



## LIBERIA PEACEBUILDER INITIATIVE

*Building a community-based network to foster conflict resolution, reconciliation, and sustainable peace*

### LIBERIA'S CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITY

Civil war has left the country deeply affected and devastated. Conflict easily erupts at fault lines such as weakened respect for elders, ethnic tensions and integration of refugees. There is a tremendous need for local leaders to experience and learn skills for inter-group trust, nonviolent conflict resolution, reconciliation and collaborative networking: *the foundations of democracy, development, and a sustainable peace.*

### THE PEACEBUILDER INITIATIVE

This initiative offers deep discussion and visioning among all constituents. A microcosm of the whole of Liberia, beyond Monrovia, is needed to build peace at the grassroots, not just official levels. This reflects President Sirleaf's call for *"...real conversation, real debate... We need to talk openly and honestly all over the country about our history and our roots, about the evils of our past and the good in it too."*

We plan to create an expanding community-based network of Peacebuilders across age, gender, ethnicity and social status differences. This builds capacity to manage tensions at the grassroots, taking a powerful step towards creating a healthy Liberian national identity, true democracy and sustainable peace.



### HOW IT WORKS

**Peacebuilder teams** of three local community leaders (elder, woman, and youth) from the major ethnic groups across all counties attend.

**A series of five-day Summits** – two national, three regional, comprised of:

- Compassionate Listening training
- Council Circles with women, youth and men where all voices are heard
- Nonviolent conflict resolution skills adapting traditional practices
- Restorative Circles of listening to each other's stories to move toward reconciliation
- Celebration and co-creation through music, art and dance
- Sharing meals and social time
- Inclusion of national leaders
- Large group dialogue and deliberative processes in a Town Hall

## WAYS YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

- Endorse the Initiative
- Become a partner
- Help recruit Peacebuilder Teams
- Attend your local Community Meetings and Town Halls
- Show the DVD in your community
- Support the text messaging Early Warning/Response Network
- Provide funding or refer funders
- Spread the word



**What happens beyond the Summits is key:** Peacebuilders bring the learnings home, supported by a Peacebuilder Manual of the processes and skills learned. The teams:

- Hold local workshops on Compassionate Listening and conflict resolution
- Facilitate dialogues after showing the DVD of Peacebuilders' stories and Summit highlights
- Organize Town Halls to address local issues
- Utilize text messaging system to give/receive support with the growing network of Peacebuilders and serve as an Early Warning/Response Network
- PCO staff monitor and support the teams, and co-facilitate local Town Halls

**PCO gathers government and national leaders** in Monrovia to discuss the Peacebuilder Report and see the DVD.

Each new Summit brings a multiplying effect, resulting in over 144 Peacebuilders, 48 local workshops, 48 Town Halls and 4800 community participants.



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Population Caring Organization (PCO) is a humanitarian NGO registered in Liberia and Ghana dedicated to peacebuilding and improving both day-to-day conditions and long-term prospects for alleviating suffering of West Africans who have been displaced or affected by poverty and civil war.

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Global Citizen Journey (GCJ) is a small, USA based 501(c)3 nonprofit devoted to engaging individuals at the grassroots as fully empowered global citizens through citizen diplomacy, peacemaking, leadership building, education, environmental stewardship and service.