

UNDP/MOCI Livelihood and Employment Creation Project

**Liberia MSMEs Growth Accelerator Programme - Cohort III**

**MSMEs Final Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Report**

**March 20, 2024**



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## Acronyms

ALAB	Accountability Lab Liberia
GALP	Growth Accelerator Liberia Program
GOL	Government of Liberia
iCampus	Innovation Campus
LRA	Liberia Revenue Authority
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MOCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NASSCORP	National Social Security and Welfare Corporation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program



## I. Introduction

### I.1 Background and Introduction

The Growth Accelerator Liberia Program (GALP), a sub-set of the livelihood and creation program of the Government of Liberia, the UNDP, and its partners, is designed to help revenue generation of small and medium-sized enterprises to scale up their operations and meaningfully contribute to the national economic development of Liberia through increased revenues and job creation, particularly for youth, including women and people living with disabilities.

This year's program supported the acceleration of 10 sustainable, value, and diversified livelihood opportunities (5 MSMEs, 5 Clean/Renewable Energy Ventures), with all 10 receiving co-financing support. Within this final MSMEs' MEL report, there two key activities were conducted;

- **Evaluation of Capacity-building sessions of workshops 2 and 3** and Participants Feedback. This consisted of questions and responses covering various training topics conducted before and after the presentations to capture key learning, as well as general feedback on the relevance of the training, its delivery, and logistics.
- **The final post-grant assessment of the MSME businesses** was conducted with the aim of assessing the businesses' abilities to absorb the management rightly and capacity-building knowledge and skills provided and for them to deploy the co-financing investment support provided towards increasing social impact in the counties, and for the communities they serve.

The ten (10) business ventures supported are five general MSMEs and five clean/renewable energy businesses, each of whom won a grant of U\$40,000.00, which was paid out in two installments of 50% each, alongside a matching fund of (U\$8,000.00) provided by each business. The ten businesses cut across three counties, namely, Margibi, Montserrado, and Nimba.

### I.2 Purpose and Scope of the MEL Activities

The main goal of the MEL activities is to generate and present evidence-based data points from the implementation of activities to ensure that the MEL system, procedures, and processes are helpful and used for learning and improvements of the project delivery and that the data communicates clearly what needs to do, and help to influence the livelihood portfolio's work in different ways and at various levels. The data collected form the basis for effectively and efficiently strengthening the program's delivery, including supporting the capacity-development activities of the participants, strengthening and maintaining the businesses/cooperatives operations, and helping achieve the program outcomes; that is, increases revenue generation of the participants and employment of youth in the country, and for the donor, helps ensure value for money of the investment made by different funders, and used further to make the case for additional support.



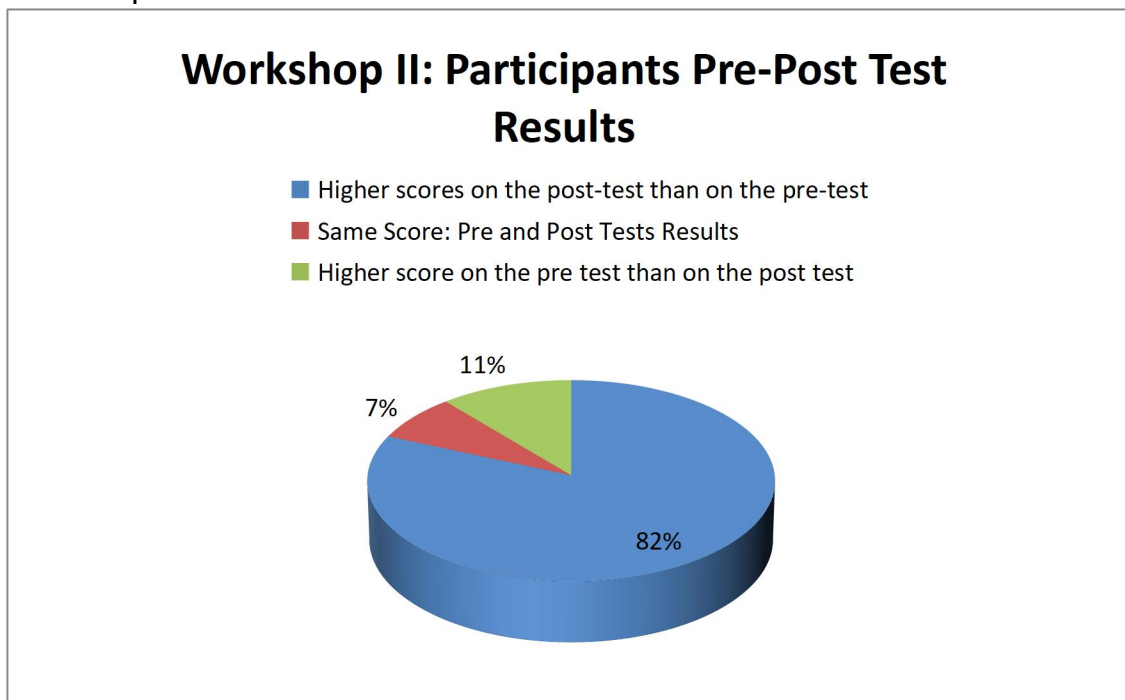
## 2. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Activities

### 2.1 Capacity-building Workshops II and III

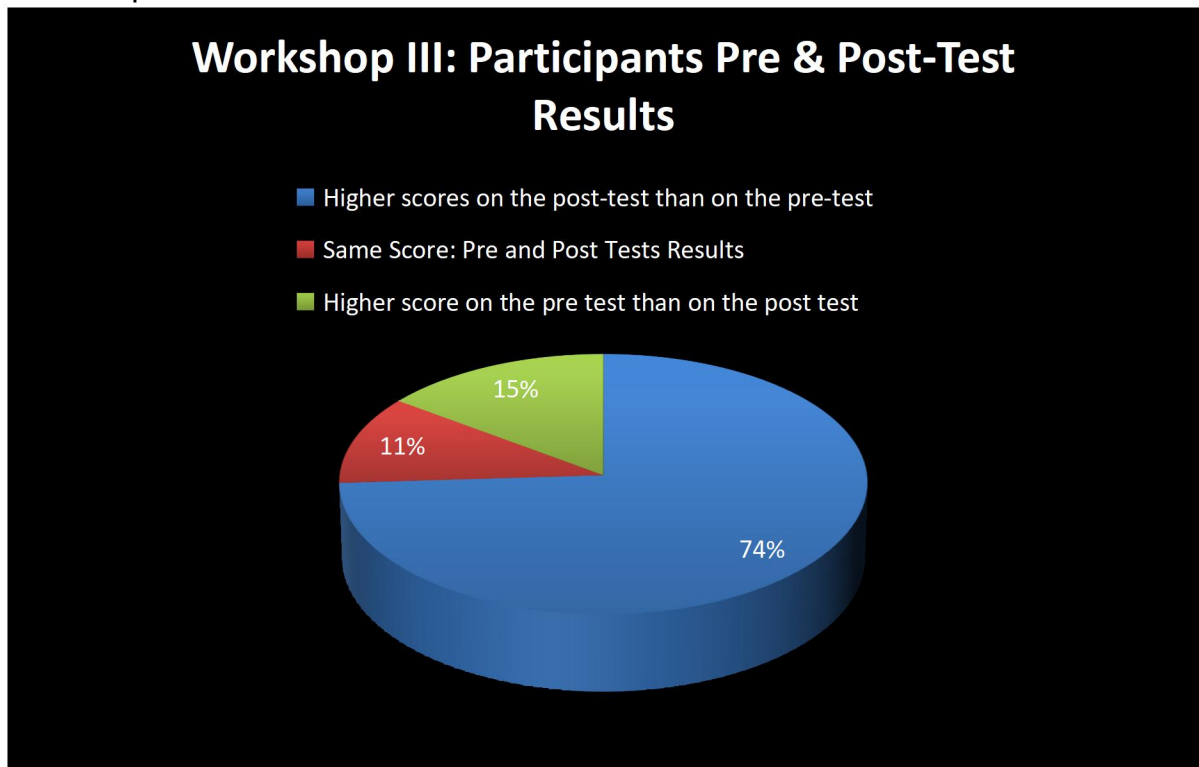
The capacity development and mentoring support to existing and potential MSME businesses aimed to identify and address significant gaps specific to the businesses and their operations along the value chain. Therefore, workshop two (2) covered **“value chains, supply chains & production, distribution, sales and customer care,”** and workshop three (3) covered **“building the foundation for scale, investor communication & growth trajectories.”** The two capacity-building exercises were for two days each and were implemented on September 29-30 and October 26-27, 2023, in Ganta City, Nimba County, and Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County, respectively.

A pre and post-test was designed and administered at each of the workshops to measure the participants' levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills gained as a result of the exercise. The data shows that an average of **82%** of the participants gained some form of new knowledge and skills in Workshop II, and **74%** experienced the same during the third workshop. What is also worth noting is that out of the **11** and **7** percent that had the same score on the pre and post-tests, about half that number scored **100%** on both pre and post-tests. This explains that some participants already knew some of the presented lessons. The graphs below depict the aggregated data more clearly.

#### a. Workshop II



b. Workshop III



## 2.2 Final Evaluation Findings

Between February 23-27, 2024, iCampus and partners sent three teams out in the field to conduct a physical post-grant-payment evaluation of all ten (10) businesses.

Within the program design framework, an internal evaluation exercise was planned to take place after the program activities, including the disbursement of all the funds to the businesses from the donor. The aim of the activities was to assess the businesses’ abilities to absorb the management and capacity-building knowledge and skills provided rightly and for them to deploy the co-financing investment support provided towards increasing social impact in the counties and for the communities they serve. The exercise was able to measure the achievement of outputs/outcomes and provide ratings for the targeted objectives of the program.

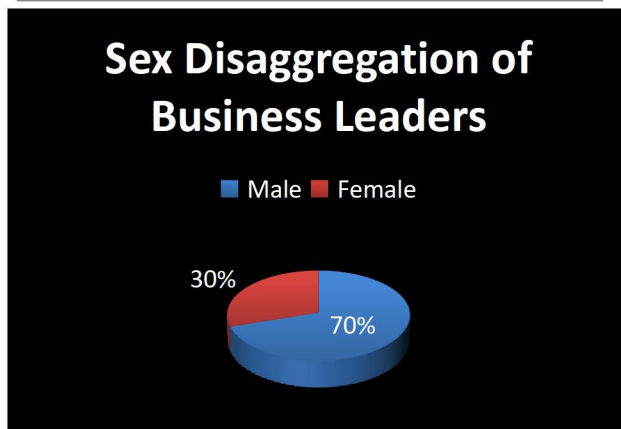
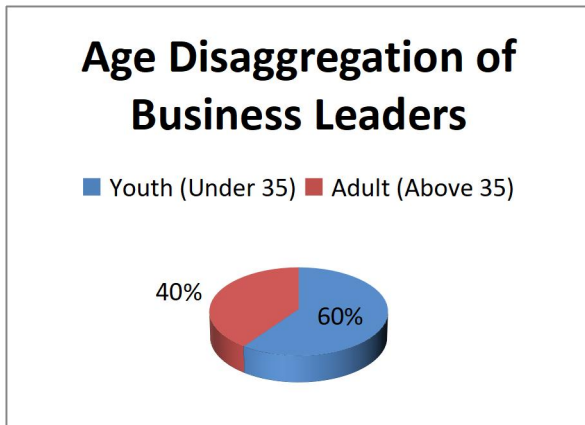
Below are the key Findings:

I. Business Name and Key Product and Service

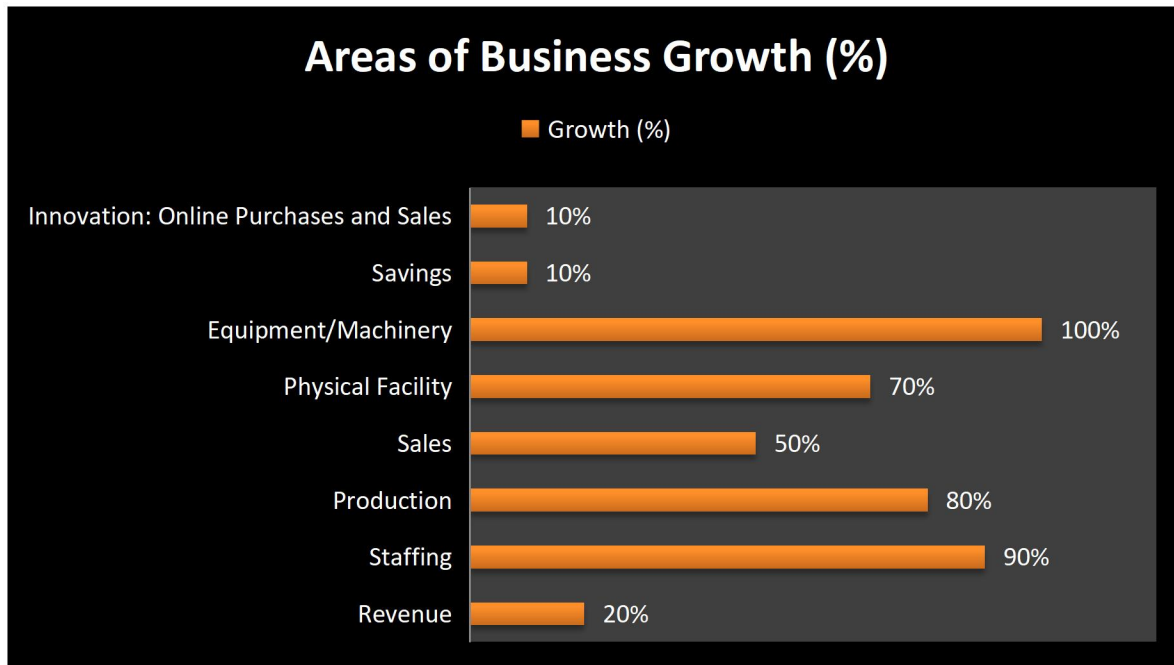
No	Name of Business	Product/Service
I	Eco-Energy Liberia	Solar Energy Products

2	iFarm Liberia	Animal husbandry, and organic fertilizer
3	Grace Diagnostic and Treatment Center Inc.	Medical diagnosis and treatment services, clinical engineering
4	Green Gold Liberia	Briquettes, clean cook stoves.
5	Eco fuel	Chacoal briquette. fire starter, shisha coal and organic fertilizer
6	Payless Cloth Pads	Pad production
7	Voma Energy Liberia	Clean energy , maintenance, configuration
8	Mako's Fruits	Caved fruits for events, fresh juice, smoothes
9	Naz Naturals	Natural hair products
10	A-I Technical Engineering Solutions	Solar Installation, Maintenance and Retailing of Solar Products

2. Sex and Youth-Led Businesses- The business leaders are predominantly youthful, 60% and women account for 30% of that number. The graphs follow below:



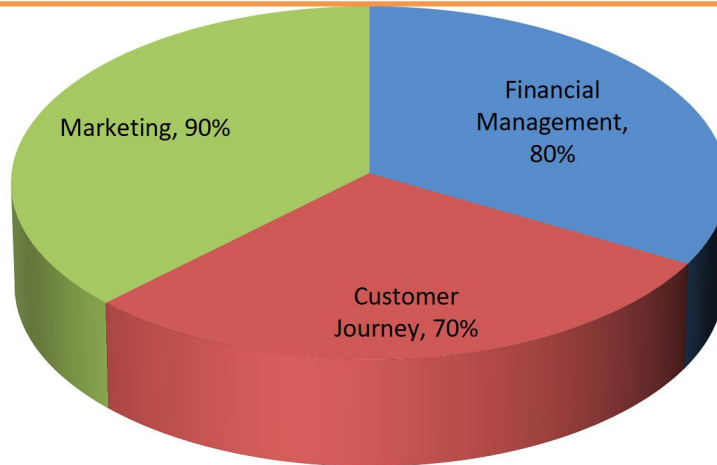
3. Business Growth and Development - The businesses experience growth in the areas of Production, Revenue and Sales, Staffing, Physical Facility, Equipment and Machinery, Savings, and Service Innovation. One hundred percent (100%) of the businesses acquired new Machinery/Equipment for the businesses, which translated into more production, as reported by (80%) of the businesses. The percentage of businesses experiencing growth in their respective areas are classified and presented in the graph below:



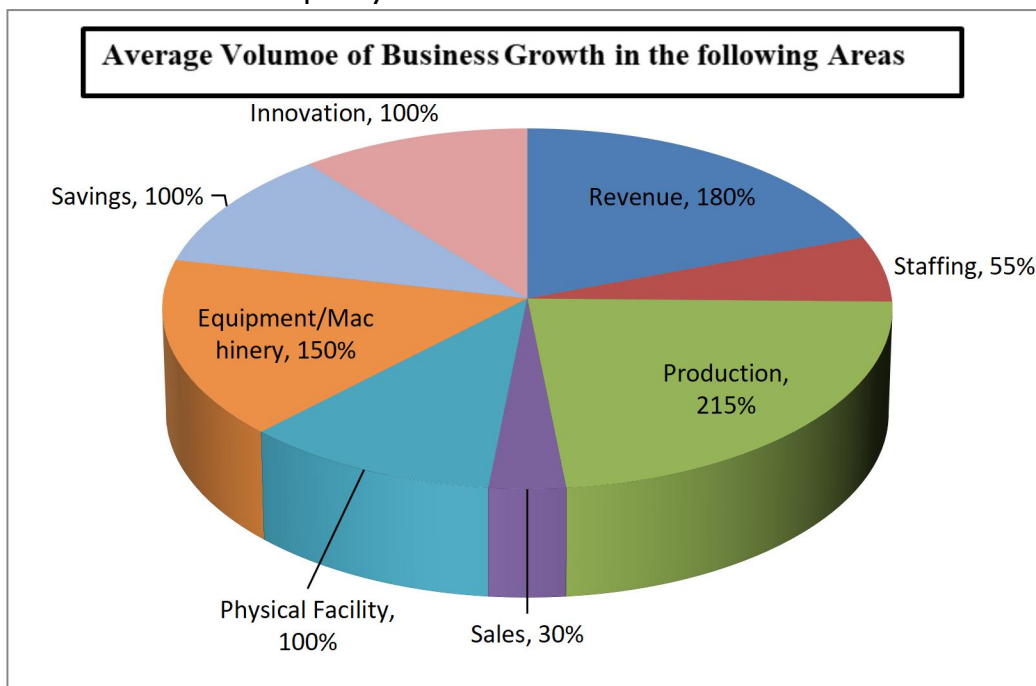
4. Most Impactful Areas of Capacity Building- The businesses listed Marketing (90%), Financial Management (80%), and Customer Journey (70%) as the three most significant topics covered during the course of the training workshops. The graph below displays the data:



## Most Impactful Areas: Percentage of Businesses Eng

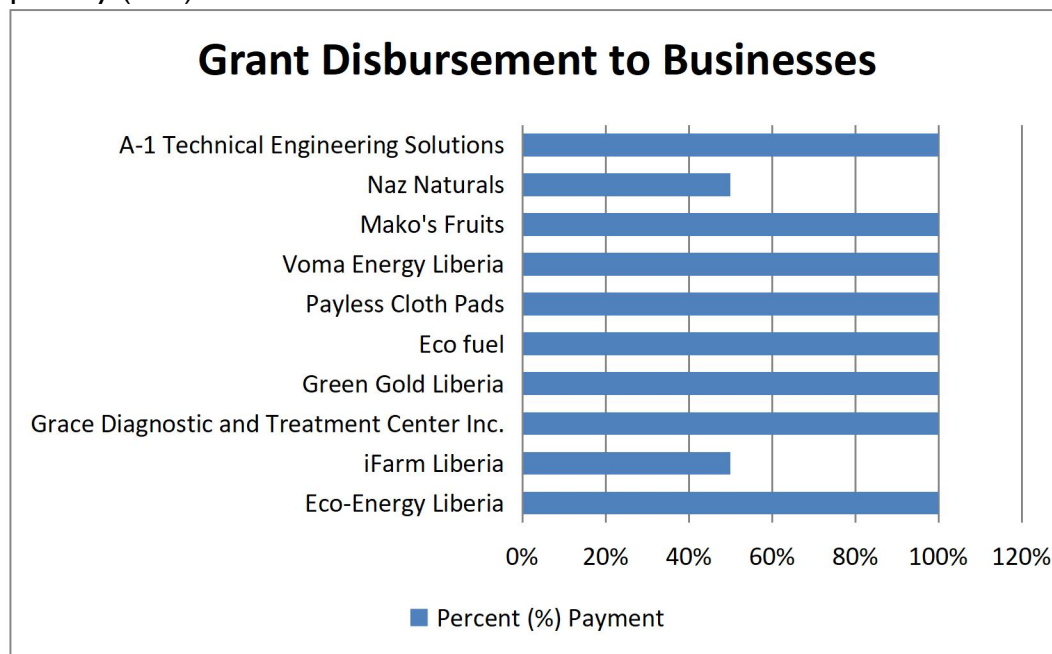


5. **Average Volume of Business Growth-** The businesses have significantly shown tangible/visible impact since receiving the grants about three months ago. The average production of the businesses has increased by 215%. This has seen revenue soar to 180%. Staffing has risen by 55%, all of whom are youth, with 33% females. The graph below explicitly shows the details.



6. **Grants Disbursement** – Eight (8) of the ten (10) businesses have received the full payment of U\$40,000.00 made in two installments. The remaining two businesses have each received 50% (U\$20,000.00) of the data collection date. The other two businesses cited delays in gathering and submitting the required documentation to the donor. On the other hand, Grace Diagnostic & Treatment Center Inc. and Payless Cloth Pad are the only two businesses that have completed all their agreed milestones. The remaining eight businesses have reported ongoing activities in the areas of construction, equipment delivery, staff training, and final reports.

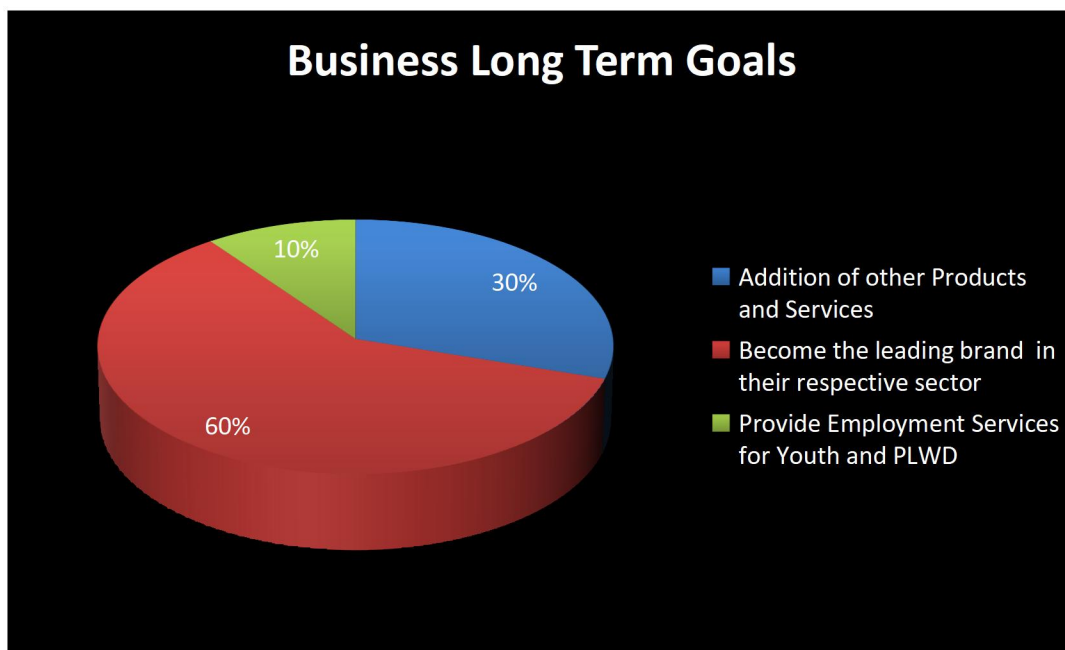
The graph below shows the individual businesses that have been completely (100%) and partially (50%) funded to date:



7. **Unexpected and Unintended Outcomes-** The business reported a delay in the second trench payment from the donor, a delay in the shipment and delivery of the equipment and machinery, burglary, and theft. However, they reported some key positive and innovative outcomes, including producing fertilizer from the pigs' urine for farming and making flower pots from Charcoal and Eco Stove production waste.

8. **Businesses Short and Long term Goals-** After the grant investment, the businesses were asked to state their short- and long-term goals. The top three responses for the short-term goals were: I. Increase Revenue/Sales (60%), II. Expand the Business Services (30%) in other locations, and III. Add value to their Products and Services (10%), and the top three responses for the long-term goals were I. Addition of other Products and Services (30%), 2. Become the leading brand in their respective sectors (60) and 3.

Provide Employment Services for Youth and PLWD (10%). The graphs below display the key responses in terms of percentages:



9. The Growth Accelerator’s participants Ratings-

- i. **Program Accessibility-** The participants rated the program’s accessibility at an average of 8, out of 10.
- ii. **Key Program’s Strength and Weaknesses:**



- a. **Strength-** Facilitators are knowledgeable and experienced; the team demonstrated excellent networking capabilities, very good organization and Coordination, Good monitoring and supervision, and the procedures and processes were transparent and merit-based
- b. **Weaknesses-** Challenging online mentorship with grantees in rural areas, delay in funds disbursement, limited project implementation timeframe for completing all the required milestones, and high co-financing (cash amount-U\$8,000.00 or 20%) required from the businesses

### 3. Conclusion and Recommendations

**3.1 Conclusion-** The projects/activities implemented by the various businesses under the Growth Accelerator Cohort III have shown great promise and have already started to impact economy, just after three-four months of the grant disbursement. They have found more ideal spaces for their operations, brought in needed equipment that has risen production up to a staggering average of 215%, and revenue/sales up to an average of 180%. All of these with the help of needed human resources employed (55%).

**3.2 Recommendations-** The participants recommended, Peer-to- peer mentoring, and or in-person mentoring instead of online, Post grant workshops-One after the first disbursement, and the other after the final disbursement. These workshops will focus on the reporting requirements and financial management of the funds disbursed. Lastly, they recommended that the grant size be stratified and those in productions are given money than those in processing/value addition and retail businesses.

### 4. Appendix

#### 4.1 Final Evaluation Questionnaire

#### Growth Accelerator Liberia Programme (GALP) Cohort III- MSMEs End of Project due Diligence Evaluation

1. What is the name of your Business/Cooperative?
2. What are the Business/Cooperative key products/services?
3. Select the category you belong to: a. General MSMEs b. Clean/Renewable Energy MSMEs c. Agriculture Cooperative
4. Select the County of your Business/Cooperative operations:
  - i. Bong
  - ii. Bomi



- iii. Grand Bassa
  - iv. Grand Cape Mount
  - v. Grand Gedeh
  - vi. Grand Kru
  - vii. Lofa
  - viii. Margibi
  - ix. Maryland
  - x. Montserrado
  - xi. Nimba
  - xii. River Cess
  - xiii. River Gee
  - xiv. Sinoe
  - xv. Gbarpolu
5. Date of the Survey:
  6. Name and Position of the Person Completing the Survey on behalf of the Business/Cooperative:
  7. Contact Number of the Person Completing the survey on behalf of the business/cooperative:
  8. Name of the CEO/Chairperson of the Business/Cooperative
  9. CEO/Chairperson's Contact Number:
  10. CEO/Chairperson's Email Address:
  11. CEO/Chairperson Sex: a. Male b. Female c. Others
  12. Select the age range of the CEO/Chairperson
    - a. Youth (18-35)
    - b. Adult (36-Above)
  13. Survey conducted by (Enumerator's name):
  14. What are the most significant pieces of learning (the top 3) gained from the Program (this includes the Bootcamp, Workshops, Coaching, and mentoring)?
  15. In which areas has your business/cooperative experienced growth since participating in the GALP III program? Select all that apply.
    - i. Revenue
    - ii. Staffing
    - iii. Production
    - iv. Sales
    - v. Physical Facility
    - vi. Equipment/Machinery
    - vii. Saving
    - viii. Other(s)
  16. If you selected others as your response above, please specify:



17. Can you state the growth volume in the areas you selected above? (eg. Production: You were producing 500 fruit bowls per quarter, now you are producing 1,200. This means you have increased quarterly production by 700 bowls)
18. Have you received the two payment trenches (100%) of your agreed grant funds from the UNDP?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
19. Have you completed all the agreed program milestones deliverables as planned?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
20. If your answer to the above question is NO, list all the milestone activities that you have NOT completed, and why?
21. In the course of the project milestone activity implementation, were there any unexpected/unintended outcomes? If yes, what were they?
22. What are the short and long term goals of the business/cooperative under this GALP III project ?
23. From the goals that you have stated above, what all have been achieved?
24. What can you say are the key factors that have contributed to the success/failure of this project (GALP III)?
25. From the way in which this project was designed (including the activities), what can you say are the GALP III project's strength and weaknesses?
26. Photos of the main items procured with the GALP III grant funding (Take a picture)
27. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is very difficult, and 10 is easily accessible, how would you rate your experience accessing the Growth Accelerator Liberia Program grant funding?
28. Before joining the Growth Accelerator Programme, please tell us your experience in accessing grant funding, particularly in Liberia.
29. What are your top two recommendations to the Growth Accelerator Liberia management team in terms of how they can improve the programme: