

# Exploring GBV Prevention in Liberia

GOVERNMENT UN GBV JOINT PROGRAM

# 2013



A number of strategies are in place to address issues related to gender based violence in Liberia. This document captures the key Gender Based Violence prevention strategies being implemented in Liberia under the Government – United Nations Joint Programme on the Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence. The Joint Programme capitalizes on the participating United Nations organizations' and UNMIL's comparative advantages to address critical issues reflected in the National GBV Action Plan. A number of projects that focus on achieving the objectives of the strategies are being implemented by partner national and international non-governmental organizations and community based organizations, in close collaboration with the Government of Liberia, and the United Nations.

## Acknowledgements

The need for documenting all SGBV prevention efforts was identified during a review, in 2013 of the Government - United Nations Joint Programme on Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). It was felt that there was no single document that showcased all of the prevention strategies, or the impact of work in these areas, despite there being a number of such strategies during the second phase of the Joint Programme across all of its Pillars: health; legal; protection; and, coordination. This document therefore captures all of the current strategies and key interventions that are being implemented mid-2013, and will provide a basis on which to measure impact of activities carried out under these strategies when the Joint Programme ends in December 2014.

All prevention strategies reflected in this document are being implemented under the framework of the GBV National Action Plan (2011-2015), through the SGBV Joint Programme and other UN initiatives. The Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) leads the coordination of all efforts, while the United Nations system provides financial and technical support to the MoGD and implementing partners.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

*“It is time for all of us to assume our responsibility to go beyond condemning this behavior, to taking concrete steps to end it, to make it sociably unacceptable, to recognize it is not cultural; it is criminal.”<sup>1</sup>*

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a pervasive problem and cuts across age, religion, education and economic status. It is a human rights violation and is an impediment to the advancement of the survivor and affects participation in social, political, and economic activities. GBV also affects families, communities and the country: it often results in reduced income at the family level; limited access to education; and, increased costs related to legal and medical services. Gender-based violence also has an impact on the public health, economic stability, and security of the country.

The Government of Liberia, under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGD) recognized the importance and relevance of prevention of GBV, thus shifting the focus of the second phase of the National Plan of Action on GBV (2011 -2015) to prevention. The prevention of GBV calls for a significant shift in the value system of individuals and communities. The need for stronger GBV prevention programmes are beginning to be recognized throughout Liberia as an important strategy to change the attitudes and behaviors of those perpetuating GBV and those facilitating the compromise of GBV cases. Extensive general awareness of men, women, boys and girls were carried out countrywide in the first phase of the GBV Joint Programme in Liberia and this impacted the level of awareness of communities and increased access to referral services countrywide, however the cases of rape continue to rise.

Several new approaches are being tried and tested in the second phase, with a focus on addressing the **‘root causes of GBV’**. The report is on the collective response and represents the strategies of the Government and the UN, implemented with the support of its partners. The approach is structured around the findings of the In-depth Study on the Prevalence of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Liberia (pre and post conflict), 2010 and the recommendations from the retreat on Child Rape held in 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Remarks on the Adoption of a United Nations, Security Council Resolution to Combat Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict, United Nations Headquarters, New York, New York, September 30, 2009

### **1.1 Definition of Gender Based Violence:**

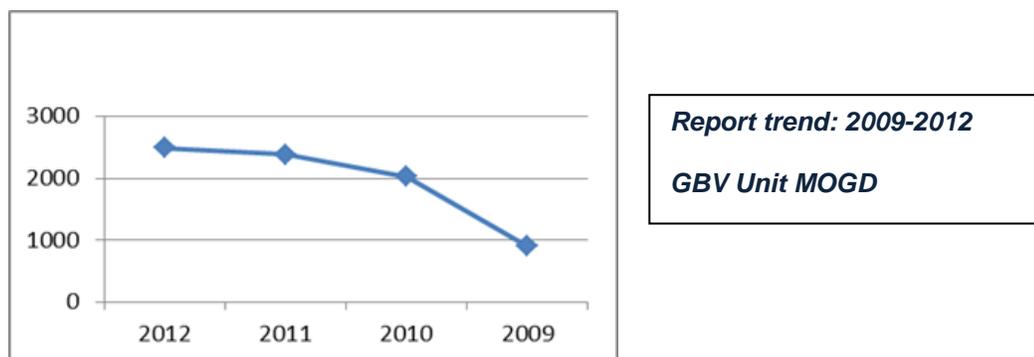
There is a need to define Gender Based violence as the terms “violence against women” and “gender-based violence” are often used interchangeably. “Gender-based violence” is defined as violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life.

Gender-based violence takes on many forms and can occur throughout the life cycle. Types of gender-based violence can include female infanticide; child sexual abuse; sex trafficking and forced labor; sexual coercion and abuse; neglect; domestic violence; elder abuse; and harmful traditional practices such as early and forced marriage; “honor” killings; and, female genital mutilation/cutting.

Women and girls are the most at risk and most affected by gender-based violence. However, boys and men can also experience gender-based violence, as can sexual and gender minorities. Regardless of the target, gender-based violence is rooted in structural inequalities between men and women and is characterized by the use and abuse of physical, emotional, or financial power and control.

### **1.2 Data on Violence**

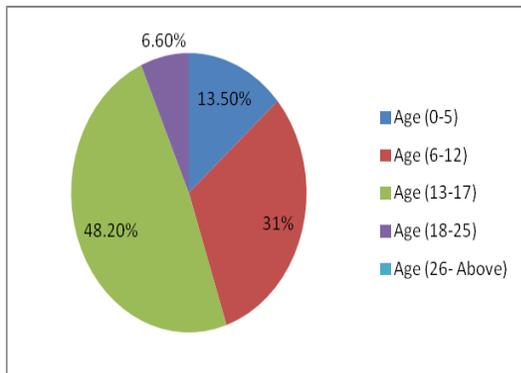
Data on violence in Liberia indicates a steady increase in number of cases reported over the years. The question most often asked is whether there is an increase in the number of cases or is there an increase in reporting? Irrespective of what the analysis of data indicate, the most worrying factor is that there is a spurt in the cases of rape of children.



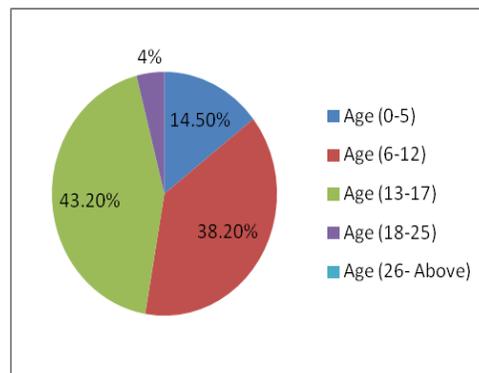
The comparative data presented below covers the same period for 2012 and 2013, the data indicates that there is an increase in the rape of children between 0-12 years from 44% in

2012 to 52.7% in 2013. Four rape related deaths of children have already been recorded in the first half of 2013, compared to five in 2012.

**Fig1: 2012 data (Jan to April) (MOGD)**

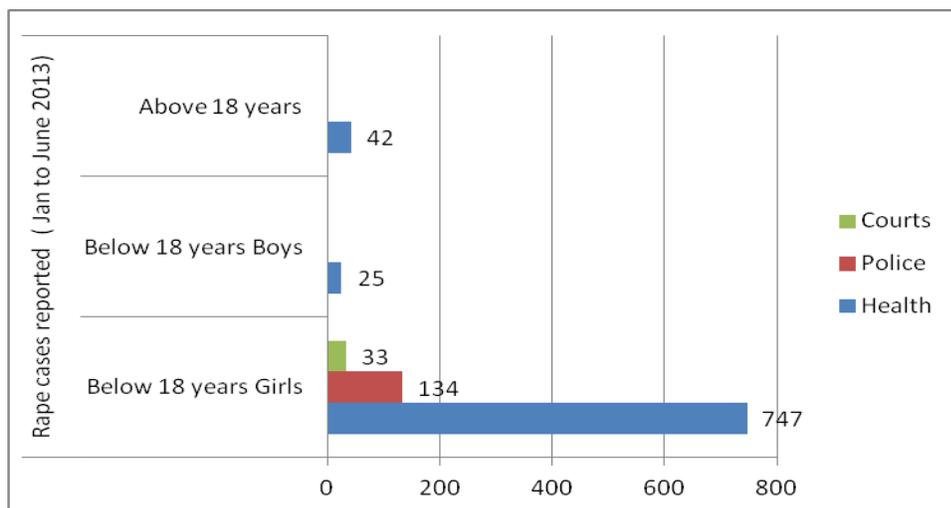


**Fig 2: 2013 (Jan to April) ( MOGD)**

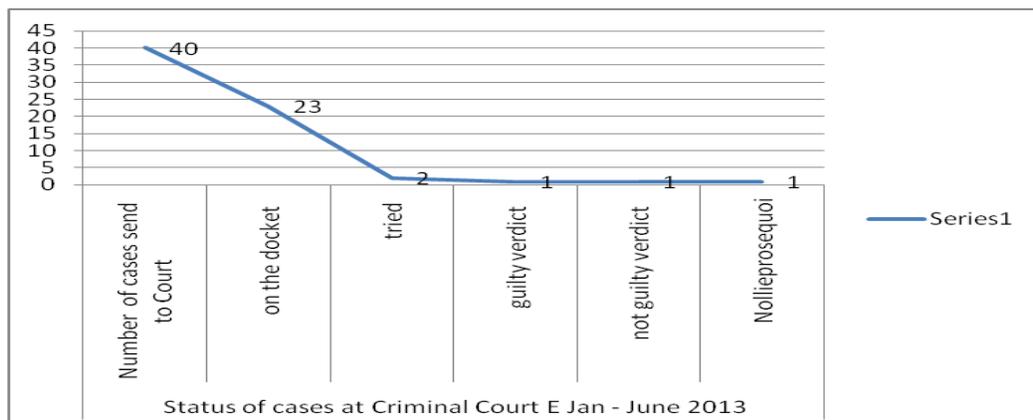


An analysis of cases received this year from **Monserado County** indicates a clear increase in the rape of minors, reported to the health, police and courts. The report (refer Fig 4)for Monserado county covers four health centers that provide free services to survivors of rape and other forms of violence. They are the Redemption Hospital, Star of the Sea clinic, JDJ Hospital and Duport road clinic. These four hospitals together provided clinical management of rape, counseling services and also conducted HIV tests for 814 survivors of which **772 were children**.

**Fig 4: Monserado County data**



The comparative data of three service providers clearly indicate that there is a steep drop in cases reaching the police (16%) and courts (4.3%). **The current data from health, police and courts captures the trends in 2013.**

**Fig: 6 Status of Cases at Criminal Court E**

The data presented in the report (fig 4) indicates that health and psychosocial counseling services (all survivors are provided counseling services in the four clinics/hospitals) are being accessed by survivors, reinforcing the need for continued support to such facilities. The steep fall in reporting to the police and courts could be due to a number of reasons, including cases being compromised, parents/survivors fear stigma, additional and unaffordable expenses for families to appear in courts and pay legal fees, and no quick solutions owing to lengthy trials. This could be deduced from the data received from Criminal Court E for 2013: of 40 cases received by the court this year, only 2 were tried.

This further reinforces the need for more focused prevention strategies, which addresses rape as a criminal issue and not a cultural issue and targeted in communities that report very high prevalence. Campaigns do ensure greater visibility and awareness on the issue, this has been documented in the study on 'Rape and the New Rape Law- Perception, Knowledge and Realities on the ground<sup>2</sup>' and the assessment of the first Anti Rape Campaign by UNMIL's Office of the Gender Advisor in 2009. However, the need for strategies that provides the necessary space for closer interaction, questioning, dialogues, discussion and engagement individually or in groups specifically targeting opinion leaders, young and old men and women and youth from all walks of life, was recognized. Based on this, new focused prevention strategies were identified and are being implemented across the pillars of the Joint Programme.

### **1.3 Prevention Strategy: Proposed by Evaluator of the GBV JP**

An evaluation of the Joint Programme was conducted in 2013, recommending the need for a greater focus on prevention. A number of recommendations were made on prevention strategies, some of which have already been incorporated into the Joint Programme. However, it is essential that all Prevention Strategies for GBV, including those not falling under the Joint

<sup>2</sup> Rape and the New Rape Law- Perception, Knowledge and Realities on the ground study by Kofi Anna Institute for Conflict Transformation for GBV JP 2011

Programme, be reviewed and a single strategy adopted across Liberia. This will ensure there is a single focus, no duplication of efforts, and synergies between all activities and projects.

Key recommendations following the review are listed below:

- Identify key prevention strategies adopted by different partners countrywide through a consultation with GBV partners, and develop a broad framework for coordinated support to identified promising prevention strategies. The consultation should serve as a forum to share experiences, skills and promising practices to address commonly encountered challenges
- Institutionalize all established networks viz. observatory, religious, media, traditional leaders, women and men networks.
- Develop and popularize innovative approaches to messaging for example: using football field, radio messages during matches, messages on taxis, buses, and institutional vehicles as well as using motorcycle riders to disseminate information.
- Create awareness with a focus on impact not just what is violence for example the message on malaria states " Malaria Kills" similarly GBV messaging must focus on impact for example 'Violence impacts health, reduces productivity and also kills'.
- Support and institutionalize children networks/clubs in schools and promote safe spaces/safety strategies to prevent violence against children. MoE institutions such as teacher training colleges must be engaged and the implementation of schools against GBV initiative should be supported.
- Create national role model men to men network comprising male leaders across all sectors targeting men at all levels in order to identify key challenges affecting men and boys and to speak out against GBV. MEGEN, men to men network in Malawi, which targets both male professionals and male community members, is an example worth emulating.
- Promote role model families who have survived GBV to speak about their experiences and encourage other families to report about and take action against GBV.
- Increase public awareness of GBV by moving away from the mere 16 days of activism to a robust 365 days campaign against GBV and encourage every citizen to take specific steps to prevent GBV in both the private and public arena.

## **2. Key Prevention strategies-GBV Joint Programme:**

### **Ongoing and planned**

There are several initiatives currently implemented under the second phase of the SGBV Joint Programme. The strategies have been classified broadly as follows:

#### 1. Campaigns

2. Work with Leaders
3. Work with Communities

## 2.1 CAMPAIGNS

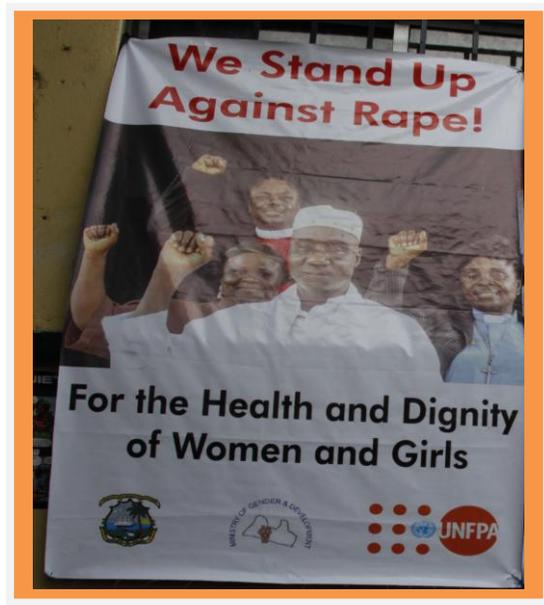
### 2.1.1 Anti Rape Campaign

**Strategy:** Amplify national attention and dialogue that would strongly condemn the perpetration of GBV, especially rape of children

#### Initiatives:

An official launch by the President H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, of the Anti Rape Campaign with the theme: **Stand Up Against Rape** followed by campaigns in Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount and Margibi Counties.

The campaign in 2013 includes a year-long engagement with community members using a number of mutually reinforcing messaging. These include I.E.C/BCC messages, cultural performances, community dialogues, and radio programs. Two popular Liberian musicians have also been selected as the **Anti Rape Ambassadors for 2103**.



Anti Rape Campaign Launch in Monrovia

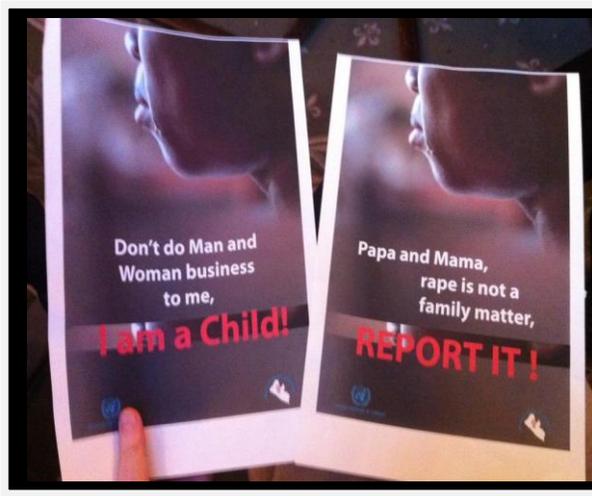
The MOGD engaged the Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives to facilitate “**The Dialogue**” in several locations including the Fiana and Paynesville communities as well as in Gbartalah, Bong County, Bomi and Margibi Counties. The **DIALOGUE** is a live interactive outdoor Talk Shows. These forums are held in market places and street

corners where the community questions the guests and the responses are (when required) translated into dialect the audience understands. All the locations for these dialogues are carefully chosen based on prevalence and compromise of cases. These interactions are recorded and played all over the country through 45 National and Rural Community radio stations/media outlets. These messages are aired on The Women's Democratic Radio, ELBC and SKY FM for a period of three months; this is done to reach a wider audience who were not directly targeted through the airing of these taped dialogues.



UNMIL PI provided support to the MOGD led campaign by organizing Sporting activities (soccer and kickball), Video shows, Door-to-door sensitization, speaking engagements with the media by opinion leaders in the communities and top officials of government and UNMIL, Street parades against rape,

#### UNMIL PI Support to Prevent GBV



**anti-rape songs, radio talk shows and traditional Groups of Communicators** to support the ‘Stand Up Against Rape’ in 10 counties.

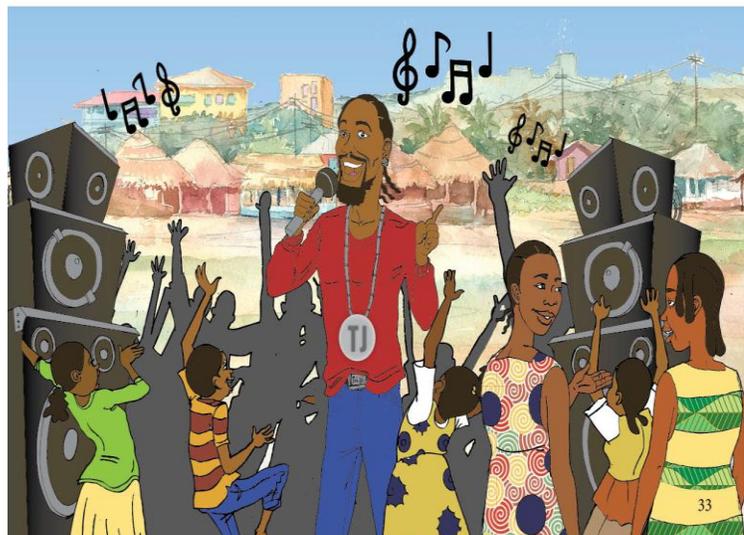
**UNICEF collaborated with Hip Co and Takun J<sup>3</sup>** to create awareness across the country through the brand of **music** that transforms hip-hop culture by incorporating positive messaging. Takun J has written songs using Liberia’s unique music of



‘Anti-Rape Ambassador’ Takun J at the campaign and reaching out to households through music

vernacular speech to incorporate anti-sexual violence messages into the lyrics and challenge the formulas that negatively define gender relations. Produced with PCI Media Impact, both “*Song For Hawa*,” and “*Where You At?*” weave powerful messages denouncing rape and sexual violence against women and children into music. These touch people over the airwaves, in a compelling music video and in community performances, urging them to stop the silence and shift norms around the epidemic levels of abuse in Liberia. Takun J’s popularity and character provides a unique

On Saturday, the children went to Takun J’s Anti-Rape concert with their buddies: “Eh Ba! God Ba. Lord Ba! Take this message from me to you children and parents, Always learn how to keep eyes on each other, in the community be there for one another, No more rape and evil I think is better.”



<sup>3</sup> “Song for Hawa” at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3prScqk0Oo>

opportunity to harness the power of music and storytelling to promote positive behavior change for reducing violence against children.

### 2.1.2 The Billion Rising Campaign

**Strategy:** Calling on people to “strike, rise and dance” to demand an end to violence against women

**Initiative:**

UN Women in collaboration with THINK, the Liberia Shelter for Abused Women and Children, SOAP, a men’s group against violence against women and girls, the GBV task force, Samaritan’s Purse, BRAC and other stakeholders facilitated the worldwide movement “One Billion Rising” on February 14, 2013. It was V-Day’s 15th anniversary, men and women in Monrovia joined activists, writers, thinkers, celebrities, came



together and used dance as a medium to publicly demand an end to violence against women. 350 men and boys and 200 women attended the event.



**UN Women with MOGD** and partners launched the **UNiTE to End Violence against Women** campaign that proclaims every 25th of the month as Orange Day! It was officially launched by the President of Liberia H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and attended by over 3000 participants.

### **2.1.3 The 12th Man Campaign (planned for September to December 2013)**

**Strategy: Men give voice to women's stories 'her story is my story and I am my sister's keeper'**

#### **Initiative:**

UN Women and MOGD with its partners will launch the 12<sup>th</sup> Man Campaign. In football terminology the 12<sup>th</sup> Man indicates the fans in the stadium cheering their team. In this context all the Liberian men are **the 12<sup>th</sup> Man**, who supports the fight against gender based violence. The campaign will feature 12 men selected from different strata of the society, including rural communities, who will give voice to women's stories and advocate for a violence-free society under the theme "Her story is my story and I'm my sister keeper". The strategy of the campaign will have a two pronged approach, at community and national level. It will use a wide range of communication tools including discussions hosted in the atay (a men's drink) shops, movies on SGBV broadcast at video clubs, involvement of soccer teams, as well as t-shirts, billboards, printed cloth, bus-stops, mass text messages from cellular communications providers, and one major public event to gain visibility at the national level.

## **2.2 WORK WITH LEADERS**

### **2.2.1 Work with Traditional Leaders**

**Strategy: Build partnership with traditional leaders as community gate keepers to transform communities and make them agents of change.**

#### **Initiatives:**

Dialogue with the National Traditional Council is **the primary medium that is being used by UNFPA, in partnership with MOGD, MOHSW and MIA, in identifying the positive factors of culture which is then used in addressing SGBV and harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, FGM and increased cases of adolescent pregnancies.** The aim is to use influential local power structures and pressure groups that can be potential allies or adversaries to development programming. **The Community Empowerment Program (CEP) in collaboration with National Traditional Council has undertaken a baseline survey on all the Secret Groves (Sande Bushes- traditional societies) with the view to regulating activities.** Through this initiative, consultative dialogues have been held with Traditional leaders and Women

Traditional practitioners of FGM (ZOES). A key outcome of this initiative has been the **issuance of a directive by the Ministry of Internal Affairs against forceful initiation in these societies, which allegedly are responsible for FGM.**

A separate approach by UNFPA has been **'Supporting increased advocacy for development of gender related laws and the formulation of policy against Harmful Traditional Practices'**. The focus is to support advocacy for the enactment of the Gender Equity (Fairness) Bill and to Provide support to the Line Ministries/CSOs to work with the National Traditional Council and Ministry of Internal Affairs **to develop policy for regulation of harmful traditional practices**, including early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This response will promote the achievement of gender equality and reproductive rights in Liberia.



**Left:** Zoes in a group discussion  
**Right:** Celebrating through dance



In order to facilitate the process of engaging local authorities through consultation on policy related issues on FGM, three organizations were engaged to conduct local level activities in three counties: **Bomi, Bong and Gbarpolu.**

The focus of the **Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGD)** was to **enable the Zoes to get involved with activities that will provide them an alternative means of income through the establishment of traditional villages modeled around the Mama Torma village model.** The Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs held a two days conference from 7-8 June 2013 with traditional female Zoes from 10 counties (Montserrado, Bomi, Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Lofa, Nimba, Bassa, Margibi, River Cess and Bong Counties) at the Traditional Women Village in Brewerville. The Conference brought together over 43 female Zoes and traditional women Leaders from across the country with the objective of educating them on the causes and effects of GBV and the need to reform the Sande (traditional initiation schools) School System. The resolution reached was;



Sande School will operate only during vacations, only licensed practitioners can operate Sande schools, and all Sande schools will be far away from regular school.

## 2.2.2 Work with Religious leaders and networks

**Strategy: Engage with religious leaders using their strategic platform, church or mosques and the large outreach that they have through their believers.**

### **Initiatives:**

Currently there are several different initiatives under the GBV JP facilitated by the MOGD, the UN family and their partners in the work with Religious leaders. The efforts are to influence change through concerted, continuous engagement with the community using a focused thrust on prevention of GBV. The efforts are being implemented over a period of time thus reinforcing messages.

The **MoGD and the UN** with the support of **partners** focused on first training religious leaders through the **Established Religious Network, the Inter Religious Council, and Concerned Muslim Association, the Union of Muslim Associations in Liberia and religious leaders from counties** to ensure messages are standardized, effective and clear. The trained members used the key messages to carry out awareness and sensitization on Sexual Based Violence prevention through sermons and town hall meetings, using references from the Bible and the Koran. The objective here is to regularize sermons on GBV using the strategic platform of Churches and Mosques by the members.



**UNFPA** has included religious leaders on all forums involving traditional leaders to balance the conflict between cultural dimensions and advancement of human rights.

**UNICEF** has an ongoing partnership with **Inter-Religious Council** in 3 counties (Montserrado, Grand Gedeh and Sinoe) regularly using protection messages in religious services, 60 senior religious and traditional leaders signed a pledge to promote protection of children and reduce harmful practices at a high level conference held in June 2013.

UNMIL CDT focus has been on information sharing and raising awareness on anti-SEA (Sexual exploitation and abuse) related information and the UN Zero Tolerance to SEA. Upon receiving training from CDT, Religious Leaders in identified counties spread messages on anti-SEA to their congregations. Through the guidance of CDT, the Religious leaders in Tubmanburg, Kakata, Harper, and Voinjama have organized radio talk shows in the counties on the Religious perspective to SEA including the effects of SEA on the survivor and perpetrators, the reporting mechanism of the UNMIL-CDT, and the GBV referral pathway



Training of religious leaders and awareness raising in Church in Vonjama (UNMIL CDT)

## ***2.3 WORK WITH COMMUNITY***

### **2.3.1 Men's Groups:**

**Strategy: Partner and engage with men as 'Centers of Power' in the family and community to redefine masculinities and make them partners for change**

#### **Initiatives:**

'All men Dialogue to Prevent Child Rape and Sexual Abuse' was held in May 2013 organized by UNMIL Public Information Office in collaboration with the Independent National Commission for Human Rights, the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), UN Women, UNICEF and the Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA) of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Around 80 men and young boys from diverse backgrounds, settings, ages and professions participated in the dialogue. While the causes and reasons identified were similar to those in previous consultations, some interesting ideas were put forward for preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and violence against children. Inclusion of sexual violence and rape and its effects in school curriculum, creation of anti-violence clubs in schools and communities and limiting children's interaction with strangers were some of the interesting suggestions.

**UN Women** through its partner SOAP has trained 120 men and boys in six communities as ‘**role models**’ on SGBV issues. The roles models, equipped with visibility and IEC materials, conduct awareness sessions in the communities, they encourage and monitor reporting of SGBV cases to the police. The role models have been organized into local Men Forum Groups linked to the GBV task force at County level and the local police WACP for coordination to prevent violence against women and children in the communities and for conducting SGBV campaigns. The implementing



strategies includes men and boys dialogue groups, community all men dialogues, schools outreach, religious center outreach, public speeches, radio talk shows and individual dialogue

**UNFPA** has facilitated the establishment of the **GBV Palava prevention forums** through its partner CEP in Peace Island and Nyehn. ‘Palava’ in Liberia means conflict resolution, 50 men trained on gender roles and GBV issues in Liberia hold community discussions on gender and GBV to bring out the notions of power and its relation to violence. This is aimed at changing the attitude towards and acceptance of violence as a part of their daily lives.



### **2.3.2 Children in Schools**

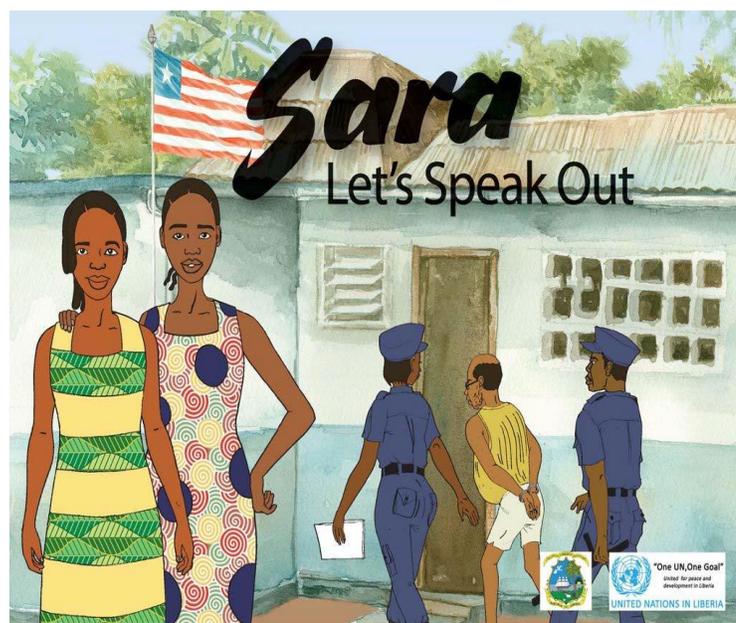
**Strategy: Strengthen support to children as change agents as well as survivors of violence using the schools and communities as ‘Centers’ of safety and protection’**

#### **Initiatives:**

**MoGD with UNICEF** has supported Children’s CSO, Children’s Parliament and Child protection networks countrywide. A high level panel meeting on **post-MDG agenda was organized** with civil society and child protection organizations, including children and youth groups. They demanded urgent measures to be put in place to address violence against children and protection issues. Children also presented the Monrovia Children’s Declaration signed by children and child protection agencies to the High Level Panel (HLP) Members. All members work in teams in their respective districts to create awareness on children issues including, protection of children and prevention of violence.

Work with children is extensive and several different bodies have been created to look at protection and prevention of GBV as one of their mandates, they are Child Welfare committees, Child Protection Networks and Children Parliament. The focus of child welfare committees is primarily to monitor and report on child rights violations, violence against children and to perform other tasks such as mediation, advice, recommendation and representation. There are 400 child welfare created in 7 counties with an average of 9-11 members in each committee. The Children Parliament has been established in all 15 counties their key role is advocacy on children's issues including protection from and prevention of violence.

**UNICEF Sara communication initiative** has expanded this year with a new comic book for children and families, promoting safety messages and ways of preventing and addressing violence against children, including the "buddy system" to promote peer-to-peer support. With increasing police coverage and strengthened capacity to respond to violence against children, one of the objectives of the comic book is also



to promote reporting and contribute to building trust towards the police and the formal justice system. The police officers themselves will be trained in child friendly policing and will be part of the roll-out, through town hall meetings throughout the country. The National Youth Volunteers will also play an important role in disseminating the comic book and promoting the messages in their day to day work at schools, communities, youth centers and agricultural setting.

The focus of **UNMIL CDT in collaboration with MOGD and partners** in their work with schools has been raising awareness in various schools using different communication strategies which include communication of messages during devotion time in schools, debates and dramas, trainings etc. in different schools. About two thousand three hundred (2,300) students were directly engaged in this process this year. The use of debates and dramas in the various schools has generated an interest in schools to organize forums and discussions during parents' teachers meetings, talk

shows for children etc. The GBV Unit from MOGD has received several requests from various schools in Monrovia, to address both parents and children including children from nursery schools



UNMIL CDT work with Children

### 2.3.3 Women, men, youth in communities

**Strategy:** Reach out to every member of the community to take action against violence as responsible citizens of the country

**Intervention:**

Several different initiatives have been designed and are currently being implemented, with the objective of preventing gender based violence and, reminding the community of their role and responsibility as parents, community members and as citizens to take action against rape and other forms of violence.



UNFPA in partnership with CEP have established 2 '**Listening Clubs**' as a pilot in two communities comprising of 25 community members both males and females. The listening club members tune to a radio station at a specific time to listen and take notes during a talk show on SGBV prevention. The talk show discussions are based on pre-arranged topics on SGBV

prevention. Following each talk show, a follow-up session is immediately held with the clubs to get their responses on the topic earlier discussed. Community members see the Listening Clubs as a learning space and as social support group that promote strong bonding between group

members. This has in a significant way contributed to the success of this activity. It is expected that the current members will promote listening and discussions in their own neighborhood.

**MOGD** has established Six (6) **GBV Observatory Networks**, one in each county, Lofa, River Gee, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Gbarpolu, and Bomi counties. These networks are made up of representatives from community-based organizations including women and youth groups, community watch forums as well as key opinion leaders. Each network has 10-12 members who are charged with the responsibility of monitoring the development process of potential violence against women, serving as grass root source of information for the prevention of GBV/rape. The members are trained on GBV issues and the referral pathway. They regularly introduce and re-enforce information on rape prevention, referrals and victims' confidentiality. They hold community discussions and awareness on GBV particularly rape and report cases to the police. The communities where the observatories network members operate have reported an increase in interaction of the community with service providers, and improved arrest of perpetrators.



The **Media Network (Journalist against Sexual and Gender Based Violence)** established with the support of MOGD are engaged in airing of jingles on six community radio stations in six Counties (Radio Cape Mount, Radio Gbarnga, Radio Kakata, Radio Live-Gbarpolu, radio Gbehzon-Grand Bassa, and radio Bomi). The jingles are aired 4 times a day for two weeks to inform the community on the danger rape poses to the survivor. The jingles focus on consequences of rape and violence on adults and children, and caution family/community members to desist from compromising rape.



The **MOGD** work with **Adolescent/ Youth and women Groups** included awareness and sensitization on GBV prevention through forums, focus groups discussions, Dramas, Sports, Jingles Palava Hut meetings, Workshops and community dialogue. **The COLA Sports and Entertainment** was engaged this year to hold awareness through sports. The sports day was attended by over 500

spectators. Similar efforts are ongoing and planned for other counties- the approach is using sporting events to engage with the youth and communicate messages on prevention of Rape and GBV.

### **3. PREVENTION STRATEGIES: A SNAPSHOT**

#### **Approach: Campaigns**

As the strategies clearly indicate the approach was to grab National Attention and follow up with intense one to one dialogues, group discussions and continued use of messages over a prolonged period to improve recall of information.

- **Anti Rape Campaign**

**Strategy:** Amplify national attention and dialogue that would strongly condemn the perpetration of GBV, especially rape of children

- **The Billion Rising Campaign**

**Strategy:** Calling on people to “strike, rise and dance” to demand an end to violence against women

- **The 12th Man Campaign (planned for September to December 2013)**

**Strategy:** Men give voice to women’s stories ‘her story is my story and I am my sister’s keeper’

#### **Approach: Work with Leaders**

The approach here was multi pronged; one work with Ministry of Internal Affairs for issuance of directive against forceful initiation, two engagements with National Traditional Council to advocate for a policy to regulate harmful traditional practice, third directly engage with practitioners to explore alternate avenues of economic empowerment and finally use the church and mosque as change agents to end all forms of gender based violence including rape and teenage pregnancy.

- **Work with Traditional Leaders**

**Strategy:** Build partnership with traditional leaders as community gate keepers to transform communities and make them agents of change.

- **Work with Religious leaders and networks**

**Strategy:** Engage with religious leaders using their strategic platform, church or mosques and the large outreach that they have through their believers.

### **Approach: Work with Community**

Different members of the community as the strategies evidently state were targeted based on their position, their roles in the family and community and also as survivors or perpetrators.

- **Men's Groups:**

**Strategy: Partner and engage with men as 'Centers of Power' in the family and community to redefine masculinities and make them partners for change**

- **Children in Schools**

**Strategy: Strengthen support to children as change agents as well as survivors of violence using the schools and communities as 'Centers' of safety and protection'**

- **Women, men, youth in communities**

**Strategy: Reach out to every member of the community to take action against violence as responsible citizens of the country**

## ***4. CONCLUSION***

Collectively, the different prevention strategies articulated in this document represent a rich diversity of approaches to prevention currently being implemented by partners with the support of the Government in collaboration with the UN. Campaigns continue to be used as an important strategy, however, the strategic use of dialogues, community discussions, radio talk shows and targeting leaders who have a hold over the community decision making process, should have greater impact at the individual and community level in the future.

The issue of rape and the rising numbers of rape of children is a growing concern. The issue here is not whether cases are being compromised because of stigma, or the influence of family or inadequate investigations, or few convictions, the question is why is there little public outcry on this issue, why are parents and community not taking steps to prevent rape? Communities, parents need to be provoked to take action, to make the change. Malaria is an infection, spread through mosquitoes, this can be easily eliminated with the effort of individuals in the family; it can be cured with drugs. Rape is a social infection, a disease; it is criminal and needs to be eliminated. It requires intensive efforts and commitment from every member of the family to **'kick out<sup>4</sup> rape from the country'**.

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<sup>4</sup> Kick out Malaria is campaign here in Liberia

The question that still persists is 'How do we measure change'? Increased awareness and access to services is often used as a good measure of change; however there is a need to also include attitudinal change as a measure of change in the future. Indicators need to be both quantitative and qualitative. The systematic sharing of experiences by all GBV stakeholders from the field and follow up with communities must be regularized to ensure community sharing of experiences is recorded, impact of strategies measured and this is finally used to develop a sustained long term prevention model that has a multiplier effect.

## **THE JOINT PROGRAMME**

A Joint Programme signed between the Government of Liberia and the United Nations is helping address the issue of wide-scale sexual and gender based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse cases, through the implementation of both prevention and response measures. The Joint Programme brings together relevant Government and UN Agencies, and adopts a comprehensive and integrated approach to reducing SGBV in the country, while providing appropriate support and healthcare to survivors of GBV in Liberia.

The Joint Programme's design has been in line with the security, protection, and governance and rule of law components of Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), and the revised National GBV Action Plan. It supports all five pillars in the Action Plan, with a range of interventions in each.

A preventive strategy targeting men and women that strives for knowledge and attitudinal and behavioral change, through awareness raising efforts, is central to the Joint Programme. It involves a mix of advocacy and public awareness campaigns using various media, at the community, county and national level, in support of other wider prevention and response efforts.

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