SCORE

SCORE LIBERIA DRAFT POLICY BRIEF

Enhancing Coexistence and Civic Trust in Liberia

SCORE Liberia was launched in April 2016. Following the qualitative calibration of the methodology to the Liberian context, the quantitative fieldwork was completed in January 2017. The underlying objectives of the research are to understand the dimensions and indicators, and to collect empirical data relevant to the nature of social cohesion and coexistence in Liberia. SCORE can help identify hotspots, diagnose risks and understand the predictors of violence, which is of utmost importance at this current juncture, with the upcoming presidential elections and ongoing draw-down of UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Considering the turbulent past of Liberia and its multi-ethnic, multi-religious societal composition, one of the key outcomes of interest for SCORE was to explore the way to enhance coexistence and civic trust in the country. On these counts, the survey questionnaire includes items used to construct two horizontal (individual and group relations) and two vertical indicators (relations of citizens/groups with the state).
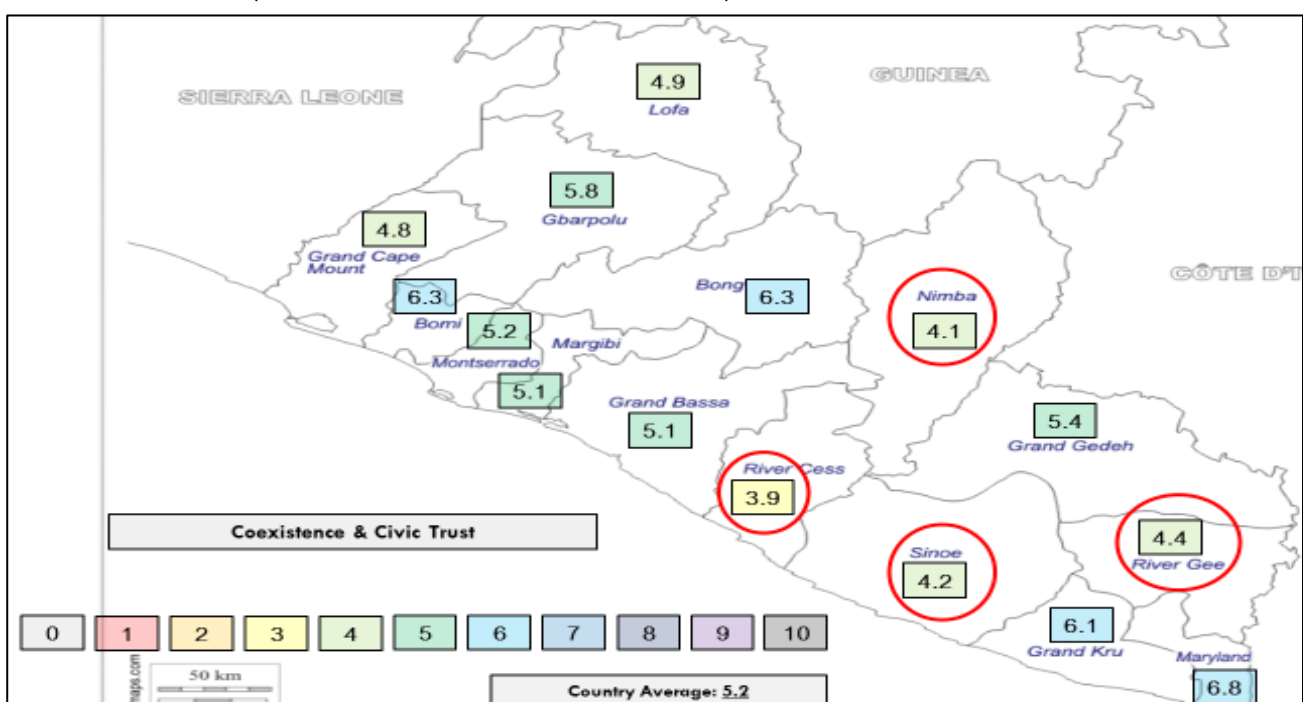
Horizontal Indicators:
> (1) *Perceived progress in reconciliation* refers to the ongoing process of societal healing to restore social cohesion between groups that were previously engaged in a dispute or conflict.
> (2) *Intergroup harmony* broadly refers to positive intergroup relations and includes components such as intergroup trust, proximity and positive feelings.
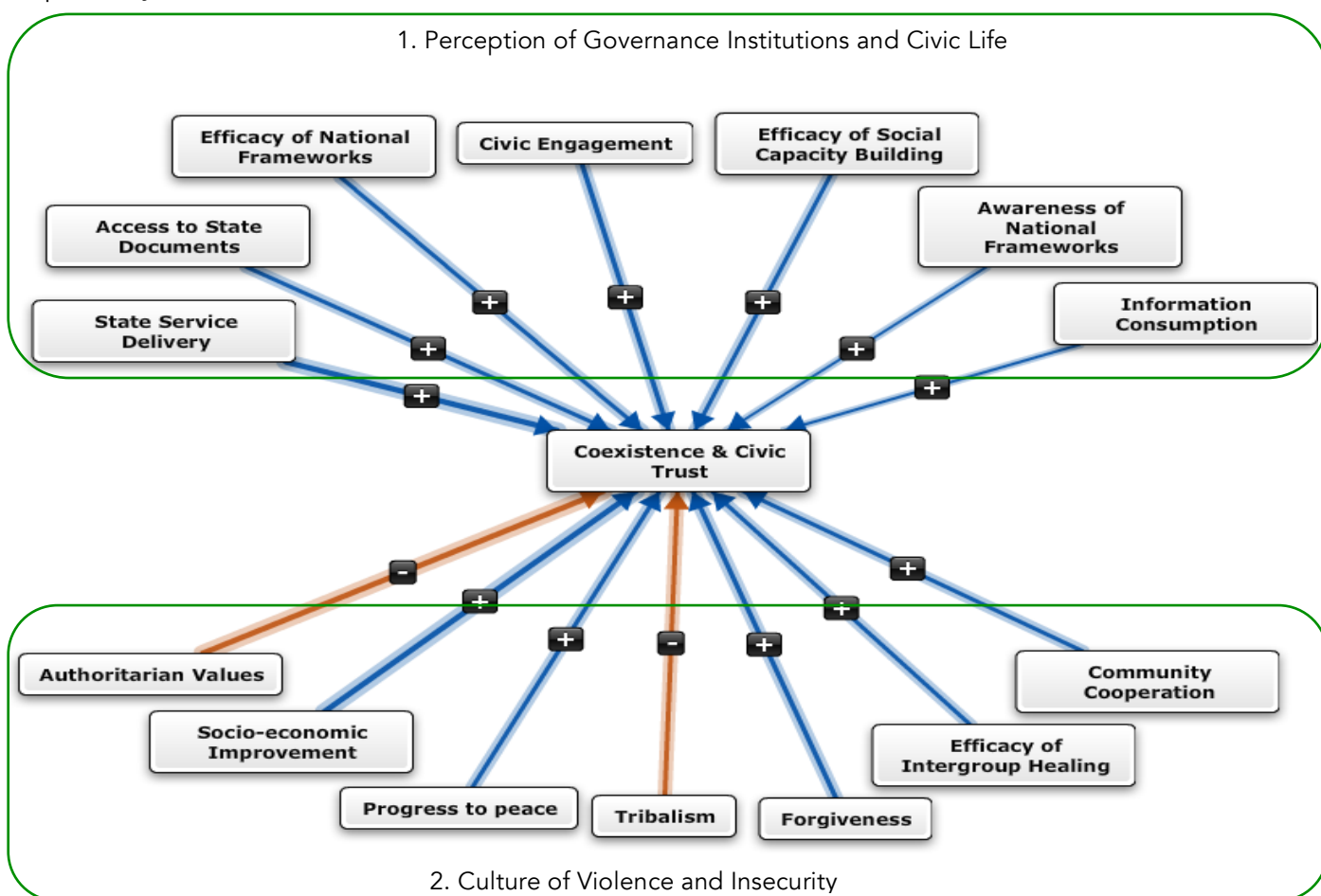
Vertical Indicators:
> (3) *Confidence in institutions* refers to the extent to which people trust governmental institutions.
> (4) *Civic satisfaction* refers to the perceived satisfaction with the state in areas of importance to the society (e.g., provision of social services, economic development).

These four indicators are then combined into an overall measure of perceptions of coexistence and civic trust. Across Liberia, the average score for perceptions of coexistence and civic trust is 5.2 on a scale from 0 (low) to 10 (high). In other words, the typical respondent felt ambivalent about progress in reconciliation, the extent of intergroup harmony, the trustworthiness and performance of governmental institutions.

As can be seen from the heat map above, no clear regional patterns are evident. Four counties, however, stand out as areas of concern – circled in red. Looking at River Cess and River Gee, SCORE findings reveal that that these counties exhibit lower scores regarding the composite horizontal indicator of intergroup harmony, which means that intergroup trust and positive intergroup feelings are substantially lower than the country average in River Cess and River Gee. On the other hand, while respondents in Sinoe expressed the lowest level of confidence in governmental institutions compared to other counties; respondents in Nimba expressed the lowest level of civic satisfaction. These results suggest that targeted, tailored strategies to address specific needs at the county (and group) level could be constructive, as a complement to addressing a countrywide-need to invest in making progress on reconciliation, intergroup harmony, and the integrity and effectiveness of governmental institutions.

On the country level, SCORE analysis identified two main groups of indicators that predict perceptions of coexistence and civic trust in Liberia. The thickness and the colour of the arrows in predictive model illustrated below indicate the strength of the relationship (i.e., thicker the arrow, the stronger the relationship) and the nature of the relationship (blue arrows represent indicators that positively contribute to "coexistence and civic trust", whereas orange arrows impede "coexistence and civic trust"), respectively.

1- Perception of Governance Institutions and Civic Life is a group of indicators that go beyond the vertical indicators that make up coexistence and civic trust, and includes indicators that relate to citizens' awareness, access and perceived efficacy about governance institutions, national frameworks and services. Predictive analysis shows that awareness, perceived efficacy and access relating to governance institutions and civic engagement translates into enhanced coexistence and civic trust in Liberia; in descending order of relationship strength, predictors in this group are as follows:

State service delivery (e.g., water, electricity, road network) and access to state documents (e.g., birth certificate, marriage certificate, driving license) are gauges of the access to and efficacy of state services. These indicators enhance coexistence and civic trust in Liberia[1].

Efficacy and awareness of national frameworks and decentralized hubs relate to the extent citizens are aware of and have confidence in the conflict prevention and management frameworks (e.g., Governance Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission) and decentralized hubs (e.g., County Peace Committees) aimed at strengthening peace and state building in Liberia. Perceptions that national frameworks are effective, representative and non-corrupt are a strong predictor for coexistence and civic trust. [2]

Civic engagement (e.g., taking part in in community meetings or county development meetings) by individuals and groups is associated with higher levels of coexistence and civic trust in Liberia.[3] However, SCORE findings reveal apathy, disengagement, non-participation in civic life across the country, which highlights the need for promoting public participation and constructive civic engagement across the country.

Efficacy of social capacity-building processes (e.g., youth empowerment, addressing SGBV) has a strong positive relationship with coexistence and civic trust. Individuals, who feel that they are included, empowered, represented, heard and cared for are more likely to express a strong sense of coexistence and confidence in civic and government institutions.[4]

Information consumption relates to the extent people consume information from an array of media to keep up to date with political and social developments in Liberia. Information consumption that also relates to civic engagement has a positive relationship with coexistence and civic trust.[5] However, it should be emphasized that *access* to information in rural Liberia, where internet access may be sporadic or nonexistent, is largely limited to Community Radio, hence information consumption across the country is uneven.

2- Culture of violence and insecurity includes indicators that relate to violent tendencies (both contributing or undermining) and perceived societal, economic, political progress. Those citizens and groups who experience insecurity and share violent tendencies are more likely to express lower levels of coexistence and civic trust in Liberia. Relevant literature indicates that violence can be damaging to democratic institutions, eroding their legitimacy and effectiveness. When democracy fails to deliver its promise of providing security, stability and prosperity, the democratic process can become compromised, with citizens reacting by withdrawing from public spaces, accepting the authority of non-state actors, or supporting hard-line responses. In descending order of relationship strength, indicators that contribute to coexistence and civic trust in this group are as follows:

Authoritarian values refer to values such as strong obedience to leadership, preference for non-democratic hierarchical systems of governance, and reliance on heavy-handed leadership to make all the decisions. Especially in countries where democratic institutions are not efficient and

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[1] Country average for perceived efficacy of state service delivery is 3.5, Liberians on average consider the provision and delivery of state services as inefficient.

[2] Country average for perceived efficacy of national frameworks is 4.0. At the country level, Grant Cape Mount, Sinoe, Nimba, Lofa and River Cess trend lower than the country average; while Bomi and Maryland trend significantly higher.

[3] The national average for civic engagement is 3.0, where the averages for Grand Bassa, Sinoe and River Gee counties are significantly lower than the national average, while the averages for Bong and Maryland counties are significantly higher.

[4] The national average for perceived efficacy of social capacity-building processes is 4.6. Lofa, River Gee and Grand Cape Mount counties are significantly lower than the average.

[5] The national average for information consumption is 5.4, which highlights the need for improving interest in and access to information, as well as developing better communication strategies. The averages for River Cess, Grant Cape Mount, Nimba, and River Gee counties are significantly lower than the national average, while the averages for Bomi, Margibi and Montserrado counties are significantly higher.

consolidated, authoritarian politics may look more appealing, including due to their hierarchical effectiveness. Endorsement of authoritarian values and convictions do not promote inclusive and participatory decision-making – and thus undermine coexistence and civic trust in Liberia.[6]

Socio-economic improvement and progress to peace encompass factors such as an improved ability to make a living, the quality of education and health, and improved intergroup trust and relations. Overall, socio-economic improvement reduces culture of violence and insecurity in Liberia.[7]

Political tribalism relates to a politicization of tribal identities that can lead to polarization, which reinforces a culture of violence and insecurity. Specifically, this indicator refers not to ethnic identity and belonging, but rather to the tug of war between 'tribal hierarchies and traditional way of life' and 'democratic governance structures and values' (e.g., believing that justice and security services should be provided by tribal authorities instead of state authorities).[8]

Forgiveness (as opposed to revenge) is an indicator that assesses the extent to which people have moved on and forgiven those responsible for the violence and violations experienced during the conflict. A strong sense of forgiveness translates into enhanced coexistence and confidence in civic and government institutions.[9]

Efficacy of intergroup healing relates to the extent to which communities can improve relationships among people on different sides of the conflict. Such improvement contributes to positive intergroup relations, hence reducing the culture of violence and insecurity in Liberia.[10]

Community cooperation entails collaboration to achieve things that benefit the community as a whole, such as cooperating to achieve things on behalf of the community and resolving crises in the community. Community cooperation is an inhibiting factor for culture of violence and insecurity, and hence enhances coexistence and civic trust in Liberia.

To summarise, those who have faith in governance institutions and those who are engaged in civic matters report higher levels of coexistence and civic trust, while those who have propensity for violence and report insecurity express lower levels of coexistence and civic trust in Liberia.

Policy Recommendations

Policies and interventions to enhance coexistence and civic trust should focus on developing existing capacities to improve the delivery of state services, foster civic engagement, and reinforce socio-economic improvement, while reducing the propensity for violence and improving the sense of security. To ensure effective and efficient allocation of resources, these policies and interventions should target areas where there the likelihood of impact is the highest. On that note, it is important to highlight that the ongoing

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[6] The national average for authoritarian values is 8.1, which points to strong need for consolidating democratic values. The averages for Grand Kru, Lofa, Maryland and Grand Cape Mount counties are significantly lower than the national average.

[7] The national average for socio-economic improvement is 5.8. The averages for Nimba, Montserrado and Lofa counties are significantly lower than the national average, while the averages for Bong, Bomi, Maryland, Grand Gedeh and Grand Cape Mount counties are significantly higher.

[8] The country average for political tribalism across Liberia is 3, where Grand Cape Mount, River Cess, Sinoe and Grand Gedeh score higher than the national average.

[9] The national average for forgiveness is 8.0. The averages for Lofa, Sinoe and Grand Cape Mount counties are significantly lower than the national average, while the averages for Sinoe and Maryland counties are significantly higher.

[10] SCORE findings suggest investing in healing processes to achieve reconciliation of Bassas and Grebos with Mandigos and Gios; Manos with Krahns and Mandingos; Vais with Krahns, Gios and Manos; Bassas and Manos with Muslim groups; Manos, Kissis and Bassas with victims and perpetrators.

decentralization efforts and the Local Government Act, such as decentralization of access to state documents (e.g. Driving license, marriage certificate, tax/revenue payment, business registration and etc.) is receiving overwhelming support among the public. The predictive model illustrated above can help identify policy entry points that can be matched with county-level analysis to tailor efforts to where the needs are strongest.

In the short and medium term, the SCORE predictive analysis reveals that the access to and efficacy of state services, complemented with improved efficacy of national frameworks and social capacity-building processes, would be one of the best policy entry points to enhance coexistence and civic trust. For the long run, policies aimed at promoting constructive civic participation and developing capacities and support mechanisms to foster forgiveness and intergroup healing should be incorporated into programming and strategies.

Policy Entry Points	Recommendations
Efficacy of and access to state services and documents	Improve efficacy of public/community services in River Cess, Nimba, and Montserrado; Improve access to state documents particularly in Sinoe, River Cess and Grand Kru, but also in Nimba, Grand Cape Mount and Maryland.
Efficacy of and awareness about national frameworks	Develop grassroots participation and engagement mechanisms at the county level for the implementation of the Reconciliation Roadmap; ensure sustainability and effectiveness of decentralized government systems and structures; and develop communication strategies to raise awareness about national frameworks in Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, Nimba, Lofa and River Cess. More specifically, almost 90% in Grand Cape Mount and 70% in Sinoe report that Land Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission and Reconciliation Roadmap has not helped to strengthen peace and state building. On the other hand, over 50% in Lofa, Nimba and Sinoe report that the Governance Commission has not helped to strengthen peace and state.
Civic engagement and information consumption	Incorporate citizenship, democratic values and human rights into the education system, particularly focusing on River Cess, Grand Bassa, Gbarpolu, Nimba and River Gee; strengthen and diversify information consumption, particularly in River Cess and Grand Cape Mount; and promote public participation and constructive civic engagement, particularly in Grand Bassa, Sinoe and River Gee.
Efficacy of social capacity building processes	Design youth recovery and empowerment programmes such as entrepreneurship, social, cultural and economic activities to improve youth participation and inclusion; and design psychosocial recovery and empowerment programmes such as counselling and support for victims of SGBV and severe assault, to give women a role in national reconciliation and improve women's participation and inclusion socio-politically and economically in Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, Grand Cape Mount. More specifically, 65% in Grand Cape Mount report that no progress has been achieved in terms of conflict prevention and mediation processes that are aimed at rebuilding capacity for nonviolent conflict resolution and dialogue in local communities; and similarly, 65% also report that no progress has been achieved in terms of promoting a transformative education system aimed at fostering a shared future, break barriers between groups, and socialize future generations in the use of dialogue and nonviolent actions.
Socio-economic improvement	Provide and improve economic incentives and SME grants combined with psychological counseling to victims and vulnerable groups, and improve of social welfare, health care and support systems, particularly in River Cess, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, River Gee, Nimba, Montesarro and Lofa.

Progress to peace intergroup healing	Build non-violent communication and mediation skills, and incorporate peace education into curricula, particularly in Sinoe, Montserrado, River Cess, Grand Gedeh and Lofa; invest in intergroup reconciliation, dialogue and healing processes to foster forgiveness and to address intergroup threat, negative stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes, focusing on reconciling Mandigos, Gios and Krahns and Mandingos with other groups, including Muslims; and engage in intensified reconciliation efforts tailored for Grand Cape Mount, River Cess, Sinoe and Lofa.

About the SCORE Index: The SCORE Index was originally developed by SeeD in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with funding from USAID. The tool supports policy decisions for national and international stakeholders and is particularly suited for post-conflict, multi-ethnic societies that now face peacebuilding and state-building challenges. By examining social cohesion and reconciliation, the SCORE Index aims to identify and analyse the factors that underpin peace in a society - as needed in order to better inform and evaluate intervention programs. Thus far, versions of the SCORE Index have been implemented in Cyprus (2013, 2014 and 2015), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013), Nepal (2014), Ukraine (2015-ongoing), Liberia (2017), and Moldova (2017-ongoing).

About SeeD: SeeD is a peacebuilding think tank, originally with a regional scope, that uses participatory research to support international organizations, local policymakers, stakeholders, and peace practitioners to develop, implement and monitor targeted efforts towards social cohesion and reconciliation. SeeD specializes in the development of innovative quantitative methodologies, such as Participatory Polling and the SCORE Index, which seek to understand the underlying social dynamics of conflict and its transformation for use in peacebuilding contexts.

More information can be found at SCORE Online Platform: www.scoreforpeace.org.

The SCORE Index in Liberia has been implemented in partnership between SeeD, UNMIL and UNDP. The fieldwork was conducted by Search for Common Ground (project manager: Aaron Weah, Director of Liberia Country Office) with invaluable support from Anu Kulkarni (Stanford University) and David Backer (University of Maryland) as collaborators in the design of the survey and questionnaire. Univeristy of Liberia also provided USIP funding supported for the project.