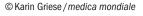


Raising communities' awareness on women's rights and assistance to survivors of sexualised and gender-based violence in South East Liberia







PROGRAMME

Reintegration and Recovery Programme (RRP V)

DONOR

Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau

EXECUTING AGENCIES

Welthungerhilfe, Oxfam, *medica Liberia, medica mondiale*

DURATION

Phase 5, 2018-2021

VOLUME

EUR 14.7 million

The Challenge

After 14 devastating years of civil war (1989–2003), the level of sexualised and gender-based violence (S/GBV) in Liberia remains high. In 2016, rape was the second most reported serious crime according to UN/OHCHR, with minors accounting for almost 80% of those affected.

Survivors of S/GBV face a high risk of stigmatization, discouraging them from reporting their cases to authorities. An inefficient judiciary and lack of knowledge on legislation regarding S/GBV often result in impunity for the perpetrators.

→ Survivors of S/GBV face a high risk of stigmatization, discouraging them from reporting their cases to authorities.

In many cases of gender-based violence, women and girls are left alone without access to support.

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Our Approach

Since 2005, the Reintegration and Recovery Programme (RRP) assists women and girls affected by S/GBV and their communities in Grand Gedeh County. With RRP, the consortium partners *medica Liberia, medica mondiale,* Welthungerhilfe and Oxfam contribute to socio-economic recovery and consolidation of peace in the South East.

medica Liberia carries out the women's empowerment component of RRP. Their holistic approach includes psychosocial, health and legal services as well as incomegenerating activities for survivors and campaigns to sensitize state actors in the protection of women, such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the Ministry of Health.

medica Liberia addresses key state actors as well as survivors and their communities.

*medica Liberia'*s approach includes, among others, the following aspects:

Referral pathway for survivors

As part of an inter-agency task force, *medica Liberia* and *medica mondiale* have established a referral pathway making it easier for S/GBV survivors to access support. This pathway connects service providers of health, psychosocial and legal support to enable rapid assistance. The service providers and the Liberian National Police have been trained to offer stress- and trauma-sensitive support.

Strengthening community mobilization

To strengthen the prevention of and response to S/GBV, *medica Liberia* has created local Protection Networks in the programme communities. In these networks, Women Support Groups serve as focal points for survivors of S/GBV. Additionally, *medica Liberia* trains community leaders, has established Girls' Clubs in schools, and integrates male community members in the Protection Networks.

Village Savings and Loan Association

To make the Women Support Groups sustainable, a fund concept has been introduced in the form of village savings and loan associations (VSLAs). The VSLA receives an initial fund that gives the members access to income. The fund increases when women who receive a loan pay interest. The VSLA makes joint decisions on how much money is saved and determines the interest rate. The savings scheme includes a social fund to assist women affected by S/GBV in emergencies, for example, by covering transportation costs to health centres.

Results

Over the last decade, Liberia has witnessed a cultural change from impunity for perpetrators to survivors taking legal action. **189** 3



From 2014–2017, 189 cases of violence against women in Grand Gedeh were resolved in the survivors' favour.

3.611



From 2005–2020, 3.611 women received S/GBV counselling sessions from *medica Liberia* counsellors.

128



From 2005–2020, 128 Support Groups were created and trained on S/GBV.