



ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA

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



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authors

Dr. Ilke Dagli Hustings, Ako Essan Emile

Editing & Design

Ilke Dagli Hustings, Christopher Louise, Amie Scheerder

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About SCORE Liberia & SeeD

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

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



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Enhancing Good Governance

SCORE LIBERIA 2018 Policy Brief

Introduction

SCORE Liberia 2018 assesses over 350 indicators to investigate social cohesion in the country, focusing on civic attitudes, intergroup relations, violence tendencies, gender dynamics as well as effectiveness and confidence in government institutions¹. Evidence presented in this policy brief is based on the advanced statistical analysis using a representative random sample of over 6200 people across Liberia as well as the governance assessment survey, which was based on expert scoring panels organised with over 180 governance experts² in 15 counties plus Monrovia. SCORE Liberia findings seek to improve the efficacy and impact of evidence-based public policy and development and reconciliation investments designed to sustain peace in the country. SCORE Liberia can help diagnose gaps and guide effective and tailored public policy and programming. This policy brief assesses multiple governance indicators and how they relate to each other, and explores evidence-based pathways to enhance good governance in Liberia.

Governance refers to the strategic development, management and distribution of natural and economic resources, and the provision of public services in a way that can ensure the security, wellbeing and dignity of individuals in any given society. Good governance is a prerequisite for building endogenous resilience against systemic shocks (e.g. epidemics, economic crisis, natural disasters) and for sustainable economic growth. Since the global adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, good governance has taken a central point in positive peace and development outcomes relating to peaceful coexistence, stability and social cohesion. SDG 16 and its targets explicitly call for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provision of access to justice for all, and construction of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The analysis presented in this policy brief are highly relevant to benchmarking progress towards the achievement of SDG 16 targets, and are vital for the meaningful contextualisation of these targets for Liberia.

Liberia's legacy of centralised governance, which failed to serve all citizens, combined with the fragile nature of legitimate state authority outside the capital, makes achieving SDG16 targets in the country all the more crucial for sustaining peace. The desire for a more just, accountable and effective governance has been growing among the general population and civil society in Liberia, and is

¹ Confidence in Institutions include: the president, the legislature, the Supreme Court, Circuit and Magisterial Courts, the Liberia national police and armed forces of Liberia.

² Governance experts included civil servants, representatives from the education, health, security and private sectors as well as religious leaders and civil society representatives. For more information on SCORE Liberia methodology, please visit www.scoreforpeace.org

evident from the growing number of demonstrations calling for the implementation of reforms, policies and mechanisms that can address corruption, foster political inclusion and improve management of natural and economic resources in the country. Meanwhile, institutional capacity to respond to these expectations is crucial for addressing fragility and sustaining peace. Notably, the government of Liberia has ascribed effective governance and transparency, as one of the four pillars of its newly adopted five-year National Development Plan, entitled the Pro-poor Agenda for prosperity and Development (PAPD)³. This Plan represents the strong political will to enhance good governance in the country, and the Government of Liberia has adopted SCORE as a tool to monitor and evaluate its implementation.

SCORE Liberia evidence affirms that good governance is as much about intergroup relations and inclusion as it is about performance and service delivery. In other words, good governance and peacebuilding are interlocking dimensions, and inclusive democratic governance can help maintain an equilibrium between competing interests and reduce fragility. Findings show that while economic, food, health, personal insecurity⁴ and experiences of victimhood undermine confidence in government institutions; marginalisation⁵, polarisation and exclusion are the direct predictors of low confidence in government institutions. Nonetheless, this should be interpreted with caution given strong political tribalism⁶ in the country, which means citizens' judgement of government institutions is influenced by who is in power, who wields authority and the tribal affiliation of the leaders. Thus, fostering intergroup harmony and inclusion in parallel with improving the provision of public services is the ultimate way forward for a more democratic and merit-based Liberia.

In summary, there are three main evidence and policy entry points presented in this policy brief:

1. Assessment of meritocracy and inclusion as the strongest direct predictors of confidence in government institutions;
2. Assessment of human insecurity and injustice as the strongest root causes undermining good governance;
3. Assessment of provision of public services as a key responsibility states need to fulfil for their citizens.

World Economic and Social Survey 2015 confirms that decentralized delivery of services are critical for good governance and policy implementation, and weak service delivery more often is the result

³ The PAPD was launched on October 27, 2018

⁴ Economic security refers to availability of financial means to buy food, clothes and/or more expensive items, as well as social welfare systems supporting economically vulnerable groups. Food security refers to access to and affordability of food that meets one's own and one's dependents' nutritional needs. Health security refers to access to and affordability of medical services, basic and specialized. Personal security refers to the degree to which one feels safe from violence in daily life.

⁵ The degree to which one feels socially excluded because of their position in society (e.g. level of income, education) or identity (e.g. ethnic, gender, religious).

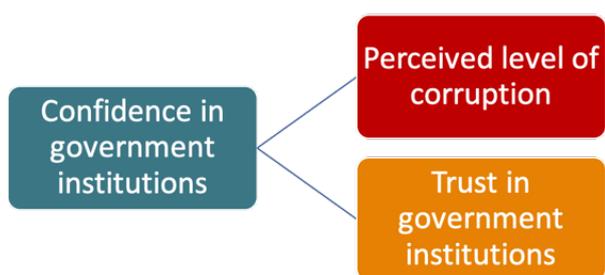
⁶ Propensity to vote, participate in political activities and follow political leaders based on ethnicity or tribal considerations

of weak institutional and human capacity, and exclusion. In this light, the recent decentralisation efforts in Liberia at their core, aim to enhance the public value created by governance institutions by improving their quality and accessibility. As such, implementation of the new Local Government Act should be informed by the analysis presented in this policy brief, and incorporate efforts to enhance inclusivity, meritocracy and security.

Assessing Good Governance in Liberia: Key Findings

Confidence in government institutions

Confidence in government institutions is a meta-indicator which focuses on trust as well as perceived level of corruption⁷ in these institutions among Liberians. Where 0 means there is no trust and public perceive the government institutions as extremely corrupt, and 10 means absolute trust and complete elimination of corruption, the overall national score for confidence in government institutions is 5.8 (See Figure 1). This is in line with the assessment of the governance experts, which



is 5.6. A comparison with the SCORE Liberia 2016 data, shows a remarkable increase by 1.4 points⁸. In addition to an actual improvement, this increase could also be attributed to the optimistic expectations with regards to the new government⁹ following the presidential elections that took place

at the end of 2017 that marked the first peaceful transfer of power in Liberia since 1944.

Despite the remarkable increase in confidence in government institutions, national score of 5.8 undoubtedly leaves room for much improvement, especially in counties where the score is significantly weaker than the country average. The heatmap presented in Figure 1 below shows meaningful differences across the counties. While confidence is significantly stronger in Grand Kru than the national average, it is alarmingly low in Grand-Bassa, which indicates disenfranchisement and grievances in the county. SCORE findings show high levels of perceived corruption in Grand Bassa as well as elevated feelings of exclusion and mistreatment by the authorities among Bassa people. Confirming the quantitative findings, focus groups and consultations reported high levels of

Significantly low levels of confidence in government institutions in Grand Bassa is linked to sense of exclusion and neglect, and calls for community dialogue to further investigate and address the grievances.

⁷ Perceived level of corruption as measured by the frequency of informal payments in various sectors.

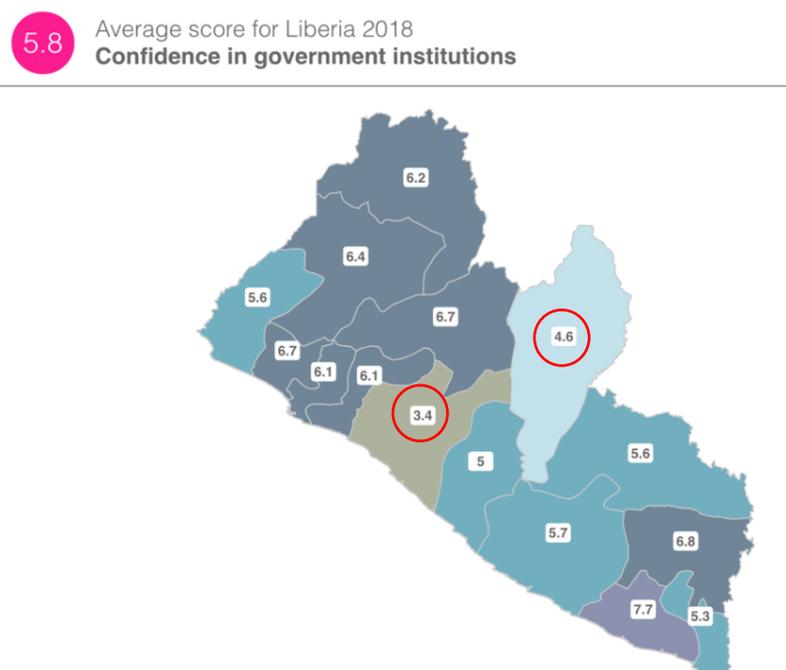
⁸ Differences more than 0.5 points are considered statistically significant.

⁹ Please note that quantitative data was collected from over 6,200 respondents for SCORE Liberia's second wave between February 2018 – March 2018.

embezzlement of county development funds and funds provided by the concession companies. Floods during the rainy season in 2017 and 2018 contributed to displacement and in turn, a sense of neglect in the county, where property violations¹⁰ and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are also on the rise. Lastly, this negative perception is partly due to strong support for the Liberty Party in the county¹¹, and disappointment regarding the party's performance in the last elections. Community dialogue to better understand the dissatisfaction with the government institutions is crucial to address grievances against authorities and institutions in Grand Bassa.

It is worth noting the significantly low confidence levels in Nimba county too. Similar to Grand Bassa, perceptions regarding embezzlement of funds paid by concession companies and the sale of scratch metal from former iron ore mining companies, as well as high levels of corruption are the contributing factors to low levels of confidence in government institutions. Additionally, focus group and county dialogue participants expressed grievances toward local authorities and political leaders, and emphasised lack of inclusion and representation in decision making, stating that the authorities only remember the citizens during election periods.

Figure1. Confidence in government institutions heatmap (General population survey)



**For all indicators, only the differences bigger than 0.5 are considered statistically significant.*

Liberians' assessment of confidence in government institutions includes an assessment of perceptions with regards to the prevalence of corruption. Addressing corruption at all levels is a prerequisite for achieving the fifth target of SDG 16, which calls for substantial reduction of corruption and bribery in all forms. SCORE findings not only help benchmark progress towards achieving SDG

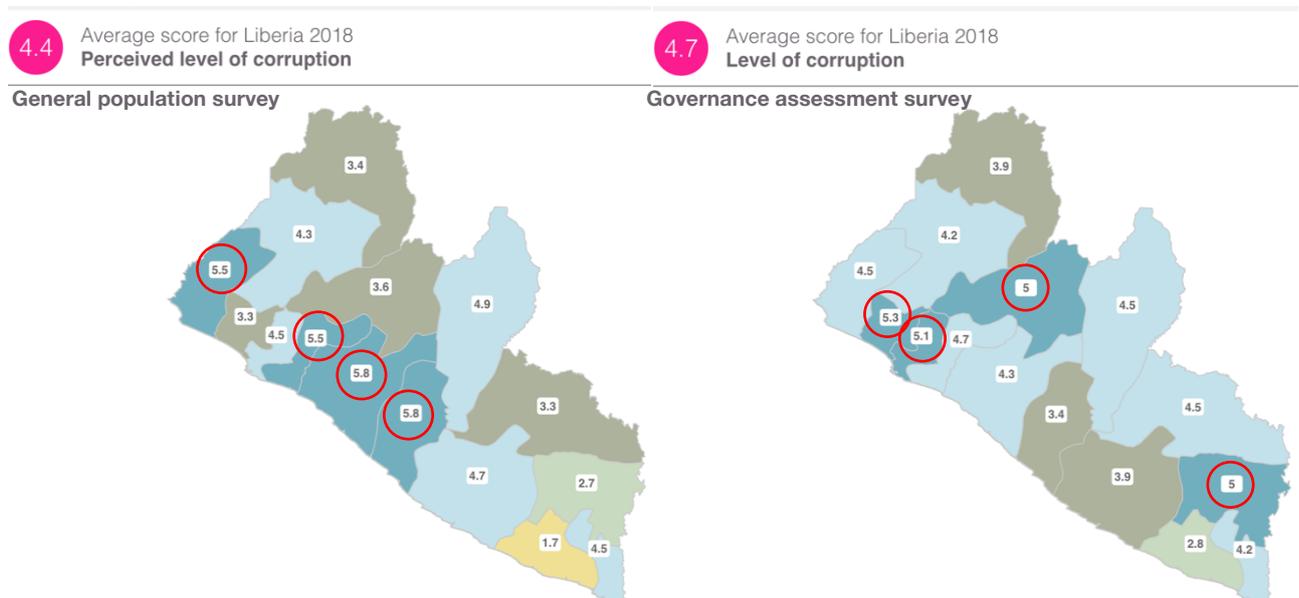
¹⁰ Whether one was subject to property violation during the civil conflict

¹¹ There is an inverse correlation between support for Liberty Party and confidence in government institutions, and support for Liberty Party is very strong in Grand Bassa.

target 16.5, but also contextualise and identify priority areas for its improvement. The perceived level of corruption among the general population from 0 (no corruption) to 10 (prevalent corruption on all levels) is in line with the experts' score; where the former is 4.4, the latter is 4.7. Figure 2 below shows the differences between the two assessments, which could be due to number of factors such as sense of representation and level of grievance based on ethnicity, popularity of the appointed authorities in the given county or level of urbanity. While both the public and experts' assessment of corruption is lowest in Grand Kru, citizens in Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Grand Bassa and River Cess perceive corruption to be significantly worse than the experts' assessment. Conversely, citizens in Bomi, Bong, Montserrado and River Gee perceive the level of corruption to be significantly better compared to the experts' opinion. These differences could indicate two societal dynamics:

- 1- Where the general population's perceptions are more negative (higher scores for corruption), we can diagnose a breakdown in trust and dialogue with the authorities;
- 2- Where general population's perceptions are more positive (lower scores for corruption), we can diagnose condonation of corruption; and/or lack of interaction with the authorities. SCORE findings show elevated levels of tolerance of corruption compared to other counties particularly in Bomi and Bong.

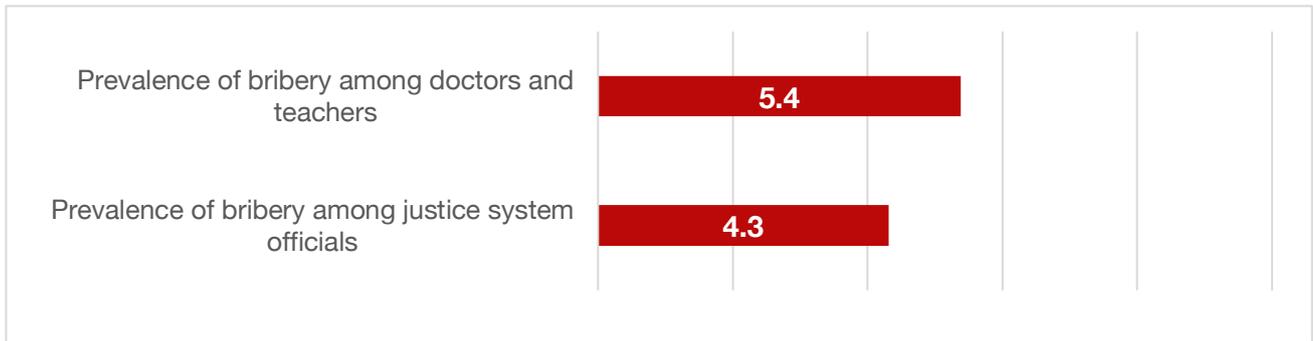
Figure 2. Level of corruption heatmaps



The table presented in Figure 3 below shows that governance experts identify higher levels of corruption among doctors and teachers compared to justice system officials. That being said, considering that citizens' trust in the Liberian National Police forces is the lowest¹² compared to all other institutions (e.g. legislators, president, judges), anti-corruption efforts should focus on addressing corruption among health and education professionals as well as the police.

¹² Confidence in the LNP is 5.0

Figure 3. Prevalence of bribery (Governance assessment survey)



Elixir of Good Governance: Inclusion and Security

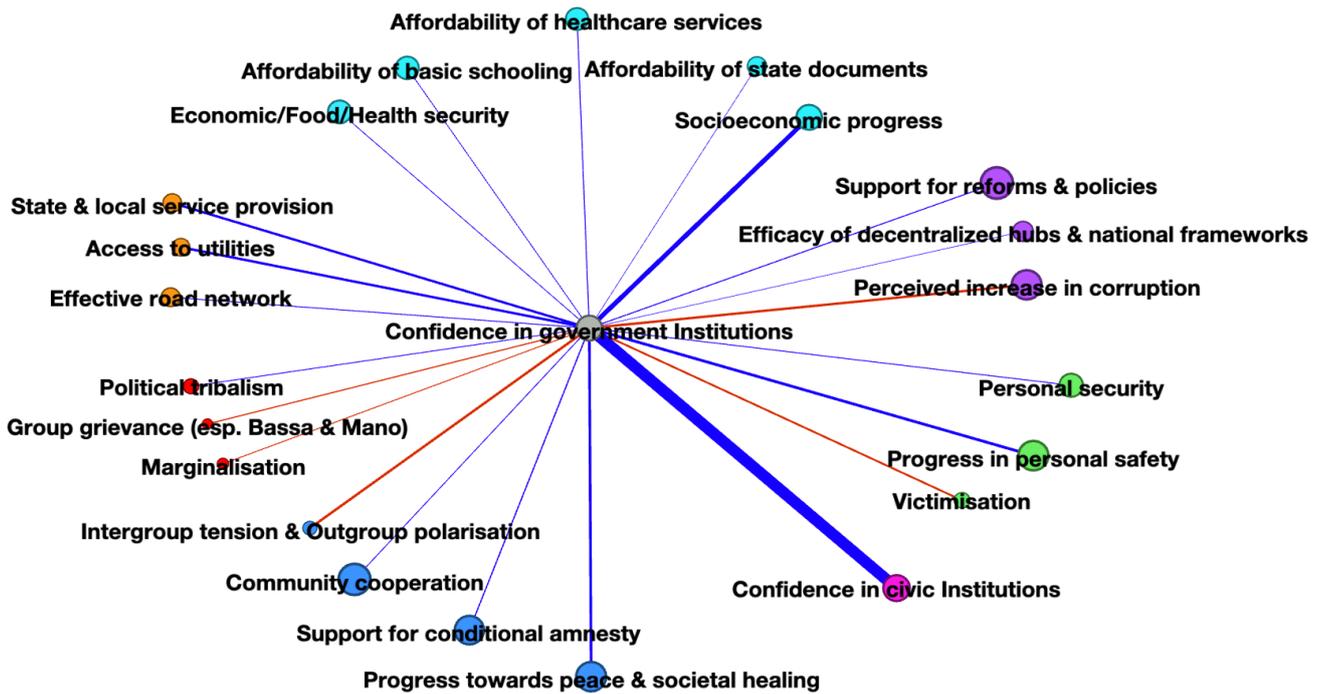
The UNDP report on ‘Building Inclusive Societies and Sustaining Peace through Democratic Governance and Conflict Prevention’ affirms that a narrow focus on public services including security and justice, whilst necessary, is insufficient for sustaining peace. In other words, good governance cannot be separated from inclusion and reconciliation, and requires a transformative agenda to reform the structures and processes that perpetuate exclusion and fragility. However, examining the network of relationships, and different clusters of indicators that have a strong association with governance is vital for a more in-depth understanding of contextual dynamics and particularities. The correlation network presented in Figure 4 below positions confidence in government institutions in the centre and illustrates its relationships with other indicators. While the colour of the connecting lines represents the nature of the relationship - **blue** lines symbolise a positive association, and **red** lines symbolise a negative association; the thickness of the lines represents the strength of the relationship – the thicker the line the stronger the relationship. The size of the indicator bubbles represents their score – the bigger the bubble, the higher the score; and the colour of the bubbles signify their thematic cluster in the network – **Orange** bubbles relate to provision of services¹³, **cyan** to human security¹⁴, **purple** to efficacy (performance) of institutions, **green** to personal security and victimisation¹⁵, **fuchsia** to confidence in non-state actors (e.g. civil society, religious leaders, media), **blue** to intergroup relations and lastly, **red** to exclusion.

¹³ State services include passing/implementing laws, inclusive justice, budget management, jobs. Local services include healthcare and basic schooling. Utilities include access to clean water, electricity and toilet facilities.

¹⁴ Personal security and safety is not grouped with human security in this model as it shows stronger associations and different predictive power that calls for a more granular analysis and not over aggregation.

¹⁵ This is a meta indicator composed of victimhood regarding severe assault, torture, detention and property violations.

Figure 4. Correlation network for confidence in government institutions



The correlation network presented above reveals important insights. Firstly, the network confirms the intricate relationship good governance has with reconciliation. Intergroup tension and outgroup

A consistent positive trajectory towards development, reconciliation and stability is more important to Liberians than quick fixes.

polarisation¹⁶ have a strong negative association with confidence in government institutions while community cooperation¹⁷ and support for conditional amnesty¹⁸ has a positive association. This means that as polarisation increases confidence decreases; but cooperation, societal healing and confidence all increase in parallel. Further, we can see that the trajectory of the country is

very meaningful for Liberians. Perceived progress has the strongest positive relationship compared to other indicators in human security (cyan), personal security (green) and intergroup relations (blue) clusters. In particular, perception of progress in economic and personal security has the strongest association, meaning that as citizens perceive progress, their confidence grows, and as their confidence grows they evaluate the country’s trajectory more positively. Inversely, perceived increase in corruption in the efficacy cluster (purple) has a strong negative relationship, indicating that assessment of deterioration instead of progress has an opposite effect. This finding denotes civic patience and understanding, indicating that Liberians evaluate the present together with the

¹⁶ The level of perceived social threat, social distance and negative stereotypes against a group that is seen as the primary rival or primary 'other' by another group.
¹⁷ The degree to which one feels that their community cares for each other and cooperates to solve common problems.
¹⁸ The level of support for granting amnesty to certain groups under certain conditions such as truth telling, reparations, public apologies.

past and the near future; and thus, highlights the importance of ensuring a consistent and coherent progress rather than looking for quick but unsustainable remedies.

More specifically, the strikingly strong relationship between confidence in governance and in civic institutions asserts the importance of non-state actors such as civil society, media and religious leaders in enhancing good governance, which underscores the holistic and participatory approach needed for achieving good governance. Nonetheless, Figure 4 confirms that citizens' assessment of governance institutions is also associated

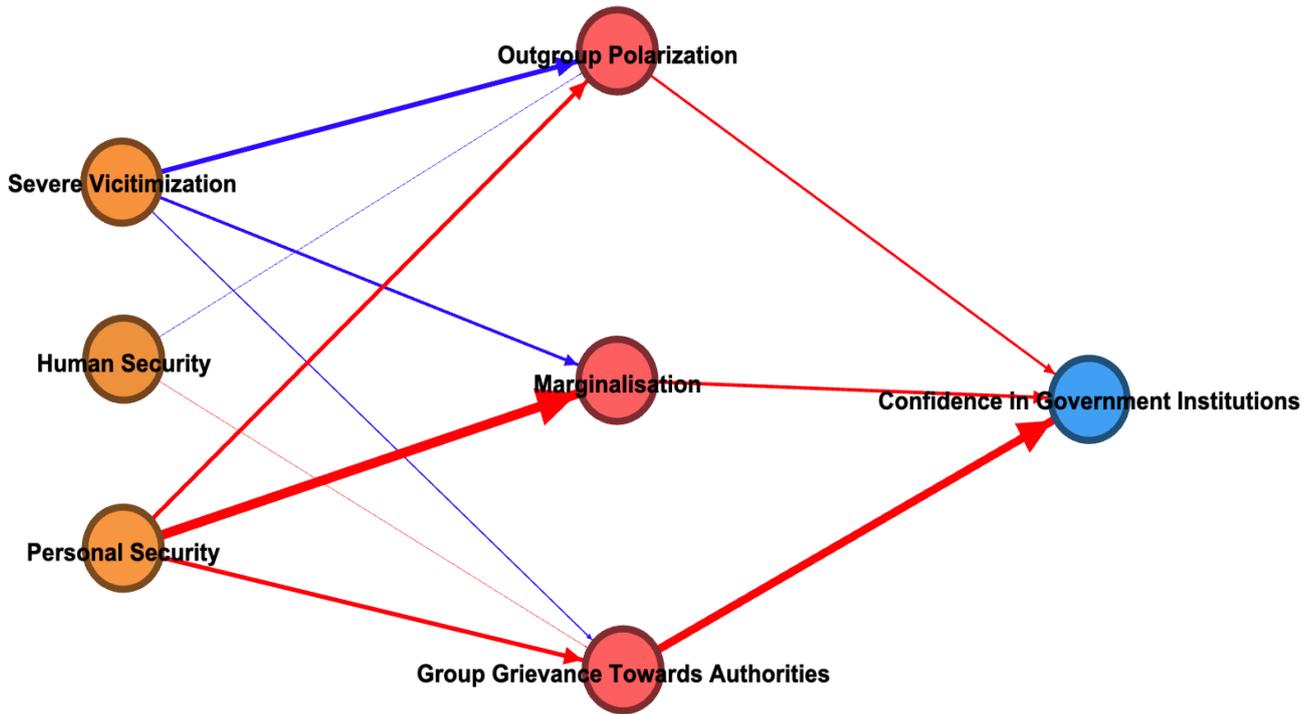
Bassa and Mano ethnic groups have elevated feelings of exclusion and grievance towards authorities.

with the tribal affiliation of the leaders. **Although some Liberians judge the governance institutions based on who is in power of authority rather than how they perform, fostering intergroup harmony and inclusion in parallel with improving the provision of public services and security is the ultimate way forward for a more democratic Liberia.** As such, network explicitly shows the central role of inclusion / exclusion. Marginalisation as well as group grievance¹⁹ towards authorities have a reverse association with confidence in institutions. The more excluded people feel and the more they perceive their group is treated unfairly, the less likely they will trust government institutions, leading to greater perception of corruption, irrespective of the quality of the provision of services. Remarkably, two ethnic groups feel more excluded than others in Liberia and hence, have significantly lower confidence levels, namely Bassas and Manos, which calls for county dialogue to better understand their grievances and efforts to improve their civic participation.

Going beyond correlation, the cross section of a predictive model presented in Figure 5 corroborates the analysis provided above. Similar to the correlation network, the colour and the thickness of the connecting arrows represent the nature and the strength of relationship. However, unlike the correlation network, the relationship is directional (i.e. arrows not lines). The predictive model, explicitly shows that while personal insecurity and experiences of victimhood are the strongest root causes undermining confidence in government institutions followed by human security (i.e. economic, food, health security and access to local services such as basic schooling). In other words, lower the personal security and higher the victimisation, stronger the feelings of polarisation, marginalisation and group grievance. We also observe that unfair mistreatment by authorities, derived from group grievance is the strongest direct predictor of low confidence in government institutions followed by marginalisation and polarisation. Thus, the key entry points for creating the greatest positive impact on state-citizen relations are personal insecurity, which is the strongest undermining root cause, and the perception of unfair mistreatment by authorities, which is the strongest direct predictor of low confidence.

¹⁹ The extent to which some groups have grievances against authorities, and think that their group is treated unfairly by the government.

Figure 5. Predictive model for confidence in government institutions



**Unlike the correlation network analysis, the size of the bubbles do not indicate the score for each indicator for this model.*

Policy entry point: Meritocracy and inclusivity

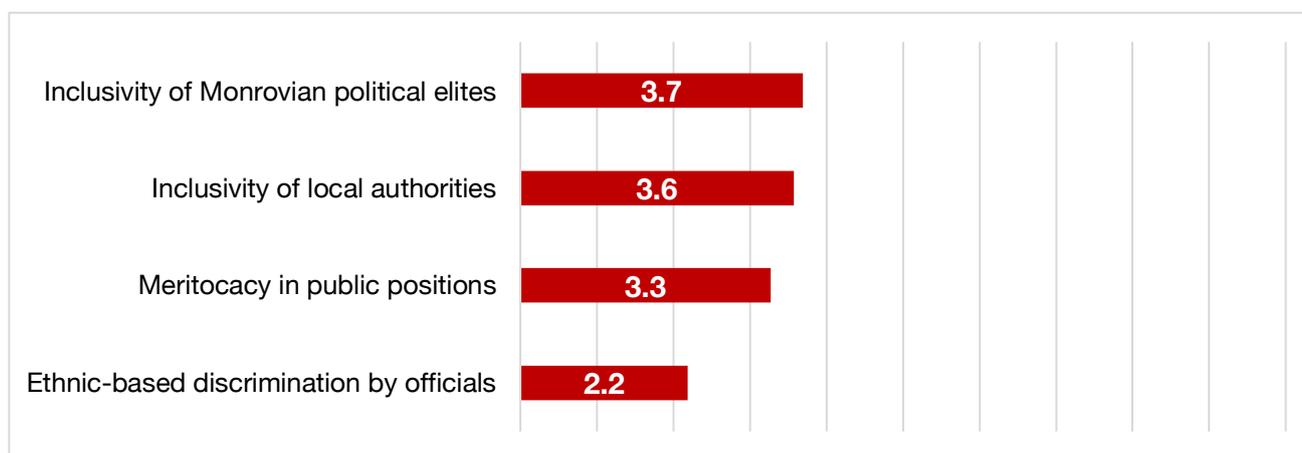
SDG 16 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has woven democratic governance and peacebuilding targets into a single goal, recognizing the indivisible links between peaceful societies and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Inclusive governance paves the way for collaboratively addressing concerns of public interest, fosters active civic engagement and collective action and empowers communities. As a result, inclusivity can accelerate economic development and social cohesion. On the other hand, meritocracy is an essential component of democratic governance. Meritocracy refers to government by those with the ability and qualifications rather than socio-demographic or ethnic affiliation, and thus offers not only fair systems but also optimisation of public welfare. Meritocracy is also a powerful vehicle for social mobility and incentivize productivity, supporting people to reach their full potential. The highly influential 1997 World Development Report asserted that meritocracies have higher rates of economic growth and that “... meritocracy of the civil service helps bring in high-quality staff, confers prestige on civil service positions, and can do a great deal to motivate good performance.” (World Bank 1997:92).

SDG target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
SDG target 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

Worryingly low inclusivity and meritocracy scores of the governance experts are presented in the Figure 6 below. On the county level, inclusivity of local authorities is lowest in River Cess (2.1) and Lofa (2.2), while the highest levels of ethnic-based discrimination by officials are reported in Grand Gedeh (2.8) and Montserrado (2.7). Governance experts also emphasise that women’s representation in public positions, particularly in the judiciary and police force

is inadequate. Where 0 means that all appointment of public service positions are always personalised and politicised based on affiliation, and 10 means that they are always based on ability, talent and credentials, the national score for meritocracy is 3.3.

Figure 6. Meritocracy and inclusivity (Governance assessment survey)



It is essential to improve the public recruitment based on transparent processes and to strengthen women’s meaningful representation particularly in the justice and security sector. Effective measures to improve public recruitment processes would also help address political tribalism and grievances towards authorities. Inclusive governance needs to be underpinned by active civic participation and public consultation mechanisms that incorporates the perspectives of non-state actors into decision making processes. Inclusive governance, through citizens’ involvement, enables governance to gain greater acceptance, facilitates implementation and help tackle new issues of public interest. Inclusive decision-making processes include three basic steps: (1) Informing citizens; (2) Consulting citizens; (3) Citizen’s dialogue on implementation. One effective way of improving inclusivity on the local level is through participatory budgeting, which is a democratic deliberation and decision-making process where municipal or public budget allocation is driven by open public consultations. Such processes facilitate the representation of most vulnerable groups and nurture civic empowerment. Participatory budgeting could be piloted in high priority counties where meritocracy and inclusivity are the lowest, and marginalization and grievances towards authorities are the highest, namely: Grand Bassa, Nimba, River Cess, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Montserrado.

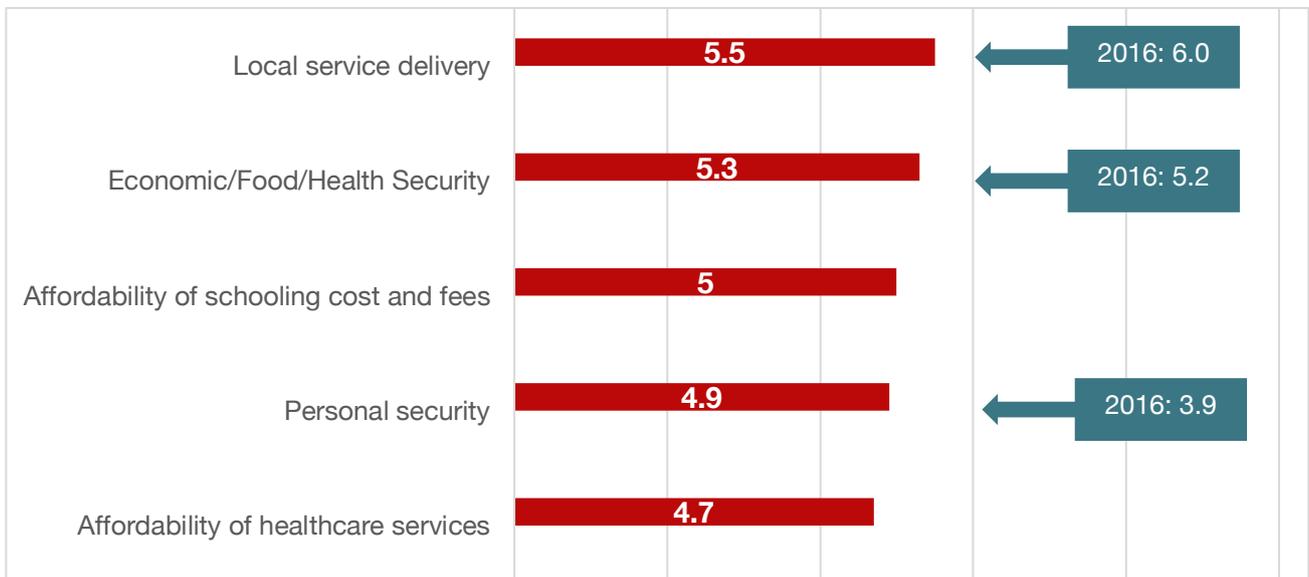
Policy entry point: Quality of the justice system and security

Human security is an integral part of fragility assessments and good governance, and it argues that proper referent for security should be at the human rather than national level. The World Development Report 2011 asserts that fixing the economic, political, and security problems that disrupt development and trap countries in a state of fragility and cycles of violence requires strengthening national institutions that prioritise personal and economic security as well as effective justice mechanisms.

SDG target 16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

The bar-chart presented in Figure 7 below illustrates the scores for human security indicators on the national level, and compares it to SCORE Liberia 2016 where possible. Although we can observe a significant improvement in personal security, which is very remarkable, the score remains low at 4.9. In fact, national average scores for all human security indicators remain low, with affordability of healthcare scoring the lowest at 4.7. In fact, there is a downward trend in citizen’s assessment of local service delivery, which could be explained partly by the disappointment with the performance of the County Service Centres but also by the fact that SCORE Liberia 2018 had a sample frame three times bigger than the pilot phase and a stronger representation of remote communities.

Figure 7. Human security indicators (General population survey)



The Figure 8 identifies six counties with the lowest human security scores where efforts to particularly improve economic, food, health and personal security should be prioritised. Provision of personal security is alarmingly low in Nimba county, while Margibi scores significantly lower than the national average across all human security indicators. Areas closest to a capital city usually suffer the great pull of the urban centre, which can drain the human capital and resources from its periphery. A similar trend can also be observed in Bomi and Bong counties that border Montserrado.

Figure 8. Counties with highest insecurities (General population survey)

Indicator	Bomi	Bong	Grand Gedeh	Margibi	Nimba
Personal security	3.7	3.7	6.0	3.2	2.7
Economic/food/health security	5.4	4.7	3.5	3.5	3.9
Local service delivery (schooling and healthcare)	4.8	5.8	5.0	3.8	5.5
Affordability of healthcare services	5.0	5.0	3.5	3.3	4.1
Affordability of schooling cost and fees	3.8	5.5	3.5	3.7	4.3

Considering that confidence in the national police and personal security is low across the country, Figure 9 presents a deeper look into the governance experts’ assessment of the justice system to better diagnose its shortcomings. The bar-chart below reveals that prisons in Liberia call for significant reform and investment to ensure that they can effectively fulfil their role as rehabilitation centres. Governance experts and county dialogues also report the unsafe and unhygienic conditions in prisons and inadequate representation of women in judiciary and police force as well as insufficient number of female prison wardens. In line with the experts’ assessment of the juror system and policing, Liberians also express dissatisfaction towards the jury selection process and in police capacities both on the national and on the county level. In particular, both police and citizens who participated in county dialogue groups emphasize lack of resources (e.g. vehicles and fuel) to effectively respond to the incidents, which often prompts citizens taken matters in their own hands when it comes to providing security on the community level. Participants called for citizen-police dialogue to improve mutual understanding of needs and concerns, particularly in Grand Bassa and Nimba where citizens’ confidence in the police is the lowest at 2.4 and 3.7 respectively. Further, participants noted that accessibility of the justice system both in terms of awareness of laws and legislation as well as physical access to police stations and courts needs to be improved for effective provision of justice.

Participants called for citizen-police dialogue to improve mutual understanding of needs and concerns, particularly in Grand Bassa and Nimba where citizens’ confidence in the police is the lowest.

Figure 9. Assessment of the justice system (Governance assessment survey)



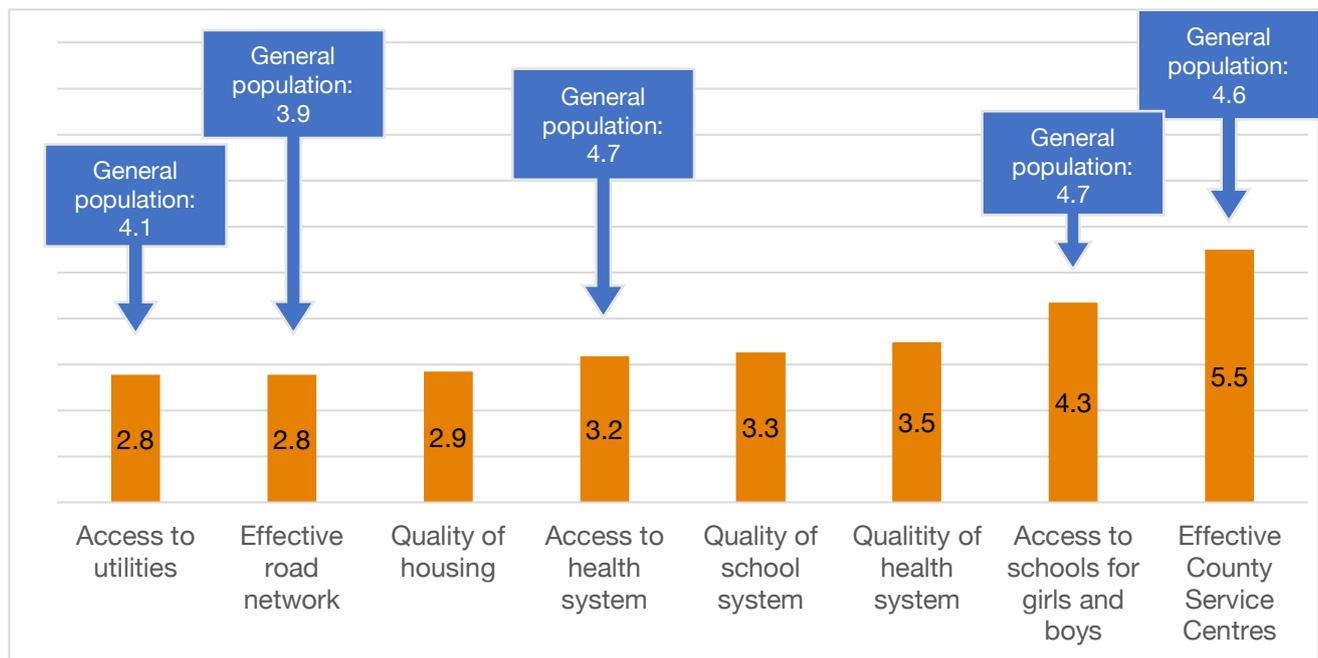
Policy entry point: Service delivery

At its core, good governance means focusing on fulfilling any organisations purpose, duties and services for its ‘users’ in an effective, efficient and ethical manner; and this includes being accessible and affordable as well. In the case of states, fundamental duties are about providing services and fundamental service users are the citizens. Governments and other public sector entities raise resources from taxpayers, donors and lenders for the provision of direct and indirect services. Their accountability and in turn, citizens’ confidence in their performance is ultimately linked to principled fulfilment of these duties, and provision of public services such as healthcare, schooling are a big component of these duties. The concept of ‘public value’ can be helpful when thinking about service delivery. Public value refers to the things that public services produce using public money, and good governance essentially aims to produce biggest public value with the revenues it generates.

The bar-chart illustrated in Figure 10 below illustrates the governance experts’ assessment of various public services ranging from road networks to healthcare, and compares it to the perceptions of the general population, where possible. Overall, the population is not fully satisfied with the services provided to them, while governance experts are particularly critical of public service delivery. Citizens’ less critical assessments is partly due to less technical knowledge than the experts, and partly due to an optimistic evaluation of improvements in service delivery compared to the past. Country Service Centres (CSCs) received a less generous assessment from the public than provided by the experts, very much reflecting the direct experiences of citizens who have tried to access services from new local institutions which were heralded by the previous government and the international community as representing a major advance in bringing government closer to the people. On a 0 (no services provided) to 10 (services provided very effectively), CSCs score 5.5 from governance experts and 4.6 from the general population. County dialogues at the local level reveal prevalent disappointment with the performance of the CSCs, and severe shortage of resources as the main problem. Improving the efficacy of County Service Centres, as the main local hubs playing an instrumental role in Liberia’s decentralisation efforts, needs to be among the top priorities of the

government particularly in Sinoe, Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Kru and River Gee, where the scores are the lowest. Further, SCORE findings illuminate a significant increase in access to state documents²⁰ from 4.1 in 2016 to 4.9 in 2018, which falls within the remit of the CSCs, but we can diagnose that access to state documents in River Cess, Bomi, Margibi and Grand Kru is significantly lower. This is interesting given that the CSC in River Cess is assessed positively. When we dig deeper we can observe that this is linked to affordability of state documents in River Cess, which is also significantly low in Grand Cape Mount and Grand Gedeh as well. In fact, we observe a strong overlap between access and affordability across the country.

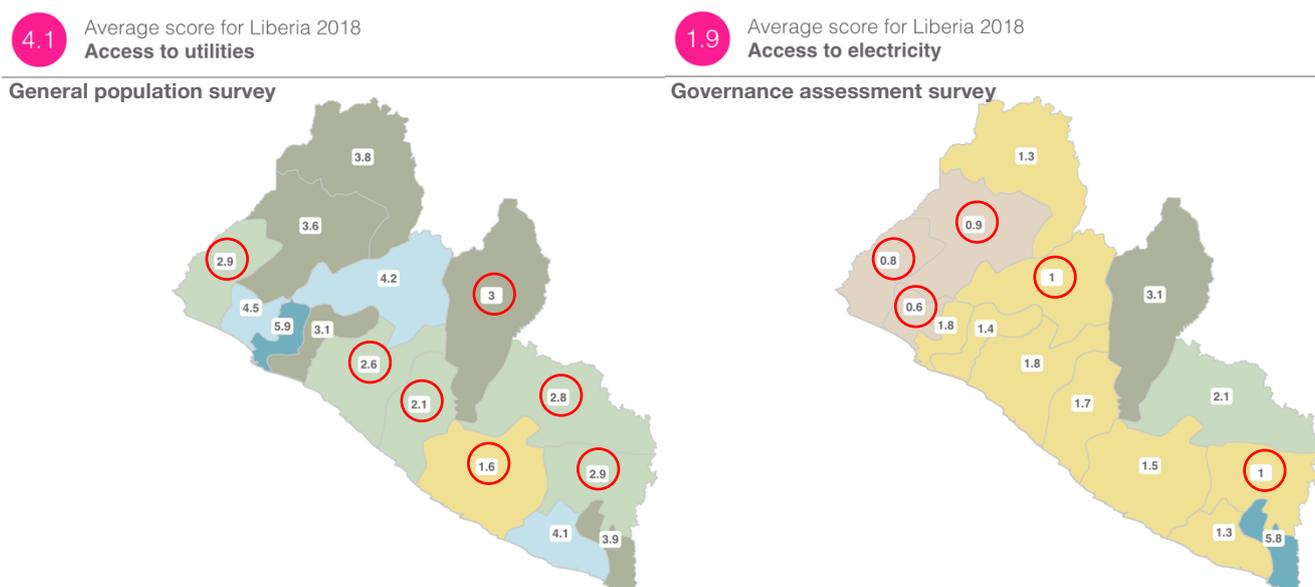
Figure 10: Provision of services (Governance assessment survey)



The bar-chart above shows that access to utilities and effective road networks receive the lowest scores. Where 0 means that Liberians have no access to utilities, such as access to water, electricity and toilet facilities, and 10 means that all Liberians have access, the governance experts' score for access to utilities is 2.8. Governance experts evaluate the access to electricity acutely lower (1.9), but general population's evaluation is significantly higher, albeit still low. Looking at the heatmap for access to utilities and electricity presented in Figure 11 below can help identify priority areas to tailor efforts and focus investments. Liberians report strikingly low access to utilities in Sinoe and River Cess. Although access to electricity is dramatically low across the country, governance expert scores for Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolou, Bong and River Gee are the lowest.

²⁰ This includes birth, marriage certificates and driving license

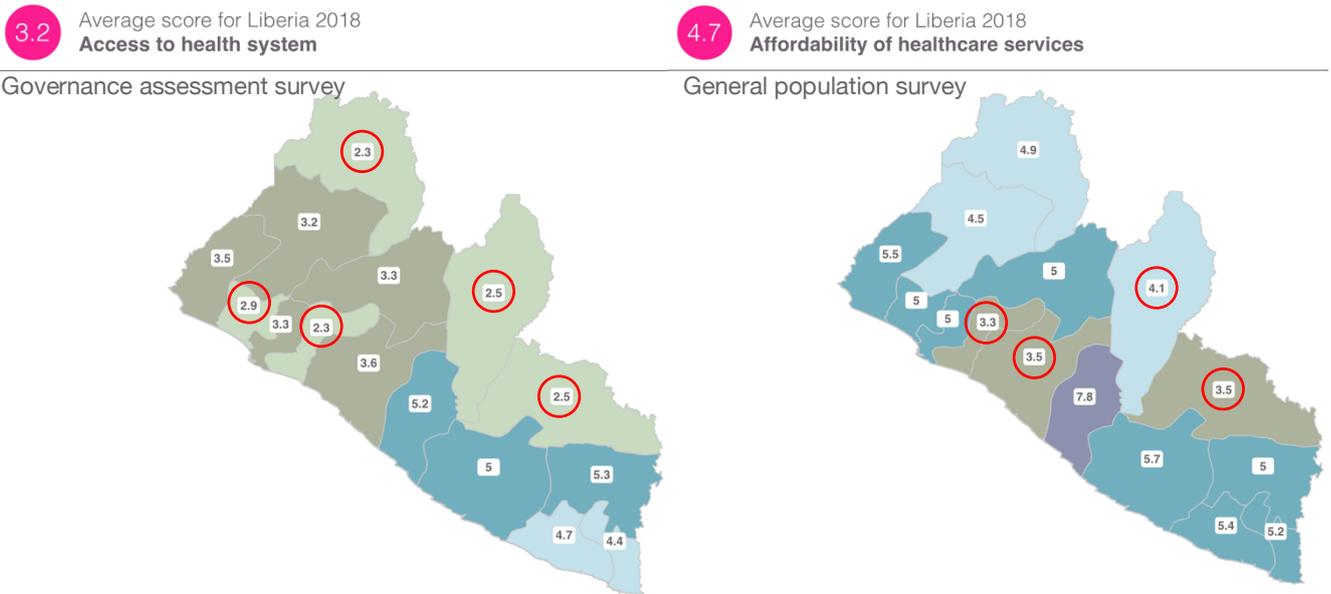
Figure 11: Access to utilities and electricity heatmaps



Education is recognised as a key element for achieving development and peacebuilding outcomes. The World Development Report 2018 titled ‘Learning to Realize Education’s Promise’ is the first ever devoted entirely to education. The report highlights that hundreds of millions of children reach young adulthood without even the most basic life skills. Even if they attend school, many leave without the skills for calculating the correct change from a transaction, reading a doctor’s instructions, or interpreting a campaign promise, let alone building a fulfilling career or educating their children. For individuals, education promotes employment, earnings, health, and poverty reduction. For societies, it spurs innovation, strengthens institutions, and fosters social cohesion. Four per cent of Liberians report having no access to education while 34% find provision of basic schooling ineffective, and almost half of Liberians (47%) find school fees and costs not affordable. Efforts to improve provision of basic schooling such as increasing the number of teachers by investing in personal twinning and mentorship programmes, and introducing subsidies and scholarships towards school fees and costs should prioritise Grand Bassa, Margibi, Bomi and Grand Gedeh.

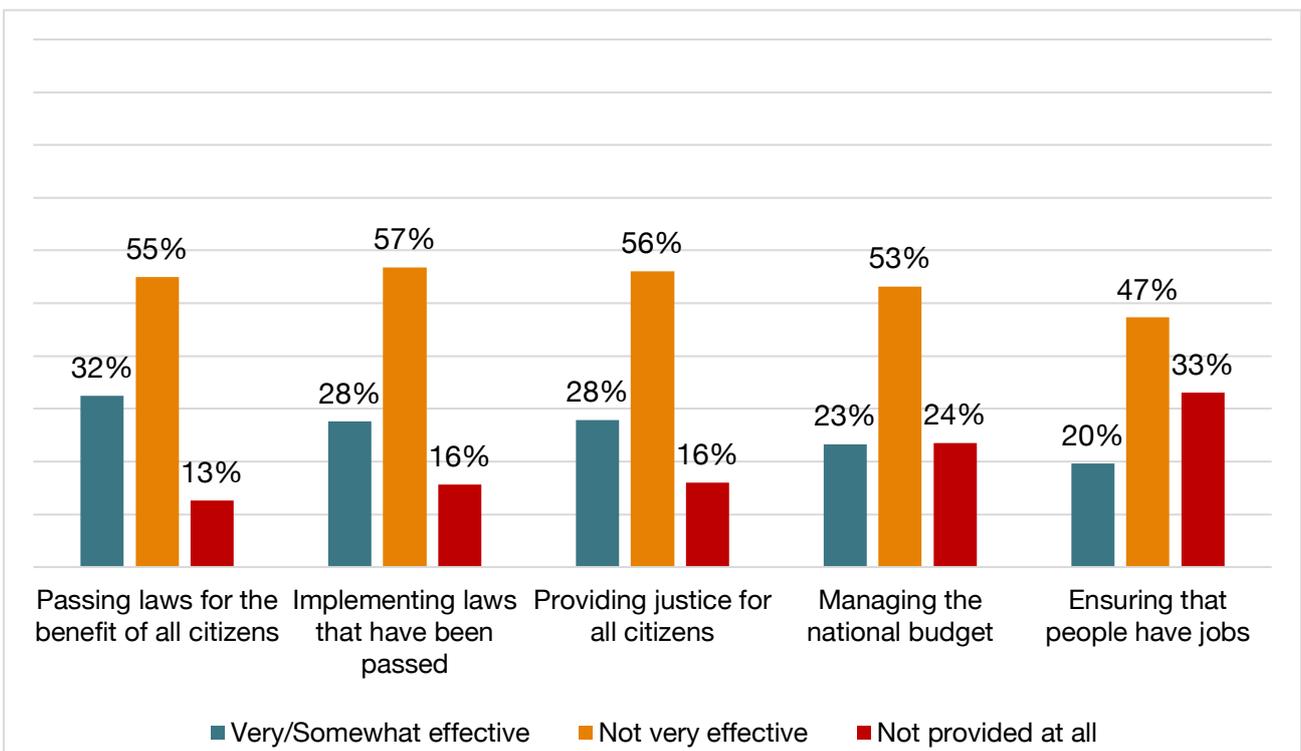
Figure 12 presents the SCORE findings on the provision of healthcare across Liberia. Heatmaps explicitly show that the counties in the South-East are doing significantly better when it comes both to access to and affordability of healthcare services. While government experts’ assessment of access to healthcare are drastically low, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties score significantly lower than the national averages both on access and affordability. This finding is corroborated by the fact there are more health units in south-eastern counties, which also have smaller populations compared to counties like Nimba and Lofa.

Figure 12: Access to and affordability of healthcare



Perceptions of state service delivery is assessed based on core government responsibilities that include the passing and implementing of laws, managing national resources and the national budget, providing inclusive justice, and creating job opportunities. Compared to 2016 findings, SCORE 2018 did not find any significant improvement in Liberians’ assessment of these government competencies. The score for state services from 0 (no state services are provided anywhere) to 10 (state services are provided effectively everywhere) is low with a country average of 3.7. The bar chart in Figure 13 below shows overall national scores for the breakdown of state services.

Figure 13. Provision of state services



Policy Entry Points for Evidence-Based Recommendations

- **Improving inclusivity and civic participation would significantly contribute to addressing marginalisation, polarisation and exclusion as the direct predictors of low confidence in government institutions.** The lack of citizen-state interaction and exclusion of civil society in decision-making increases the perception of corruption and erodes trust in public authorities. This could lead to citizens becoming passive and apathetic believing that they cannot change anything in their communities or becoming hostile due to political disenfranchisement. Significantly low levels of confidence in government institutions in Grand Bassa and Nimba are linked to sense of exclusion and neglect, and calls for community dialogue to further investigate and address the grievances. Bassa and Mano, who are concentrated in Grand Bassa and Nimba respectively, are also the two main ethnic groups with the elevated feelings of exclusion and grievance towards authorities. On the county level, inclusivity of local authorities is lowest in River Cess and Lofa, while the highest levels of ethnic-based discrimination by officials are reported in Grand Gedeh and Montserrado. Governance experts also emphasise that women's representation in public positions, particularly in the judiciary and police force is inadequate. It is essential to improve the public recruitment based on transparent processes and to strengthen women's meaningful representation particularly in the justice and security sector. Inclusive governance also needs to focus on mainstreaming active civic participation and public consultation mechanisms by implementing three basic steps: (1) Informing citizens on a regular basis about policies and services; (2) Consulting citizens about their perceptions with regards to policies and services; (3) Citizen's dialogue on implementation of policies and issues of public concern such as regular participatory county sittings or townhall meetings. These would provide an open and inclusive platform for identifying investment priorities, deciding on concessions and providing information on the management of the county development funds. Another effective way of improving inclusivity on the local level is through participatory budgeting, where municipal or public budget allocation is driven by public consultations. These efforts could be piloted in high priority counties where meritocracy and inclusivity are the lowest, and marginalization and grievances towards authorities are the highest: Grand Bassa, Nimba, River Cess, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Montserrado.

- **SCORE Liberia evidence show that increasing personal security would create a significant positive impact on state-citizen relations and enhance peacebuilding and development outcomes.** Increasing personal security comes down to violence prevention and could include countless mechanisms ranging from reducing perpetrator motivation and improving community policing, to rule of law promotion and weapon reduction programs. Improving the resources available for the local police forces and conducting regular citizen-police dialogue to build mutual understanding of needs and concerns would be effective efforts towards increasing personal security in Liberia. These efforts should be prioritised in Grand Bassa and Nimba where confidence

in the Liberia National Police is the lowest, and in Nimba, Margibi, Bong and Bomi where personal security is also significantly low. For more recommendations on enhancing personal security please read the SCORE Liberia policy brief on Addressing Violence Tendencies.

- **Improving the efficacy of County Service Centres (CSCs), as the main local hubs playing an instrumental role in Liberia's decentralisation efforts,** needs to be among the top priorities particularly in Bomi, Margibi, Sinoe, Grand Kru, Lofa and Grand Cape Mount, where the scores are the lowest. In addition to improving the resources available to CSCs, developing and implementing a regular performance assessment mechanism would institutionalise a public feedback mechanism and help improve their efficacy. SCORE findings diagnose low levels of access to and affordability of state documents, especially to marriage and birth certificates and to driver licences at the county level. The capacity of CSCs in providing these documents efficiently should be improved, while their cost need to be re-evaluated across the country as both access and affordability is low.

- **Access to and quality of healthcare is an essential component of human security, and given the destructive experience of Ebola in Liberia's recent past, there needs to be a concentrated effort to improve the health system in the country.** Access to healthcare is lowest in Margibi Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa and Nimba. County dialogue groups emphasised the shortage of health professions at the local level as one of the biggest problems. Providing training to increase the number of community nurses and building mobile health teams that travel the districts in these high priority counties would be an effective tailored way of improving access to healthcare.

- **Access to and quality of basic schooling is critical to human welfare, and to improving human capital and positive youth socialisation.** Efforts to improve provision of basic schooling such as increasing the number of teachers by investing in personal twinning and mentorship programmes and improving resources available for teachers should prioritise Grand Bassa, Margibi, Bomi and Grand Gedeh. Further, improving the public recruitment processes for teachers and provision of incentives to relocate to remote areas of the country were among the recommendations of the county dialogue groups. County dialogues also highlighted the need to reduce the distance teachers need to receive their pay and called for a more effective and secure mechanism for salary payments near teachers' work locations. Importantly, county dialogues demanded immediate action to improve the conditions at schools as safe spaces for girls that can effectively protect girls against harassment and cater for their special needs (e.g. during menstruation periods).

- **Corruption is a fundamental factor contributing to low confidence in government institutions.** Anti-corruption measures and awareness raising on the repercussions of corruption should particularly focus on Bomi, Bong and Montserrado where government experts report highest levels of corruption, and in Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Grand Bassa and River Cess where general population perceives the highest level of corruption. Anti-corruption efforts should prioritise doctors, nurses, teachers and the police.

About SCORE Liberia

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

See Figure 8. SCORE Process Cycle



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

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

The SCORE Vocabulary

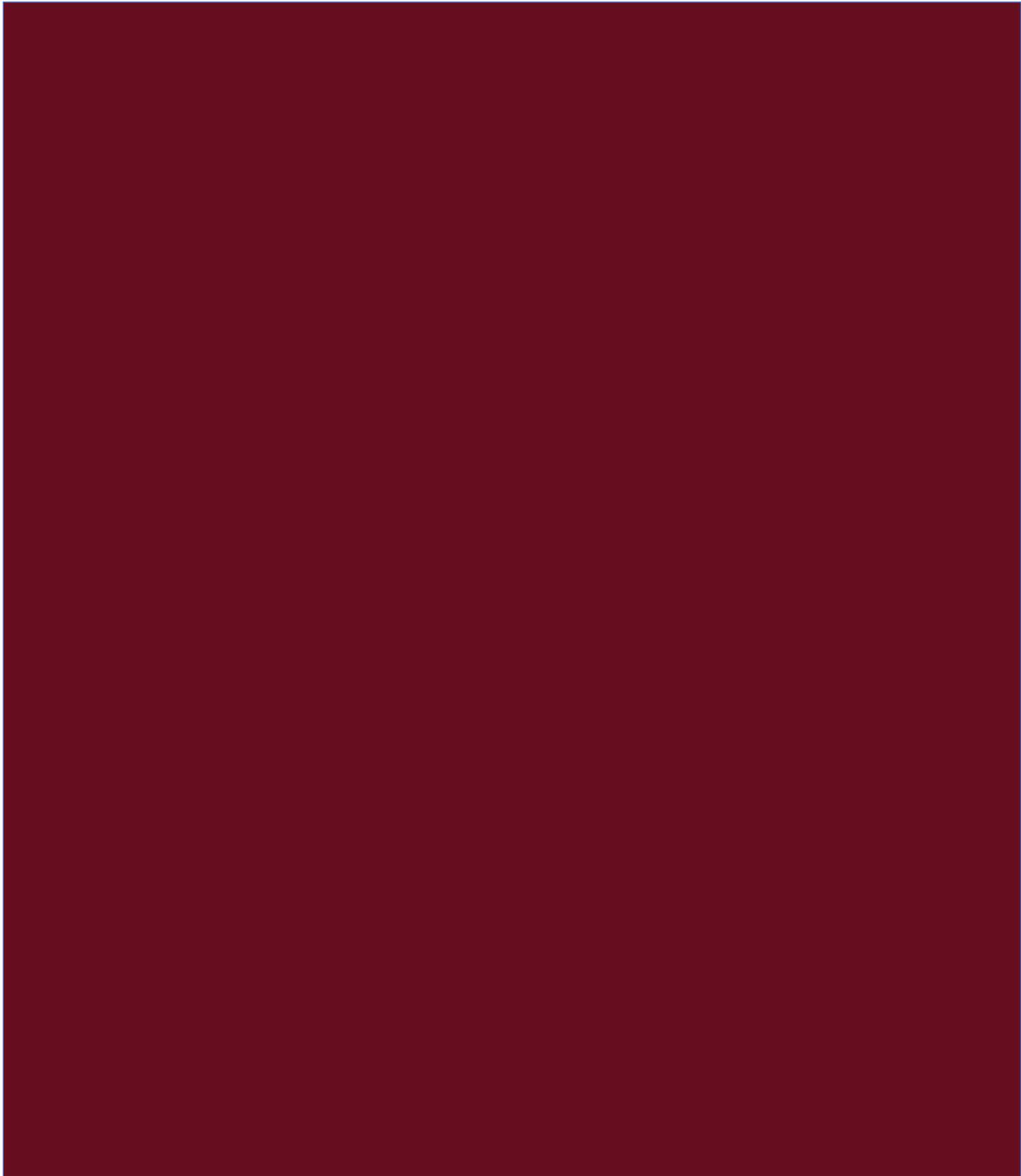
Indicators: Each indicator measures a particular phenomenon (e.g. economic security, discrimination towards out groups, belief in human rights, support for certain policy options, post-traumatic stress disorder and etc.), and is usually assessed with minimum 3 questionnaire items, which are scaled following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

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

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

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

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



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Resilient nations.*



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