

ADDRESSING VIOLENT TENDENCIES IN LIBERIA

An evidence-based policy paper
SCORE LIBERIA Wave Two (2018)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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About SCORE Liberia & SeeD

SeeD implemented two waves of the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index in Liberia between 2016 – 2018 in partnership with PBO, United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNDP. SCORE Liberia was designed following a rigorous participatory process and the fieldwork was conducted by SfCG with expert support from Dr David Backer (University of Maryland, US). All the data presented therein is from SCORE Liberia Waves conducted between 2016 and 2018. The ideas, opinions and comments therein this policy paper are entirely the responsibility of its author(s) and do not necessarily represent or reflect donors' policies.

The SCORE Index was originally developed by SeeD in collaboration with the UNDP with funding from USAID. The SCORE Index has also been implemented in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Moldova, Malaysia, Nepal and Ukraine. SeeD advises international development organisations, governments and civil society leaders on the design and implementation of evidence-based strategies for social change and sustaining peace. Our work contributes to the global debate on how to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for building peaceful and prosperous societies, empowering women and youth and improving citizens' connectedness in urban spaces. SeeD uses participatory research techniques and advanced analytical instruments to bridge the peacebuilding evidence gap, investigating and predicting optimal pathways for sustaining peace and provide evidence-based policy recommendations. For more on SeeD, visit: <https://www.seedsofpeace.eu>



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Addressing Violent tendencies

SCORE LIBERIA 2018 Policy Brief

Introduction

SCORE Liberia 2018 assesses over 350 indicators to investigate social cohesion in the country, focusing on civic attitudes, intergroup relations, violent tendencies, gender dynamics as well as effectiveness and confidence in governance institutions. Evidence presented in this policy brief is based on the advanced statistical analysis using a representative random sample of over 6200 people across Liberia. SCORE Liberia findings aim to support evidence-based public policy, and development and reconciliation investments to improve their efficacy and impact in order to contribute to sustaining peace in the country.

A robust and contextual understanding of the root causes of violence is vital for fostering social cohesion and reconciliation efforts in post-conflict contexts. Provision of security is a prerequisite for economic development as well as for building societal and institutional resilience and prosperity. In close collaboration with the United Nations Police (UNPOL) and the Liberia National Police (LNP), SCORE Liberia's first wave in 2016 was instrumental in diagnosing risks, and identifying conflict prone areas. This assessment was especially important in the context of the draw down of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) at that time, and preparations being made for the 2017 presidential elections. Since the completion of the first wave of SCORE Liberia, the country had experienced significant milestones. Both the departure of UNMIL and presidential elections were completed successfully without any significant breakout of violence. In fact, despite the UNMIL draw down, Liberia presidential elections marked the first peaceful transfer of power since 1944. Nonetheless, efforts to address fragility and to build resilience against violence are far from complete. Building on the findings of the first SCORE Liberia assessment, this policy brief investigates the predictors of violence and focuses on identifying evidence-based pathways for mitigating violent tendencies.

Violent tendencies in the SCORE Liberia study is a composite index made up of three indicators: (1) aggression¹ in daily life; (2) endorsement of political violence²; and (3) endorsement of sexual and gender-based violence³ (SGBV). Each of these indicators are measured separately via the SCORE questionnaire calibrated and tailored to the context. These indicators and answers to the specific questions relating to the indicators can be examined individually, and combined into the overall index

¹ The extent to which one is aggressive in daily life, such as frequently getting into fights and confrontations.

² Propensity to use violent means to achieve political change.

³ The extent to which one thinks SGBV is acceptable and the norm, such as believing that women need to tolerate violence to keep the family together.

of violent tendencies. It is important to note that practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is not part of the SGBV indicator, but it is separately assessed by SCORE Liberia and will be unpacked separately further in this brief.

SCORE Liberia 2018 findings show that the overall potential for violence remains the same compared to 2016 levels, and aggression in daily life continues to be the strongest violence tendency indicator. By analysing the levels and drivers of violent tendencies, demographic factors that are associated with violence and the share of citizens who express strong propensity for violence in each county, we identified seven counties as areas of concern, with rural communities most vulnerable to violence. SCORE revealed two striking and contextually specific key pieces of evidence:

- Aggression, endorsement of SGBV and a propensity for political violence, accompanied by victimhood and victimisation⁴, is a self-perpetuating vicious cycle that particularly impacts rural communities.
- Forgiveness⁵ and empathy⁶, as well as support for reforms and good governance policies⁷ are the strongest resilience factors which militate against for violent tendencies. This highlight the vital role of societal healing, reconciliation and democratisation as effective violence prevention measures.

Considering the relationship between civic behaviours and violent tendencies, this policy brief should be read in conjunction with SCORE Liberia's Fostering Constructive Citizenship policy brief.

⁴ This is a meta indicator composed of victimhood regarding severe assault, torture, detention and property violations.

⁵ The extent to which one feel the way to resolve a dispute is by forgiving rather than taking revenge on the other side.

⁶ The degree to which one feels empathetic towards others, and shares the feelings of others

⁷ This is a meta indicator composed of support for reforms and policies regarding land rights, social services and infrastructure, policing and judiciary systems, national peacebuilding policies, anti-corruption policies, decentralisation and entrepreneurship support.

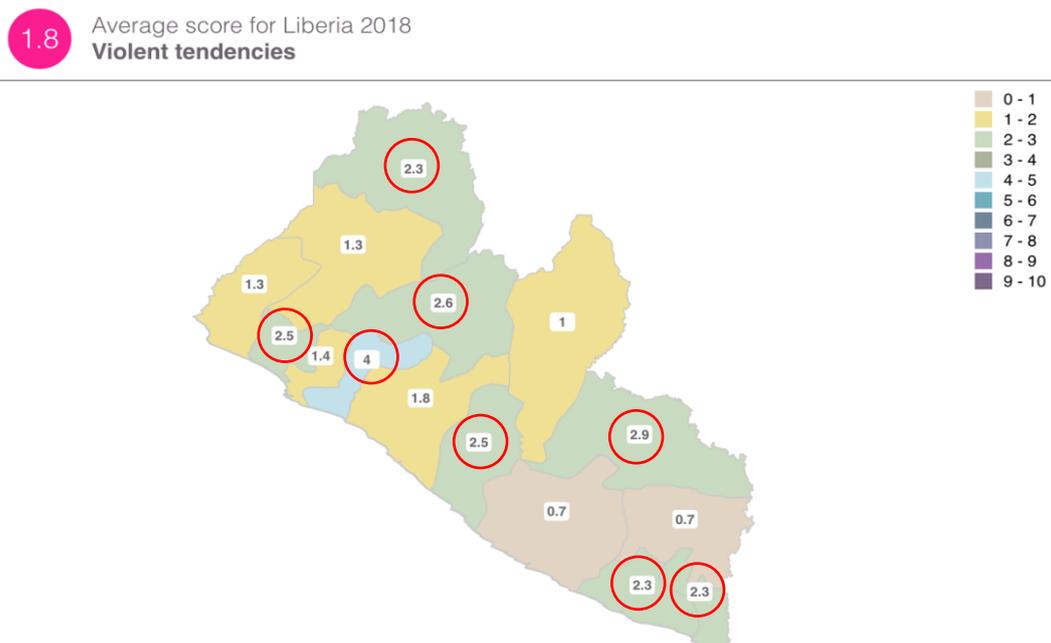
Violent tendencies in Liberia: Key Findings

It is important to emphasise that SCORE Liberia *does not* measure criminality or the prevalence of violent incidents. Although violent crime is closely linked to violent tendencies, SCORE assesses the phenomenon's individual traits by assessing three independent dimensions: daily aggression, readiness political violence and endorsement of SGBV. Undoubtedly, violence could be prompted by a small minority in a given society, yet an assessment of violent tendencies beyond violent incidents is crucial for our understanding of fragility and resilience factors in a country, and therefore key to designing effective violence prevention measures. This section presents temporal changes in violence indicators and a more granular look into the identified conflict-prone counties.

Changes across time

Eliminating violence and orientations toward violence completely is difficult if not impossible, especially in a society with a history of serious political violence, not to mention other types of violence in communities and households. Thus, scores under 1 can be considered 'normal', and scores above 1 can be considered as concerning. SCORE Liberia findings reveal that the national average for violent tendencies is 1.8 on a scale from 0 (no violent tendencies) to 10 (extreme violent tendencies among everyone everywhere). Compared to 2016, violent tendencies on the country level remained unchanged and all things considered, this low score is promising but should not be overemphasized. Even though we accept that achieving a score of zero for violence is unrealistic, we should aspire to be as close to zero as possible. The heatmap illustrated in Figure 1 below shows significant variance across counties, where eight counties – Margibi, Grand Gedeh, River Cess, Bong, Bomi, and Lofa, Grand Kru and Maryland – stand out as regions of concern.

Figure 1. Violent tendencies heatmap



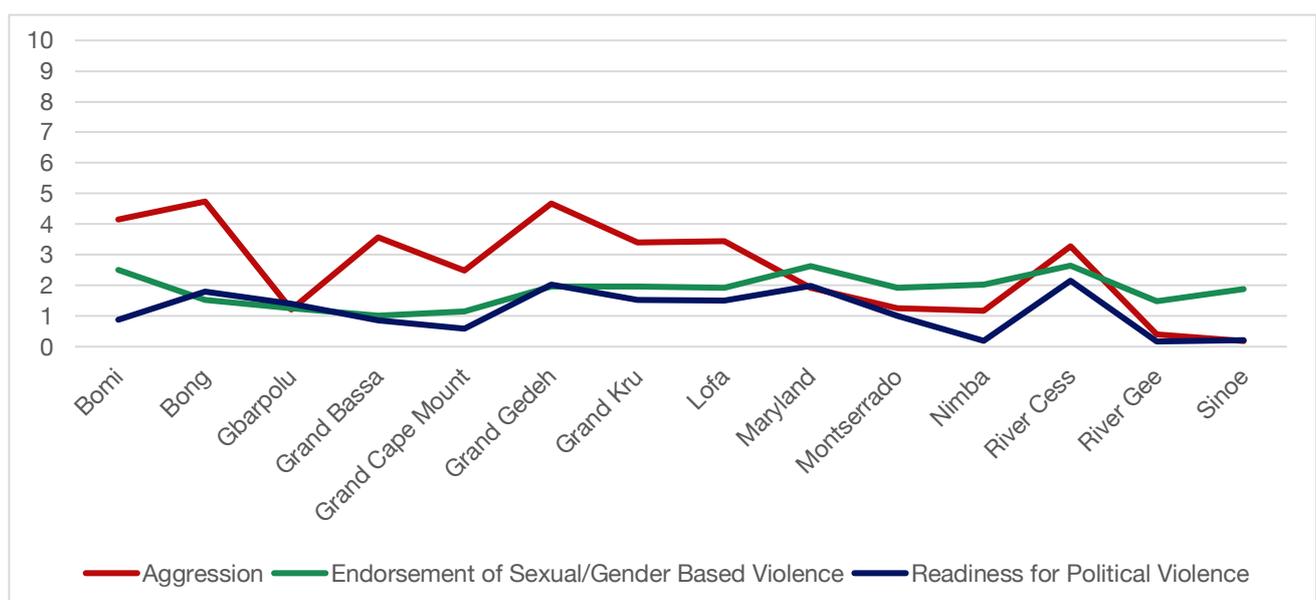
**Only the differences bigger than 0.5 are considered statistically significant.*

It should be noted that victims of violence and past atrocities were over-represented in Margibi county, which can help explain the significantly higher levels of violent tendencies in this county, as victimhood is a predictor of violence. Areas closest to a capital city usually suffer the great pull of the urban centre, which can drain the human capital and resources from its periphery. A similar trend (i.e. peak in violent tendencies) can also be observed in Bomi and Bong counties that border Montserrado. Further, Margibi hosts a large number of displaced people who settled in the county during and after the civil wars, and SCORE findings show that victimhood and violent tendencies are strongly correlated. Nonetheless, these contextual particularities do not fully account for why Margibi shows more than twice the level of violent tendencies compared to the national average. County consultations and validation exercises confirmed a considerable level of anger and disappointment with the lack of progress in the county but also noted that the scores are likely to be skewed due to the over-representation of victimized groups. SCORE Liberia’s third iteration in 2019 would take a closer look at Margibi. Thus, this policy brief excludes Margibi county in its analysis of violent tendencies.

Understanding violent tendencies in conflict prone counties

For a more granular examination, it is important to explore the different dimensions of violent tendencies. The bar-chart in Figure 2 below presents the county level scores for the three indicators that make up the violent tendencies index, namely: aggression, readiness for political violence and endorsement of SGBV. We observe that aggression is significantly higher than other components of violent tendencies across most counties, and on the whole, all three components peak and drop in parallel to each other, indicating the self-perpetuating and multi-faceted character of violence.

Figure 2: Components of violent tendencies



Understanding what contributes to elevated scores in the counties identified as “hotspots” is vital in order to tailor appropriate and effective policies. A striking finding is that the elevated scores for violent tendencies in the seven counties are driven mainly by aggression in daily life, followed by endorsement of SGBV. The table presented in Figure 3 shows that the levels of aggression reported in Bong and Grand Gedeh are alarming, while Maryland is the only county that scores lower than the national average on aggression. Conducting county dialogue groups is necessary to better understand the specific reasons driving aggression in Bong, Grand Gedeh and Bomi. On the other hand, River Cess is the only county that scores significantly higher than the national average across all three components of violent tendencies, and should be considered a high priority for further investigation.

Grand Gedeh, Bong, River Cess, Bomi and Grand Kru are high priority counties that call for further investigation into violent to design tailored made violence prevention measures.

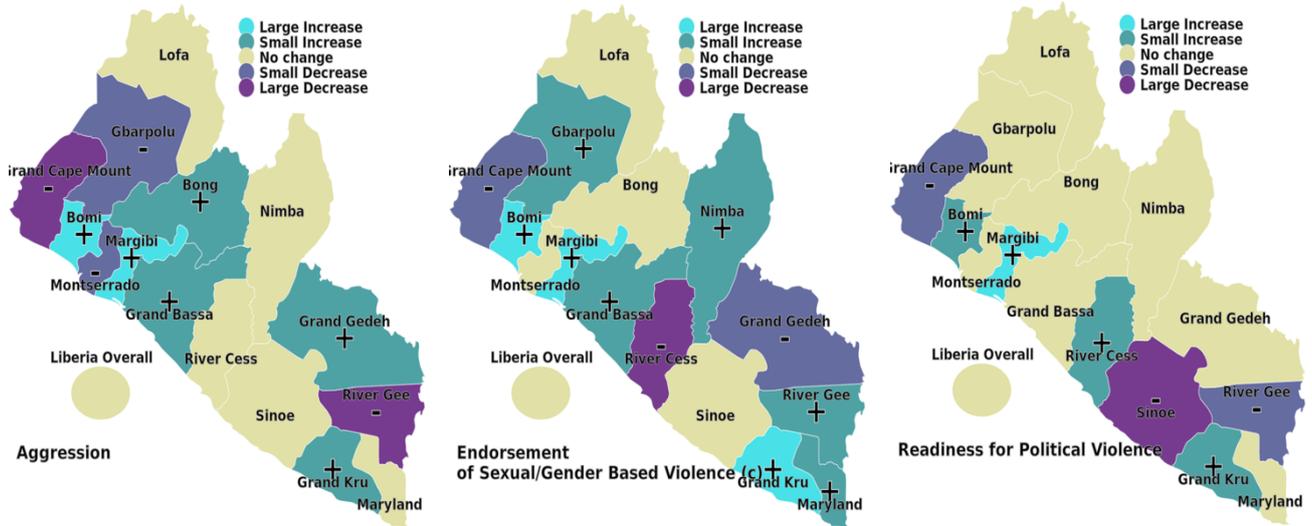
Figure 3. Understanding conflict prone counties

Region	Violent tendencies	Aggression	Endorsement of SGBV	Readiness for Political Violence
National Average	1.8	2.4	2.0	1.2
Grand Gedeh	2.9	4.7	2.0	2.0
Bong	2.6	4.7	1.5	1.8
River Cess	2.5	3.3	2.6	2.2
Bomi	2.5	4.1	2.5	0.9
Maryland	2.3	1.9	2.6	2.0
Lofa	2.3	3.5	1.9	1.5
Grand Kru	2.3	3.4	2.0	1.5

Examining the temporal changes across time between 2016 and 2018 can help better understand the violence dynamics in hotspots. Change heatmaps presented in Figure 4 show an increase in all three indicators that make up violent tendencies in Bomi and Grand Kru. Lofa is the only county that shows no change in all three violent tendencies indicators compared to 2016. While endorsement of SGBV is decreasing in River Cess and Grand Gedeh, readiness for political violence in the former and aggression in the latter increased. This temporal comparison also illustrates positive impact of the initiatives led by the government and UN agencies in Grand Cape Mount, where very high levels of aggression were detected in 2016⁸. This included the implementation of a County Reconciliation Dialogue process in 2017 funded by UNMIL, and led to the creation of a county-wide five-year reconciliation plan.

⁸ SCORE Liberia 2016 findings showed very high aggression levels, in part linked to issues surrounding dissatisfaction with mining concessions in Grand Cape Mount. Quick impact projects and constructive dialogue groups with the local communities were implemented.

Figure 4: Change heatmap comparing 2018 to 2016 scores in violent tendencies



The analysis presented above provides an overview of violent tendencies and its indicators across Liberia, and identifies seven hotspots that have elevated violence scores. However, it does not tell us the distribution of groups that score extremely high or extremely low. Investigating this distribution is crucial for looking deeper than average scores, tailoring preventative measures as well as the strategic allocation of resources of the security sector, such as police deployment. Our advanced analysis involved a population segmentation (Figure 5 below), which highlighted the notable characteristics of four groups with respect to their expressions of daily aggression and their readiness for political violence. On the national level, the majority of respondents (58%) can be considered peaceful as they have low scores on both counts (i.e. non-aggressive and averse to political violence). 8% exhibit aggressive traits, but no propensity for political violence, and approximately 35% of respondents report daily aggression and also endorse political violence. When compared to the distribution of groups in 2016, we can observe that the share of citizens who fall into the yellow category (moderate aggression but no political violence propensity) significantly

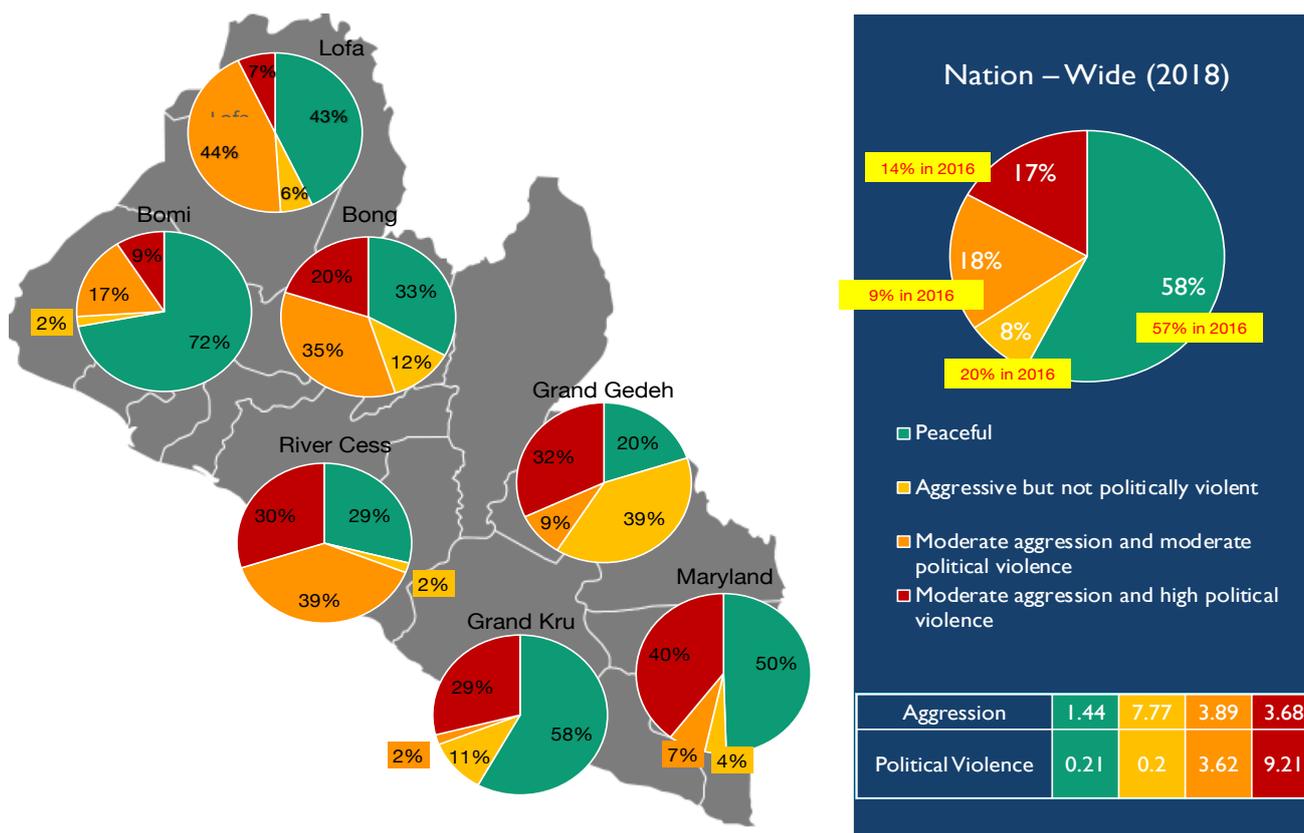
With political violence on the rise in River Cess since 2016, and increasingly high aggression levels in Grand Gedeh and Bong combined with the smallest share of peaceful citizens, these three counties show early warning signs.

decreased while those who fall into the orange category (moderate aggression and moderate political violence propensity) has increased. Although the majority of Liberians are peaceful, these figures are alarming particularly when calculated in relation to the population size. 17% of Liberians report moderate levels of aggression (over 3.7) and extreme levels of political violence propensity (over 9.2), which means over 590,000 people fall into the red category.

Figure 5 below shows the distribution of these groups on the county level across the seven identified hotspots. In addition to noting the share of violent citizens in these counties, it is also important to note the share of peaceful citizens. Peaceful citizens highlight the level of immunity to violent

tendencies and their active participation in countering violence is crucial for durable peace consolidation. The biggest share of peaceful citizens are in Bomi, followed by Grand Kru and Maryland. However, Maryland also has the biggest share of the most violent group in the red category. River Cess, Grand Gedeh and Bong on the other hand can be identified as showing early warning signs with a large distribution of citizens who express strong violent tendencies (both orange and red groups) and a significantly smaller distribution of citizens who are peaceful.

Figure 5: County profiles based on population segmentation



In order to better understand the profile of the group that has an increasing political violence propensity trajectory between 2016 and 2018, SCORE Liberia conducted between-group analysis. The main observations from this analysis is that **the group that shows increasing political violence propensity is young and restless. They perceive intergroup threat and tension, have high aggression and they are seeking political power. Their income and economic security is also decreasing while their support for authoritarianism is increasing. This is a striking finding that points to young people’s discontent and feelings of disenfranchisement with regards to political and economic progress in Liberia. Improving young people’s political representation and meaningful integration into economic and political life would be an effective measure to mitigate violent tendencies.**

Elixir of Violence Prevention: Societal Healing & Democratisation

Advanced statistical analyses conducted by SCORE Liberia point to the exacerbating impact of victimisation and insecurity on violent tendencies, while highlighting the mitigating effect of forgiveness and empathy. This is a remarkable finding that highlights the vital role of societal healing processes, such as holistic transitional justice mechanisms for building resilience and for effective violence prevention measures. It is important to note that SCORE findings in other counties have identified different policy entry points for violence prevention and this is a highly contextual finding specific to Liberia. For example, while family cohesion is the main mitigating factor for violence in Moldova, school connectedness for adolescents and neighbourhood support for adults are the most prominent driver for preventing violence in Ukraine. This section presents the advanced analysis that helps us identify evidence-based policy entry points to mitigate violent tendencies.

Remedy for political violence propensity

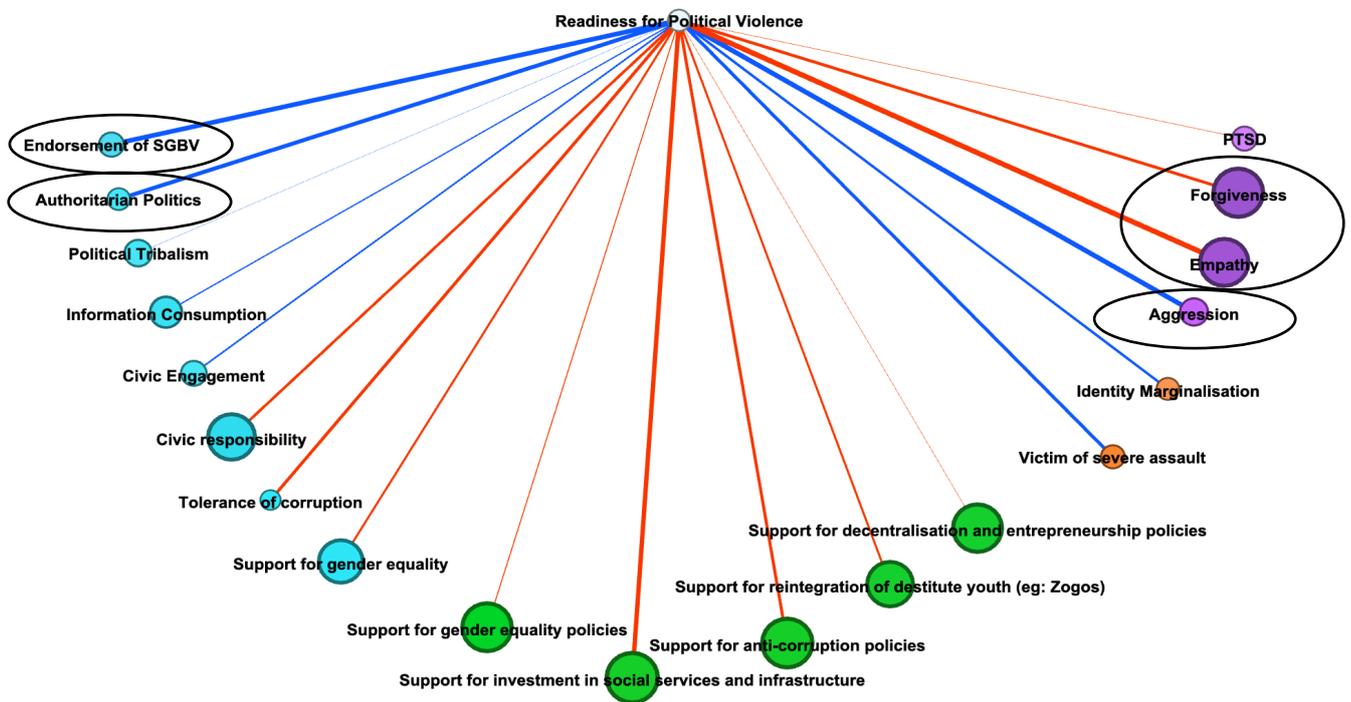
Understanding the relationship between violence indicators is vital in order to tailor appropriate and effective policies. The correlation network presented in Figure 6 below illustrates the relationships readiness for political violence has with other indicators. While the colour of the connecting lines represents the nature of the relationship - **blue** lines symbolize a positive association, and **red** lines symbolize a negative association; the thickness of the lines represents the strength of the relationship – the thicker the line the stronger the relationship. The size of the indicator bubbles represents the score for that indicator; the bigger the bubble, the higher the score. The indicators are grouped thematically in the network: **Cyan** bubbles relate to civic attitudes, **green** bubbles relate to support for different policies, **orange** bubbles are about adverse experiences of individuals while the **purple** bubbles are about psychosocial assets.

Violence and victimisation are self-perpetuating. Violence prevention measures need a holistic approach that includes social healing mechanisms to foster resilience.

The strong positive correlations between all three violent tendency indicators as well as the victimisation indicators (identity victimisation and severe assault) highlight the self-perpetuating character of violence. Strikingly, we can observe a strong reverse correlation between forgiveness and empathy, which highlights the strong positive impact social healing and reconciliation efforts can have on building resilience against political violence. The model shows that support for all reforms and good governance policies has a strong reverse association with readiness for political violence while authoritarian politics has a strong positive association. These relationships underscore the important role of democratisation processes and reveal that people who support governance reforms are less likely to express readiness for political violence. Successful implementation of these

reforms and policies, and developing capacities on participatory decision-making processes would contribute to mitigating political violence propensity.

Figure 6: Correlation network for readiness for political violence



The cross section of a predictive model below further investigates the influence between victimhood and insecurity and confirms a directional relationship beyond a strong correlation. Figure 7 illustrates that severe victimisation is a root cause and a driver for group grievance towards authorities⁹, marginalisation¹⁰ and outgroup polarisation¹¹. In other words, victims of violence feel stronger grievance towards authorities, they are more likely to face identity and structural marginalisation, and they feel stronger tensions towards outgroups. Personal security¹² demonstrates the strongest predictive power in the model. As personal insecurity is the fiercest driver of both marginalisation and group grievance, efforts aimed at improving the local provision of security on the county level such as neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood watchdog initiatives can be effective violence prevention measures.

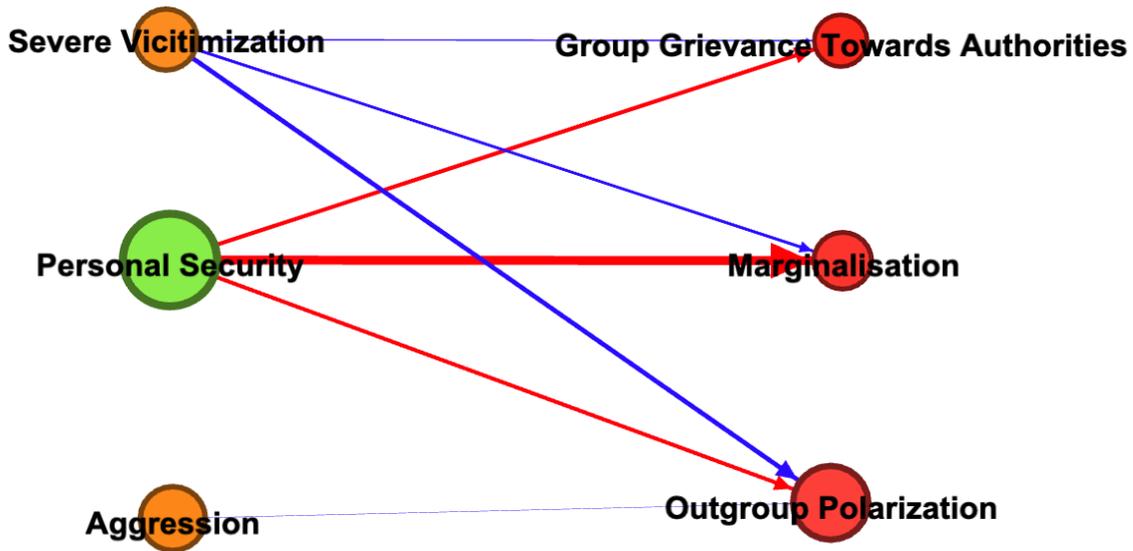
⁹ The extent to which some groups have grievances against authorities, and think that their group is treated unfairly by the government.

¹⁰ The degree to which one feels socially excluded because of their position in society (e.g. level of income, education) or identity (e.g. ethnic, gender, religious).

¹¹ The level of perceived social threat, social distance and negative stereotypes against a group that is seen as the primary rival or primary 'other' by another group.

¹² The degree to which one feels safe from violence in daily life.

Figure 7. Predictive model illustrating the victimhood and insecurity as root causes



Remedy for sexual and gender-based violence: social healing

The SCORE correlation network analysis for SGBV, similar to the readiness for political violence correlation network presented in Figure 6, shows a very strong association between aggression, political violence propensity and authoritarian politics, but adds political tribalism¹³ into the equation. While political tribalism has a significantly weaker correlation with readiness for political violence, it has a strong relationship with SGBV. Figure 8 shows indicators that have a strong correlation with SGBV. While the colour of the connecting lines represents the nature of the relationship - blue lines symbolize a positive association, and red lines symbolize a negative association; the thickness of the lines represents the strength of the relationship – the thicker the line, the stronger the relationship. The size of the indicator bubbles represents the score for that indicator; the bigger the bubble, the higher the score. The indicators are grouped thematically in the network: Cyan bubbles relate to civic attitudes, green bubbles relate to support for different policies, orange bubbles to adverse experiences of individuals, the purple bubbles to psychosocial assets, yellow bubbles to intergroup relations and finally the red bubbles are about demographic indicators.

We can see that apart from information consumption, positive civic attitudes have a reverse correlation and negative civic attitudes have a reinforcing correlation with SGBV. Thus, fostering positive civic attitudes and addressing negative ones would help reduce SGBV. The reinforcing relationship between information consumption and endorsement of SGBV is important. This evidence shows that negative media content about gender norms and stereotypes buttress negative attitudes towards women in Liberia. A similar relationship is also observed in other SCORE countries

¹³ The extent to which one seeks security and justice services from tribal leaders, basing political decisions on tribal affiliations and recognizing solely tribal leaders instead of government institutions.

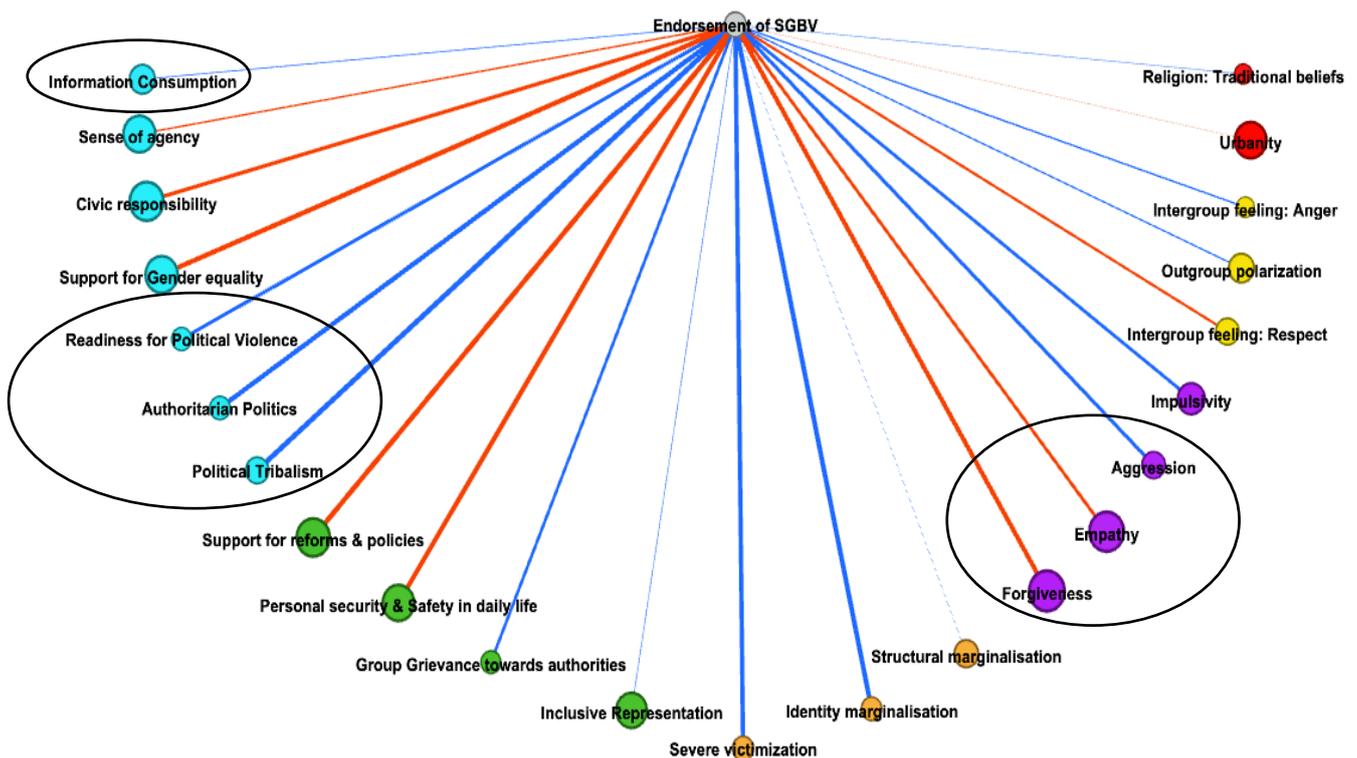
such as Moldova, where media content reproduces repressive stereotypes against women and undermines efforts towards gender equality.

In addition to authoritarian politics having a strong positive correlation with SGBV, we also observe the reverse relationship between support for reforms and policies and SGBV. These relationships underscore the important role of democratisation processes in violence prevention, and reveal that people who support governance reforms are less likely to normalise violence against women. However, it is interesting to note that inclusive representation has a weaker, yet a positive, association too. This could indicate that those groups who feel represented are also more likely to normalise SGBV, and that political decision-making in Liberia is inadvertently conducive to repression of women; and hence underscores the need to include groups that actively support gender equality in political decision-making processes.

SCORE evidence shows that media content in Liberia buttress negative attitudes and stereotypes towards women, and hence information consumption and sexual and gender-based violence has a strong positive association.

The positive association victimhood and marginalisation has with SGBV, and the inverse association between forgiveness and empathy mirrors the relationships we observed in the readiness for political violence correlation network in Figure 6. These relationships corroborate that violence and victimhood feed both into and onto each other, and affirm that social healing and reconciliation efforts are the key entry points for violence prevention.

Figure 8: Correlation network for SGBV



It is important to note that practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is not part of the SGBV indicator but it is separately assessed by SCORE Liberia. The traditional and cultural foundations of FGM should be approached with high sensitivity and nuance in Liberia. Although FGM explicitly falls within the SGBV definition in international law¹⁴, SCORE findings show that Liberians neither link FGM to SGBV, nor do they link Bush Schools¹⁵ to FGM in a direct manner. This is a contextually specific and important finding that can help design better programmes and policies to eliminate FGM. Firstly, untangling FGM from Bush Schools so addressing FGM does not undermine the traditional value and role many Liberians attach to Bush Schools; and secondly reconceptualising FGM as a violent act against women and girls rather than a traditional practice that needs to be preserved would be empirically informed and receive contextually appropriate entry points.

There is strong polarisation in Liberia when it comes to endorsement of FGM as a traditional practice that should be preserved and the national score, where 0 means there is absolutely no endorsement and 10 means everyone strongly endorses FGM, is 4.6. Liberians seem to be divided on this issue particularly in Bong (5.2), Montserrado (5.1) and Grand Kru (4.8), Nimba (4.7) and

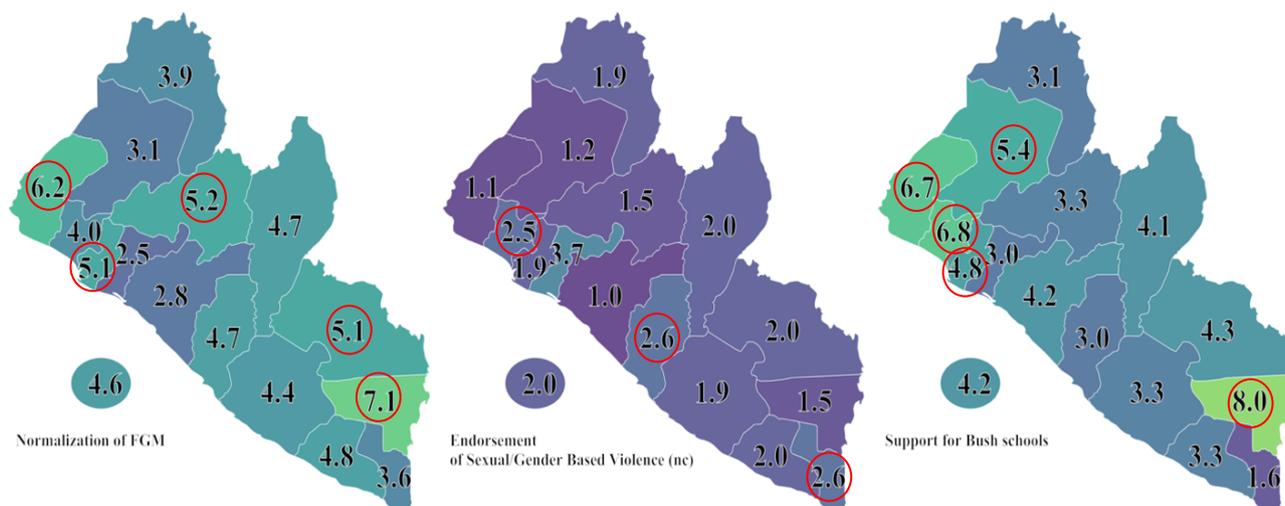
Majority of Liberians do not perceive female genital mutilation (FGM) as a form of violence against women, nor do they link Bush Schools to FGM in a direct manner.

River Cess (4.7), and endorsement of FGM is highest in River Gee (7.1) and Grand Cape Mount (6.2). The heatmaps presented in Figure 8 below illustrate that FGM is not perceived as an act of SGBV. For example, there is strong endorsement for FGM in River Gee and Grand Cape Mount but endorsement of SGBV is even lower than the national average; and Maryland, Bomi and River Cess have the highest levels of endorsement of SGBV but score similar or lower than the national average when it comes to FGM. Additionally, the level of support for Bush Schools are in line with the level of endorsement for FGM in many counties including River Gee, Grand Cape Mount and Montserrado where endorsement of FGM is significantly higher than the national average. However, this is not the case in Bong, Gbarpolou and Bomi, which indicates de-linking of the practice from traditional schooling.

¹⁴ Such as The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

¹⁵ Bush Schools are an age-old secretive society in Liberia. Known as the Sande for girls and Poro for boys, Bush schools teach behaviors and rituals that prepare youth for adulthood within traditional Liberian society. Thousands of youth leave home to attend Bush Schools, which are camps run by spiritual leaders in the jungle. The duration of the Bush Schools varies depending on the tribe and school, and while the youth learn numerous valuable life skills from plating baskets and respecting elders to learning to hunt, some of the 'initiation' practices such as FGM are extremely harmful for myriad reasons, and the general conditions can be extremely unhygienic leading to spread of chronic illnesses as well as epidemics.

Figure 9: Heatmaps for Support for FGM, SGBV and Bush Schools



Rural communities are more vulnerable to violence

Demographic disaggregation of violent tendencies show little to no difference in attitudes when it comes to age, gender and education. However, income and settlement type play an important role. While high income Liberians are more likely to express significantly higher levels of daily aggression, they score similar or the same with other income groups when it comes to SGBV and political violence propensity. On the other hand, rural communities show a persistent vulnerability, as they are significantly more prone to all three indicators of violent tendencies and victimhood, while their resilience capacities are much weaker. The table presented in Figure 10 demonstrates significant differences between rural and urban communities and underscores the link between victimhood, insecurity and violence.

Figure 10: Demographic disaggregation by settlement type

Violent tendencies and Related Indicators	Rural	Urban	Difference
Overall Violent tendencies	1.7	1.1	0.6
Readiness for Political Violence	3.2	1.9	1.3
Endorsement of SGBV	2.6	1.9	0.7
Aggression	3.6	2.5	1.0
Severe victimisation (predictor of violence)	2.7	1.4	1.3
Tolerance of corruption (association with political violence)	2.7	1.0	1.8
Authoritarian politics (association with political violence and SGBV)	1.6	1.2	0.4
Forgiveness (strongest resilience factor against SGBV and 2 nd strongest for political violence)	7.9	8.4	-0.5

Empathy (strongest resilience factor against political violence and 2 nd strongest for SGBV)	6.9	8.2	-1.3
Civic responsibility ¹⁶ (strongest direct mitigatory factor against political violence and SGBV)	6.6	7.6	-1.0
Personal security (root cause for marginalisation, polarization and grievance, which are drivers of violence)	4.4	5.1	-0.8

**Only the differences bigger than 0.5 are considered statistically significant.*

Policy Entry Points for Evidence-Based Recommendations

SCORE Liberia analysis in this policy brief identified seven conflict prone counties (hotspots) where violent tendencies are particularly high and a cause for concern. These counties are Grand Gedeh, Bong, River Cess, Bomi, Maryland, Lofa, Grand Kru, and based on the SCORE evidence, require tailored violence prevention strategies with particular attention paid to young people in rural communities, who are most vulnerable to violence. Among these seven hotspots, SCORE Liberia findings also identified 3 counties that show early warning signs based on their trajectories since 2016 as well as the assessment of their resilience factors. These are: River Cess, Grand Gedeh and Bong. These three counties, plus Lofa, were all target regions for the UNMIL and Government county reconciliation dialogue programme implemented in 2016 and 2017. Their selection at that time for special peace consolidation investments was based on the early warning signals emerging from the 2016 SCORE data and was aligned to the UN and government’s commitment to national reconciliation outlined in the 2017 Liberia Peacebuilding Plan.

Each county dialogue produced a county vision and 5-year plan for reconciliation in the county, which was produced by citizens, validated by the respective local authority and representatives of the local community, and endorsed by the Minister of Internal Affairs at the National Reconciliation conference - Local Voices for Inclusive Reconciliation – held on 21-22 March 2018. The SCORE Liberia 2018 demonstrates the need for conflict-prone counties to review and translate the reconciliation action plans into tangible benefits for citizens, with required resources provided to implement concrete measures for local level reconciliation.

The full range of evidence-based policy recommendations for mitigating violent tendencies are presented below and should be prioritised based on this comprehensive assessment.

¹⁶ The extent to which one feels responsible for the future and well-being of their society and country.

Mitigating violent tendencies: Policy entry points

Drivers of violent tendencies	Recommendations
Negative intergroup relations and outgroup polarisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of the Country Reconciliation Plans which emerged from the Country Reconciliation Dialogues and endorsed by the President and Minister of Internal Affairs at the National Reconciliation Conference held in Monrovia in March 2018, and extend the Country Reconciliation dialogues to all 15 counties. Design holistic programmes supported by effective legislation to address hate speech. • In close coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Sports and local CSOs support local initiatives such as sporting events, mobile libraries, environmental activities (e.g. cleaning, planting, building playgrounds), film screenings, local photography competitions and the like in order to promote inter-generational and inter-group interactions and cooperation beyond as well as within county borders. • Build capacities on non-violent communication, active listening, perspective taking, collaborative problem solving, negotiation and debate skills among young people particularly in rural communities.
Personal insecurity and severe victimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity and empower police, security and justice professionals to deal with domestic violence and rape. • Improve the safety of roads leading from/to farms and markets to enhance the personal security, and in turn economic security of women. • Reinforce the role of the County and related District Security Councils and the county level early warning and early response network, and connect these mechanisms to the Liberia National Early Warning and Response Mechanism Coordinating Centre (NEWRMCC). • Strengthen community engagement in the security sector and build trust between Liberian citizens and law enforcement agencies through well-coordinated civil society partnerships and community policing mechanisms such as neighbourhood watchdogs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a mechanism to support and cater for the needs of survivors of domestic violence and rape, such as legal and psychological counselling, training of health professionals and mobile women’s health units.
Information consumption (driver for SGBV only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of media content about reform and policies, and about gender sensitivity by investing in local news outlets, and providing peace journalism trainings. • Work with community radio stations to produce key messages and trigger constructive public debate about SGBV in local languages and dialects.
Political tribalism (driver for SGBV only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower women Palava hut efforts and mobilise women leaders in the fight against SGBV. • Work closely with traditional and religious leaders, elders and with Bush Schools to integrate messages against normalisation of domestic violence in their teachings. • Engage traditional leaders and local communities particularly in rural areas in a Cross-Sectional National Dialogue with the aim of redefining and reconceptualising FGM as a case of SGBV and untangling it from Bush Schools. Cross-Sectional National Dialogue would focus on human rights issues, health issues and the legal foundations that allow individuals to make their own life choices, as well as designing alternative livelihood opportunities for traditional leaders and FGM practitioners. FGM remains a very sensitive issue. Therefore, strategies to target FGM should be piloted before being scaled up. • See civic responsibility and good governance recommendations as concrete entry points that can help address political tribalism. Older people are more prone to political tribalism, thus actions aimed at fostering civic responsibility, democratic values and participatory decision making should also include older people.
Mitigatory and resilience factors for violent tendencies	Recommendations
Forgiveness and empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering transitional justice is an intricate, sensitive, expensive, highly contextual and a very long-term process, conduct a comprehensive and inclusive investigation in order to identify appropriate transitional justice

mechanisms supported and preferred by different communities. Review and revise the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's report based on strong evidence and in line with the public opinion; and tailor appropriate transitional justice mechanisms such as truth-telling, public apology, memorialisation and reparations based on strong scientific evidence.

- Allocate required national resources to key elements of the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013-2030), to ensure that its elements dealing with forgiveness can be implemented to foster national unity.
- Invest in counselling and psychosocial support programmes to victims of violence, victims of the civil war and those who suffer from PTSD.

Civic responsibility

- Accelerate the implementation of projects and programmes, including the Youth Opportunity Project and the Technical and Vocational Training Programme designed to constructively engage young people and use these opportunities to strengthen civic duty.
- Improve youth inclusion and integration via capacity building on inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development supported by youth employment opportunities on the local level (e.g. vocational skill training, entrepreneurship trainings, microfinancing for youth entrepreneurs, creation of small local cooperatives and unions)
- Introduce civic education and citizenship studies focusing on human rights, tolerance to diversity and democratic values in the curriculum at primary and secondary school levels.
- Create inter-party political committees and organise regular townhall meetings with by County Administrations, community leaders and local communities to discuss socio-political issues prioritised collectively at the county level to enhance constructive dialogue, civic participation and inclusion.
- Conduct sustained and large-scale awareness raising campaigns targeting men on domestic violence, consent and SGBV, and gender awareness trainings among teachers to mainstream gender sensitive education in

schools to foster a more gender sensitive society that takes responsibility for women's empowerment and meaningful participation in socio-economic and political life.

Swift and effective
implementation of reforms &
policies to enhance good
governance and
democratisation

- Apply gender responsive budgeting in the preparation of the 2018/2019 budgets of Ministries, Agencies and Commissions, paying particular attention to programmes which strengthen the civic leadership role of marginalized girls and women.
- Conclude the constitutional reform process and hold a referendum on the Liberian constitution by the end of December 2019, and enshrine gender affirmative action as a part of the process for constitutional reform.
- Introduce effective measures to improve transparency and accountability of public recruitment and procurement processes as well as political party fundraising and income generation activities.
- Harmonize the age of consent between rural and urban areas, and address discrepancies between common law and customary law. Revision of the legislation addressing SGBV should incorporate an inclusive process that involves civil society, victims of SGBV, health and security professionals tribal and religious leaders as well as experts.
- Prioritize the development and implementation of legislation which prohibits FGM on girls under the age of 18.

About SCORE Liberia

The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index seeks to improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts based on evidence, and was designed to address the deficits in informing sustainable processes of conflict transformation. As a customizable, flexible and evidence-based diagnostic and predictive assessment instrument, the SCORE can be utilized to identify programmatic entry points which are most likely to have a positive impact on peacebuilding outcomes. From this perspective, the SCORE speaks to the concerns of the peacebuilding community, often comprising national and international actors who are still uncertain about the real efficacy of their investments. The backbone of SCORE is founded upon participatory research based on mixed-methods, where multi-level stakeholder consultations, focus groups and interviews are conducted to inform the design and contextualisation of the SCORE indicators, and a robust general population survey questionnaire.

See Figure 8. SCORE Process Cycle



The SCORE Liberia Year One was launched in 2016 and is the first to be implemented in Africa. This included the creation of a partnership framework, which involved the Liberia Peacebuilding Office and the Ministry of Interior, the United Nations system and Search for Common Ground. The SCORE Liberia was an inclusive and participatory consultative process, involving local and national government officials and civil society actors including those outside Monrovia.

The Liberia Peace Building Office (PBO), who is a key partner and the custodian of SCORE Liberia use the results to guide the revision of the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation, and the implementation of the Liberia Peace Building Plan, which was endorsed by the UN Security Council on 24 July 2017. Further, numerous SCORE Liberia indicators were adopted as key monitoring targets for the government's Pro-Poor Agenda for Peace and Development. Building on the successes of the Pilot Phase SCORE Liberia Year Two, which was launched in November 2017, conducted tens of interviews, focus groups and stakeholder consultations, incorporated gender sensitive indicators into its design and collected quantitative data from over 6,200 respondents between February 2018 – March 2018. This second iteration also had a Governance Assessment component, where over 180 informed governance experts and civil servants participated in county level expert scoring panels in 15 counties plus Monrovia to provide both qualitative and quantitative assessment of different governance institutions and sectors.

The SCORE Vocabulary

Indicators: Each indicator measures a particular phenomenon (e.g. economic security, discrimination towards out groups, belief in human rights, support for certain policy options, post-traumatic stress disorder and etc.), and is usually assessed with minimum 3 questionnaire items, which are scaled following reliability tests, to ensure that SCORE can robustly capture different dynamics underlying the given indicator.

Heatmaps: A score over 10, where 0 means that the phenomenon indicator is measuring is not observed in the context at all and 10 means that it is observed strongly and prevalently, is calculated for each indicator. Heatmaps demonstrate the regional differences of these scores in order to identify areas of concern and tailor interventions more precisely.

Drivers/Predictors: Indicators that have a strong positive or negative impact on the outcomes are called drivers or predictors, as they provide strategic entry points that hold the most likelihood of impact on the desired outcome. Method of analysis to investigate drivers is based on Structural Equation Modelling.

Correlation analysis: This analysis shows the correlations between indicators, and how they are associated to the central node (selected indicator of interest). The colour of the connecting lines represents the nature of the relationship - blue symbolizes a positive correlation, and red symbolizes a negative correlation. The thickness of the lines represents the strength of the correlation – the thicker the, line the stronger the relationship. The size of the indicator bubbles/nodes represent the score – the bigger the node, the higher the score.

Predictive models: Based on advanced statistical analysis such as regression and structural equation modelling, predictive models investigate the directional relationship between different indicators and the outcomes of interest. Predictive models reveal those indicators that may have a reinforcing or mitigating influence on other indicators as well as the outcome. Similar to the correlation analysis, the colour of the connecting arrows represents the nature of the relationship - blue symbolizes a positive reinforcing impact, and red symbolizes a negative mitigating impact. The thickness of the lines represents the strength of the predictive power – the thicker the line, the stronger the relationship. The size of the indicator bubbles/nodes represent the score – bigger the node, higher the score.



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