

ZOA: Community based social therapy

	Implementing partner(s)	ZOA, YMCA, The Peacebuilding Office and the Office of the National Peace Ambassador
	Location	Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties
	Agreement period	2017-2021
	Budget total	20 964 000 SEK

Overview and objectives

Liberia's social fabric remains fractured along ethnic lines, by faith, by political allegiances, by generation, by gender, and by unequal access to rights and resources. To contribute to the furthering of constructive community relations, peacebuilding and sustainable development in post conflict Liberia, this project aims to identify and address triggers of conflict, such as lack of trust within and between communities, and the lack of credible dispute resolution by introducing community-based social therapy, reaching over 16,000 community members, leaders, students and government officials. This project component seeks to facilitate a comprehensive process of positive community dialogue and reconciliation, through which community members will be enabled to safely address underlying causes of conflict and lack social cohesion and trust.



Figure 1: ZOA community based social therapy. Photo credit: ZOA

The second project component seeks to promote peace, reconciliation, social cohesion and prevent conflict at the community level while also enhancing youth leadership in peacebuilding.

Activities

The project is divided into two components, the first component is implemented by ZOA and YMCA and focuses on improved individual psychosocial health and well-being, improved family dynamics, including more gender equal relations; renewed social fabric from the grass-roots, in and between target communities, identified by improved social interaction and reduction of tension between different groups; and citizen participation and civil trust encouraging improved citizen participation and positive engagement with local government.

Community members who attend CBS sessions report that they have become more open-minded and positive in dealing with people. The most notable changes at individual level among CBS participants are related to anger-management. At the family level, CBS participants communicate better with their partners, decisions about family issues are more often taken together and apologies and reconciliation happen.

The second project component is implemented by The Peacebuilding Office and the Office of the National Peace Ambassador, and supports Early Warning and Early Response, County Peace Committees, political reconciliation - and civic engagement. It is a grass root projects which seeks to build trust, promote peace, reconciliation, social cohesion and prevent conflict at the community level while also enhancing youth leadership in peacebuilding. Early Warning and Early Response activities are implemented in all 15 counties where almost 300 monitors report early warning to an online platform. The target counties for activities on political reconciliation, intergroup harmony and civic trust are based on a needs assessment and data from the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index.