



Sustaining Peace in Liberia

Assessing opportunities and threats three years after UNMIL's departure

July 2021



Photo source: UN Photo Digital Asset Management System

Traditional Liberian dancers perform during a farewell for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) organized by the NGO Liberia Crusaders for Peace in Monrovia. The ceremony brought together stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders, women and youth groups, to say "Thank You" to UNMIL for establishing peace and security in Liberia. The ceremony included musical and cultural performances and messages expressing gratitude.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CDC	Coalition for Democratic Change
CPP	Collaborating Political Parties
CSC	County Service Centre
CDSDF	County Development and Social Development Fund
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GOL	Government of Liberia
LMPTF	Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NPRSC	National Peace and Reconciliation Steering Committee
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PBO	Liberia Peacebuilding Office
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SCORE	Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SeeD	Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Acronyms and abbreviations	2
Executive Summary	4
Section A: Liberia's peace consolidation framework	9
The international community's support for peacebuilding.....	9
National ownership of the SCORE process	10
Mid-term scorecard assessment of progress towards peace consolidation and social cohesion	13
Section B: Exploring Liberia's peace dividend	16
Peace dividend indicators	16
Factors driving progress towards peace	21
Explaining Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland	23
Section C: Violent tendencies and peaceful citizenship	27
Profiles of violent citizenship	30
Resilient peaceful citizenship	30
Section D: Policy implications	36
Design an evidence-based and citizen-focussed national policy for reconciliation	36
Build citizen confidence in state institutions	37
Deepen community capacities to address the root causes of violent citizenship	40
Institutionalise Community Resilience Compacts	41
Annex I: Methodology	43

Executive Summary

In 2016 the Liberia Peacebuilding Office (PBO), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Development (UNDP) initiated the first Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) project in Liberia. This was the first time that SCORE had been deployed on the African continent. The goal was to assess Liberia's state of social cohesion in the context of the two historic transitions which took place between 2017 and 2018: the first democratic transfer of power in 70 years and the departure of the UN peacekeeping force, which had guaranteed the country's stability for the previous decade.

The first SCORE index (2016-2017) was used to measure social cohesion and resilience capacities in local communities to prevent conflict. The project provided predictive assessments of strategic peacebuilding interventions that held the greatest potential for sustaining peace at a time of declining peace and development resources. These results were used to guide the design of the Government of Liberia's (GOL) Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), which was published in 2018. Multiple SCORE metrics were used as monitoring indicators to track progress towards achieving specific high-level targets identified in the PAPD.

The second SCORE project (2017-2018) coincided with UNMIL's departure. Support from the UN system and the Embassy of Ireland helped to convert SCORE findings into evidence-based publications which were disseminated to government policymakers, the donor community and Liberian civil society. These three reports are entitled a) *Enhancing Good Governance*, b) *Addressing Violent Tendencies* and c) *Fostering Constructive Citizenship*¹, and their publication sought to add value to the national debate on reconciliation and peace consolidation. This phase of SCORE Liberia paid special attention to domesticating two key sustainable development goals (SDGs) for Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16).

The third SCORE Liberia project (2020-2021) provides an opportunity to assess progress in Liberia since the closure of UNMIL on 30 March 2018. The three reports in the 2021 series will explore a) progress towards sustaining peace, b) livelihood resilience and c) women and the peace dividend. They build on the work and knowledge accrued through previous SCORE projects, and together provide policy makers with evidence-based insights which can optimize efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving key targets in the PAPD.

This report looks at the status of Liberia's sustaining peace agenda and assess the extent to which the country has progressed since the departure of UNMIL in March 2018.

¹ <https://www.scoreforpeace.org/en/liberia/publications>

Key findings

SCORE Liberia 2021 demonstrates that in the four-year period from late 2016 to early 2021 Liberians have not perceived a significant change in their social and economic situation. Indicators selected to monitor progress in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) have not changed sufficiently to show that there is a discernible peace dividend. The overall social cohesion score for 2021 is the same as 2016 at 6.1 out of 10 - a medium-low level of social cohesion. Coexistence and civic trust and satisfaction with state service delivery have also remained at a low level, while violent tendencies and aggression in daily life have remained at the high levels first recorded in 2016. There has been a positive change in attitudes endorsing sexual and gender-based violence, where the number of people accepting this practice declined compared to 2016.

In several cases 2021 SCORE values worsened compared to 2018, which helps to explain the overall poor performance of PAPD metrics. Among the worst performing indicators were progress towards peace, enhanced personal security, socioeconomic progress, confidence in government and civic institutions, aggression and violent values. In particular, three “progress indicators”, designed to measure people’s changing perceptions over time -- progress towards peace, socioeconomic progress and enhanced personal safety – collectively saw a 35 percent drop between 2018 and 2021. These three progress indicators, represent a device for measuring Liberia’s peace dividend, and failure to improve these scores signals unmet expectations in translating peace into discernible and tangible quality of life outcomes.

Trust in governing institutions was found to be the most influential factor determining people’s perceptions of a peace dividend. The SCORE models demonstrate that the three peace dividend outcomes are predicted by the same institutional drivers – confidence in institutions, justice and security and livelihood security. This finding is one of the clearest indicators that Liberia’s peace dividend is dependent on citizens’ actual and perceived sense that government and civic institutions are working for them. The fact that citizens’ loss of faith in governing institutions was so significant in 2021 not only helps to explain why overall social cohesion has not advanced in the country, but also signals the fragility of the national peace consolidation and reconciliation agenda.

Reducing violent tendencies in Liberia since the end of the conflict in 2003 has been a key dimension of postwar recovery and the process of reconciliation. Since 2016 SCORE has monitored progress in reducing the propensity for violence and, while a score of 1.0 or under is considered normal in stable societies, the national average for Liberia is yet to fall below 1.8.

The PAPD target is to reduce violent tendencies to 0.5 by 2023. Counties with the highest and most persistent violent tendency score include Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Nimba, Rivercess, Bong and Lofa. The SCORE analysis explored the profile of violent and peaceful citizenship traits, leading to an assessment of counties by their relative concentrations of potentially violent and peaceful citizens. While acknowledging that everyone has the potential to exhibit peaceful and violent behaviours, the results of this analysis showed that only a minority of people (seven percent) appear to embrace high levels of violent behaviour in their personal relations and approach to political engagement. Most people are split into two groups -- those who indicate a strong inclination to peaceful behaviour (54 percent), and those who declare they are peaceful, but who do not fully reject violence in their daily lives or in pursuit of political objectives (39 percent). From the perspective of politically motivated violence, 13 percent of people across the country agree with using violence to force socio-political change. This picture is different at the local level with certain counties showing higher concentrations of citizens who are potentially prepared to use violence as a form of political expression. These include Lofa (30 percent); Grand Kru (28 percent); Bong (24 percent); Nimba (24 percent) and Rivercess (22 percent).

A key feature of the SCORE 2021 analysis is identifying factors which help people to be constructive and peaceful citizens, based on the assumption that peaceful citizens can access tools to develop a sustainable space for socioeconomic and political advancement. Peaceful citizenship can be undermined by different adversities in people's lives, while individual and institutional qualities can help people to be resilient in the face of these life challenges. The two major causes of people potentially turning away from peaceful and constructive ways of transforming society are the experience of severe victimisation and the lack of personal security. SCORE Liberia defines severe victimisation as experiences of physical assault, unlawful dispossession of property and experience of sexual violence. Lack of personal security refers to the extent to which one feels safe from violence in one's daily life and is confident the police can protect the citizen from violence. Factors which help protect peaceful citizenship, and thus prevent violence, include functioning County Service Centres and good public service delivery, including health and rule of law services. Confidence in Christian and Muslim religious leaders, family coherence (defined as a healthy family life) and intergroup contact are all important in supporting a resilient peaceful citizenship orientation.

Policy implications

1. Design an evidence-based and citizen-focussed national policy for reconciliation. This needs to focus on leveraging the political will to put in place the institutional structures that can ensure a national reconciliation policy can be meaningfully implemented at both the national and local levels. The policy envelope should remove reconciliation from the straight jacket of project cycles and be anchored in an understanding of the status of existing commitments and plans in support of reconciliation made by the Government of Liberia and other actors. This requires an audit of past frameworks and use of this analysis to align local community-based reconciliation priorities with a national reform process.

2. Build citizen confidence in state institutions. A loss of faith in government institutions has a potentially devastating impact on Liberia's capacity to leverage a peace dividend; confidence in institutions is the most important driver for progress towards peace, and critical for predicting socioeconomic progress and enhanced personal safety. Confidence in government institutions will improve with evidence that government services are working for people. The services in most demand and most likely to transform the perception of responsive government include local service delivery (County Service Centres), the justice system and the Liberian National Police. Improved government services will not only increase confidence in government institutions but also create a bulwark against violent tendencies and the potential for active violent citizenship behaviours.

3. Deepen community capacities to address the root causes of violent citizenship. SCORE 2021 affirms the need to deepen the concept and practice of community-driven reconciliation. However, there have been challenges in implementing various recommendations of past high-level strategies for post-war reconciliation. The 15 Counties Consolidated Peace and Reconciliation Plan (December 2020) institutionalises the community dialogue approach into a national strategy which should serve as a pillar of a Liberia national policy on reconciliation. It affirms the notion of reconciliation as a product of individual and collective healing as well as of political and institutional reform. Reversing the impact of socio-psychological drivers of violent tendencies, represented by victimisation, marginalisation and the lack of personal security, requires community strategies which invest in Palava Huts and the continuation of inclusive participatory county dialogues. The SCORE 2021 finding that Christian and Muslim faith leaders are trusted and respected facilitators of peaceful citizenship is an asset that local reconciliation efforts need to capture. Finally, SCORE 2021 results highlighted the importance of family coherence in serving as an organic instrument for peaceful citizenship behaviours.

4. Conclude Community Resilience Compacts and link these to County Reconciliation Action Plans and the agenda of the Libera Multi-Partner Trust Fund. The different elements of community-driven reconciliation can be institutionalised through a Community Resilience Compact signed and jointly owned by government and the respective counties. Each Compact would seek to establish a binding framework of mutual accountability involving stakeholders responsible for implementing the respective County Reconciliation Action Plan. Compacts would evolve into partnership frameworks for resilience programming. Initiatives designed under these compacts would address issues described in the 2021 SCORE analysis and identifiable underlying causes of conflict. In this regard the Community Resilience Compact and County Reconciliation Action Plans should serve as frameworks for the identification of priority projects funded by the Libera Multi-Partner Trust Fund (LMPTF). This would help plan how national resources and capacities, both centrally and locally, will be leveraged to accompany LMPTF investments and then used to organically guarantee the institutionalisation of project results and their absorption into community structures and practices.

Section A: Liberia's peace consolidation framework

The international community's support for peacebuilding

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is cited as one of the most successful examples of international peacekeeping in modern times². This includes traditional peacekeeping accomplishments, such as disarming 100,000 former combatants, helping to professionalise the country's security forces and supporting three successful elections. The most notable achievement, however, is the way UNMIL facilitated the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. This process was marked by some specific technical exercises such as the handover of security functions from UNMIL to the national authorities in June 2016, but it also included significant strategic transitions intended to ensure peace consolidation capacities were embedded in Liberian organisations and institutions.

One key policy framework for this transition was the Liberian Peacebuilding Plan which was requested by Security Council resolution 2333 (2016). The Plan demonstrated how the UN Country Team and international partners would ensure continued peace and security in Liberia following UNMIL's departure. The consultative process for the Plan started in January 2017 and involved representatives from across government, the National Civil Society Council, UNMIL, the UN Country Team and the donor community. This process led to the formulation of peacebuilding priorities and identified areas of possible ongoing assistance.

The Peacebuilding Plan established a timetable for Liberia's transition, focusing on two phases and a roadmap for action, while providing guidance to achieve a peaceful, just and inclusive society, based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. While Phase I outlined actions required of the UN system in support of the Government's commitment to embed durable national capacities before UNMIL's departure in March 2018, Phase II defined longer-term peacebuilding priorities which would be integrated into development frameworks necessary to ensure ongoing support to national efforts to mitigate, prevent and manage risks of conflict. Significantly, Security Council resolution 2333 marked the first time the Council had requested a peacebuilding plan as part of a transitioning mission's mandate.

There are two main reasons why the Peacebuilding Plan is an important entry point for the current SCORE study. First, the Plan refers to the SCORE as a methodology for monitoring

² <https://www.dw.com/en/un-hails-liberia-peacekeeping-mission-as-a-success/a-43084970>

progress towards achieving critical peacebuilding benchmarks using SCORE indicators, including perceived corruption, trust in institutions, feeling represented by institutions, human security and life satisfaction (Social Cohesion); and negative stereotypes, intergroup anxiety, social distance, social threats and active discrimination (Reconciliation)³. Second, the key elements of the Plan were subsequently integrated into the Government of Liberia's (GOL) five-year Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). One result of this process was the adoption of SCORE metrics to measure critical performance indicators in the PAPD, demonstrating the continuity between UNMIL's peacekeeping to peacebuilding mandate, and the demand for evidence-based peace consolidation policies⁴. This approach was underpinned by a commitment to ensure the UN Country Team (UNCT) had the skills, knowledge and resources to support Liberia's peacebuilding and peace consolidation priorities. This dimension was articulated through the exercise to map UNCT technical and operational capacities to support the UN Commitments in the Liberian Peacebuilding Plan. The exercise took stock of the capacities of the UNCT within the context of UNSCR 2333 and the overall transition process, to better position the UNCT to assume full responsibilities to support Liberia's development and peacebuilding priorities after UNMIL's departure.

National ownership of the SCORE process

Nurturing national ownership of SCORE results has underpinned the approach to formulating evidence-based policy and programme insights derived from the research process. In Liberia this has been achieved by designing SCORE processes through the lens of key national policy frameworks, which allowed Liberian policy stakeholders to use SCORE results to improve decision-making. The process created robust feedback loops such as the Core Reflection Group, while enabling policy stakeholders to independently use SCORE data. This has been based on the premise that policy impact will be more lasting if knowledge rests in the hands of Liberian experts and officials.

As a result, the first SCORE Liberia project focussed attention on informing the existing Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation 2013-2030. The Roadmap is intended to guide national reconciliation, and was designed to foster coherence of institutions, structures, systems, mechanisms, and human resources mobilized to foster sustainable peace. The Roadmap defines reconciliation in Liberia as:

A multidimensional process of overcoming social, political, and religious cleavages; mending and transforming relationships; healing the physical and psychological wounds from the civil

³ Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, 2017, Para 68, https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/040417_sg_letter_of_4_april_liberia.pdf

⁴ UNMIL and UNDP jointly funded the 2016 and 2018 SCORE projects. The Irish Embassy in Monrovia funded a follow-up project in 2019.

war, as well as confronting and addressing historical wrongs including the structural root causes of conflicts in Liberia. It is set in an 18-year time horizon with the strategic outcomes of a) transforming mindsets, b) rebuilding relationships, and c) rebuilding social, political, and economic institutions to sustain reconciliation and peace by accounting for the past, committing to addressing challenges of the present, and collectively aspiring for a better and shared future⁵.

Based on extensive consultations and recommendations in the 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, 12 components were designed to build on ongoing and past efforts in promoting national healing and reconciliation.

Accounting for the Past	Managing the Present	Planning for the Future
1. Palava Hut Process of Addressing Past Wrongs 2. Memorialisation 3. Reparation 4. Diaspora and Reconciliation	5. Political Dialogue 6. Conflict Prevention and Mediation 7. Women's Recovery and Empowerment 8. Children and Youth Recovery and Empowerment 9. Psychosocial Recovery and Empowerment for Persons with Disabilities	10. Inclusive People's History and Collective Identity 11. Transformative Education System 12. Constitutional and Law Reforms

Figure 1: Components of the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation 2013-2030⁶

The Liberia Peace Building Office (PBO) used SCORE results from 2017 to update and make revisions to the Roadmap and to help align it with more specific metrics for monitoring progress in each of the components described in figure 1. In 2018 the GOL's commitment to implement the Roadmap was incorporated into the PAPD, alongside recommendations from the TRC. These policy directions were enshrined in the overall premise of the PAPD's Sustaining Peace Pillar III, which acknowledged that peace is essential to achieving all the country's social, economic and development objectives by 2023. The PAPD echoes the Roadmap's definition of reconciliation and reasserts the need to follow through with recommendations from the TRC report, the National Peace Building Plan and Strategic Roadmap for Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation.⁷ In this context the PAPD's high level national targets adopted SCORE metrics to provide evidence-based signals towards achieving these objectives. These are described in figure 2 below and demonstrate the changes in these scores from 2016 until 2021.

⁵ https://issuu.com/edwardmulbah/docs/reconciliation_roadmap_draft_3

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Pro-Poor Agenda for Peace and Development, 2018-2023, p.71

High level national indicator	High level national target by 2023	Summary of PAPD Strategies	SCORE index data collection year and value**		
			2016*	2018	2021
Liberia's Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) rating	Improves from 6.6 to 8.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a sense of shared values • Tackling regional socioeconomic disparities • Strengthening community disaster preparedness and recovery 	6.6	7.1	6.6
Civic trust and coexistence	Improves from 5.2 to 7.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing TRC recommendations • Improving rural access to rule of law, security, and justice services 	5.2	6.1	5.1
Nationwide average for satisfaction of state service delivery	Improves from 3.5 to 6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orienting Palava Huts to raise awareness of economic opportunities • Capacity building for rule of law institutions 	3.5	3.7	3.6
Violent tendencies	Decreases from 1.9 to 0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving conflict mitigation/alternative dispute resolution • Strengthening inclusive land tenure security • Securing gendered access to land 	1.9	1.8	1.9
National average for tendencies towards sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)	Decreases from 1.5 to 0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orienting Palava Huts to PTSD training • Raising awareness of SGBV as criminal behaviour 	1.5	2.0	1.1
National average for tendencies towards aggression in daily life	Decreases from 2.7 to 1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening early warning and early response at county and district levels • Leadership, non-violent communication and conflict mediation training programme for youth 	2.7	2.4	3.0

* Baseline year (2016)

** Changes of 1.0 and above are considered statistically significant.

Figure 2: Pillar III High Level National Indicators measured through SCORE 2016-2021

Mid-term scorecard assessment of progress towards peace consolidation and social cohesion

Figure 3 shows how Liberia’s social cohesion and reconciliation index is constructed of two principal variables: a) coexistence and civic trust and b) violent tendencies. Each of these main variables is made up of sub-indicators. Although the 2021 SCORE assessed that some sub-indicators remained constant or saw a positive change in a few cases, several of these sub-indicators for both coexistence and civic trust and violent tendencies worsened from 2018. Notably, these were progress towards peace, enhanced personal safety, socioeconomic progress, confidence in government and civic institutions, aggression and violent values (see figure 4). Collectively, these poor performing indicators help explain the reduction in the overall social cohesion SCORE from 7.1 in 2018 to 6.6 in 2021.

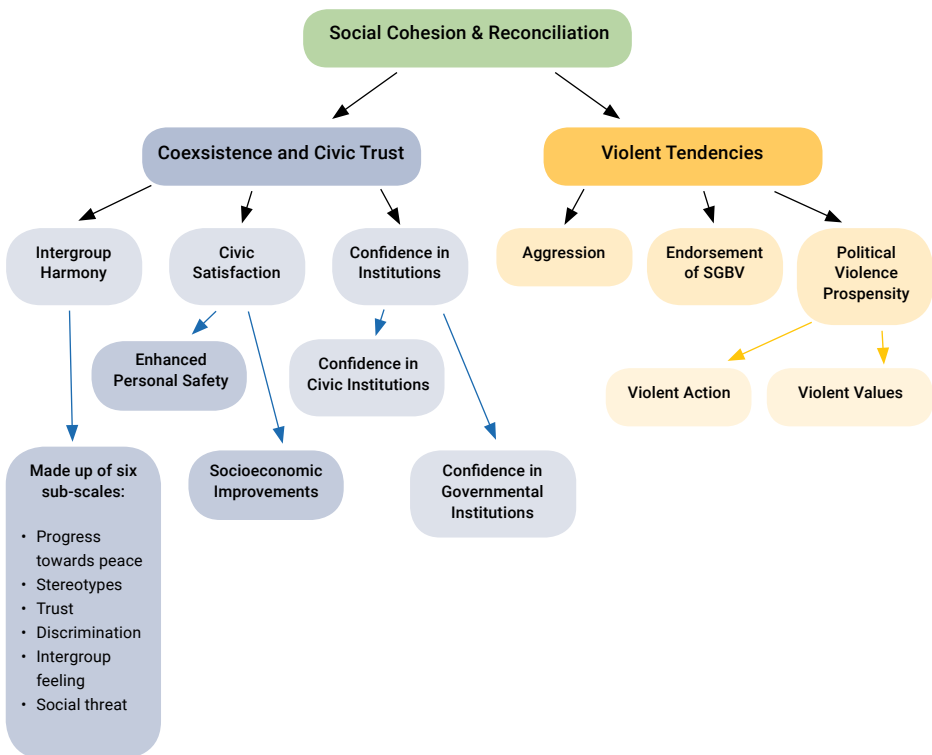


Figure 3: Construction of Social Cohesion and Reconciliation

	2018	2021
Social Cohesion & Reconciliation Index	7.1	6.6
Coexistence and Civic Trust	6.1	5.1
Intergroup Harmony	7.7	7.5
Intergroup Stereotypes	7.4	7.6
Intergroup Social Threat	8.6	7.6
Intergroup Discrimination	9.6	9.4
Intergroup Trust	4.8	5.7
Intergroup Negative Feelings	8.0	8.1
Intergroup Social Proximity	8.4	9.0
Progress Towards Peace	7.2	4.8
Civic Satisfaction	6.5	4.1
Enhanced Personal Safety	7.1	4.7
Socioeconomic Progress	5.9	3.4
Confidence in Institutions	5.9	4.6
Confidence in Governmental Institutions	5.9	4.6
Confidence in Civic Institutions	6.0	5.2
Violent Tendencies	1.8	1.9
Aggression	2.5	3.0
Endorsement of SGBV	2.0	1.1
Political Violence Propensity	1.2	1.7
Violent Action	0.2	0.2
Violent Values	2.1	3.2

Indicators shaded grey performed poorly between 2018 to 2021. This negative change helps explain the overall decline in the social cohesion and reconciliation index score between 2018 and 2021.

The objective is to push down the scores of indicators measuring violent tendencies, so the lower the score the more successful the effort to reduce violence in Liberian society.

* Changes of 1.0 and above are considered statistically significant.

Figure 4: Components of social cohesion

Pillar III of the PAPD includes a mix of positive and negative SCORE indicators, with the aim of increasing the value of the positive indicators (e.g. social cohesion) and reducing the strength of the negative indicators (e.g. violent tendencies). Strong trends are represented by scores of 8 and above for the positive indicators, while desirable scores for negative indicators are below 0.5.

The big picture demonstrates that in the four-year period from late 2016 to early 2021 Liberians have not perceived a significant change in their social and economic situation. There was a

general positive change in scores in 2018, which can be attributed to the optimism of a newly elected President, and the success (or relief) of a peaceful election and change in government. However, three years on these scores have fallen back to their 2016 levels, and in some cases worsened. Figure 5 illustrates how all the indicators are short of the 2023 targets, demonstrating the need to renew peace and development efforts over the next two years.

High level national indicator	Overall change 2016 to 2021	Required improvement to meet 2023 target
Liberia's Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) rating	0	+1.4
Civic trust and coexistence	-0.1	+1.9
Nationwide average for satisfaction of state service delivery	+0.1	+2.4
Violent tendencies	0	1.4*
National average for tendencies towards SGBV	+0.4	0.6*
National average for tendencies towards aggression in daily life	-0.3	2.0*

* Meeting the 2023 PAPD high-level targets requires a reduction of the 2021 SCORE by the value shown.

Figure 5: Change in PAPD monitoring indicators 2016-2021

While improvement is required in all PAPD indicators, specific areas require particular attention to meet 2023 PAPD targets, with the biggest improvement required in the delivery of public services. The quality of state services, which include education, health, justice services and administrative services, have not improved sufficiently to demonstrate a tangible peace dividend to Liberians. The target of attaining a SCORE of 6.0 is modest, yet the country's current deficit in this area stands as a clear obstacle to achieving overall social cohesion.

This shortfall probably helps to explain the deterioration in the indicators measuring violent tendencies and aggression in daily life. SCORE Liberia projects start from the premise that a violent tendency score of 1.0 and under is normal, while any score above 1.0 is a cause of concern. Both violent tendencies and aggression in daily life reduced slightly in 2018 but have worsened overall between 2016 and 2021. The conflation of unfulfilled expectations and the threat of violence is a theme which has been highlighted by the international media, including The Economist's analysis from August 2019⁸. The fact that most indicators have not improved significantly helps to explain the growing frustration among ordinary people, which spilled over into popular protests against the government across the country in 2019 and 2020. This picture reinforces the sense of structural fragility and is reflected through the significant improvements which are required in reducing violent tendencies (1.4 points); reducing aggression in daily life (2.0 points); improving civic trust (1.9 points) and improving overall social cohesion (1.4 points).

⁸ Liberia's economic crisis and corruption could lead to violence, The Economist, August 10 2019

Section B: Exploring Liberia's peace dividend

Peace dividend indicators

This section is concerned with understanding the nature of a possible peace dividend in Liberia and explores the factors which can help the country take full advantage of the sustaining peace agenda.

SCORE Indicator	2018	2021
Progress towards peace	7.2	4.8
Socioeconomic progress	5.9	3.4
Enhanced personal safety	7.1	4.7

* Changes of 1.0 and above are considered statistically significant.

Figure 6: Peace Dividend Indicators for 2018 and 2021

The three indicators in figure 6 demonstrate the extent to which people in Liberia have experienced a peace dividend, defined as progressive improvements in key areas of life. The progress towards peace indicator assesses inter-communal and inter-personal capacities to develop peaceful relations, while socioeconomic progress measures people's perceptions of improvement in livelihood opportunities, and enhanced personal safety assesses whether people feel respected, and are free and secure in daily life.

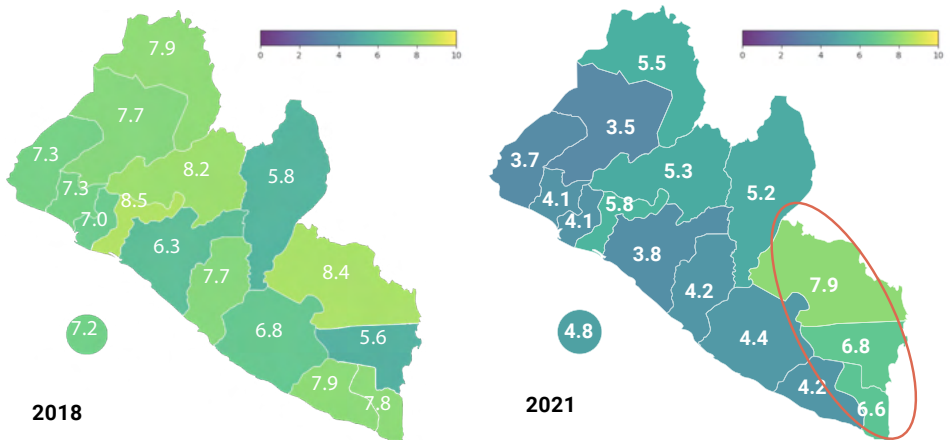


Figure 7: Progress towards peace - national and county SCOREs for 2018 and 2021

Counties in the southeast – Maryland, River Gee and Grand Gedeh - appear to be doing better than the rest of the country.

Figure 7 shows how progress towards peace has declined, with the country score dropping from 7.2 in 2018 to 4.8 in 2021, though Maryland, River Gee and Grand Gedeh appear as exceptions to the trend. The fall in progress towards peace reflects the overall decline in peace dividend measures and points to unmet expectations in translating peace into discernible and tangible quality of life outcomes. Understanding this picture of “apparent” disillusionment in peace consolidation and reconciliation is key to identifying critical areas for policy action. It is important to contextualise this finding, with a clear indication that the decline in indicators constituting progress towards peace (figure 8) has been accompanied by declines in people’s perceptions of socioeconomic progress (figure 9) and personal safety (figure 11). The data signals reduced trust among people and weakened conflict management over the past three years. At the same time perceptions of earning power and the quality of essential human development services – health and education – have worsened, as have people’s perceptions of respect for human dignity, personal freedom and personal security. The data affirms the premise that perceived progress in reconciliation is intimately linked to expectations of better social and economic opportunities and improved quality of life.

To what extent would you say the following has changed in the last 2 years?

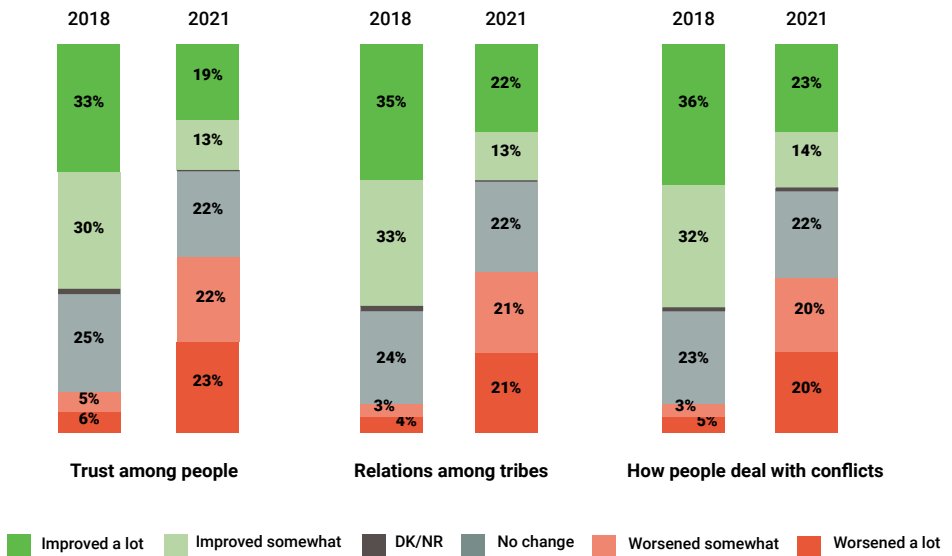


Figure 8: Components constituting progress towards peace – comparison between 2018 and 2021.

Between 2016 and 2018 there was only a small proportion of people who believed that there had been a downturn in trust (eleven percent), inter-tribal relations (seven percent) and conflict management approaches (eight percent). By contrast, 45 percent of people believe trust among people has worsened in the period between 2018 and 2021, while 42 percent perceive a change for the worse in inter-tribal relations and 40 percent report a negative change in the way people deal with conflicts (see figure 8). Sixty-two percent of people believe that it is more difficult to earn a living today than two years ago, while over 50% of people indicate that health and education have worsened over the same time frame. Throughout the entire period from 2016 to 2021 about one-quarter of Liberians indicated that they had not seen any change in progress towards peace, socioeconomic improvement or personal security.

To what extent would you say the following has changed in the last 2 years?

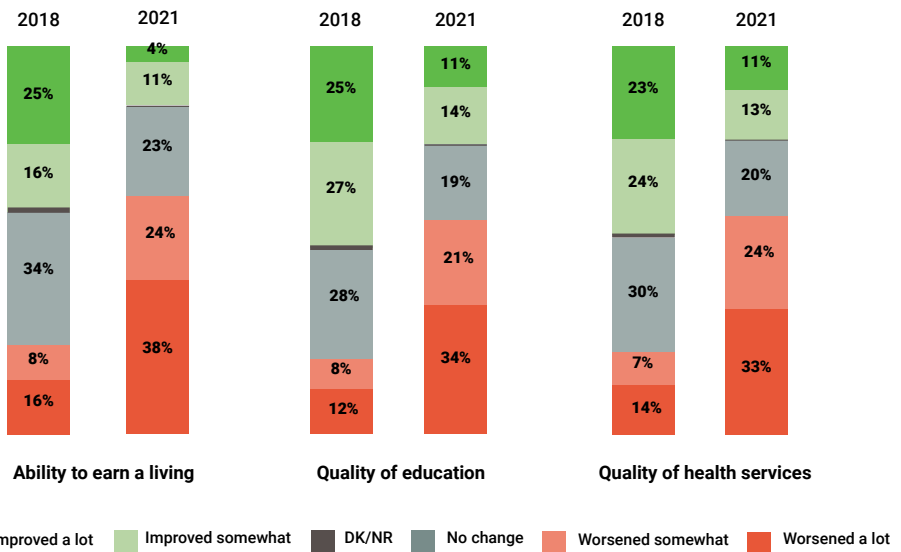


Figure 9: Components for socioeconomic progress – comparison between 2018 and 2021.

The absence of personal security in the lives of many people is signalled by the poor extent to which Liberians believe rule of law institutions can exercise their responsibilities. Figure 10 shows the low standing of these institutions, with only 16 percent of people fully convinced the police and other institutions can protect them from violence. This low level of confidence is underlined by the decline in the number of people who believe that the police can protect people to some extent - from 44 percent in 2018 to 29 percent in 2021. On the other hand, the percentage of people who have lost faith in the police's ability to protect them has increased from 18 percent in 2018 to 30 percent in 2021.

	2018	2021
Yes, very much	17%	16%
Yes, to some extent	44%	29%
Not really	21%	24%
Not at all	18%	30%

Figure 10: Do you feel confident the police or other institutions can protect you from violence?

Figure 11 confirms this decline in trust. While only a small proportion of people (nine percent on average) believed that personal safety had worsened between 2016 and 2018, 43 percent of people report a negative change in their personal security in the period 2018 to 2021, measured by perceptions of human dignity, personal freedom and personal safety.

To what extent would you say the following has changed in the last 2 years?

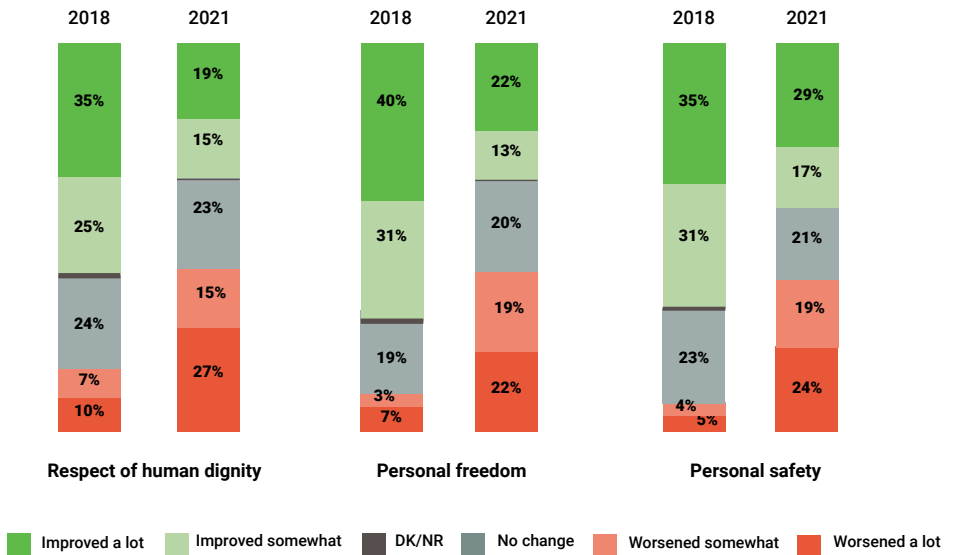


Figure 11: Components for enhanced personal safety – comparison between 2018 and 2021

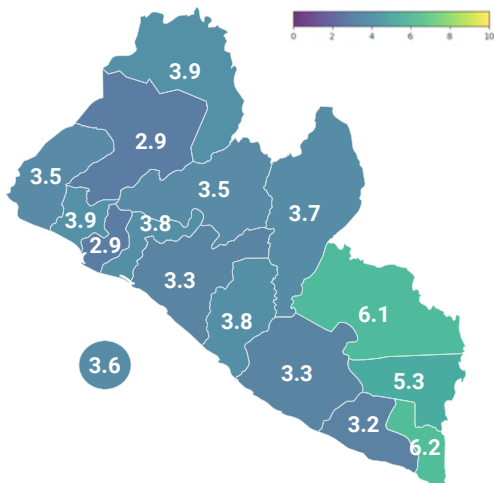


Figure 12: 2021 levels of confidence in the Liberian National Police (LNP) by county

The low confidence in the Liberian National Police (LNP) across the country reflects citizens' assessment that their personal safety has not improved. The exception is counties in the southeast, which show a more positive picture, with Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland scoring LNP confidence levels above the national average. Grand Gedeh stands out as the only county where more than half the community (51 percent) declare a high level of confidence in the LNP.

Figure 13 shows the strength of the association between different civic and institutional qualities and peace consolidation (progress towards peace). This indicates that Liberians most strongly associate progress towards peace with critical development and rule of law outcomes, which reflect a responsive state system. Liberians care most about government institutions that they can trust, personal security and access to justice. Further analysis shows that confidence in institutions is strongly correlated with delivery of public services, justice and security and livelihood development. Similarly, personal security strongly correlates with local service delivery, faith in public institutions, quality of the justice system and livelihood security.

Confidence in Institutions	0.42
Personal Security	0.42
Access to Justice	0.36
Quality of Justice System	0.36
Investment Environment	0.35
Support for Equal Education for Girls	0.29
Support for Women in the Workforce	0.28
Fairness of Elections	0.25
Quality of Police	0.28

Note: A value of +0.2 or above denotes a very strong significant relationship.

Figure 13: Civic qualities positively associated with progress towards peace

Perceived Level of Corruption	-0.28
Tribal Authority Preference	-0.26
Endorsement of FGM and SGBV	-0.26

Note: A value of +0.2 or above denotes a very strong significant relationship.

Figure 14: Negative civic qualities which undermine progress towards peace.

Figure 14 shows which factors in Liberian society are likely to undermine peace. Critically, this includes the perceived level of corruption, a feature in society which has been a long-standing obstacle to social cohesion. In 2016 the Liberia PBO conflict mapping exercise identified corruption as the second most important conflict driver in the country⁹, with land disputes reported as the most significant cause of conflict. On the other hand, SCORE 2021 findings show that violence against women (endorsement of SGBV) remains a potential barrier to local reconciliation efforts. In September 2020 President George Weah declared rape a national emergency in the country, creating a national security task force to handle sexual and gender-based violence and allocating \$2 million to address the issue¹⁰. Finally, preference for traditional tribal authorities is seen as a factor which undermines progress towards peace. In 2018 political tribalism was identified as being associated with readiness for violence and endorsement for SGBV. The 2021 Liberia SCORE shows that political tribalism is still associated with support for SGBV and preference for tribal authorities over the state, and, while it continues to have a negative effect on progress towards peace and personal safety, its significance should not be over-stated.

Factors driving progress towards peace

The previous section demonstrated that in 2021 the decline in progress towards peace contributed in part to the lower SCORE in social cohesion. This next section shows which factors are most important for reversing this trend in the period to 2023.

Figures 15-17 illustrate how the three peace dividend outcomes – progress towards peace, socioeconomic progress and enhanced personal safety – are predicted by the same institutional drivers, confirming the interlinkages between socio and economic improvement and peace consolidation. Critically, the models show that Liberians depend on livelihood security, justice and security and confidence in institutions to drive forward the key peace dividend outcomes. Significantly, confidence in government institutions is the most notable driver in all three cases. Box 1 describes how these peace dividend drivers have been constructed in SCORE 2021.

⁹ National Conflict Mapping Exercise, Liberia Peacebuilding Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Liberia, 2016

¹⁰ Government of Liberia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Weah declares Rape and all forms of SGBV as a National Emergency

Box 1. Defining the drivers for progress towards peace

Livelihood security and development is measured by people's perceptions of a dependable income and the extent to which people believe economic opportunities are improving or deteriorating.

Justice and security is measured by perceptions of safety in daily life, citizens access to information about laws and their rights, the extent to which rule of law institutions protect people and the effectiveness of the police.

Confidence in institutions is measured by assessing people's perceptions of the trustworthiness of public and civic bodies and the extent to which they are free of corruption.

In the three diagrams below, blue arrows denote a positive driver and red arrows denote a driver which undermines progress towards the peace dividend outcome. The thickness of the arrow denotes the relative strength of the predictive relationship.

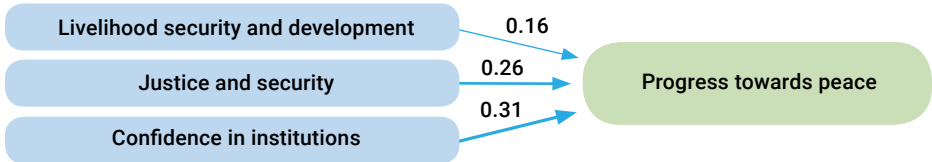


Figure 15: Predictive drivers of progress towards peace

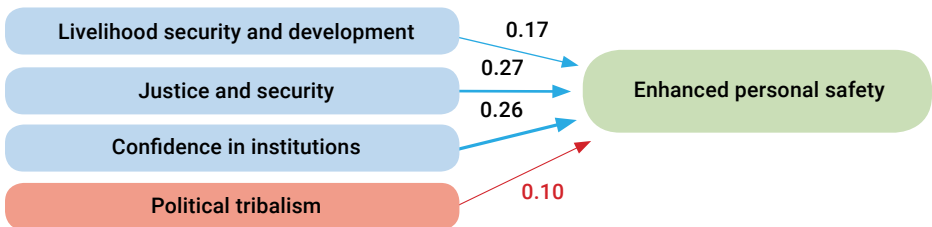


Figure 16: Predictive drivers of enhanced personal safety

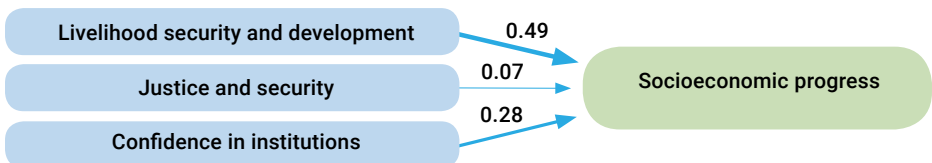


Figure 17: Predictive drivers of socioeconomic progress

The dilemma for peace and development policy makers is that confidence in institutions is one of the critical indicators which has declined dramatically since 2018 (see figure 4 above). In the same way, key justice and security indicators such as safety in daily life have declined from 7.1 in 2018 to 4.7 in 2021 (see figure 6 above).

Explaining Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland

Figure 7 above shows that Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland are performing better than other counties in progress towards peace, while other SCORE data infers that these counties also perform better in other socioeconomic areas. However, this picture is not necessarily consistent with contextual realities, while other indicators show that, in real terms, peace and security in these three counties is as fragile as other parts of the country. Section C will demonstrate that violent tendencies in these counties remain high and, with the exception of Grand Gedeh, above the national average.

	Violent tendency SCORE	Percentage of people who do not reject violence
National Average	1.9	46
Grand Gedeh	1.6	23
Maryland	2.1	48
River Gee	2.0	41

Figure 18: Violent tendencies and violence propensity in the southeast counties

Similarly, each of the counties contain significant proportions of citizens who do not reject the use of violence in family life, inter-personal relations or while engaging with the political process. Incidents in the first half of 2021 indicate that violence remains a constant threat to community cohesion. The actions of a violent mob in May led to the burning down of a police station in Zwedru¹¹, while in March protesters attacked the home of the House Speaker in Sodeken District of Maryland. Violence in Harper also saw a mob storm the Central Prison, which led to the escape of 91 inmates¹². Such incidents affirm the structural character of violence in each of the counties, rather than signalling an anomaly reflected through SCORE results.

The question is whether there is an explanation for the apparent contradictory signals emerging from the SCORE results in these three counties. One answer can possibly be found in the level of political support for the governing party in these counties, which, based on the analysis, points to a level of bias which may have influenced the way citizens perceive progress in their local areas. The SCORE analysis confirms the strong support for the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) in the three southeastern counties, which was notably stronger than other parts of the country.

¹¹ In the latest act of mob violence/mob justice on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, there was death and the burning down of a police station in the city of Zwedru.

¹² <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/front-slider/liberia-violence-in-maryland-speaker-chambers-house-set-ablaze-as-pres-weah-orders-curfew/>

	Coalition for Democratic Change %	Collaborating Political Parties %	Other political parties %
National Average	46	30	24
Grand Gedeh	77	11	12
Maryland	73	6	21
River Gee	70	11	19

Figure 19: Distribution of political support

The weight of this political support (CDC also enjoys strong support in Sinoe, Rivercess and Grand Kru) is a consideration in helping to explain people’s favourable assessment of progress towards peace. Support for the CDC and the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) was tested against the main predictive drivers of the peace dividend indicators. This analysis showed a strong correlation between CDC party support and confidence in governing institutions in Grand Gedeh, Maryland and River Gee. Given that people who support a particular political party are also more likely to show loyalty to the public institutions that represent their political persuasion, this relationship is perhaps not surprising. However, in this case the finding is interesting since, of all the drivers predicting progress towards peace dividend outcomes, confidence in government institutions is the most important.

Figure 20 helps to affirm the premise that political party preference indirectly influences people’s perceptions of progress towards peace, personal safety and socioeconomic development since they have a stronger level of confidence in the governing institutions responsible for these development outcomes. In this case CDC supporters are strongly correlated with confidence with government institutions in the three counties, while supporters of the Collaborating Political Parties block have a weak association.

	Grand Gedeh		Maryland		River Gee	
	CDC	CPP	CDC	CPP	CDC	CPP
Confidence in government institutions	0.23	0.11	0.31	0.12	0.38	0.10

Figure 20: CDC supporters strongly associate with governing institutions

The analysis also shows that, for all other counties, affinity to the CDC is positively correlated with progress indicators, while supporters of the CPP coalition have a negative perception of these peace dividend outcomes. The finding implies the influential character of political preference in people’s perceptions of progress.

An analysis of more objective indicators, such as people's livelihood security and food and health security, showed that there is no significant difference between supporters of the political groupings. In real terms there is no evidence that CDC supporters are likely to be more secure, which would have possibly explained their more positive outlook. Instead, SCORE shows that all Liberians, regardless of political party preference, report similar levels of deprivation and hardship. On the other hand there is no evidence that supporters of a particular political party are more or less peaceful or violent.

While this analysis may help to explain why people in Grand Gedeh, Maryland and River Gee seem to report better peace dividend outcomes than the rest of the country, it also foreshadows a more challenging governance dilemma. It raises the question of whether people, regardless of their emotional attachment to a particular political party, can feel confident that local governing institutions will represent their interests. In this case the possibility that people who do not support the ruling political party also do not feel that they have a genuine stake in the benefits of citizenship should be a concern.

Section C: Violent tendencies and peaceful citizenship

Profiles of violent citizenship

Assessing violence has been a feature of SCORE Liberia since 2016. Section A above showed how the trend for violent tendencies has remained constant over the past four years countrywide. Reducing violent tendencies in Liberia since the end of the conflict in 2003 has been a key dimension of the peace consolidation and reconciliation programme, and while a score of 1.0 or under is considered normal in stable societies, Liberia retains a score of 1.9.

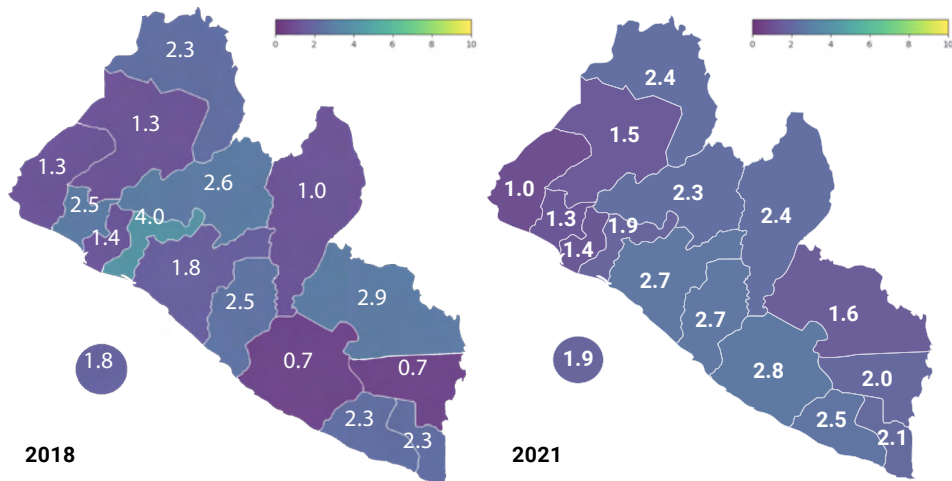


Figure 21: Violent tendencies - national and county SCOREs 2018 and 2021

	2018	2021
Violent Tendencies	1.8	1.9
Aggression	2.5	3.0
Endorsement of SGBV	2.0	1.1
Political Violence Propensity	1.2	1.7
Violent Action	0.2	0.2
Violent Values	2.1	3.2

* The SCORE for violent tendencies in 2016 was 1.9, and the PAPD target is to reduce this to 0.5 by 2023. Higher scores denote a stronger propensity to embrace violent activity.

The score for violent tendencies is constructed by measuring three principal indicators: aggression in daily life, the endorsement of SGBV and the inclination to engage in political violence. While endorsement for SGBV has reduced to 1.1 from 2.0, other indicators have worsened. County level scores also show how some regions of the country retain concerning levels of violent citizenship. While counties in western Liberia have seen scores stay around the national average or lower (e.g., Bomi from 2.5 in 2018 to 1.3 in 2021 and Margibi from 4.0 in 2018 to 1.9 in 2021), other counties have remained above the national average or worsened in the past three years. Three counties in particular demonstrate a significant increase in violent tendencies, highlighted in figure 22 below.

County	2018	2021
Grand Bassa	1.8	2.7
Sinoe	0.7	2.8
Nimba	1.0	2.4
Rivercess	2.5	2.7
Bong	2.6	2.3
Lofa	2.3	2.4

Figure 22: Counties showing higher than average violent tendencies

It is clear that some counties are more vulnerable to violent citizenship tendencies. The SCORE analysis explored the profile of violent and peaceful citizenship traits (see Box 2), leading to an assessment of counties by their relative concentrations of potentially violent and peaceful citizens.

Box 2. Definitions of violent and peaceful citizenship

Violent citizenship: Citizens who endorse SGBV, demonstrate an inclination to aggression in inter-personal relations, are prepared to accept violence as a legitimate form of political expression and are less forgiving of those who caused harm.

Peaceful citizenship: Citizens who reject SGBV, aggression in inter-personal relations and violence as a legitimate form of political expression, and who are prepared to forgive those who caused harm.

While acknowledging that everyone has the potential to exhibit peaceful and violent behaviours, SCORE 2021 wanted to better understand how profiles of citizenship are concentrated across Liberia. Results show that only a minority of people (seven percent) appear to embrace high levels of violent behaviour in their personal relations and approach to political engagement. The

majority is split into two groups -- those who indicate a strong inclination to peaceful behaviour (54 percent), and those who declare they are peaceful, but they do not fully reject violence in their daily lives in pursuit of political objectives (39 percent).

Liberia	7 percent	54 percent	39 percent
County	Weak propensity for peaceful behaviour (%)	Strong propensity for peaceful behaviour (%)	Medium propensity for peaceful behaviour (%)
Lofa	16	35	49
Nimba	15	41	44
Bong	15	38	47
Grand Bassa	11	40	49
Margibi	11	43	47
Sinoe	9	28	63
Grand Kru	9	29	62
Rivercess	8	40	52
Grand Gedeh	1	77	22
Gbarpolu	1	54	45
Maryland	1	50	48
Montserrado	0.5	72	28
Grand Cape Mount	0	81	19
Bomi	0	75	25
River Gee	0	59	41

Figure 23: National average and county concentrations of strong and weak peaceful citizenship qualities

There is no particular evidence to indicate that peaceful citizens are more or less likely to be better off than those who are more likely to be violent, with only 10 percent of citizens who are more likely to resort to violence in their personal or political activities classified in SCORE 2021 as being critically insecure. At the same time, only 10 percent of violent-leaning citizens live in rural areas, while seven percent reside in semi-rural communities.

Although the overall picture of peaceful citizenship orientations across Liberia is positive, figure 24 shows the extent to which citizens agree with the use of violence if politicians and decision-makers are unable to resolve the challenges in society. Counties with the highest concentration of citizens which are potentially politically motivated to take violent action include Lofa (30 percent); Grand Kru (28 percent); Bong (24 percent); Nimba (24 percent) and Rivercess (22 percent).

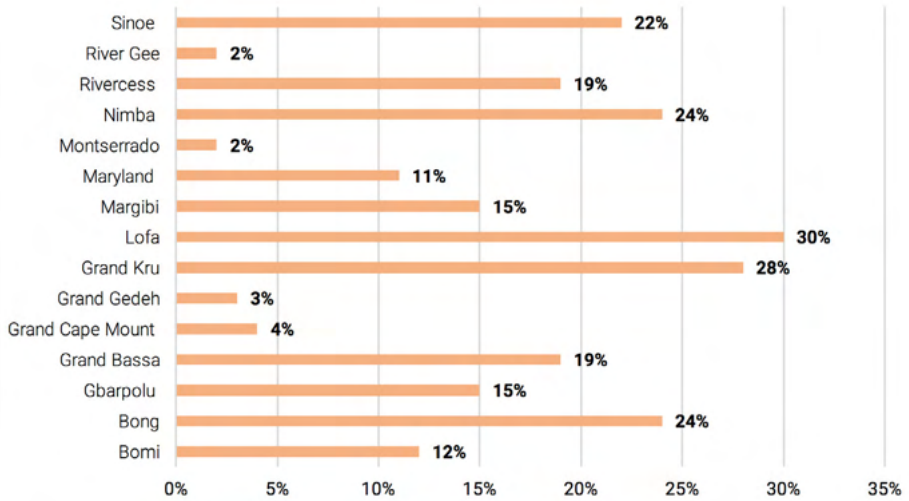


Figure 24: Percentage of citizens who agree with the use of violence if policy makers cannot solve the problems of society

Nationally, 13 percent of people agree with using violence to force socio-political change. While most people disagree with violence (less than 10 percent of people in most counties) as a method for protecting the community where they live, several counties (figure 25) have a higher than average concentration of citizens prepared to protect their communities using violent means.

Although the largest portion of Liberians reject violence, no counties have reduced violent tendencies to the PAPD SCORE target of 0.5. At the same time, specific counties demonstrate a propensity towards political violence as a vehicle for forcing socio-political change. Bong, Lofa, Grand Kru, Nimba and Sinoe are notable in this regard.

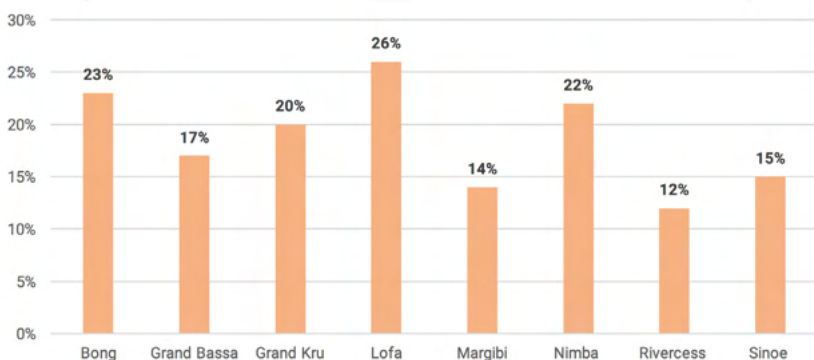
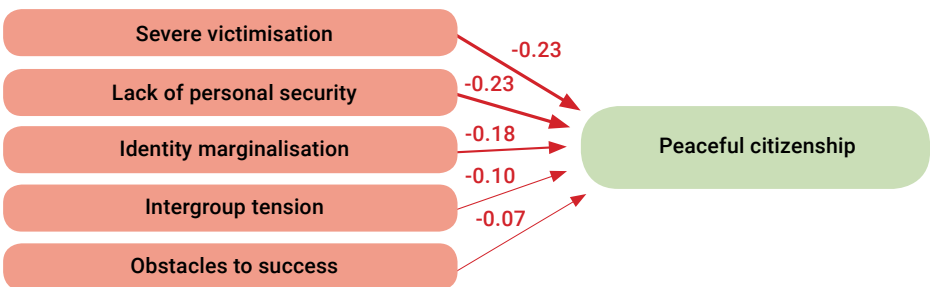


Figure 25: Percentage of people who agree with the use of violence to protect the local community

Resilient peaceful citizenship

A key feature of the SCORE analysis is identifying factors which help people to be constructive and peaceful citizens. Philosophically, the notion of a constructive peaceful citizen resides in the space between individual volition, governed by human capabilities, and the behaviour of state institutions. The assumption here is that the peaceful citizen has access to the tools to develop a sustainable space for socioeconomic and political advancement. The peaceful citizen does not acquiesce in the face of injustice or inequality, but rather possesses agency to play an active and constructive role for the peaceful transformation of society in the face of disruptions caused by violence and the challenges related to addressing the root causes of conflict.

In this analysis “disruptions” are presented as adversities, which prevent people from experiencing positive life outcomes at the individual level. We have established that peaceful citizenship is a set of individual behaviours which reject violence in daily personal relations and political activity, while being prepared to reconcile (forgive) with people who caused harm in the past. Figure 26 presents a statistical model which demonstrates factors which undermine this peaceful citizenship quality, while figure 29 (below) shows the specific individual and institutional factors which are likely to embolden the peaceful citizen in the face of adversities and disruptions.



Red arrows denote a negative driver, which undermines peaceful citizenship. The thickness of the arrow denotes the relative strength of the predictive relationship.

Figure 26: Adversity drivers which undermine peaceful citizenship

The two major causes of people potentially turning away from peaceful and constructive ways of transforming society are the experience of severe victimisation and the lack of personal security. SCORE Liberia defines severe victimisation as experiences of physical assault, unlawful dispossession of property and experience of sexual violence. Lack of personal security refers to people feeling vulnerable to violence in daily life, while not being confident the police can protect citizens from violence. Identity marginalisation – defined as the extent to which an individual

feels discriminated against due to their gender, religious beliefs, ethnicity or political opinions – is a lesser negative driver. However, it is strong enough to demonstrate the risk of frustrations turning into violence if people do not feel they are being treated equally, irrespective of their ethnic background or cultural norms.

Finally, intergroup tension measures negative perceptions of other ethnic and religious groups. In 2021 this indicator does not exert a major negative influence over the Liberia SCORE results, and the value of intergroup harmony has improved from 7.0 in 2016 to 7.5 in 2021. In 2018 the intergroup harmony SCORE was 7.7. However, an early warning of future potential risks to social cohesion lies in the indication that, tentatively, intergroup tension and political tribalism have the potential to undermine peaceful citizenship and progress towards peace respectively. Finally, obstacles to success does not appear to be a major factor in predicting peaceful citizenship, though it is much more significant as a negative driver of livelihood security¹³.

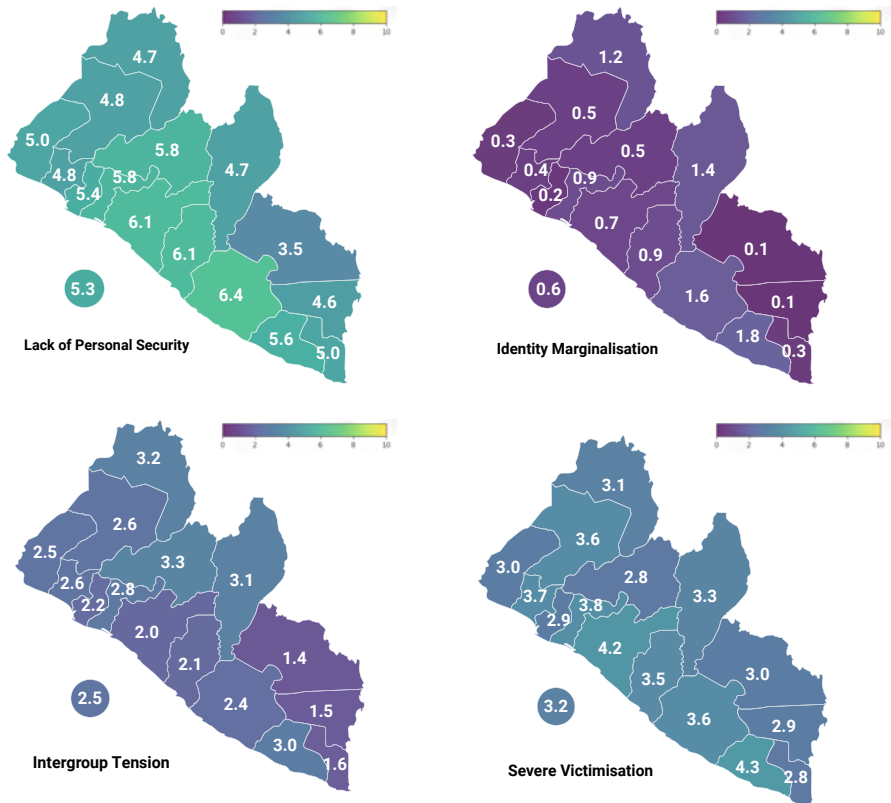


Figure 27: County SCOREs for adversities which threaten peaceful citizenship

¹³ For a full analysis please see the 2021 SCORE report: Livelihood resilience and escaping poverty in Liberia: Assessing adversities and opportunities for livelihood security

The relative strength by county of these disruptions to peaceful citizenship are presented in the heatmaps above. With a national average of 5.3, the lack of personal security is particularly strong in Grand Bassa, (6.1), Rivercess (6.4) and Sinoe (6.4). Identity marginalisation (national average of 0.6) is most pronounced in Grand Kru (1.8) and Sinoe (1.6), while severe victimisation (national average of 3.2) is a significant concern in Grand Bassa (4.2) and Grand Kru (4.3). Intergroup tension (national average of 2.5) is relatively high in Lofa (3.2), Bong (3.3) and Nimba (3.1).

Figure 28 below shows how the adversities identified by the SCORE analysis are concentrated in each of Liberia's 15 counties. The last column shows the sum of these adversities by county, indicating those counties which are more or less vulnerable to the sum effect of barriers to personal success, identity marginalisation, intergroup tension, victimisation and lack of personal security. The aggregate score for adversities at the national level is 3.4, with Grand Kru, Margibi and Sinoe performing worse; each with an average adversity score of 4.0. Other counties above the national average include Grand Bassa and Bong (3.7); Nimba and Rivercess (3.6) and Lofa (3.5).

	Obstacles to Success	Identity Marginalisation	Intergroup Tension	Severe Victimisation	Lack of Personal Security	Composite Adversities Score
Liberia	4.1	0.6	2.5	3.9	5.3	3.4
Grand Kru	4.1	1.8	3.0	5.1	5.6	4.2
Margibi	5.6	0.9	2.8	4.7	5.8	4.0
Sinoe	3.6	1.6	2.4	4.3	6.4	4.0
Grand Bassa	2.6	0.7	1.9	4.6	6.1	3.7
Bong	5.4	0.5	3.3	3.6	5.8	3.7
Nimba	5.1	1.4	3.1	3.9	4.7	3.6
Rivercess	3.0	0.9	2.1	3.9	6.1	3.6
Lofa	5.0	1.2	3.2	3.7	4.7	3.5
Bomi	2.7	0.4	2.5	4.5	4.8	3.3
Gbarpolu	3.4	0.5	2.5	4.2	4.8	3.3
Montserrado	3.3	0.2	2.2	3.7	5.4	3.2
Grand Cape Mount	3.0	0.3	2.4	3.6	5.0	3.1
Maryland	3.6	0.3	1.6	3.5	5.0	3.0
River Gee	4.5	0.1	1.5	3.6	4.6	2.9
Grand Gedeh	4.9	0.1	1.4	3.8	3.5	2.7

Scores are calculated on a scale of 0-10. Higher score values denote more severe levels of adversity felt by citizens in the county.

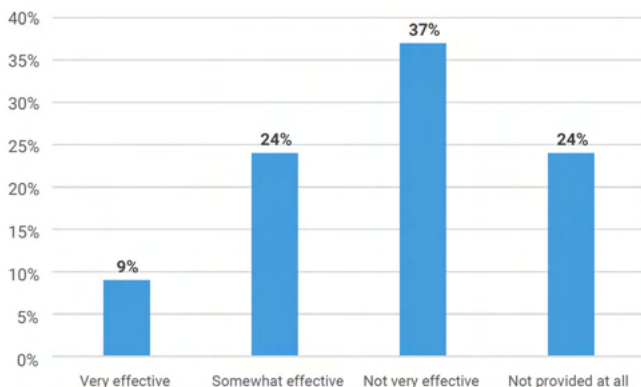
Figure 28: County comparisons of adversities

Figure 29 shows the most significant indicators that correlate with peaceful citizenship and can be considered as factors that insulate peaceful citizenship qualities from the impact of the adversities described above. Each of these state and societal assets create the capacity for people to cope better with the impact of adversities in their lives, and this helps to mitigate the violent tendencies which such adversities can potentially provoke.

Indicator	Strength of relationship
State capacities	
State provision: County Service Centre	0.16
State provision: Passing Laws	0.15
State provision: Opportunity to go to hospital when sick	0.14
State provision: Justice for all	0.14
State provision: Implementing Laws	0.14
State provision: Road Networks	0.14
Individual attitudes and behaviours	
Confidence in Christian Faith Leaders	0.18
Family Coherence	0.18
Intergroup Contact	0.17
Confidence in Muslim Faith Leaders	0.13

Figure 29: Resilience factors for peaceful citizenship

Among the most important state capacities is the functioning of County Service Centres which were established to improve the delivery of local public services. The overall SCORE for state service delivery in 2021 is 3.6. In 2018 38 percent of people said that their Country Service Centre (CSC) was effective to some degree, while 43 percent reported it was not effective. Figure 30 shows



that in 2021 33 percent of people believe that the local CSC is very or somewhat effective, while 61 percent indicate that the CSC is not effective or does not provide any services.

Figure 30: Effectiveness of County Service Centres countrywide

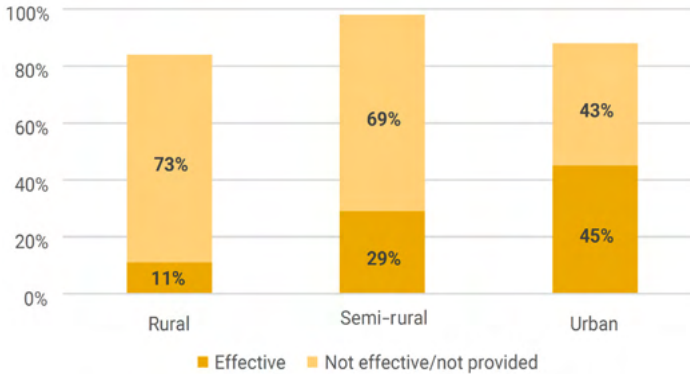


Figure 31: County Service Centre delivery to rural and urban communities

Satisfaction with CSCs is concentrated in urban areas, while rural regions seem least able to access good quality services. Figure 31 demonstrates the extent to which rural and semi-rural areas are underserved, while urban areas benefit more from service provision.

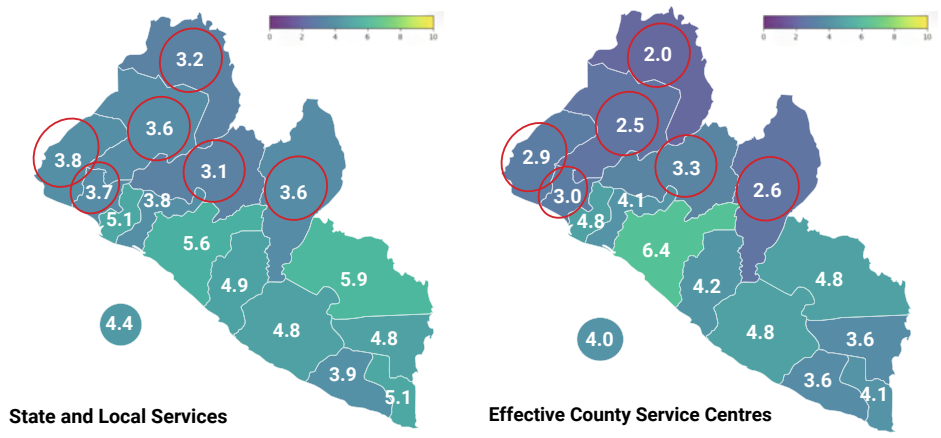


Figure 32: County profile of state and local service delivery

Figure 32 presents a similar pattern of underserved counties and the poor effectiveness of CSCs. Although the countrywide picture of public service delivery is poor, there does seem to be a particularly disappointing performance in northern counties, with the worst public service delivery gravitating towards Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Bong, Bomi, Gbarpolu and Nimba.

Individual attitudes and behaviours clearly indicate the important role of faith leaders in supporting peaceful citizenship and overall social cohesion in Liberia. Both Christian and Muslim leaders have the influence to prevent conflict and to calm social tensions. This was exhibited in

2016 when the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia used its influence to defuse tensions triggered by the debate surrounding Proposition 24 to declare Liberia a Christian nation. This is shown in figure 33, where both Christian and Muslim leaders are trusted by Liberians from both religious persuasions.

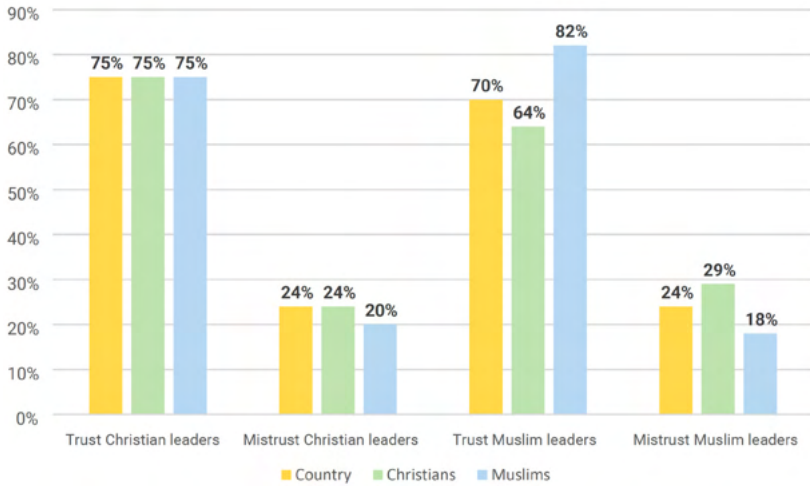
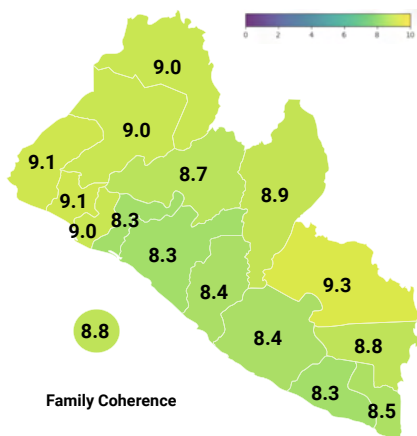


Figure 33: Trust in Religious Leaders

A key asset for supporting peaceful citizenship is family coherence. As in other SCORE-assessed countries, family coherence features as an instrument of social cohesion in support of peaceful and constructive societal relations. The quality of family coherence is measured by assessing people’s attitudes to strong family bonds, drawing satisfaction from being with family members, a sense of family loyalty and family members building a consensus on what is important in life.



The qualities of family coherence seem to translate into citizenship traits where the family unit serves as an incubator for constructive inter-relationships, characterised by cooperation, problem solving and consensus building. Figure 34 shows that family coherence is a strong element in society, and with this quality behaving as a defence against violent citizenship, the case for investing in the family is compelling as a feature of peace consolidation.

Figure 34: Strong family coherence across Liberia

Section D: Policy implications

SCORE Liberia 2021 demonstrates how an elusive peace dividend is fuelled by unmet expectations in people's livelihoods and the continuation of traditional community conflicts. Persisting violent tendencies at the local level are underpinned by a profile of citizenship which does not yet reject violence as a method for resolving disputes. Resorting to violence in the absence of trusted public institutions is a clear product of the failure to demonstrate the benefits of peace to the country's citizens.

SCORE findings validate the contextual drivers of conflict which hinder national reconciliation. Sadly, the lack of investment in reconciliation, highlighted by former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in January 2017¹⁴, remains a pervasive feature of national life. The result is that the drivers of instability identified in Pillar III of the PAPD continue to undermine efforts to build a durable peace infrastructure. These dimensions of severe economic inequality, poverty, disharmony between and among communities and the perception that the government does not operate to the benefit of most of its people, resonate across SCORE findings. Ultimately, the SCORE analysis shows the extent to which Liberia is unable to escape its fragile peace, while 2021 results mirror those from 2018 and 2016. Different observers have indicated that many recommendations captured in different high-level peacebuilding frameworks and commitments have not been fully implemented, with many aspects of the country's reconciliation roadmap lacking investment or political attention. One criticism targeted at Liberia's peacebuilding and reconciliation infrastructure – that there were too many frameworks and an over-projectisation of peacebuilding efforts – can also help explain why citizens fail to see a peace dividend and a discernible progress towards peace.

The following sections describe the strategic entry points for policy action based on the SCORE findings.

1. Design an evidence-based and citizen-focused national policy for reconciliation

The 2021 SCORE study showed that 87 percent of Liberians want to see the government prioritise the implementation of peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. This strong public sentiment for reconciliation sits well with the process of county level reconciliation dialogues which started in 2016. The second National Reconciliation Conference, which took place in December 2020, affirmed the 15 Counties Consolidated Peace and Reconciliation Plan¹⁵. The Plan emerged from

¹⁴ Last annual address to the Sixth Session of the 53rd National Legislature of the Republic of Liberia on January 23, 2017

¹⁵ "Enhancing local voices for consolidation of peace in Liberia: 15 Counties Consolidated Peace and Reconciliation Plan,

county level reconciliation dialogues and reconciliation plans and reflects the specific needs of those local communities. The Conference Resolution, which was endorsed by the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Liberia Peace Ambassador, acknowledged the projectisation of reconciliation initiatives, short-term planning, inadequate resources and coordination, and the absence of political will, as obstacles to achieving progress towards reconciliation. As a result, there is now renewed impetus to develop a coherent policy for National Reconciliation, which is receiving support from the UN system.

Political will needs to be mobilised to ensure that a future national reconciliation policy is underpinned by the institutional structures to ensure it can be meaningfully implemented at both the national and local levels. The first step in this direction should be the operationalisation of a National Peace and Reconciliation Steering Committee (NPRSC), which builds on past inter-ministerial decisions and accommodates the standing committees on peace and reconciliation in the national legislature. The Liberia Peace Building Office should serve as the secretariat to the NPRSC and provide the political support to act as the coordinating authority across government and legislative bodies. Given the limited coordination capacity at central level between and among government institutions coordinating peace, the PBO will require extensive and long-term support to operate in its new role. Positioning the NPRSC is a highly political question which this report cannot recommend, but the decision needs to be made at the level of the President and should allow national reconciliation to be anchored within the Executive branch of government, while the PBO should remain free of political pressures.

The national policy of reconciliation should be anchored in an understanding of the status of existing commitments and plans in support of reconciliation made by the government and other actors. This requires an audit of past frameworks including the Statement of Mutual Commitments, the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation, the County Reconciliation Action Plans and other relevant high-level documents. This process will help align local community-based reconciliation priorities with a national reform process which shapes a roadmap for national reconciliation driven by inter-locking policy priorities rather than funding cycles and project logic.

2. Build citizen confidence in state institutions

One of the clearest pictures painted by the SCORE 2021 findings is that Liberia's peace dividend is dependent on citizens' actual and perceived sense that government and civic institutions are working for them. The fact that people do not trust public bodies is reflected in the decline of the SCORE for confidence in government institutions from 5.9 to 4.6, and of civic institutions,

which includes civil society organisations, from 6.0 to 5.2. With a change of more than 1.0 point representing a significant change, these findings show the extent to which Liberia's public bodies need to modify their approach to public service delivery. A loss of faith in government institutions has a potentially devastating impact on Liberia's capacity to leverage a peace dividend; confidence in institutions is the most important driver for progress towards peace, and critical for predicting socioeconomic progress and enhanced personal safety. Without an improvement in confidence in institutions, it is unlikely that people will perceive they are benefiting from any form of peace dividend.

Improving confidence in government institutions needs to be driven by actual improvements in the quality of service delivery which translates into better livelihoods for people. In 2018 SCORE identified a range of services which correlated with confidence in government institutions including confidence in civic institutions, socioeconomic progress, progress in personal safety, access to utilities and an effective road network. Unsurprisingly, all these factors remain highly relevant in 2021, showing that citizens' priorities remain the same. Figure 35 demonstrates that all forms of public service delivery, including local services, government investments in local economies and the rule of law are critical for improving people's confidence in state institutions. In addition, the creation of strong civic institutions including the media, civil society organisations and community organisations for youth and women are all likely to embolden trust in government. The implication is that confidence in government derives from a functioning state-society relationship evidenced in the benefits of citizenship, exercised through citizen-led organisations and assured by state-delivered protective and enabling services.

In 2021 the SCORE analysis has been able to prioritise the kinds of public services which are

Description of Indicator	Strength of association
Civic institutions	0.7
Local service delivery	0.3
Personal security	0.3
Quality of justice system	0.3
Quality of police system	0.3
Investment environment	0.3
Livelihood security	0.2
Access to justice	0.2

A value of +0.2 or above denotes a very strong significant relationship

Figure 35: Factors highly correlated with confidence in government institutions in SCORE 2021

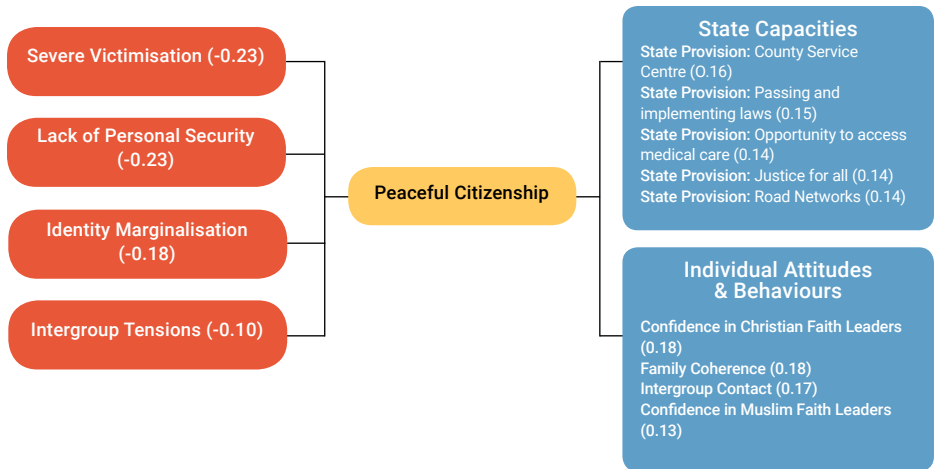


Figure 36: State capacities build resilience against adversities which undermine peaceful citizenship

likely to improve confidence in government institutions as a route towards resilient peaceful and constructive citizenship. This analysis supports the long-held axiom that responsive government institutions support development and provide the space for inclusive economic growth. Figure 36 confirms this relationship by demonstrating how state capacities (right-hand side of the model) work to protect peaceful citizenship in the face of adversities (left-hand side of the model).

A tangible example of this model is found in the potential of well-functioning County Service Centres; facilities supported by the government and international donors to build up confidence in the state’s service delivery credentials. This finding echoes the SCORE recommendation from 2018, and the assessment that CSCs are crucial for advancing Liberia’s decentralisation efforts remains highly relevant. The message in 2021 is that CSCs and overall public service delivery are more than ever a strategy for consolidating peace at the local level, since coherent and responsive government services are an essential tool for conflict prevention.

Specific services feature as priorities for citizens and these include healthcare, justice services, the passage and implementation of laws and better public infrastructure such as roads. The Country Reconciliation Plans, endorsed by the Government in December 2020, should serve as the main entry point for allocating resources to support development strategies which meet specific local needs. In this regard barriers to the appropriate use of County Development and Social Development Funds (CDSDFs) need to be removed. This requires further efforts to support the decentralisation of political, administrative and fiscal powers, and the institutionalisation of

measures which help target CDSDF monies to priority local peacebuilding and development initiatives. The assertion in the 15-Counties Reconciliation Plan¹⁶ that the allocation of these funds continues to be politicised, while their use has been ineffectively managed, is symptomatic of the structural challenges hindering progress towards a countrywide peace dividend.

3. Deepen community capacities to address the root causes of violent citizenship

The first Liberia SCORE (2016-2017) uncovered an important finding, which showed that socio-psychological resilience was a strong driver lessening the impact of violent tendencies. These resilience factors were identified as empathy, executive skills, family coherence and community cooperation. The 2018 SCORE findings confirmed that factors such as forgiveness, empathy and civic responsibility were strongly correlated with reduced propensity for violence readiness and SGBV endorsement. In 2021 we can see that factors which are likely to undermine the socio-psychological well-being of the individual and community, such as severe victimisation, lack of personal security and identity marginalisation, remain strong negative drivers of peaceful citizenship (see figure 36 above). While state-centric dimensions are important resilience factors which help people sustain peaceful behaviours, individual and community attitudes have an equally strong effect on sustaining peace.

Expert opinions solicited for this report confirmed that there have been challenges in implementing various recommendations of past SCORE Liberia reports, the County Reconciliation Plans, and some aspects of the 2009 TRC report related to community level peacebuilding and reconciliation. The original County Reconciliation Dialogue programme, which was conceived in 2016 and later enshrined as a government commitment in the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan (2017), was designed as an inclusive and participatory community space which would build consensus around local level peacebuilding priorities. The Consolidated National Action Plan and Results Framework for the 15 Counties Consolidated Peace and Reconciliation Plan¹⁷ institutionalises the community dialogue approach into a national strategy which should serve as a pillar of a Liberia national policy on reconciliation. The main features of the consolidated plan focus on a) security and rule of law; b) economic transformation; c) social cohesion; d) accountability; and e) sexual and gender-based violence. The 15 county plans propose actions which gravitate around these five themes demonstrating the inter-operability of community priorities for reconciliation.

¹⁶ "Enhancing local voices for consolidation of peace in Liberia: 15 Counties Consolidated Peace and Reconciliation Plan, December 2020, Liberia Peacebuilding Office, UNDP, Naymote

¹⁷ "Enhancing local voices for consolidation of peace in Liberia: 15 Counties Consolidated Peace and Reconciliation Plan, December 2020, Liberia Peacebuilding Office, UNDP, Naymote

SCORE 2021 affirms the need to deepen the concept and practice of community-driven reconciliation. This is evidenced in the finding that family coherence, trust in faith leaders and inter-group contact complement the state-centric and institutional drivers for preventing violent citizenship. It underlies the notion, long understood in Liberia's post-war recovery strategies, that peace consolidation involves a process of individual and collective healing as well as of political and institutional reform. Reversing the impact of socio-psychological drivers of violent tendencies, represented by victimisation, marginalisation and the lack of personal security, requires community strategies which reaffirm the need to invest in Palava Huts and the continuation of inclusive participatory county dialogues. Investments in community-based socio-therapy¹⁸ can complement the overall strategies of local level healing, especially for those who continue to live with the trauma of past conflict or who have experienced physical or emotional violence. Successive SCORE projects have demonstrated that mental health challenges faced by community members contribute to potential violent behaviours.

The SCORE 2021 finding that Christian and Muslim faith leaders are trusted and respected by local communities is an asset that local reconciliation efforts need to capture. This can take the form of faith leaders participating directly in different community reconciliation dialogues or advising County and District Security Councils. At the national level the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia has a track record of influencing peace outcomes. Examples include support to the ECOWAS Peace Plan in 1997; facilitating discussions of the International Contact Group; and, in 2016, defusing tensions associated with the controversy surrounding Proposition 24. Efforts to leverage this influence at the community level can be stepped up by building the local mediation capacities of local faith leaders who can integrate themselves into conflict management and resolution processes. As with community-based dialogue and socio-therapy efforts, respected community faith leaders can also facilitate intergroup contact, which serves as another factor which can drive peaceful citizenship tendencies.

4. Institutionalise Community Resilience Compacts

The different elements of community-driven reconciliation can be institutionalised through a Community Resilience Compact signed and jointly owned by central government and the respective counties. Each Compact would seek to establish a binding framework of mutual accountability involving stakeholders responsible for implementing the respective County Reconciliation Action Plan. The legal authority of the national reconciliation policy could be leveraged to draw different actors into the Compacts from the political establishment, the private sector, civil society and the international community. Compacts would evolve into partnership

¹⁸ <https://www.zoa-international.com/news/community-based-sociotherapy-and-its-contribution-to-peace/>

frameworks for resilience programming and initiatives designed to address issues described in the 2021 SCORE analysis and identifiable underlying causes of conflict. Similarly, Compacts should seek to create a balance between government ownership, inclusive community ownership and donor-assisted mandated tasks, which aim to ensure local capacities for conflict prevention and a durable process for reconciliation.

Financing community level reconciliation efforts can be on the agenda of the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund (LMPTF), which was designed to support post-UNMIL peacebuilding efforts. In this regard, the Community Resilience Compact and County Reconciliation Action Plans should serve as frameworks for the identification of priority projects funded by the LMPTF. One feature of any LMPTF investment should be to identify from the outset how the potential project will be scaled and integrated into the national reconciliation policy. This thinking would help to avoid the trap of projectised reconciliation efforts, which many have criticised as a major flaw in Liberia's sustaining peace agenda. In practical terms this would require planning how national resources and capacities, both centrally and locally, will be leveraged to accompany the initial LMPTF investment and then used to organically guarantee the institutionalisation of project results and their absorption into community structures and practices.

Annex I: Methodology

What is the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index?



SCORE is an evidence-based peacebuilding and development methodology, which combines an extensive participatory research process with advanced data analysis to identify the drivers of conflict dynamics and peaceful social change. It draws inspiration from multiple scientific disciplines such as sociology, psychology, international relations and security studies and is flexible enough to incorporate new research findings, global policy guidelines and the realities of each local and regional context. The methodology is underpinned by a process framework, which ensures local ownership of project results and helps align research objectives with the specific policy outcomes of different partners.

The SCORE Index uses a mixed-methods participatory research approach and relies on multi-level stakeholder consultations, focus groups and interviews to inform the calibration of the SCORE questionnaire (QNR). The QNR draws from the extensive SCORE library of measurement instruments and indicators. The approach helps ensure the SCORE results are built on the basis of a wide-ranging set of inputs and extensive data-driven insights. The SCORE Index can flexibly

integrate different modalities of data collection as required and draws its strength from advanced analytical and statistical toolkits. Using participatory research principles, SCORE results are interpreted through multi-level stakeholder consultations and dialogue groups, which inform further data analysis and design of participatory policy briefs, which provide suitable policy and programme outlets for recommendations which can be owned by national stakeholders. The credibility of the SCORE results resides in the framework of cooperation between key stakeholders, allowing for the implementation of broadly supported public policy decisions which derive from the process.

The SCORE for Liberia was calibrated in the last quarter of 2020. The household survey was administered in the first quarter of 2021 by the Liberia Peacebuilding Office in 15 counties of Liberia. There were 3,874 respondents countrywide: 1,329 in urban areas and 2,545 in rural and semi-rural areas.

