



Naymote Partners for Democratic Development
 “COVID-19 Response and Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civic Engagement (2018-2020)”

Progress Report (Narrative) – June 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020

SECURITY OFFICERS AND COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT COVID-19 AND RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS



PREVENT COVID-19 AND ENHANCE PEACEBUILDING AND SOCIAL COHESION

Project Title:	COVID-19 Response and Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civic Engagement (2018-2020)”
Project Number	00113925
Donor	United Nations Development Programme
Implementer	Naymote Partners for Democratic Development
Implementation Period	June 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020
Total Cost of Grant	US\$ 136,827.50
Project Location	Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Bassa
Report By	Joshua Dennis Cleon
Report Submitted To	UNDP - Liberia
Reporting Period	June 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020

1. Project Deliverables:

COVID-19 pandemic in Liberia like any other country and its ongoing devastation has exposed deep inequality and key social fissures in communities. Certain communities and groups have been exposed to discrimination, hard times and untold difficulties more than ever. Strict security measures instituted during the State of Emergency increased these challenges and led to the violation of the rights of citizens creating more tension amongst citizens in the country and the national government. As the country continues to combat the pandemic, many communities are still experiencing conflicts with local and national authorities including the security forces mounted on existing health crisis and social issues arising from loss of jobs and livelihoods.

Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, realizing the impact of the virus and threat it poses to sustaining peace in Liberia embarked on an innovative and robust social mobilization action to help stop the virus transmission and mitigate the pandemic impact in communities.

The institution through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) redirected an ongoing project fund, and initiated the **Community Action Platform Against COVID-19, Phase II** across four most affected counties (Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Bassa) as part of UNDP and Naymote Partnership on COVID-19 response to advancing reconciliation.

The project is designed to buttress national reconciliation, peace building, strengthen political, economic, and social stability, reduce violent conflict between communities and security forces through dialogues and improve social mobilization in COVID-19 response. This initiative seeks to protect the human rights of all with emphasis on rights of socially marginalized groups (women, youth and People Living with Disability).

Naymote during the period June 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020, mobilized 105 communities across Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. In addition, 21 CBOs were vetted and selected from four infested counties to support the project deliverables. Amongst the 21 institutions, 13 were selected from Montserrado, 3 from Nimba, 3 from Margibi and 2 from Grand Bassa. The CBOs were provided with small grants to conduct activities to stop COVID-19 transmission, promote peace building and social cohesion in communities and provide community level social mobilization and awareness within selected communities. Their engagements reached and educated a total of 23,754 citizens comprising of 11,504 males and 12,250 females. Of the total reached, 812 were persons with disabilities, 14,168 were youth between 18-35 years and 9,215 above 36 years.

Feedback being collected through phone calls and random interviews suggest that the project is enhancing peacebuilding and social cohesion in project communities and contributing to the stopping of COVID-19 transmission.

On the above ongoing successes, Naymote has produced and disseminated dramas with tailored made messages on prevention and impact of COVID-19 utilizing six (6) contracted community radio stations across the project locations. Additionally, 10,000 flyers were produced, disseminated in communities mobilized. Messages printed focused on human rights and gender

specific messages on the rights of citizens especially on the State of Emergency focusing on alternative measures for disputes while delivering Covid-19 preventive measures.

To enhance and sustain the project successes, the initiative has supported peace building dialogues between communities and security forces which is helping to counter misinformation on the implementation of the State of Emergency protocols – reducing tension in communities and promoting peace amongst citizens – with very limited tensions as compare to two months ago when the State of Emergency was being implemented. There were enough scars left but with the intervention of this project, Citizens are being encouraged to report and seek redress than fighting back, there's improved relationship between security forces and citizens.

Talk shows held, videos, jingles and dramas produced and aired on community radio stations helping to reinforce the message of peace building - educating citizens about the MoH approved health protocols and State of Emergency protocols. To complement Social Distancing, 2,000 nose masks were produced and distributed to vulnerable people, mostly women, people with disabilities and youth in project locations.

Naymote equally utilized technology to engage more citizens and increase awareness on the implementation of the approved health protocols, State of Emergency, and its after effects. The initiative recruited, trained, and deployed 15 volunteers for a 40-day mobile phone awareness campaign through Naymote call center.

The Volunteers reached and educated a total of 5,907 citizens (3,395 males and 2,512 females) across the project locations via mobile phones. Media and civic engagement events were conducted through social media, national and community radio stations.

Preliminary random discussions, field visits and phone follow-up calls have shown that there's an improved relationship between project communities and security forces. Community actors are currently working together to resolve issues peacefully at the community level and creating synergies to eradicate COVID-19 emanating from the tensions posed by the implementation of the State of Emergency, adherence to Health Protocols and limited information on COVID-19 amongst communities.

There is also an increased awareness in communities about the then imposed State of Emergency and health protocols. Citizens are currently adhering to preventive measures, while communities that have been engaged have promised to uphold approved precautionary measures to keep safe including hand washing, observing social distancing and using masks when necessary.

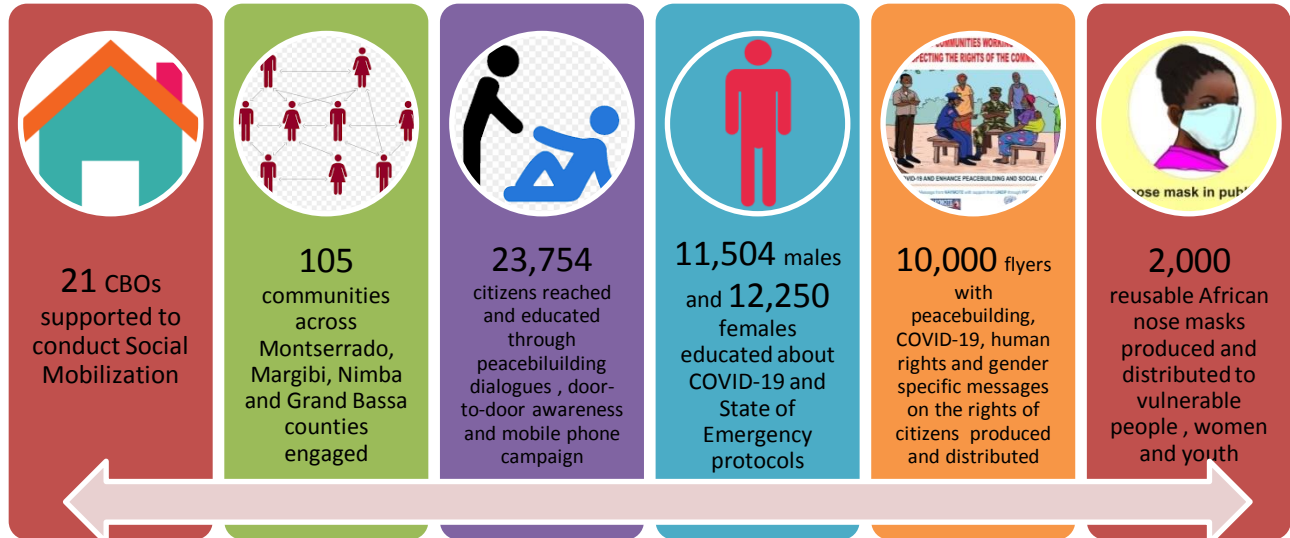
It can be attributed that ongoing impact realized on the fight against Covid-19 is partly because of this project's engagements as a complement to interventions made by Government and other actors.

Presently, there is an encouraging decline in new confirmed COVID-19 cases and limited COVID-19 death in Liberia.

2. Project Success/ Achievements

Series of project activities was successfully implemented during the period and yielded significant impact.

Figure I: Project Achievement in Figures



- 812 persons reached and educated were people living with disabilities.
- 14,168 persons reached and educated were youth between 18-35 years.
- Improved relationship and collaboration between project communities and security forces.
- Security forces and communities working together to resolve issues peacefully at the community level and creating synergies to eradicate COVID-19.
- Increased awareness on COVID-19 preventive measures, SoE and health protocols.
- High decline in new confirmed COVID-19 cases and limited COVID-19 death in Liberia.

Figure II: % number of persons with disabilities engaged and benefited from the project

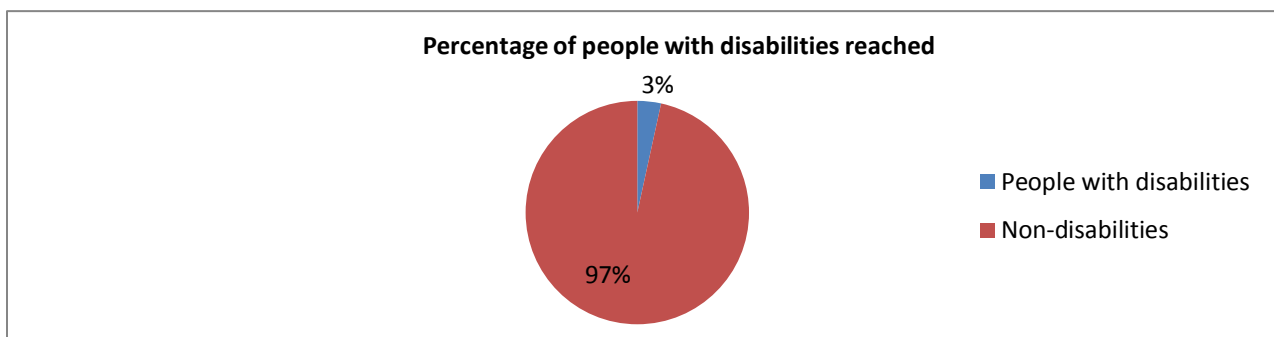


Figure III: Demographic distribution of project beneficiaries

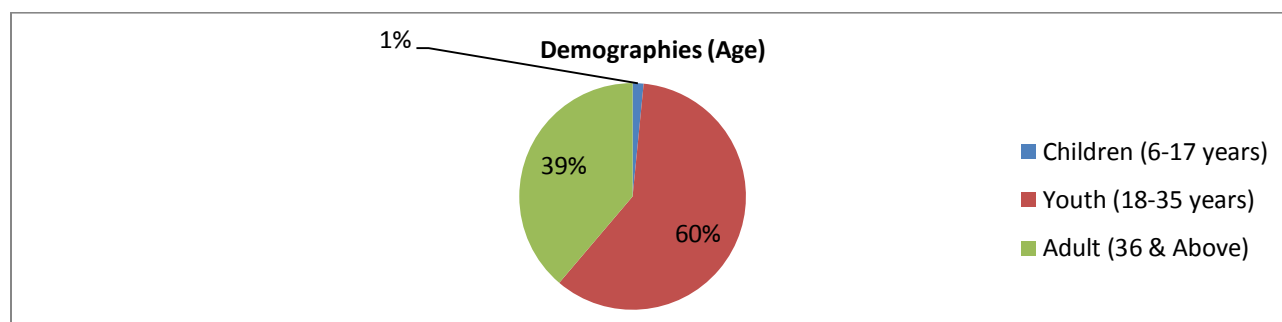


Figure IV: Project Beneficiaries Reached in Summary

IMPACT OUTCOME				
Total beneficiaries reached	Youth (18-35 years)	Adult (36 & Above)	Children (6-17 years)	Persons living with disabilities
Total: 23,754 citizens Males: 11,504 Females: 12,250	14,168	9,215	371	3% of those reached were people with disabilities

Figure V: Workplan performance of completed activities

COMPLETED ACTIVITIES	Timeline				Planned Budget for the Activity (in grant currency)	Funds Delivered for the Activity (in grant currency)
	T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4		
1.1 Produce and air Dramas	X				See attached financial report	See attached financial report
1.2 Support to CBOs to conduct Social Mobilization	X					
1.3 Print 10,000 Fliers in color (A4 size)	X	X				
1.4 Print and erect Billboard Flex	X	X				
1.5 Holding of Radio Talk Shows	X	X				
1.6 Support to Community Radio Stations airing of Jingles	X	X				
1.7 Mobile Phone Awareness Campaign		X				
1.8 Conduct Lesson Learn Workshop						
1.9 Conduct Media Engagement	X	X				

10 Conduct 2-day Nat. Reconciliation Conference						
2.1 Program Logistics/ Operations	X	X				
2.2 Staffer Stipend	X	X				
2.3 Adm. /Overhead Costs	X	X				

3. Activities Implemented/ Completed

The below mentioned activities as depicted in figure V were completed during the reporting period.

Produce and air Dramas/ jiggles – Up to date the project has produced five dramas/ jiggles in several languages including: Bassa, Gio, Mano, Kpelleh and simple Liberian English. The dramas/ jiggles were produced and aired on six (6) national and community radio stations selected in project counties during the reporting period.

Support to CBOs to conduct Social Mobilization - Naymote published a call for application, vetted and selected 21 institutions through a competitive process to conduct social mobilization in 105 communities. 21 institutions were successful, (13 from Montserrado, 3 from Nimba, 3 from Margibi and 2 from Grand Bassa). These institutions benefited from a small grant to conduct activities to stop COVID-19 transmission, promote peace building and social cohesion in communities and provide community level social mobilization and awareness within selected communities. Their engagements reached and educated total of 17,847 citizens comprising of 9,843 males and 7,633 females.

Printing of 10,000 Fliers in color (A4 size) - 10,000 flyers were produced and distributed in project counties. 5,000 flyers had messages focused directly on COVID-19 preventive measures while 5,000 had messages on gender, human rights, and peace building. The flyers were disseminated to citizens through door-to-door awareness in communities, awareness in markets, as well as community engagement events.

Print and erect Billboard Flex – 20 billboards were printed and erected in several communities with tailored messages on enhancing peace building and social cohesion in communities and COVID-19 preventive measures. 11 billboards were erected in Montserrado, 3 in Margibi, 3 in Nimba and 3 in Grand Bassa.

Holding of Radio Talk Shows – The project hosted 2 radio talk shows so far in order to increase awareness and provide more information on the project, MOH health protocols and alternative dispute resolution amongst citizens and the Securities officers. Naymote project team appeared on Truth FM, OK FM, while Partners in project counties appeared on local radio stations including: Radio Kortuma FM in Nimba County, Classic FM in Margibi and Radio Gbehzohn in Grand Bassa.

They disseminated peace building and COVID-19 messages to citizens as it was done at national level. Naymote's regional office in Bong County led discussions about the project on Radio Gbarnga, in Bong County.

Support Community Radio Stations airing of Jingles – The project contracted and supported Truth FM and OK FM in Montserrado, Radio Gbehzohn in Bassa, Classic FM in Margibi, Kortuma FM in Nimba and Radio Gbarnga in Bong to air produced jingles in local languages.

Mobile Phone Awareness Campaign – The project successfully recruited and deployed 15 volunteers who conducted social mobilization campaign using mobile phones for 40 days. Their engagements reached and educated total of 5,907 citizens, 3,395 males and 2,512 females.

Production and distribution of face masks – 2,000 reusable African nose masks were produced and distributed to vulnerable people, women and youth in project communities. Naymote in collaboration with the CBOs that were contracted through the Small Grant led the distribution of the nose masks with vulnerable population.

Conduct Media Engagements - The project conducted 2 radio appearances in Montserrado, played awareness jingles 40 times (4 per week, two and a half months gone) to intensify Media and civic engagement on national and community radio stations.

The institution used its social media page (Liberia Decides) with over 24K followers to share updates about the project, partners' social mobilization activities, produced flyers on COVID-19 preventive measures, and disseminated peacebuilding messages. Additionally, COVID-19 awareness video produced on the washing of hands, wearing of face masks and stigmatization was also shared via social media. Thousands of citizens were reached through media engagements and much more are expected to be reached by the end of the project.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

One of the major challenges experienced during the project period was countering misinformation in communities about COVID-19. Many citizens believe that the government is escalating confirmed cases, and that the virus is no longer in Liberia. However, with the intervention, this myth was dispelled and using practical evidence of similar denial during Ebola were used to inform citizens across the project communities which restored trust and led to mass mobilization of citizens to support the project.

The following lessons were learned during project implementation:

- Working directly with CBOs in communities has proven to be very effective as it reduced cost, promote participation and increase local context approaches for remote communities where culture is strongest.
- Working with security officers and communities to help combat COVID-19 and enhancing peace building and social cohesion in communities was a very effective strategy during the implementation of the project as it helped reduced piled up tensions and present seem to promote huge understanding through meetings.

- The use of local vernaculars by our partners (CBOs) during conduct of community level peace dialogues/ meetings with security officers and community residents in Grand Bassa and Nimba, increased awareness, created the platform for social exchanges and promoted participation.
- Integrating peace building and COVID-19 prevention messages in local vernaculars (Bassa, Gio and Mano) and dialogues/ meetings with security officers in Grand Bassa and Nimba narrow the space between the two parties and has open up space for future linkages and networking on other crucial national peace building initiatives.
- The Procurement and distribution of face masks locally produced by women's organizations resulted into two folds: increase income in the local market and communities saw NAYMOTE as a true partner to trust and work with.

5. Recommendations:

- Building on this project gains, a national dialogue on peace and reconciliation could benefit hugely from the gains of this project.

Appendix:

Link to project photos <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmQvvX5S>

Link to COVID-19 awareness videos produced on the washing of hands, wearing of face masks <https://web.facebook.com/LibDecides/videos/3184621211633790/>, and stigmatization of COVID-19 survivors <https://web.facebook.com/LibDecides/videos/1228708314173350/>

Link to stories about the project

<https://www.lr.undp.org/content/liberia/en/home/presscenter/articles/2020/naymote-disburses-l-1-2m-to-cbos-for-covid-19-response-.html>,

<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-naymote-disburses-l1-2m-to-cbos-for-covid-19-response/>,

<https://kmtvliberia.com/naymote-disburses-l1-2m-to-cbos-for-covid-19-response-calls-on-politicians-to-prioritize-citizens-health/>