTS will issue \$4 million United States dollars in grants under contracts and has earmarked \$1.5 million United States dollars for inclusive development programming.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Gender and Disability Inclusion Organizational Assessment is to create a baseline of gender- and disability-inclusive policies and practices at each of the eight teacher training colleges or universities. The assessment helps to ensure that the cultures and environments in the institutions are as inclusive as possible for all individuals, including women and persons with disabilities in particular. The assessment fieldwork was carried out between Friday, February 25, 2022, and Tuesday, March 8, 2022, in Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba counties.

Table 1 shows the location, by county, of the institutions assessed.

Table 1. Location of Institutions Assessed

County	Institution
Bong	• Cuttington University (CU)
Grand Bassa	• Grand Bassa University (GBU)
Lofa	• Lofa County Community College (LCCC)
Margibi	• Adventist University of West Africa (AUWA)
Montserrado	• University of Liberia (UL) • African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU) • Liberian Cooperative Standard Education School System (LICOSESS) College of Education
Nimba	• Nimba University (NU)

2.1 Purpose of Assessment

The Gender and Disability Inclusion Organizational Assessment is the first step that TESTS has taken to work with HETTIs to ensure the cultures and environments in the eight colleges and universities are as inclusive as possible for all people, particularly women and persons with disabilities. The assessment examined the following five core domains:

1. **Staffing.** Ensure a diverse staff inclusive of women and persons with disabilities.
2. **Student body.** Ensure a diverse student body inclusive of women and persons with disabilities.
3. **Instructional practices, procedures, and content.** Ensure instructional practices, procedures, and content are inclusive for women and persons with disabilities and effectively train higher education teacher-aspirants to teach girls and students with disabilities.
4. **Demonstration schools.** Ensure demonstration schools support the same standards as HETTI in relation to including women and persons with disabilities.
5. **Physical premises and materials.** Ensure physical premises and materials are safe, accessible, and inclusive for women and persons with disabilities.

2.2 Preliminary Findings

The following sections summarize the aggregate findings from the institutional assessments. While each institution presents different strengths and areas of need, the summaries below are focused on those issues which most broadly affect the greatest number of institutions surveyed. Individual summaries per institution are described further in Annex A.

2.2.1 Staffing

Harassment. The institutions assessed generally have clearly written policies that outline expectations for professional conduct among employees, and some policies include language around sexual harassment. Although all institutions have sections in their policies that outline clear consequences for various forms and degrees of professional or personal misconduct, sexual harassment is not consistently noted in policy as a form of misconduct that is subject to termination of employment. Most importantly, respondents have reported across multiple institutions that sexual harassment under threat or coercion is still being

committed by faculty in spite of policy language which makes harassment a punishable offense. Although there are some instances of staff being terminated or referred to police following allegations, persistent behavior is still not being reported or addressed.

Mechanisms for Complaint of Harassment. No evidence suggests that universities have consistently provided training to those human resource officers or other focal points responsible for receiving and responding to complaints of sexual harassment, nor are there any reported efforts to ensure that each campus has a female employee who is trained to take complaints with consideration to gender sensitivity or privacy protections. Although five universities have grievance committees or other formalized structures to respond to known complaints, focus group discussions suggest some complainants are not totally comfortable coming forward to seek redress and that training may support human resource officers' skill and preparedness in fairly receiving and responding to concerns.

Alignment with National Laws and Policies. No HETTI policy reviewed made explicit reference to Liberia's Civil Standing Order, in which Chapter 9 provides specific definitions and policies pertaining to recognizing and reporting sexual harassment. It was also not possible to locate any institution which referenced the National Teacher Professional Performance Standards for Liberia (2007/2020). The assessment did not examine HETTI policies' mention of the 2011 Education Law, but in focus group discussions with faculty, a majority appeared to either be unaware of its impact on their institution's practice or vaguely aware of the policy.

Equity and Representation. No employee or student policies reviewed to date address reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities or rights and protections for women. Five of the eight institutions do include language in job advertisements which encourage women to apply, but no institution specifically encourages persons with disabilities to apply. Based on employment statistics, all but one institution experienced overrepresentation of men in staff positions generally and positions of authority specifically, including some departments that are led 100% by male faculty. Specifically, seven of the eight institutions have at least 80% of faculty who are men, with only one institution (AUWA) achieving near gender parity with 56% of faculty who are men. No institutions have any strategic plans to increase promotion and equity among women in positions of leadership. Thus, although written statements affirm equity between all employees, employment statistics still mirror gender stereotypes reflected within the university and society more broadly. For example, no institutions surveyed have regular systems to analyze disaggregated employment statistics by gender to monitor whether gender ratios are changing from year to year and whether women obtain promotions at rates proportional to their male colleagues.

Training Background. Among 72 faculty respondents across all institutions, only 21% ($N = 29$) had received prior training on disability-inclusive education. Prior training on teaching students with learning difficulties was slightly higher, at 39% ($N = 28$) of faculty. Generally, focus groups with faculty revealed that those who have had access to such training obtained this knowledge during their own graduate or personal studies and not as a result of any in-service training furnished by their current employer. Faculty across all eight institutions expressed a desire to receive additional training on disability-inclusive education.

Furthermore, when asked if they felt comfortable training student teachers on issues of gender-based violence, 84% of respondents ($N = 56/67$) said they were either comfortable "to some extent" or "to a great extent," while the remaining 16% of respondents ($N = 11$) were either comfortable "to a limited extent" or "not at all." Faculty generally expressed greater comfort teaching students about gender-based violence than issues of disability inclusion or support to struggling learners, suggesting they may have had more exposure to these topics over time.

Experience of Disability. Among faculty survey respondents, 21% of faculty personally identified as having a disability themselves ($N = 14/67$), a number much higher when disclosed in written surveys than in oral focus group discussions. Men and women were

equally likely to identify as having a disability. The most common types of functional difficulties cited by faculty were seeing ($N = 9$), communicating ($N = 3$), and walking or climbing steps ($N = 2$)¹. Among those who either have a disability or do not know if they have a disability (excluding those who do not have a disability), only 21% ($N = 6$) had been assessed for having a disability. Three faculty indicated they believed that having a disability impacted their ability to get a job. Among 64 faculty respondents, 64% ($N = 41$) of faculty said they know a person with a disability in their family or close circle of friends, suggesting that disability is an issue close to many individuals irrespective of their formal education on the subject.

2.2.2 Student Body

School Climate. Although each institution has different policies and practices to orient new students and obtain feedback from students in the form of course evaluations, no institutions regularly survey students for feedback on their overall academic and personal experience. Furthermore, gender and social inclusion do not feature as regular agenda items for any of the universities' regular meetings which may discuss the student experience. Feedback on student experiences varied greatly by institution. In focus group discussions, the most pervasive concern levelled by students of any demographic identity at any institution was around financial stability, including the inability to pay course fees, the need to seek work in addition to study commitments, financial and time costs related to transportation to and from school, and a common trend of dropping school for one or more semesters in order to save money to reenroll. Surveys among students and faculty indicate that the most widespread barriers for teacher-aspirants who are women are (1) lack of funding, (2) lack of employment opportunities after graduation, and (3) family responsibilities. Faculty and student surveys also identified lack of funding and lack of employment opportunities after graduation as the greatest barriers for students with disabilities; the third most common barrier listed was negative attitudes from peers (such as discrimination or stigma against students with disabilities).

Communicating Concerns. Many female and male students, and those with disabilities, have spoken glowingly in interviews and focus groups about their academic experience, noting heartfelt examples of teachers practicing gender-inclusive approaches and institutions offering favorable treatment to persons with disabilities. Yet, focus group discussions suggest harassment and discrimination are still common across university campuses. This includes direct reports of overt examples of coercive sexual behavior by male faculty against female students, examples of teachers requiring bribes from female and male students in exchange for passing grades, and students with disabilities who have been denied admission or have had to withdraw from classes due to discrimination by faculty members outside the College of Education.² While institutions have various pathways for reporting such concerns, in practice some focus group discussions suggest students were not comfortable or confident to raise such concerns to their administration. In some cases, focus group discussants described fear of retribution, especially for allegations of sexual misconduct, and in other cases they generally did not believe that the administration would take seriously students' complaints and concerns. Overall, no university yet has a strategic action plan to address sexual misconduct which includes all of the following:

1. providing clear, trained focal points (men and women) in which students feel comfortable and safe reporting concerns;

¹ Some faculty who identified as having a disability did not disclose which functional difficulties they encountered, and likewise some who disclosed functional difficulties did not identify as having a disability (e.g., those who wear glasses).

² Many students claimed these behaviors were taking place outside their Colleges of Education among other university faculties.

2. providing clear, consistent, and timely consequences for allegations of misconduct; and
3. publicizing and disseminating this information uniformly to staff and students.

Female Students. With an overall average of 73% female and 27% male students across the eight institutions, women are generally enrolling and graduating in undergraduate pre-primary and primary teacher preparation programs at higher rates than their male counterparts (this statistic is in stark contrast to the 20% female and 80% male enrollment at Rural Teacher Training Institutes³ as of 2015). These rates vary greatly between counties and institutions, such as the UL's 89% female teacher-aspirant population (among approximately 500 students) as compared with GBU's 26% female teacher-aspirant population (among 23 students). Further, they only reflect the representation among women in the early grades training programs, as opposed to secondary education training programs, which have more males in attendance. Enrollment information for secondary education students was not consistently collected for this assessment. As an example, however, statistics provided to the assessment team by LCCC showed that 89% of secondary education students are male (N=230/258).

Although gender-specific enrollment rates are not attributable to any overt campaigns or strategies by universities to encourage women to enroll, it is suggestive that access to these programs is not as great a need for these universities as *equity* through the educational experience. The above statistics, however, do not account for in-service teachers who may seek out further study through the TESTS-supported associate or bachelor's programs. In this case, given the overwhelming majority of current primary teachers who are men, statistics suggest that female in-service teachers may be underrepresented in future programs unless further policies on female recruitment and enrollment are instituted.

Some female focus group respondents across the institutions described faculty in Colleges of Education who encouraged female and male students to participate equally in classroom activities and did not believe that their admission or day-to-day learning experiences were materially different from their male counterparts. However, other female respondents described discriminatory statements from male student colleagues who stereotyped teaching the early grades as a job more appropriate for women than teaching older students.

Students with Disabilities: According to a written student survey, 23% of student respondents ($N = 17/73$) identified as having a disability. The prevalence of disability status was proportional among the total population of students surveyed, suggesting men and women were equally likely to identify as having a disability. The most common types of functional difficulties cited by students were walking or climbing steps ($N = 13$), self-care, such as washing or dressing ($N = 12$), seeing ($N = 10$) and remembering or concentrating.⁴ However, in verbal discussions, only four male students with hearing or vision disabilities disclosed their disability status.

The four students with disabilities who disclosed their status in discussion expressed various concerns about their experiences, although they noted that some professors are trying hard to support them using their limited knowledge on disability inclusion. These four students each reported missing out on academic achievements due to professors' unwillingness or inability to accommodate their individual needs, including one student with a vision disability⁵ who had to drop a mandatory computer course because the instructor was unwilling to believe the student was fully able to use computers using adaptive software. All three

³ Ministry of Education, Republic of Liberia. *Getting to Best Education Sector Plan 2017–2021*, Monrovia, Liberia: Ministry of Education, Republic of Liberia, 2016.

⁴ Some students who identified as having a disability did not disclose which functional difficulties they encountered, and likewise some who disclosed functional difficulties did not identify as having a disability (e.g., those who wear glasses).

⁵ Local populations of people who are blind indicate that they prefer to be described as visually impaired. The term vision disability has been used throughout the report.

students with vision disabilities reported having to spend personal time and money to compensate for the lack of accessible materials, such as transposing handouts into braille using personal resources or completing written assignments by computer after class. The four students with disabilities described being unable to access key information necessary for basic academic success, such as the case of a student who is deaf without any access to sign language interpretation. This feedback aligns with that furnished by university administration, where only one institution in eight has any dedicated budget for accommodations (for sign language interpretation), and this money is not spent in the College of Education.

2.2.3 Physical Premises and Materials

Accessibility. No university campus visited was designed for or equipped to accommodate the needs of persons with physical disabilities. Examples of this inaccessible environment are numerous. Treacherous roads and overcrowded buses leading to campus (and in one case, the need to physically walk across a rickety wooden bridge crossing over a river) may prevent students from accessing schools in the first place. Once on campus, students are likely to encounter uneven pathways filled with trip hazards, multistory buildings without any access to upper floors, narrow doorways impassable to wheelchairs, and buildings without any ramps or steep ramps leading up to a set of stairs. Once inside, classroom conditions vary widely, including many classrooms with poor ventilation or limited lighting. In at least four schools, there is ongoing construction of new facilities or classroom blocks, which focus group discussions indicate have not yet taken into consideration basic accessibility features which could enhance accessibility. Three public rural HETIs do have an accessible facility not affiliated with their Colleges of Education, which was constructed with USAID support. Finally, other accessibility features, such as signage in braille or disability-inclusive emergency evacuation plans, were not evident in any institution.

WASH. Staff and students alike expressed that hygiene and sanitation, particularly for women and girls, is an issue of overwhelming and serious concern at some institutions. Such conditions were of greatest concern in rural counties but were also reflected to some extent in urban schools and in demonstration schools across all counties. Accessibility audits conducted during this assessment show that universities and demonstration schools across the board do not have sufficient water in bathrooms or reliable sources of electricity to keep bathrooms well lit. Most bathrooms do not have soap or toilet paper. Water is not potable in most institutions, and adults and children must purchase bottled water or not drink water all day. There are also numerous gender-based risks as it pertains to WASH. This includes female bathrooms which are out of order, necessitating female students to share single bathrooms without locks with male faculty; bathroom stalls which do not lock and cause women in particular to feel unsafe; bathrooms which are locked after certain hours, requiring men and women to use open air facilities; and some venues where no bathrooms are present whatsoever. Some faculty and students flagged that basic teaching and learning experiences would be impeded if students are exposed to unhygienic water and toilet facilities, and women and girls feel unsafe or completely unable to use the bathroom while studying.

Technology. No institutions surveyed had any specific policies or practices to support the use of accessible technologies for persons with disabilities. However, many schools have expanded the use of electronic and remote learning technologies leading up to and expanded by the pandemic. These technologies support access for the students surveyed with vision disabilities, who advocated for continued posting of course materials in electronic formats to enable their equitable access. Students with and without disabilities noted that electronic materials help to reduce the burden of paying for printed course materials, although associated cost burdens are still related to access to mobile devices and internet connectivity.

2.2.4 Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content

Content. The curricula related to gender and disability inclusion vary widely by institution. Five of eight institutions have a course on teaching learners with exceptionalities (one of which only offers it to early childhood education students), which broadly covers various types of disabilities but has limited time allocated to instructional strategies likely to be employed in inclusive settings. These courses are sometimes taught by faculty with no expertise or training in disability-inclusive education themselves. All eight schools have courses on educational or child psychology, which includes content that is implicitly supportive of students with diverse needs. However, the content on disability for this and other courses is sometimes outdated and lacking in current evidence. It was not possible to review course syllabi for each institution, but as an example, one institution's main cited resource is more than 35 years old, and another institution's curriculum still uses terminology including "mental retardation" and "handicap," terms which are no longer considered acceptable for use internationally.

Only one school has a required course on gender for all students, although other schools touch on issues of gender equity in broad terms throughout other courses. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is described in differing ways among institutions' curricula. Many child development and educational psychology courses touch on the importance of reaching students' personal and emotional development, and six of eight institutions do have coursework on guidance and counseling. Although Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is not included as a topic in any institution's coursework, various courses have content that is implicitly supportive, including classes that describe the use of play and innovative low-cost teaching materials to support student engagement and social development. Such variation in course content and breadth is consistent with variable feedback from student surveys that 37% of students have learned about issues of disability-inclusive education in their coursework, while 61% of students have learned strategies to teach struggling learners.

Instructional Practices. The pedagogical approaches employed by faculty vary extensively between universities and also vary between Colleges of Education and other faculties within individual universities. Many students described, in focus group discussions, a strong preference for the courses taken in the Faculties of Education as compared with general education requirements taken from other departments in the universities. Faculty in Colleges of Education have been described by students as using engaging methods which promote discussion, group work, demonstration, use of visual aids, and other practices supportive of diverse learning styles. Although not all schools were in session at the time of the assessment visit, some Colleges of Education observed used the methods mentioned by students, while other universities still rely on traditional teacher-centered instructional approaches including lecture formats. In one such example, teachers were observed speaking up to 95% of class time, and two to three students spoke frequently throughout the lesson, with all remaining students never speaking throughout an entire lesson. It was not possible to observe any gender-based discrimination during a very short observation window, but there were some lesson observations where men were more likely to speak up in class without prompting or encouragement from teachers.

2.2.5 Demonstration Schools

Overview of Challenges. With the exception of two demonstration schools observed, demonstration schools are emblematic of major educational challenges present across schools more generally in Liberia. This includes both faculty reports and direct observations of extremely overcrowded, under resourced classrooms which are poorly lit and poorly ventilated, led by unqualified or poorly qualified instructors, using traditional teacher-centered instructional approaches. Available teaching and learning materials are few, and the previously mentioned WASH concerns pose significant risks to safety and security. Given the lack of qualifications or expertise among many teachers and the barriers to supporting basic learning outcomes for typical students reported by HETTI faculty, it is

unclear from observation that teachers in demonstration schools are prepared to support the educational needs of children with disabilities.

Linkages with Universities. According to focus group discussions with faculty, student teachers at these universities generally have access to practicum experiences during their study. Some faculty in focus group discussions described observing student teaching on a regular basis, although the frequency with which these observations occur could not be verified during brief assessment visits.⁶ There is no evidence that the selection of demonstration schools takes into consideration any issues of gender or disability inclusion or physical accessibility of the premises. Nor is there evidence that children's or student teachers' safety and wellbeing are assessed prior to determining appropriate school placements. Furthermore, once student teachers undertake their placements, there is no evidence that they are specifically monitored for the extent to which they exhibit inclusive teaching practices supportive of diverse learning needs. Therefore, even among the institutions that do offer academic coursework on disability inclusion, it is unclear that this content is explicitly linked to observational data collected in the practicum process.

3 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The USAID TESTS Activity supports MOE and NCHE to improve the quality of targeted Liberian early childhood education (ECE) and primary teachers' instructional delivery. This 5-year Activity will work with eight HETTIs in the six USAID priority counties of Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba to directly benefit 3,500 teacher-aspirants.

The purpose of the Gender and Disability Organizational Assessment is to create a baseline of gender- and disability-inclusive policies and practices at each of the eight teacher training colleges or universities. The assessment helps ensure that the cultures and environments in the institutions are as inclusive as possible for all individuals, including women and persons with disabilities in particular.

With inputs from key stakeholders, including the TESTS gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) taskforce, the TESTS team developed the gender and disability organization assessment tool to create a baseline of gender- and disability-inclusive policies and practices at each HETTI. The assessments ensure that the cultures and environments in the eight HETTI's are as inclusive as possible, most especially for women and people with disabilities.⁷

Finally, it is important to flag this assessment primarily focused on the student experience and curriculum in the Colleges of Education of each institution. This means that other student populations' experiences related to gender and disability were not included in this assessment. Also, the assessment team neither interviewed faculty from other departments outside Education nor observed lessons from coursework unrelated to Education. Therefore, while the assessments of policies are based on the institutions as a whole, the assessments of student experience and curriculum and instruction practices are intended to be specific to the Colleges of Education.

4 ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

The assessment fieldwork was carried out between Friday, February 25, 2022, and Tuesday, March 8, 2022, in Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba

⁶ It was challenging to determine from focus groups alone whether institutions had dedicated budgets for faculty to conduct school observations.

⁷ This assessment was carried out at a time when the Omicron variant of COVID-19 was globally prevalent. Although Liberia is rated low risk by the World Health Organization, the TESTS team put in place measures to ensure the safety of all staff and GESI taskforce members taking part in the assessment activity.

Counties, as per the timeline displayed below. These visits were undertaken by two teams (Team A and B).

- February 25 and 26: LICOSESS (Teams A and B)
- February 28 and March 1 (morning): AMEU (Team A) and NU (Team B)
- March 1 (afternoon) and March 2: UL (Team A) and CU (Team B)
- March 3 and March 4 (half day): AUWA (Team A) and GBU (Team B)
- March 8: LCCC (Team B)

5 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS

The assessment teams were made up of RTI staff, IDP staff, and GESI taskforce members (Tables 2 and 3). The teams included two men and four women. Team A had three women and Team B had two men and one woman. Team A visited and administered the assessment at four colleges and universities in Margibi and Montserrado Counties, while Team B visited and administered the assessment at four colleges and universities in Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, and Nimba Counties.

Table 2. Team A Members and Assigned Locations

Member	Organization	Assigned Locations
Hayley Niad	IDP	Margibi and Montserrado
Lovette Kotee	TESTS	
Ricardia Badio-Dennis	GESI Taskforce member; CEO, Women with Disabilities Human Rights Alert	

Table 3. Team B Members and Assigned Locations

Member	Organization	Assigned Locations
Macdonald Metzger	IDP	Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, and Nimba
Sainkolo Sondah	TESTS	
Theresa Garwo	MOE	

5.1 Ethics and Informed Consent

A standard informed consent script was administered prior to each interview or focus group discussion. Participants were informed of their right to refuse to answer any question at any time and to discontinue participation. They were assured responses would stay anonymous and confidential. Participants were also asked whether they consented to the conversation being recorded in each discussion, and verbal consent was obtained.

5.2 Tools

The assessment teams used the following tools: a student survey, faculty survey, administrator focus group discussion tool, faculty focus group discussion tool, student focus group discussion tool, classroom lesson observation guide, and accessibility checklist. Each tool is elaborated on briefly below.

5.2.1 Surveys

Student Surveys. At each institution, teams administered a paper-based survey to a small group of students currently enrolled in teacher preparation programs. Due to the assessment team's visit during school holidays at some institutions, sampling was based on convenience and students' availability to come to campus. The survey assessed student attitudes and experiences in learning about inclusion. Female and male students completed the survey separately. Participants were reminded not to include any identifying information on the survey. All of survey questionnaires were collected by one data collector and stored in a secure file folder.

Faculty surveys. At each institution, teams administered a paper-based survey to faculty members involved in the College of Education or related faculties. Sampling was purposive and included those faculty most closely involved in the pre-primary and primary education programs. The survey assessed inclusive attitudes and experiences and the prior training faculty received related to disability inclusion and related topics. Participants were reminded not to include any identifying information on the survey. All survey questionnaires were collected by one data collector and stored in a secure file folder.

5.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

Administrators. Teams facilitated discussions with the faculty and staff who had historical and contemporary knowledge of the institution's human resource policies, student services and management, and gender and inclusion practices. Discussions took between 1 to 2 hours each. In some institutions, these discussions were combined with focus group discussions related to the curriculum and practices in the College of Education, and in other cases these discussions were held separately.

Faculty. Faculty focus group discussions generally centered on the curriculum and practices specific to the College of Education and took approximately 1 hour each.

Female students. Female students in the College of Education were asked to reflect on their experience entering the institution, their day-to-day experiences as students, and the extent to which gender or disability impacts the student experience at the institution. Discussions took between 45 and 90 minutes each and were held separately from the male student discussions. Focus group discussions with female students were conducted exclusively by female team members, and males were not permitted in the room during the time of the discussions.

Male students. Male students in the College of Education were generally asked the same questions as female students, by male or female team members. Discussions also took between 45 and 90 minutes each and were held separately from the female student discussions.

5.2.3 Classroom Lesson Observation

Where school was in session at the time of the visit, assessment teams were given an opportunity to observe one to three lessons delivered to teacher-aspirants. The classroom observations were approximately 1 hour in duration. The assessment teams could only observe lessons at AUWA, CU, and LICOSESS because class was not in session during the week of the visit at the remaining schools.

5.2.4 Accessibility Checklist

The accessibility checklist allowed teams to observe and check off a list of important accessibility gaps or nonaccessible spaces, devices, and WASH facilities.

5.3 Sampling

Tables 4–11 outline the number of individuals who participated in the various data collection activities at each institution. Sampling was generally on a convenience basis, wherein each HETTI was permitted to self-select those respondents who could best speak to the administrative, staffing, and student experience.

Table 4. Montserrado County, UL

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		3	5	1 (1 woman)
Student Survey		5	4	1 (1 man)
Administrator Meeting		Same as faculty focus group discussion participants	2	Not known
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		3	0	Not known
Student Focus Group Discussions		Same as student survey participants	Same as student survey participants	Same as student survey participants
Other Meeting: Leaders of New Sign Language Course		1	1	Not known
TOTAL	24 respondents	12	12	2 (1 woman, 1 man)

Table 5. Montserrado County, AMEU

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		1	5	1 (1 man)
Student Survey		5	6	2 (2 women)
Administrator Meeting		3	8	Not known
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		Same as faculty survey participants		
Student Focus Group Discussions		4 + student survey participants	Same as student survey participants	Not known
Meetings with Persons with Disabilities (where applicable)		No additional meetings		
TOTAL	32 respondents	13	19	3 (2 women, 1 man)

Table 6. Montserrado County, LICOSESS College of Education

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		3	10	4 (4 men)
Student Survey		3	5	2 (2 men)
Administrator Meeting		Combined with faculty meetings		
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		Same as population described in faculty survey		
Student Focus Group Discussions		Same as population described in student survey		
Meetings with Persons with Disabilities (where applicable)				Separate focus group discussions or 2 students with vision disabilities (included in above count)
TOTAL	21 respondents	6	15	6 (6 men)

Table 7. Margibi County, AUWA

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		3	4	1 (1 woman)
Student Survey		10 ^a	7	2 (1 woman, 1 man)
Administrator Meeting		1 + faculty focus group discussion respondents	1 + faculty focus group discussion respondents	Not known
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		3	5	Not known
Student Focus Group Discussions		Same as population described in student survey	3 + student survey participants	Not known
Meetings with Persons with Disabilities (where applicable)		No additional meetings		
TOTAL	37 respondents	17	20	3 (2 women, 1 man)

^aOne respondent in the female student survey selected “prefer not to say” under gender identity.

Table 8. Bong County, CU

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		4	4	2 (2 men)
Student Survey		6	7	5 (4 women, 1 man)
Administrator Meeting		1 + faculty survey population	3	Not known
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		Listed in faculty survey population (2)	Listed in faculty survey population (1)	Not known
Student Focus Group Discussions		Same population as student survey	Same population as student survey	Same population as student survey
Meetings with Persons with Disabilities (where applicable)		No additional meetings		
TOTAL	25 respondents	11	14	7 (4 women, 3 men)

Table 9. Nimba County, NU

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		2	12 ^a	3 (1 woman, 2 men)
Student Survey		8	0	3 (3 women)
Administrator Meeting		Same as faculty survey	Listed in faculty survey (7)	Not known
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		Same population as faculty survey		
Student Focus Group Discussions		Same population as student survey		
Meetings with Persons with Disabilities (where applicable)		No additional meeting		
TOTAL	22 respondents	10	12	6 (4 women, 2 men)

^aOne respondent selected “prefer not to say” under gender identity.

Table 10. Lofa County, LCCC

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		0	3 + faculty focus group discussion population	1 (1 man)
Student Survey		7	1	1 (1 man)
Administrator Meeting		0	6 (+ 2 faculty focus group discussion population)	0
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		0	5	0
Student Focus Group Discussions		Same population as student survey	Same population as student survey	Same population as student survey
Meetings with Persons with Disabilities (where applicable)		No additional meetings		
TOTAL	22 respondents	7	15	2 (2 men)

Table 11. Bassa County, GBU

Assessment Tool / Method		Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Persons with Disabilities
Faculty Survey		0	9	1 (1 man)
Student Survey		4	4	1 (1 man)
Administrator Meeting		0	Listed in faculty survey (5)	Not known
Faculty Focus Group Discussion		0	Listed in faculty survey (4)	Not known
Student Focus Group Discussions		Same population as student survey	Same population as student survey	Same population as student survey
Meetings with Persons with Disabilities (where applicable)		No additional meetings		
TOTAL	17 respondents	4	13	2 (2 men)

5.4 Limitations

While the assessment team made reasonable efforts to ensure sampling and data collection were representative to the context of each HETTI, there are some limitations. Firstly, as school was not in session in some institutions, assessments related to classroom-based instructional practices could either not be made or were determined based on focus group discussions with faculty and students. Additionally, each HETTI was permitted to nominate which students would attend the focus group discussions; while students generally appeared comfortable sharing their experiences openly with the assessment team, there is a possibility that some perspectives were not included in the focus groups. A further limitation is that focus group discussions with institutions' faculty and administrative staff were conducted with men and women together, so there is potential that some respondents may have limited their frankness in responding to gender-sensitive questions in such a setting. However, the same respondents were also provided an individual paper-based survey, where they had the opportunity to speak to these issues anonymously for triangulation purposes.

6 COVID-19 PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

To ensure the safety of all those who participated in the assessment and to follow the Government of Liberia's COVID-19 Protocols, the following measures were taken before and during the assessment:

1. All assessment team members and drivers were required to always wear face masks during the assessment.
2. To ensure social distancing, a maximum of three passengers were allowed to travel in an assessment vehicle.
3. All assessment team members were given bottles of hand sanitizer and were required to use it whenever appropriate.

7 PRELIMINARY SCORES PER INSTITUTION

In addition to those findings described in the aggregate across all eight institutions, this assessment report includes institution-specific scores, findings, and suggestions. Each institution's gender and disability inclusion practices have been scored on an individual basis, and a detailed breakdown of each institution's score will be shared directly. It is important to emphasize that these scores represent a baseline against which further progress can be realized and are not intended to be punitive in nature.

7.1 Methodology for Calculating Scores

In the detailed rubric for each institution, each indicator was graded using the following scale including the possible scores of 3, 2, 1, 0, and N/A.

ALIGNMENT WITH MINIMUM STANDARD				
Strong alignment (3)	Emerging alignment (2)	Limited alignment (1)	No alignment (0)	N/A

For example, where an institution's practices had no alignment with a given indicator, it received a score of 0 points for that indicator. Where an indicator did not apply to a particular institution, for example if the indicator relates to a preceding item ranked as a '0', it was ranked as N/A and no score was given at all. The below table displays an example of where this took place.

	ALIGNMENT WITH MINIMUM STANDARD				
	Strong alignment (3)	Emerging alignment (2)	Limited alignment (1)	No alignment (0)	N/A
INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES, PROCEDURES, CONTENT: Ensuring instructional practices, procedures, and content are inclusive for women and persons with disabilities and effectively train higher education teacher-aspirants to teach girls and students with disabilities.					
Are students and staff regularly consulted on the				0	

<i>school climate related to gender and social inclusion?</i>					
<i>Does the HETTI use these consultations to implement improvements or address any findings?</i>					N/A

Each domain (for example, staffing or demonstration schools) had an aggregate score, which was developed as a sum of the number of points the institution received over the total possible points for that domain. For example, if an institution scored 6 points total across 5 indicators (where each indicator had a maximum score of 3 points – $3 \times 5 = 15$), the institution was ranked as 6/15. Due to the use of N/A rankings, which were not counted against the total possible score, each institution had a different total possible score (i.e., another institution may have scored 6/12 where one indicator was deemed ‘N/A’). To improve readability and comparability across institutions, these scores were converted into percentages (i.e., 6/15 is represented as 40%) in the below tables.

The accessibility of each institution’s physical premises was calculated differently than the other domains. An 11-item checklist was utilized to assess whether the institution had ramps, handrails, wide hallways and doorways, and other features. If an institution had the item in question, it received 1 point. If it had the item partially (such as a ramp in some buildings but not others) it received a half point score. If the item was not observed at all (such as signs in braille), 0 points were given. As such, each institution’s accessibility score was calculated over the denominator of 11 possible points, and then converted into a percentage.

7.2 Scores by Domain

Tables 12–17 provide an overview of each institution’s scores on the assessment.

The Staffing domain examined 17 different questions (indicators) from each institution’s policies related to gender and disability inclusion, its hiring and recruitment practices, and training and supports provided to employees. A total possible score was 51 points ($17 \times 3 = 51$), and each institution’s score has been represented as a percentage.

Table 12. Staffing Scores by Institution

Institution	Staffing Score
UL	19%
AMEU	20%
LICOSESS	18%
AUWA	29%
GBU	20%
CU	24%
NU	20%
LCCC	25%

The Student Body domain examined 17 different questions (indicators) from each institution’s practices supporting women and persons with disabilities, its admissions and retention practices, school climate, and supports and services provided to students. A total

possible score was 51 points ($17 \times 3 = 51$), and each institution's score has been represented as a percentage.

Table 13. Student Body Scores by Institution

Institution	Student Body Score
UL	29%
AMEU	26%
LICOSESS	16%
AUWA	27%
GBU	29%
CU	36%
NU	21%
LCCC	27%

The Physical Premises domain examined 11 aspects of accessibility, and a total possible score was 11 points. Each institution's score has been represented as a percentage.

Table 14. Physical Premises Scores by Institution

Institution	Physical Premises Score
UL	55%
AMEU	50%
LICOSESS	9%
AUWA	36%
GBU	45%
CU	50%
NU	41%
LCCC	45%

The Instructional Practices domain examined 13 different questions (indicators) from each institution's curriculum and instructional practices related to gender and social inclusion, including use of UDL and SEL principles, and inclusion of gender and disability-sensitive content. A total possible score was 39 points ($13 \times 3 = 39$), and each institution's score has been represented as a percentage.

Table 15. Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content Scores by Institution

Institution	Instruction Score
UL	67%

Institution	Instruction Score
AMEU	44%
LICOSESS	21%
AUWA	41%
GBU	31%
CU	33%
NU	22%
LCCC	33%

The Demonstration School domain examined 6 different questions (indicators) related to the policies and practices of gender and social inclusion in the demonstration schools. A total possible score was 18 points (6 x 3 = 18), and each institution's score has been represented as a percentage.

Table 16. Demonstration School Scores by Institution

Institution	Demonstration School Score
UL	61%
AMEU	7%
LICOSESS	6%
AUWA	7%
GBU	13%
CU	13%
NU	20%
LCCC	17%

The aggregate score has been calculated by totaling each institution's total actual score in the above five domains over its total possible score, and then converting it into a percentage. For example, if an institution scored 48 points out of a possible 161 points, it received an aggregate score of 30%.

Table 17. Total Aggregate Scores by Institution

Institution	Total Score
UL	40%
AMEU	28%
LICOSESS	16%
AUWA	30%
GBU	26%

Institution	Total Score
CU	30%
NU	22%
LCCC	28%

The tables shown in Annex A summarize the key findings, suggestions, and conclusions for each institution. A more detailed elaboration on each of these findings will be shared with individual institutions directly.

8 NEXT STEPS

The completion of the Gender and Disability Inclusion Assessment at all eight HETIs is a major first step. However, this assessment is intended to serve as a baseline against which further reform and improvement can be realized. To achieve this, each institution must identify its own chief priorities and commitments upon review of the findings and recommendations provided in this report.

Assessment teams recommend that each HETI consider the following suggestions in responding to the findings of this assessment:

1. Review the assessment findings in detail among relevant senior administrators and faculty.
2. Identify which areas of need require the most urgent attention, and develop detailed action plans to bring about change, including deadlines, persons responsible, and metrics for how one could determine whether the aim was achieved.
3. Map out all agreed urgent and nonurgent actions into a timeline which identifies those priorities which can be achieved in the short, medium, and long term.
4. Identify female and male faculty and persons with disabilities to spearhead initiatives and institute accountability. Consider forming a gender and social inclusion committee or other mechanism to follow up on key commitments.
5. Seek out technical support and assistance from community members, HETI partners, nongovernmental organizations and Organizations of People with Disabilities, and TESTS staff, as appropriate. This may include policy development, curriculum revision, improvements to accessible infrastructure, and so on.
6. Ensure that any future reforms are aligned with national policies and standards, including but not limited to Liberia's Civil Standing Order (Chapter 9: Sexual Harassment), National Teacher Professional Performance Standards for Liberia (2007/2020), 2011 Education Law, 2018 Inclusive Education Policy, National Policy on Girls Education, and the Children's Law.
7. Continuously consult with women and persons with disabilities as active participants in educational reform to measure the extent to which key aims are achieved. Avoid forums where only men are present to speak on behalf of women's issues or only nondisabled persons are present to speak on behalf of disability issues.

Further to this, the TESTS team, including the GESI taskforce and partners, will offer support to HETIs in achieving their strategic priorities. This includes embedding SEL, UDL, and gender-responsive teaching strategies into the harmonized curriculum and training efforts and allocating some grant funds towards equipment and materials that support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in education.

ANNEX A: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS PER INSTITUTION

The following section provides a summary of key findings, suggestions, and conclusions on an individual institution basis. The tables below provide summary data in a simplified format. Further detail about the findings in each domain, including data collection tools used to generate the following information, can be found in the Excel document shared with each institution.

County: Montserrado County

University of Liberia		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- With 91% the institution's faculty and staff being men and 9% women, University of Liberia has the lowest percentage of employees who are women out of any HETTI collaborating with the TESTS project. At least one faculty member surveyed identifies as having a disability. - Most faculty surveyed have never received training on disability-inclusive education (5/7) or teaching students with learning difficulties (4/7). However, faculty express an interest in receiving further training. - The human resource policy clearly defines the behavior that is constituted as sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment is listed as a terminable offense. However, the specific reporting mechanism for sexual exploitation and abuse complaints is not clearly described. - While generous leave policies include both paid maternity and paternity leave, policies are currently not in place for disability inclusion or workplace accommodations or gender equality or social inclusion. A Gender Policy is currently in draft form. - No policies or practices aim to recruit and hire women and persons with disabilities. However, job advertisements encourage women to apply.	- Ensure that the forthcoming Gender Policy outlines specific strategies to promote more women into positions of employment and leadership in the university, with metrics for tracking progress over time. Additionally, ensure the Gender Policy is clearly communicated to all faculty alongside relevant training. Ensure reporting pathways for complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse are further clarified. - Produce a disability policy that mandates equal opportunity language on disability be included in job advertisements and that enables persons with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations upon hire. Set a budget to provide for reasonable accommodations requests and/or support services such as modified equipment, information, and communications technology (ICT) services, sign language interpretation, braille materials, and so on. - Provide faculty training in gender equality and disability inclusion practices, policies, and approaches. - Ensure that the upcoming establishment of the Quality Assurance Unit mandates responsibilities for monitoring progress against benchmarks of both gender and disability inclusion, including tracking gender- and disability-disaggregated data over time. - Conduct employee performance reviews regularly and incorporate feedback through biannual or annual satisfaction surveys.
Student Body	Students have access to a large counseling and mentoring department on campus, along with	Ensure a reasonable accommodation policy is clearly shared with all staff and students, and

University of Liberia		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	academic advisors, an active student union, and scholarships. • It is unclear how many persons with disabilities are enrolled in the university as there are no disability-specific supports offered. There is also no reasonable accommodation policy. • The student population is 89% female in the primary and ECE programs, but no policies or practices are in place to promote recruitment and retention of diverse populations, such as persons with disabilities. • Students in the College of Education generally report a positive academic experience among the Education faculty. However, no systematic policies or practices are in place to survey school climate among students. • Student respondents indicate that faculty outside the College of Education continue to require bribes in exchange for passing grades. Students do not express comfort or familiarity with reporting these concerns to school administrators.	provide training as needed to faculty in accommodating student needs in the classroom (e.g., testing accommodations, use of digital materials, adaptations to assignments). • Ensure that available university scholarships include a set-aside for a certain population of students who identify as having a disability. • Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of discrimination or faculty misconduct. Collect data on discrimination or misconduct policies and review them annually to assess performance. • Regularly survey school climate among students and monitor progress over time. Include school climate and gender and social inclusion as a regular agenda item on the leadership meeting agenda.
Physical Premises and Materials	• Physical premises are not accessible to persons with disabilities. Classrooms in the College of Education are located in multistory buildings without elevator access. • The demonstration school on campus has not monitored for physical accessibility explicitly, but the facility has some accessibility features, including a ramp, and classrooms all on the first level of the building. • The university system is making gradual progress towards use of blended learning modalities and providing Wi-Fi on campus. Such practices are	• Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility. Ensure that any new construction includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. • Ensure that future advancements in digital technologies are embedding principles of accessibility for persons with disabilities, such as alt text / image descriptions, captions, and transcripts for multimedia resources, and using built-in accessibility checkers.

University of Liberia		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	supportive of accessibility but have not been designed with accessibility in mind. Classrooms are generally well lit and well ventilated, although it was not possible to observe the use of teaching and learning materials during the school break.	
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	- The College of Education's curriculum includes a variety of courses that are supportive of gender and inclusive practice, including two courses on educational psychology, a course on gender issues in education, guidance and counseling, and multiple courses that emphasize the use of local materials in teaching and learning. - Faculty are well versed on activity-based and student-centered pedagogical approaches, including the use of low- and no-cost materials, scaffolding, and cooperative and group learning activities. Student respondents report that these approaches provide them with knowledge and preparedness for teaching. - A course on supporting students with exceptionalities is only offered to ECE students. All nine students surveyed report they have learned how to support struggling learners, but only four of nine respondents have accessed training on teaching students with disabilities. - Students report learning from supportive faculty in the College of Education and feeling comfortable seeking support from a faculty advisor if further help is needed.	- Expand the requirement of a course on teaching students with exceptionalities to all levels of the education department, not just ECE students. - Identify opportunities to develop a memorandum of understanding or partnership with the University of Liberia Workforce Development Program's planned certificate in sign language, which would support teacher-aspirants to teach students with hearing disabilities. - Ensure that practicum coursework embeds application of and monitoring for principles of inclusive teaching, including gender- and disability-inclusive practices and embedding of SEL principles in instruction. - Where feasible, share expertise and thought leadership with other TESTS HETTI partners on curriculum and pedagogical practices.

University of Liberia		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Demonstration Schools	• The practicum facilities are rich in books and supplementary materials, manipulatives, and print materials posted on walls. Students report practicing student-centered, participatory, play-based teaching methodologies in their practicum. • Teachers working in practicum schools have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education, and ECE classes are staffed with two teachers per classroom. • Disability-inclusive teaching does not feature in the practicum experience, nor are student teachers explicitly monitored for the application of disability-inclusive practices. • NB: The development of the on-campus demonstration school resulted from the ingenuity and commitment of some leaders in the College of Education in 2017. They have converted a former dormitory into a small school and have advocated for and ensured the availability of diverse teaching and learning materials for pupils.	• Identify and progressively realize opportunities to enroll children with disabilities in demonstration schools. Ensure that student teachers are applying inclusive teaching principles for all students, including struggling learners and those with disabilities. • If school facilities expand in the future, consider accessibility features that would enable both children and student teachers with disabilities to participate equally alongside those without disabilities.

Liberian Cooperative Standard Education School System (LICOSESS) College of Education		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- Some 84% (N = 48/57) of staff are men, posing challenges to equitable gender balance. At least three members of faculty surveyed identify as having a disability. - Most faculty surveyed have never received training on disability-inclusive education (11/12) or teaching students with learning difficulties (9/12). However, most faculty express an interest in receiving further training. - Some language around sexual harassment and paid maternity leave is present in existing policies, though they are not clearly or uniformly communicated to staff and students. However, policies are currently not in place for disability inclusion or workplace accommodations or gender equality or social inclusion. - Equal opportunity language is not included in job advertisements, and no strategies are in place to increase gender or disability representation in the workplace. - It is unclear whether there are personnel trained to receive and respond to complaints of workplace harassment and discrimination.	- Revise policies to consider gender equity (including representation by women in policy authorship) and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Further clarify pathways for reporting concerns of discrimination or harassment. - Include equal opportunity language in job advertisements for recruitment of women and persons with disabilities. - Develop specific strategies to promote more women into positions of leadership and authority and monitor progress over time. - Identify additional opportunities to utilize the specialist expertise of faculty members with disabilities in awareness raising and professional development opportunities (including the existing faculty member with expertise in teaching braille to pre-service educators). - Identify and progressively pursue faculty training needs, including disability-inclusive education and gender-sensitive handling of complaints of workplace harassment.

Liberian Cooperative Standard Education School System (LICOSESS) College of Education		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Student Body	• Student respondents generally report an equitable, nondiscriminatory, and positive school climate and describe enjoying their experience at the college.⁸ Students' greatest concerns relate to financing their education. • Students with disabilities report having limited to no access to reasonable accommodations, including no access to digital course materials. • No systematic policies or practices are in place to survey school climate among students, and it is unclear whether all students are apprised in detail on protocols for safely reporting concerns. • Students do not have access to supports such as tutoring or counseling, and full class schedules provide little to no time to seek additional support from instructors outside class hours. • Although the student population is 65% female ($N = 205/315$), no policies or practices are in place to promote recruitment and retention of diverse populations.	• Instructors should provide access to digital course materials for all students, including those with disabilities. Other reasonable accommodations such as extended time on tests should be considered according to individual need. • Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination. • Develop policies and plans to recruit diverse student populations (including women and persons with disabilities), regularly survey school climate among students, and monitor progress over time. • Identify strategies to make available remedial support or tutoring for students who are struggling with course content.
Physical Premises and Materials	• With the exception of one ramp, physical premises are completely inaccessible. The road to the school is also a safety concern for persons with and without disabilities. • Sanitation is a major concern for staff and students, including the ratio of one toilet to approximately 250 people, with no access to clean water. • Aside from whiteboards, no supplementary materials were observed to support teaching and	• Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility. Ensure that any new construction (currently ongoing) includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. • Identify opportunities to furnish classrooms with low- or no-cost teaching and learning materials which can be used by student teachers and demonstration school students.

⁹ Most students available for the focus group discussion were newly enrolled C-certificate students and not AA or BA students, which may mean that some information about the student experience was not fully captured.

Liberian Cooperative Standard Education School System (LICOSESS) College of Education		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	learning in any classroom. Classrooms are cramped, dusty, and lacking in resources.	Pursue long-term modifications to hygiene and sanitation facilities to enable gender and disability inclusion and promote safety.
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	- Lecture-based methodologies were observed to dominate the teaching and learning environment, posing challenges to student engagement and support of diverse learning styles. - The curriculum does not currently embed gender and disability sensitivity, SEL, UDL, or monitoring for gender-based violence and abuse of students, but faculty express an interest in adding these elements. - Student respondents report that classroom environments are generally safe and nondiscriminatory, but faculty do not appear skilled in encouraging all students, instead of just those who are most outspoken, to participate. - In three lessons observed, faculty spoke between 80% and 95% of lesson time, and lecture was the primary means of teaching. Faculty did not appear to model the pedagogical practices they are instructing student teachers to use, including activity-based/group work, support to struggling learners, positive behavior supports, or use of diverse teaching and learning materials.	- Identify and progressively seek out training needs and opportunities for faculty, including gender-inclusive instructional practices, rights of persons with disabilities, SEL, UDL, and student-centered instructional practices. - Diversify instructional practices in faculty and student teacher lesson delivery, including approaches consistent with UDL and student-centered methodologies. - Identify opportunities to modernize the curriculum related to inclusion in courses that already address these principles, and further embed inclusive content across other subject areas where such principles are not reflected. - Include inclusive teaching strategies among competencies to be monitored for student teachers, and track performance over time.

Liberian Cooperative Standard Education School System (LICOSESS) College of Education		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Demonstration Schools	- As institutional policies related to gender and disability equity are generally absent, this information is not available in demonstration schools. - Practicum sites observed are generally inaccessible to persons with disabilities and unsafe from a WASH perspective for men and women. - It is unclear whether student teachers are supported to apply inclusive pedagogical approaches in their practicum opportunities.	- Offer training and guidance to all faculty and students involved with demonstration schools on newly developed institutional policies, including reporting requirements for child protection among students at demonstration schools. - Identify and progressively realize plans to make demonstration facilities more accessible, hygienic, and materially resourced. - Link teaching observations to newly developed gender, UDL, and SEL content embedded in the curriculum.

African Methodist Episcopal University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- Some 82% (N= 148/181) of faculty and staff are men and 18% are women, and women are disproportionately represented in low-level positions, posing challenges to equitable gender balance. At least one faculty member surveyed identifies as having a disability. - Most faculty in the College of Education (3/5) have never received training on disability-inclusive education or teaching students with learning difficulties. However, they express an interest in receiving further training. - Some language around sexual harassment and paid maternity leave is present in existing policies. However, policies are currently not in place for disability inclusion or workplace accommodations or gender equality or social inclusion. - Equal opportunity language around gender equity is already present in job advertisements, but such advertisements do not currently mention disability. - It is unclear whether there are personnel trained to receive and respond to complaints of workplace harassment and discrimination.	- Revise policies to consider gender equity (including representation by women in policy authorship) and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Further clarify pathways for reporting concerns of discrimination or harassment. - Revise the Faculty Handbook to include sexual harassment on the list of major offenses subject to termination. - Expand existing equal opportunity language in job advertisements to include disability. - Develop specific strategies to promote more women into positions of leadership and authority and monitor progress over time. - Identify and progressively pursue faculty training needs, including disability-inclusive education and gender-sensitive handling of complaints of workplace harassment. - Identify and make progressively available basic resourcing and accommodations that would enable the inclusion of newly hired faculty with disabilities.
Student Body	- The employment of a full-time sign language interpreter on campus is a direct support to the university's inclusion of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. - Respondents report that gender-based harassment, discrimination, and sexual abuse is taking place on campus, specifically in terms of male faculty seeking out inappropriate relationships with female students under threat or coercion. Such a climate is exacerbated by the fact that women are fearful of reporting concerns	- Ensure that university budgets maintain or expand allocations for disability-inclusive accommodations, including sign language interpretation or other human or material resources according to individual student need. - Consider available pathways to enable the transition of persons with vision impairment from the Lions Club Computer Institute for the Blind (LICCIB) to university programs at large. Employ LICCIB staff on the university payroll to support such students or

African Methodist Episcopal University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	due to lack of trust that the institution will fairly respond to their complaints. As one person describes it, there is a sentiment that it is easier to “let it go, pray against it, just forget it.” • Students report feeling generally satisfied with their experience in the College of Education specifically. Their greatest concerns relate to financing their education. • The available tutoring and counseling services are so few across the university system that students in the College of Education generally have no access. • Although the student population is 60% female ($N = 2,564/4,273$), no policies or practices are in place to promote recruitment and retention of diverse populations.	provide expertise and guidance in the university system. • Conduct widespread awareness-raising and training activities for staff and students to rapidly address the unsafe environment experienced by many female students. Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination. Encourage female students to report concerns to a trusted female focal point on campus. • Develop policies and plans to recruit diverse student populations (including women and persons with disabilities), regularly survey school climate among students, and monitor progress over time. • Identify strategies to expand the reach of psychosocial and career counseling services to all students on campus.
Physical Premises and Materials	• Although classrooms held on the ground floor support limited accessibility, the campus is generally inaccessible to persons with physical disabilities. This includes narrow doorways, uneven stairs or stairs without handrails, and inaccessible washrooms. • Some women’s bathroom stalls have broken locks. • Classrooms are generally well lit and well ventilated, although it was not possible to observe the use of teaching and learning materials during the school break.	• Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility. Ensure that any new construction (such as creation of ramps) includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. • Ensure all washroom stalls have functioning locks. • Engage persons with vision impairment already on campus to provide advice and guidance based on personal lived experience.

African Methodist Episcopal University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	- The College of Education's courses that are supportive of inclusion and SEL practices include those on inclusive education, educational psychology, guidance and counseling, child development, and creative activities for young children. - Although lessons could not be observed during the school holiday, students and teachers in the College of Education report the use of student-centered instructional approaches, including group work, use of instructional materials, and hands-on activities. - Instructional practices are inconsistent between university departments. Students report positive experiences in the College of Education, while instructional practices and classroom management strategies in other faculties are supportive or respectful of diverse learning styles. - The provision of a safe teaching and learning environment is directly challenged by ongoing occurrence of inappropriate sexual requests by faculty outside the College of Education against female students.	- Identify and progressively seek out training needs and opportunities for faculty, including gender-inclusive instructional practices, SEL, UDL, and strategies to support the needs of student teachers with disabilities. - Identify opportunities to modernize the curriculum related to inclusion in courses that already address these principles, and further embed inclusive content across other subject areas where such principles are not reflected. - Include inclusive teaching strategies among competencies to be monitored for student teachers, and track performance over time. - Improve safe teaching and learning environments by taking stringent measures to eliminate sexual harassment by faculty.
Demonstration Schools	- The university has a relationship with a single demonstration school near to the campus. However, the teaching approaches used at the school are teacher centered, classrooms are grossly overcrowded, resources are lacking, and corporal punishment is reportedly used. - Faculty are aware that the demonstration school does not provide a conducive environment to practice inclusive teaching strategies but have been unsuccessful to date in encouraging	- Pursue opportunities to create collaborations with new or additional demonstration schools in the area. - Offer training and guidance to all faculty and students involved with demonstration schools on newly developed institutional policies, including reporting requirements for child protection among students at demonstration schools.

African Methodist Episcopal University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	collaboration with the privately affiliated school to improve instructional practices. • There are no known policies or practices for teacher-aspirants to report abuse or policy violations.	• Identify and progressively realize plans to make demonstration facilities more student centered and materially resourced. • Link teaching observations to newly developed gender, SEL, and UDL content embedded in the curriculum.

County: Margibi County

Adventist University of West Africa		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- Some 56% (N = 48/85) of faculty and staff are men and 44% are women, a near-equal balance which supports a foundation of gender equity. At least one faculty member surveyed identifies as having a disability. - Approximately half (5/9) of faculty working in the humanities have never received training on disability-inclusive education or teaching students with learning difficulties. However, most faculty express an interest in receiving further training. - Faculty retention is high, which may be supported by generous paid leave policies including paid study leave. - Some language around sexual harassment and paid maternity leave is present in existing policies. However, policies are currently not in place for disability inclusion or workplace accommodations or gender equality or social inclusion. Although consequences for faculty committing various infractions are very clear, consequences for sexual harassment are not clearly included among the list of serious offenses. - Equal opportunity language is not included in job advertisements, and no strategies are in place to increase gender or disability representation in the workplace. - It is unclear whether there are personnel trained to receive and respond to complaints of workplace harassment and discrimination.	- Revise policies to consider gender equity (including representation by women in policy authorship) and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Further clarify pathways for reporting concerns of discrimination or harassment. - Add consequence of termination for sexual harassment in staff handbook's Progressive Discipline Chart. - Include equal opportunity language in job advertisements for recruitment of women and persons with disabilities. - Identify and progressively pursue faculty training needs, including disability-inclusive education and gender-sensitive handling of complaints of workplace harassment. - Identify and make progressively available basic resourcing and accommodations that would enable the inclusion of newly hired faculty with disabilities.

Adventist University of West Africa		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Student Body	• Student respondents describe a negative school climate, including feeling that their opinions and feedback are not valued, feeling bullied or intimidated by some faculty, and feeling uncomfortable providing dissenting opinions in class. Students report feeling overwhelmingly concerned about financing their education, including the need to seek additional employment beyond the work-study commitments made to maintain scholarship eligibility. Students residing on campus report feeling fearful for their safety and concerned about theft of personal belongings. • The university enrolls at least three students with disabilities. However, students with disabilities have limited access to reasonable accommodations beyond testing accommodations, have experienced overt discrimination in the enrollment process, and encountered faculty unwilling to accommodate their needs in class.⁹ • Expectations of student behavior are clearly outlined in the Citizenship program, yet there is less clarity on what rights students have to report violations committed against them. Some students described feeling unwelcome in reporting such concerns to the administration. • Student respondents generally feel they are able to seek out and receive additional support from faculty in the College of Education. They also	• Ensure a reasonable accommodation policy is clearly shared with all staff and students, and provide training as needed to faculty in accommodating student needs in the classroom (e.g., testing accommodations, use of digital materials, adaptations to assignments). • Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination. • Expand the written guidance within the Citizenship program to clarify the rights of students and pathways for seeking support in the event of experiencing discrimination or harassment on campus. • Develop policies and plans to regularly survey school climate among students, respond to legitimate student concerns, and monitor progress over time. • Identify whether additional faculty could be employed to provide counseling services or whether existing faculty could obtain additional training to develop expertise in psychological and career counseling.

⁹ NB: student respondents are emphatic that the above points are directed at the faculty at large, and not reflective of their experience among faculty in the College of Education.

Adventist University of West Africa		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	have access to assigned faculty mentors and chaplaincy services. However, no psychological or career counseling services are available. • Although the student population is 74% female ($N = 663/900$), no policies or practices are in place to promote recruitment and retention of diverse populations. • The presence of a digital system for monitoring and tracking student data provides a foundation against which to support future analysis of gender- and disability-disaggregated data.	
Physical Premises and Materials	• While the campus has not been designed for accessibility, some features help the campus to be more accessible than other Liberian universities, including pathways clear of debris or hazards, wide doorways and hallways, well-lit and well-ventilated classrooms, and access to some classrooms on the ground floor. • Classrooms are relatively well-resourced including offering access to electricity, overhead projectors, whiteboards and markers, digital materials, and printed handouts. • Some student respondents report concerns with their safety on overcrowded campus buses, with lax security personnel on campus, the absence of a fence on campus, dormitory rooms that do not lock, and men and women housed in the same dormitory.	• Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility. Ensure that any new construction (such as the dormitories and classrooms projected for development) includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. • Identify core priorities to improve the student experience of safety on campus, and progressively address realistic improvements. • Ensure any newly constructed toilet facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities (e.g., free of steps, grab bars/handles, wide stalls).

Adventist University of West Africa		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	- Some College of Education faculty observed or interviewed are skilled in using diverse teaching and learning methods in their own lessons and a practice supportive of inclusive education and a positive student experience. With only seven enrolled students in 2021, a low student-teacher ratio in the College of Education is supportive of individualized learning. - Curriculum in the College of Education addresses a positive learning environment, treating students with respect, child rights, and diverse pedagogical approaches. Content related to SEL, combatting gender-based violence, and targeted instruction for students with disabilities is not yet included. - Instructional practices are inconsistent between university departments. Students report positive experiences in the College of Education, while instructional practices and classroom management strategies in other faculties were less respectful and inclusive.	- Identify and progressively seek out training needs and opportunities for faculty, including gender-inclusive instructional practices, SEL, UDL, and strategies to support the needs of student teachers with disabilities. - Convene university-wide discussions on student-centered instructional practices, positive classroom culture, and disability-inclusive educational practices. - Identify opportunities to modernize the curriculum related to inclusion in courses that already address these principles, and further embed inclusive content across other subject areas where such principles are not reflected. - Include inclusive teaching strategies among competencies to be monitored for student teachers, and track performance over time.
Demonstration Schools	- Teacher-aspirants can choose their own practicum schools. The university does not monitor for safeguarding or accessibility standards in demonstration school selection. - Students take part in a semester-long practicum. The focus of this practicum is not currently on inclusive teaching approaches. - College of Education faculty are assigned to observe each student teacher twice in a practicum setting. However, such monitoring does not focus on safety or inclusion, and assessment teams were unable to confirm this monitoring process firsthand.	- Offer training and guidance to all faculty and students involved with demonstration schools on newly developed institutional policies, including reporting requirements for child protection among students at demonstration schools. - Establish formal agreements with demonstration schools that include protections and safeguards for teacher-aspirants prior to students beginning their practicum experiences. Develop clear reporting mechanisms for teacher-aspirants to report abuse or policy violations while they are on practicum assignments.

Adventist University of West Africa		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
		• Link teaching observations to newly developed gender, SEL, and UDL content embedded in the curriculum. • Create a budget to cover expenses related to accessibility at practicum sites.

County: Bassa County

Grand Bassa University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- Some 83% of faculty and staff are men and 17% are women, posing challenges to equitable gender balance. All faculty surveyed in the College of Education are men. Survey results show that at least one member of the faculty/staff self-identifies as having a disability. - Approximately half (4/9) of faculty surveyed have never received training on disability-inclusive education or teaching students with learning difficulties, and those who did receive training had limited confidence in the topic. However, most faculty express an interest in receiving further training and capacity development. - While the university has a clear antiharassment / sexual harassment prevention policy in place, policies are currently not in place for disability inclusion or workplace accommodations or gender equality or social inclusion. Existing policies are not clearly or uniformly communicated to staff and students. - No formal processes are in place for implementing workplace climate surveys on a regular basis. - There is no evidence of a policy to attract, recruit, and hire women and persons with disabilities. However, job advertisements encourage women to apply. - Faculty and staff have no knowledge of the existence of MOE policies on Inclusive Education, National Policy on Girls Education, Children's Law, and so on.	- Revise policies to consider gender equity (including representation by women in policy authorship) and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Further clarify pathways for reporting concerns of discrimination or harassment. - Develop specific strategies to promote more women into positions of leadership and authority and monitor progress over time. - Identify and progressively pursue faculty training needs, including disability-inclusive education and gender-sensitive handling of workplace complaints. - Ensure that policy revisions are clearly communicated to all faculty and students, consequences and reporting procedures are clearly outlined, and performance indicators are created to track progress. - Upon hiring, permit new employees to request accommodations, and set a budget to provide for reasonable accommodations requests and/or support services such as modified equipment, ICT services, sign language interpretation, braille materials, and so on.

Grand Bassa University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Student Body	• Respondents report that gender-based harassment, discrimination, and sexual abuse are taking place on campus, specifically in terms of male faculty seeking out inappropriate relationships with female students under threat or coercion. Many female students report feeling unsafe on campus. Such a climate is exacerbated by the fact that women are fearful of reporting concerns due to lack of trust that the institution will fairly respond to their complaints. • Students' greatest concerns relate to financing their education (school fees, room and board, and transportation). • The university's student population is 53.5% female ($N = 572/1,069$), but no policies or practices are in place to promote recruitment and retention of women or persons with disabilities. • The university does not currently provide targeted supports, services, and resourcing to ensure a gender- and disability-friendly campus environment. • No special programs are in place to attract and recruit a diverse student body. There are no affirmative action programs to accept more female students and/or students with disabilities. Some respondents have alleged that those scholarships available to students are not consistently distributed on the basis of merit or transparent criteria.	• Ensure a reasonable accommodation policy is clearly shared with all staff and students, and provide training as needed to faculty in accommodating student needs in the classroom (e.g., testing accommodations, use of digital materials, adaptations to assignments). • Offer or advocate for additional scholarships and financial assistance to support students, ensuring selection criteria for scholarship awards are based on a transparent, merit-based rubric to reduce accusations of bias in the selection process. • Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination. Collect data on violators of the antiharassment and discrimination policies and review them annually to assess performance. • Regularly survey school climate among students and monitor progress over time. Include school climate and gender and social inclusion as a regular agenda item on the leadership meeting agenda.

Grand Bassa University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Physical Premises and Materials	• Other than the USAID-funded science and engineering building, all physical premises on campus are inaccessible for people with disabilities. Poorly constructed ramps are present in several buildings on campus, and the sandy terrain poses accessibility challenges. • Sanitation is a major concern for staff and students. There are no toilets on campus, other than those used by faculty and the paid toilet in the cafeteria. • The only bridge leading to campus poses safety and accessibility risks to all who cross it and requires urgent repair. • Classrooms mostly only have blackboards; no supplementary materials were observed to support teaching and learning in any classroom.	• Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility (e.g., install handrails and ramps up to 1/12", construct accessible washrooms/toilets, add signs in braille or large print). • Ensure that any new construction (currently ongoing) includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. • Pursue long-term modifications to hygiene and sanitation facilities to enable gender and disability inclusion and promote safety. Discourage students from using the bushes as latrines and remove the fee associated with on-campus latrine use. • Lobby with government and partners to reconstruct or repair the only bridge that leads to the university campus. • Identify opportunities to furnish classrooms with low- or no-cost teaching and learning materials which can be used by student teachers and demonstration school students.
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	• The education curriculum covers some topics linked with disability inclusion, SEL, and UDL, including a course on teaching "special children," guidance and counseling, and the use of some inclusive pedagogies such as activity-based learning. • The provision of a safe teaching and learning environment is directly challenged by ongoing occurrence of inappropriate sexual requests by faculty against female students. While faculty are aware of the reporting requirements and consequences for policy violations, students describe fearing retaliation from their teachers if	• Identify and progressively seek out training needs and opportunities for faculty, including gender-inclusive instructional practices, rights of persons with disabilities, SEL, UDL, and student-centered instructional practices. • Diversify instructional practices in faculty and student teacher lesson delivery, including approaches consistent with UDL and student-centered methodologies. • Identify opportunities to modernize the curriculum related to inclusion in courses that already address these principles, and further embed inclusive

Grand Bassa University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	they report violations. Additionally, students are unaware of confidentiality policies or other protections that would make them feel safe to report abuse or harassment. • No evidence suggests that staff have access to technical expertise and resources to support disability inclusion and struggling learners.	content across other subject areas where such principles are not reflected. • Include inclusive teaching strategies among competencies to be monitored for student teachers, and track performance over time. • Improve safe teaching and learning environments by taking stringent measures to eliminate sexual harassment by faculty.
Demonstration Schools ¹⁰	• Some teacher-aspirants have opportunities off site/campus to apply their pedagogical approaches in a practicum with students. However, the university does not have formal relationships with practicum sites / demonstration schools. Students often select their own schools. • Students take part in a semester-long practicum. The focus of this practicum is not currently on inclusive teaching approaches. the College of Education did not have clear monitoring mechanisms in place to assess the pedagogical approaches used in a practicum environment. • The university does not have a budget for practicum sites.	• Offer training and guidance to all faculty and students involved with demonstration schools on newly developed institutional policies, including reporting requirements for child protection among students at demonstration schools. • Establish formal agreements with demonstration schools that include protections and safeguards for teacher-aspirants prior to students beginning their practicum experiences. Develop clear reporting mechanisms for teacher-aspirants to report abuse or policy violations while they are on practicum assignments. • Link teaching observations to newly developed gender, SEL, and UDL content embedded in the curriculum. • Create a budget to cover expenses related to accessibility at practicum sites.

¹⁰ Practicum sites or demonstration schools were not visited as part of this assessment. Findings are generally based on focus group discussions and information provided by HETTI leadership.

County: Bong County

Cuttington University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- Some 82% of faculty and staff are men and 18% are women, posing challenges to equitable gender balance. At least two faculty members surveyed self-identify as having a disability. - Most (7/8) faculty surveyed have never received training on disability-inclusive education or teaching students with learning difficulties. All eight faculty members express interest in receiving further training, and students have stated that there is a need for teachers to receive training on gender and disability inclusion. - The Employee Handbook and Human Resource Policy have very detailed language on sexual and other unlawful harassment and policy. However, policies are currently not in place for disability and gender inclusion including workplace accommodations. Existing policies are not clearly or uniformly communicated to staff and students. - Policies are in place for sick leave, maternity leave, and study leave. Clear policies are in place for applying for leave. - No formal processes are in place for implementing workplace climate surveys on a regular basis, except for faculty evaluations. - Faculty and staff have no knowledge of the existence of MOE policies on Inclusive Education, National Policy on Girls Education, Children's Law, and so on.	- Revise policies to consider gender equity (including representation by women in policy authorship) and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Further clarify pathways for reporting concerns of discrimination or harassment. - Develop specific strategies to promote more women into positions of leadership and authority and monitor progress over time. - Provide faculty, staff, and students with orientation and training in each policy area and clearly communicate expectations for violators. - Conduct employee performance reviews regularly and incorporate feedback from students through biannual or annual satisfaction surveys. - Upon hiring, permit new employees to request accommodations, and set a budget to provide for reasonable accommodations requests and/or support services such as modified equipment, ICT services, sign language interpretation, braille materials, and so on. - Provide faculty training in gender equality and disability inclusion practices, policies, and approaches.
Student Body	Some 53% of university students are women and 47% are men (total N = 979). Although women	Instructors should provide access to accessible course materials for all students, including those

Cuttington University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	constitute a majority of enrolled students, no intentional efforts or policies are in place to increase representation among women or persons with disabilities. Data are not currently disaggregated by gender and disability. • Respondents have reported that gender-based harassment, discrimination, and sexual abuse are taking place on campus, specifically in terms of male faculty seeking out inappropriate relationships with female students under threat or coercion. Such a climate is exacerbated by the fact that women are fearful of reporting concerns due to lack of trust that the institution will fairly respond to their complaints. • Students' greatest concerns relate to financing their education, gender equality, fair treatment, and discrimination. • While there is no evidence that students with specific and or recognizable disabilities are enrolled on campus, neither the campus infrastructure nor its policies provide for reasonable accommodations, including lack of accessible course materials. • No systematic policies or practices are in place to survey school climate among students, and it is unclear whether all students are apprised in detail on protocols for safely reporting concerns. • Students have access to faculty advisors to counsel them on their academic progress, which education students reported to be very supportive. Student respondents say they need a gender focal point at the university.	with disabilities. Other reasonable accommodations such as extended time on tests should be considered according to individual need. • Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination. Collect data on violators of the antiharassment and discrimination policies, and review annually to assess performance. • Develop policies and plans to recruit diverse student populations (including women and persons with disabilities), regularly survey school climate among students, and monitor progress over time. • Regularly collect and review data relevant to the retention and progress of women and students with disabilities to evaluate performance. • Ensure school climate regarding gender and social inclusion is a regular agenda item on the leadership meeting agenda. • Ensure selection criteria for scholarship awards are based on a transparent, merit-based rubric to reduce accusations of bias in the selection process.

Cuttington University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	Some scholarships are available but there are claims of inequality in how they are awarded to students.	
Physical Premises and Materials	- Classrooms lack physical accessibility. Currently no buildings are accessible. There are no ramps, bathrooms are not accessible, and there is no institutional expertise or allocated funding to make buildings accessible for all people. The uneven terrain (e.g., rocks, pebbles) presents accessibility challenges for people with mobility difficulties. - Hygiene and safety are challenges for students. Men and women use the same bathroom stalls, making women vulnerable to harassment and abuse. - Classrooms mostly only have blackboards; no supplementary materials were observed to support teaching and learning in any classroom. Classrooms are dusty, but well lit.	- Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility. Ensure that any new construction includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. - Establish a Disability Resource Center and recruit a disability access and accessibility professional to help support the creation of a disability-inclusive campus. - Identify opportunities to furnish classrooms with low- or no-cost teaching and learning aids which can be used by student teachers and demonstration school students. Consider the use of audiovisual materials and a mini library for the demonstration school. - Pursue long-term modifications to hygiene and sanitation facilities to enable gender and disability inclusion and promote safety.
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	- At present, faculty have limited knowledge of SEL or UDL principles or approaches. Faculty do not have expertise and resources to support disability inclusion in the classroom, especially for struggling learners. - Students report that classroom environments are generally safe. However, respondents have reported discrimination and preferential treatment by some school administrators. - There is no evidence that the curriculum has any standalone content related to gender and or disability inclusion, nor do these concepts appear	- Identify and progressively seek out training needs and opportunities for faculty, including gender-inclusive instructional practices, rights of persons with disabilities, SEL, UDL, and student-centered instructional practices. - Diversify instructional practices in faculty and student teacher lesson delivery, including approaches consistent with UDL and student-centered methodologies. - Identify opportunities to modernize the curriculum related to inclusion in courses that already address these principles, and further embed inclusive content

Cuttington University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	to be closely integrated into other education courses. The provision of a safe teaching and learning environment is directly challenged by ongoing occurrence of inappropriate sexual requests by faculty outside the College of Education against female students.	across other subject areas where such principles are not reflected. - Include inclusive teaching strategies among competencies to be monitored for student teachers, and track performance over time. - Improve safe teaching and learning environments by taking stringent measures to eliminate sexual harassment by faculty.
Demonstration Schools	- As institutional policies related to gender and disability equity are generally absent, this information is not available in demonstration schools. - Practicum sites are generally inaccessible to persons with disabilities and unsafe from a WASH perspective for men and women. - Students take part in a semester-long practicum, but this does not currently focus on inclusive teaching approaches. The College of Education does not have clear monitoring mechanisms in place to assess the pedagogical approaches used in a practicum environment. The university has no budget for practicum sites.	- Offer training and guidance to all faculty and students involved with demonstration schools on newly developed institutional policies, including reporting requirements for child protection among students at demonstration schools. - Identify and progressively realize plans to make demonstration facilities more accessible, hygienic, and materially resourced. - Link teaching observations to newly developed gender, SEL, and UDL content embedded in the curriculum. - Create a budget to cover expenses related to accessibility at practicum sites.

County: Nimba County

Nimba University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- Some 80% of faculty and staff are men and 20% are women, posing challenges to equitable gender balance. At least three members of faculty self-identify as having a disability. - Most faculty surveyed have never received training on disability-inclusive education (11/14) or teaching students with learning difficulties (9/14) and were not aware of national policies supportive of gender or disability inclusion. However, most faculty express an interest in receiving further training and capacity development. - The university has a clear antiharassment / sexual harassment prevention policy in place. However, those responsible for receiving complaints are generally men without training in disability or gender inclusion. - No gender or disability inclusion policy is in place, and existing policies are not clearly or uniformly communicated to staff and students. - While the university has enabling leave policies and benefits, these policies do not include reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. - No formal are processes in place for implementing workplace climate surveys on a regular basis. - The university does not systematically collect and review data annually on the number of women and persons with disabilities hired or retained.	- Revise policies to consider gender equity (including representation by women in policy authorship), reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Further clarify pathways for reporting concerns of discrimination or harassment. - Provide faculty and students with orientation and training in each policy area and clearly communicate expectations for violators. - Identify and progressively pursue faculty training needs, including disability-inclusive education and gender-sensitive handling of complaints of workplace harassment. - Develop specific strategies to promote more women into positions of leadership and authority and monitor progress over time. - Develop specific strategies to track institutional progress in gender and disability inclusion, with performance indicators to track progress and a process for sharing data with the leadership team, staff, and partners on an ongoing basis. - Upon hiring, permit new employees to request accommodations, and set a budget to provide for reasonable accommodations requests and/or support services such as modified equipment, ICT services, sign language interpretation, braille materials, and so on.

Nimba University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Student Body	- Students generally report safety concerns on campus. There is evidence that gender-based harassment, discrimination, and sexual abuse are taking place on campus, specifically in terms of male faculty seeking out inappropriate relationships with female students under threat or coercion. Such a climate is exacerbated by the fact that women are fearful of reporting concerns due to lack of trust that the institution will fairly respond to their complaints. Although the university has taken steps in recent years to curb this, respondents describe that this is still happening. - Students' greatest concerns relate to financing their education (school fees, room and board, and transportation). - The university does not currently provide targeted supports, services, and resourcing to ensure a gender- and disability-friendly campus environment. - The university does not currently have a system for tracking retention and progress of female students and students with disabilities. - No budget currently exists to provide for reasonable accommodation requests for persons with disabilities.	- Instructors should provide access to digital course materials for all students, including those with disabilities. Other reasonable accommodations such as extended time on tests should be considered according to individual need. - Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination. Collect data on violators of the antiharassment and discrimination policies, and review annually to assess performance. - Regularly survey school climate among students and monitor progress over time. - Make available low-cost and accessible transportation (shuttle services) options to all students to ease the burden and additional challenges that students experience getting to school. - Include school climate regarding gender and social inclusion as a regular agenda item on the leadership meeting agenda. - Create a budget to cover expenses related to providing reasonable accommodations to students.
Physical Premises and Materials	All physical premises on campus are inaccessible for people with disabilities. Poorly constructed ramps are present in several buildings on campus. However, access to those ramps is not accessible, especially for students with disabilities who use wheelchairs.	Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility (e.g., install handrails and ramps up to 1/12", construct accessible washrooms/toilets, add signs in braille or large print).

Nimba University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	- Sanitation is a major concern for staff and students, including the ratio of one toilet to approximately 200 people, with no access to clean and safe running water. Toilets are often locked at 4pm, making it hard for students to ease themselves in a safe and private place. - Classrooms mostly have a blackboard; no supplementary materials were observed to support teaching and learning in any classroom. Classrooms are dusty, with ceilings falling apart in some classrooms, and lack basic resources.	- Ensure that any new construction (currently ongoing) includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. - Identify opportunities to furnish classrooms with low- or no-cost teaching and learning materials which can be used by student teachers and demonstration school students. - Pursue long-term modifications to hygiene and sanitation facilities to enable gender and disability inclusion and promote safety.
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	- The curriculum includes a course on teaching students with exceptionalities, educational psychology, and other content that addresses play-based learning and the use of materials. However, in the absence of faculty expertise in disability inclusion, it is unclear what quality or depth is provided to these courses as it pertains to inclusive education. - Students report that classroom environments are generally safe. However, they state that students with disabilities need more “encouragement” from their teachers so they can learn “equal to everybody.” Some students are concerned about the negative attitude from faculty towards women and learners with disabilities. - The provision of a safe teaching and learning environment is directly challenged by ongoing occurrence of gender-based harassment and abuse.	- Identify and progressively seek out training needs and opportunities for faculty, including gender-inclusive instructional practices, rights of persons with disabilities, SEL, UDL, and student-centered instructional practices. - Diversify instructional practices in faculty and student teacher lesson delivery, including approaches consistent with UDL and student-centered methodologies. - Identify opportunities to modernize the curriculum related to inclusion in courses that already address these principles, and further embed inclusive content across other subject areas where such principles are not reflected. - Improve safe teaching and learning environments by taking stringent measures to eliminate sexual harassment by faculty. - Include inclusive teaching strategies among competencies to be monitored for student teachers, and track performance over time.

Nimba University		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Demonstration Schools	- Teacher-aspirants have the opportunity to apply inclusive teaching practices in a demonstration school, which upon observation includes high levels of student engagement, participation, and individualized support. - As institutional policies related to gender and disability equity are generally absent, this information is not available in demonstration schools. - Practicum sites are generally inaccessible to persons with disabilities and unsafe from a WASH perspective for men and women, including school-age pupils. - No clear monitoring mechanisms are in place to assess the pedagogical approaches used in a practicum environment. the university does not have a budget for practicum sites.	- Offer training and guidance to all faculty and students involved with demonstration schools on newly developed institutional policies, including reporting requirements for child protection among students at demonstration schools. - Identify and progressively realize plans to make demonstration facilities more accessible, hygienic, and materially resourced. - Link teaching observations to newly developed gender, SEL, and UDL content embedded in the curriculum. - Create a budget to cover expenses related to accessibility at practicum sites.

County: Lofa County

Lofa County Community College		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Staffing	- Some 84% of faculty and staff are men and 16% are women, posing challenges to equitable gender balance. At least four faculty members surveyed self-identify as having a disability. At the time of this assessment, no women were reported to be serving on the senior administrative or leadership team. - Policies have some language related to gender inclusion, and there is a clear policy on sexual harassment. It is unclear whether women were involved in developing these policies. Existing policies are not clearly or uniformly communicated to staff and students. - Policies are currently not in place for disability inclusion including workplace accommodations. Policies are in place for sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, and emergency leave. Clear policies are in place for applying for leave. - Most faculty surveyed have not received training on disability-inclusive education (7/10) or teaching students with learning difficulties (5/10). However, most faculty express an interest in receiving further training and capacity development. - No formal processes are in place for implementing workplace climate surveys on a regular basis. - Faculty and staff have limited knowledge of the existence of MOE policies on Inclusive Education, National Policy on Girls Education, Children's Law, and so on.	- Revise policies to consider gender equity (including representation by women in policy authorship) and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Further clarify pathways for reporting concerns of discrimination or harassment. - Develop specific strategies to promote more women into positions of leadership and authority and monitor progress over time. - Provide faculty training in gender equality and disability inclusion practices, policies, and approaches. - Provide faculty, staff, and students with orientation and training in each policy area and clearly communicate expectations for violators. - Upon hiring, permit new employees to request accommodations, and set a budget to provide for reasonable accommodations request and/or support services such as modified equipment, ICT services, sign language interpretation, braille materials, and so on. - Conduct employee performance reviews regularly and incorporate feedback from students through biannual or annual satisfaction surveys.

Lofa County Community College		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
Student Body	- The employee handbook clearly identifies expectations for a safe school climate and a campus free from discrimination and all forms and types of harassment. However, students reported discrimination and unfair treatment, including teachers favoring male students and offering additional supports and accommodations for male students over female students. These concerns are compounded by embedded sociocultural norms in the broader community, including the Sandy Secret Society (female genital mutilation), early marriage, and family responsibilities. - Students' greatest concerns relate to financing their education (school fees, room and board, and transportation). There are no dormitories on campus. Many female students leave their homes in distant towns and villages and move to Voinjama for school. Many struggle to find housing accommodation, placing them at risk for exploitation and requiring them to conduct menial labor for subsistence. - The student population in the College of Education is 85% male. However, historical averages in the primary education program have been approximately 74% female, suggesting that women are significantly likelier to pursue careers in the early grades and men are significantly likelier to pursue careers in the upper grades. - While students have access to an academic advisor, the institution does not provide targeted supports, services, and resourcing to ensure a gender- and disability-friendly campus environment.	- Identify and train female and male staff and student focal points for receiving and fairly responding to complaints of harassment or discrimination. Identify and implement strategies to combat traditional gender norms present on and off campus, including equal treatment for women in education and combatting female genital mutilation practices. - Ensure students with disabilities have access to basic accommodations required to ensure equity, including access to sign language interpretation for those who are deaf. Instructors should provide access to accessible course materials for all students, including those with disabilities. Other reasonable accommodations such as extended time on tests should be considered according to individual need. - Offer or advocate for additional scholarships and financial assistance to support students, especially women and students with disabilities, who demonstrate a strong need. Ensure selection criteria for scholarship awards are based on a transparent, merit-based, and gender-responsive rubric to reduce bias in the selection process. - Regularly collect and review data relevant to the retention and progress of women and students with disabilities to evaluate performance. - Ensure school climate regarding gender and social inclusion is a regular agenda item on the leadership meeting agenda. - Develop policies and plans to recruit diverse student populations, regularly survey school climate among students, and monitor progress over time.

Lofa County Community College		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	No strategies are in place to attract and recruit a diverse student body. There are no affirmative action programs to accept more female students and/or students with disabilities. A limited number of scholarships are offered by politicians.	
Physical Premises and Materials	- Other than the USAID-funded science and engineering building, all physical premises on campus are inaccessible for people with disabilities. Accessing the campus from the broader city center poses risks to persons with disabilities who must walk long distances or take motorcycle taxis on uneven dirt roads. - Safe WASH facilities are a concern for staff and students, and there are no private or accessible WASH facilities for students. Female and male faculty use the same bathrooms, and female students in particular feel unsafe in student bathrooms without doors or locks. - The classrooms mostly only have blackboards; no supplementary materials were observed to support teaching and learning in any classroom.	- Identify opportunities to make minor, low-cost modifications to infrastructure to support accessibility, and ensure that any new construction includes consultation with relevant accessibility advisors in Liberia. - Recruit a local sign language trainer/interpreter to enable access to communication for the student in the College of Education who is deaf. - Provide a printer/photocopier for students to use on campus and make course materials available free of cost in online, accessible formats. - Construct safe and accessible WASH facilities on campus. Consider long-term plans for dormitories for students who live in remote areas. - Identify opportunities to furnish classrooms with low- or no-cost teaching and learning materials which can be used by student teachers and demonstration school students.
Instructional Practices, Procedures, and Content	- No evidence suggests that staff have access to technical expertise and resources to support disability inclusion and struggling learners. - Students report that classroom environments are generally safe and respectful. However, they have reported discrimination against women and preferential treatment towards men by some instructors.	- Identify and progressively seek out training needs and opportunities for faculty, including gender-inclusive instructional practices, rights of persons with disabilities, SEL, UDL, and student-centered instructional practices. - Diversify instructional practices in faculty and student teacher lesson delivery, including approaches consistent with UDL and student-centered methodologies.

Lofa County Community College		
Domains	Summary of Key Findings	Suggestions and Conclusions
	- The curriculum does not have any standalone content related to gender or inclusion, although some courses address culturally relevant teaching which responds to student diversity. - Although it was not possible to observe lessons, students and teachers report some student-centered course work, including activity-based learning. The employee handbook in its preamble emphasizes that the college will use a student-centered approach.	- Identify opportunities to modernize the curriculum related to inclusion in courses that already address these principles, and further embed inclusive content across other subject areas where such principles are not reflected. - Include inclusive teaching strategies among competencies to be monitored for student teachers, and track performance over time.
Demonstration Schools	- As institutional policies related to gender and disability equity are generally inadequate or absent, this information is not available for demonstration schools. No policies outlining expectations for safeguarding or inclusion are clearly communicated to demonstration schools. - Students take part in an 8-week-long practicum. The focus of this practicum is not currently on inclusive teaching approaches. The college does not have clear monitoring mechanisms in place to assess the pedagogical approaches used in a practicum environment. - The college has no budget for responding to reasonable accommodations requests at practicum sites.	- Offer training and guidance to all faculty and students involved with demonstration schools on newly developed institutional policies, including reporting requirements for child protection among students at demonstration schools. - Establish formal agreements with demonstration schools that include protections and safeguards for teacher-aspirants prior to students beginning their practicum experiences. Develop clear reporting mechanisms for teacher-aspirants to report abuse or policy violations while they are on practicum assignments. - Link teaching observations to newly developed gender, SEL, and UDL content embedded in the curriculum. - Create a budget to cover expenses related to accessibility at practicum sites.