



## **Swedish Police Project in Liberia**

*Gender Mainstreaming Case Example of ISSAT's mid-term evaluation*

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In 2018, the Swedish National Police (SNP) requested ISSAT to conduct a mid-term evaluation for its Police Cooperation project in Liberia. The project was implemented by the SNP between 2016 and 2019. The purpose of the project was to achieve improved quality of crime investigations including on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), basic crime investigation, basic crime scene investigation and cooperation between the Liberian National Police (LNP) and the Prosecution Service in three police station areas. The components of the project focused on addressing important challenges and needs as formulated by the LNP and prosecutors such as:

- Training in basic crime investigations, basic crime scene investigations and investigations of SGBV crimes.
- Guidelines to optimise the quality control of any crime investigation case forwarded to the Prosecution Service.
- Basic forensic equipment.
- Improved premises and facilities for one stop centres and comfort rooms for SGBV victims.
- Improved cooperation between police and prosecutors.
- Public awareness raising.

ISSAT's evaluation was one exercise in a series of engagements with the Swedish National Police. It built on previous lessons learned studies on police reform in Liberia and national policy documents. The evaluation included a 7-day mission to Liberia and visits to local police zones for direct observations at police station level. The mission also included semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries as well as SNP normally based in Stockholm.

## **Main Takeaways**

The evaluation was carried out based on OECD-DAC criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability) which is aligned with [ISSAT's methodological approach for evaluations](#). Guided by the terms of reference, ISSAT closely liaised with the project's gender expert to understand and better integrate in the evaluation's approach the main components of effective police investigations into sexual based crime and victim protection.

### **LESSON 1: Gender equality approaches need to be an explicit part of the evaluation methodology**

Throughout the data gathering phase, ISSAT ensured consistent inquiry into the project's gender sensitive approaches and strategies. Under each of the evaluation criteria, ISSAT looked at gender relevant issues and dimensions. The results of ISSAT's evaluation found that SNP systematically promoted gender equality, and allocated resources for combatting sexual and gender-based violence crimes. This reflected Swedish commitment to this gender equality and combatting SGBV, through project strategies that promoted awareness-raising among local counterparts.

## **LESSON 2: Gender equality subject-matter expertise is essential for articulating project impact**

The Swedish National Police included a gender expert as part of the project's team. The gender expert on SGBV was not based in Liberia but deployed up to four times a year. Having a gender expert as part of the project further strengthened the quality of the project's deliverables, as well as the communications capability for the project to create traction and ownership of its priorities amongst stakeholders. It increased focus on SGBV reporting, achievements and outcomes for Swedish National Police, as well as enabled greater synergies between the different work streams.

## **LESSON 3: Build on what works at the local context**

ISSAT's evaluation demonstrated that the Swedish support project achieved positive results from its capacity building engagements on SGBV because it built on existing training material already used by the Liberian National Police and the UN Mission in Liberia. This method ensured that the project's contribution was consistent with current skills and techniques used by LNP. The added value of the SNP was therefore to bring in practical implementation techniques addressing victims of SGBV. This made the trainings and practical elements relevant and grounded in a Liberian context rather than in a Swedish model, contributing directly to the success of the project.

## **LESSON 4: Comfort rooms are an effective protection measure if used appropriately**

Another key output of the Swedish support project was the usage of comfort rooms where victims can report SGBV crimes. Comfort rooms require minimal maintenance costs if used in a consistent manner. ISSAT's evaluation showed that it is important to establish guidelines and objectives for their usage to prevent improper, or unintended usage of the dedicated facilities. Moreover, comfort rooms need to be included in national regulations, operational documents and strategies in order to enable continuous monitoring and review of their usage by SGBV victims.

## **LESSON 5: Donor coordination on cross-cutting issues is crucial**

ISSAT's evaluation demonstrated that engagement in coordination activities ensures critical information gathering on primary needs when it comes to SGBV crime investigations and forensic evidence gathering. Active and close collaboration between donors and national stakeholders in the form of task forces or coordination groups strengthens the effectiveness and impact of donor efforts and programming. It also provides a platform to explore whether the project is on the right track and opens new channels to troubleshoot if and when the project faces resistance, blockages or challenges.

## **LESSON 6: Avoid revictimization during evaluation of SGBV programming**

To safeguard and protect the victims of SGBV crimes, there is a need for rules and procedures to be put in place in the methodology in order to prevent "revictimization" of victims. Questions and

discussions on the person's prior traumatic experience and re-examination of details and actions that explain the incident and the police's response could put the SGBV survivor at risk, as well as expose their family or community members to unintended consequences. Evaluation teams conducting impact or effectiveness reviews of a SGBV programs need to design their approach avoiding revictimizing the victims.

**Lesson 7: Use awareness-raising campaigns as an outreach tool and not only for visibility**

When awareness campaigns are used as a strategy for the project to achieve its objectives, it is important that these are used as outreach channels to raise awareness on SGBV rather than merely be project visibility tools. Such campaigns also enable continuous monitoring on SGBV issues and serve as powerful advocacy tools for national counterparts to their maintain focus on those crimes and combatting them. Projects that integrate empirical evidence of outcomes in their awareness campaigns tend to achieve higher levels of conviction and credibility, particularly on a complex and culturally charged subject area such as SGBV.