

REPORT FOR THE FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT  
“LOCALIZING FOR CHANGE: POSITIONING WOMEN’S CIVIL  
SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WPS AGENDA” IN SIERRA LEONE



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>50/50</b>	50/50 Women's Group – Sierra Leone
<b>CBOs</b>	Community-Based Organizations
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>ERG</b>	Evaluation Reference Group
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>GATE</b>	Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GDD</b>	Gender Disaggregated Data
<b>GDI</b>	Gender Development Index
<b>GE&amp;HR</b>	<i>Gender Equality</i> and Human Rights (GE & HR)
<b>GERAAS</b>	Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System
<b>GII</b>	Gender Inequality Index
<b>GoSL</b>	Government of Sierra Leone
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>IP</b>	Implementing partner
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>MGCA</b>	Ministry of Gender And Children Affairs
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NCE</b>	No Cost Extension
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECD/DAC</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
<b>PBF</b>	Peace Building Fund
<b>RBM</b>	Results-Based Management
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SILNAP</b>	Sierra Leone National Action Plan
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNSCDF</b>	United Nations Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls
<b>WANEP_SL</b>	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Sierra Leone
<b>WF-SL</b>	Women's Forum – Sierra Leone
<b>WIMSAL</b>	Women in The Media Sierra Leone
<b>WOFHRAD</b>	Women' Forum for Human right and Democracy
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security
<b>WPS-NAP</b>	Women Peace and Security National Action Plan
<b>WVI</b>	World Vision International

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background and introduction**

This report is the product of the end-line evaluation of the project “Localizing for change: Positioning women’s Civil Society Organizations for effective implementation of the WPS agenda in Sierra Leone. The project was jointly implemented by United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and World Vision International (WV) from April 2023 to September 2024 and with a 6-month no-cost extension (NCE), bringing the project to a close in March 2025 (24 months). The project was funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to the tune of USD 2 million with a broad goal of strengthening the institutional capacity of women-focused CSOs to coordinate their effort in sustaining peace and enhancing the safety and security of women and girls in Sierra Leone.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE FINAL EVALUATION**

The main purpose of the final project evaluation is to assess the results of the project interventions and, to the extent, the PBF support has been effective in contributing to women’s leadership and participation in peace and security in Sierra Leone. The key results, challenges, lessons learned, good practices, conclusions, and recommendations will inform future joint programming in sustaining peace and enhancing the safety and security of women and girls in Sierra Leone. The evaluation covered the implementation period of the joint project from April 2023 to March 2025 (24 months).

### **Methodology**

The evaluation applied the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Sustainability, Impact, Gender Equality, and Human Rights (GEHR). In line with the donor requirements, the following additional PBF-specific evaluation criteria were also assessed by the evaluation: catalytic, time-sensitivity, localization, risk tolerance, and innovation. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach involving document review, interviews, focus groups, and survey techniques to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Respondents included representatives of the project recipients, including the women-focused CSOs, parliamentarians, councillors, community leaders, implementing partners, government partners, and security actors. The project covered 6 districts in Sierra Leone with histories of violence, as well as districts where women’s representation remained a huge challenge. A total of 106 questionnaires were retrieved out of the 120 targeted, made up of 65.1 percent females and 34.9 percent males. Also, 42 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 12 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, and thematic coding was used to analyse qualitative data. Findings from qualitative and quantitative data analysis were thus triangulated by the source before concluding. The intended users of the evaluation include MOGCA, CSOs, Responsible Partners, UN Women, UNDP, WV, as well as Peace Building Fund (PBF) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) more broadly.

### **Findings**

#### **Relevance**

The evaluation confirmed that the project was highly relevant in addressing conflict drivers and advancing peace in Sierra Leone, as identified in national and local conflict analyses. The project was implemented in areas that were identified as high-risk, with norms and practices that discriminate against women's participation in politics. Whilst there were several coordinating bodies on GBV, women's Political participation, none of these bodies had the mandate of promoting WPS. Even though there had been policy regulation for proportional representation of women in the electoral processes, the public acceptance of this regulation and its implementation faced several challenges before the elections. As a result, the project contributed to enhancing public understanding of proportional representation and in transforming negative norms and practices in communities and with traditional leaders in the district. The project directly responded to the structural exclusion of women from peacebuilding and governance processes, which is a core driver of inequality and conflict in Sierra Leone. By supporting women's participation as peace actors, political aspirants, and civic leaders, the project worked to transform exclusionary norms and practices. The project, through its various capacity-building activities and awareness creation at the community level, contributed to strengthening community peace structures, women-focused CSOs, and traditional leaders, which are the entities vital for mediating local disputes and promoting social cohesion. The evaluation found that the project was both appropriate and strategically aligned with Sierra Leone’s peacebuilding priorities and challenges at the time of its design. The localizing



for change project was also found to be relevant to the national strategies, policies, plans, CEDAW, Beijing +25, and UNSCR 1325 and 1820 principles, UN's peacebuilding mandate, and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16. The evaluation further notes that the ToC is broadly logical, aligning with the global and national framework for implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Overall, the evaluation confirmed that the localizing for change is relevant to peace-building needs of Sierra Leone and the targeted districts.

## **Effectiveness**

Overall, the localizing for change project was largely effective in achieving its stated objectives and made significant contributions to its strategic vision of strengthening women's CSOs and localizing the WPS Agenda in Sierra Leone. Overall, the localizing for change project was largely effective in achieving its stated objectives and made significant contributions to its strategic vision of strengthening women's CSOs and localizing the WPS Agenda in Sierra Leone. There is a total of 42 indicators in the entire project log frame; out of these, 38 indicators were achieved at the end of project implementation, recording over 90 percent overall achievement on the 42 indicators. The evaluation rated project achievement of outcome and output indicators as good after achieving over 90 percent of the stated outcome and output indicators at the end of the implementation period. The evaluation confirms that the effectiveness of the localizing for change project was shaped by the interplay of political, social, economic, and other contextual factors in Sierra Leone, including the supportive policies and commitments to the WPS agenda, the project's advocacy and awareness-raising activities, among others. The project demonstrated a strong commitment to gender mainstreaming both in the design and implementation of the project. For instance, 100 percent of the entire project budget was allocated to GEWE. The project's geographic and beneficiary targeting strategy was appropriate and moderately clear. From the project design, the project targeted six districts, namely Bombali, Karene, Kono, Pujehun, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban, based on their vulnerability to security challenges as identified by the National Threat Assessment district risk mapping for the 2023 general elections. All (100 percent) of the participants noted that they were satisfied with the project results. By gender, 81.1 percent and 65.2 percent of female and male beneficiaries, respectively, noted that they were very satisfied with the results achieved by the project.

## **Efficiency**

The evaluation found that the project has a lean staff structure but a clear structure delineating roles and responsibilities across the lead agency. The lean staff structure affected the effective monitoring of the project activities by the consortium members. The evaluation found that there were monthly coordination meetings by the consortium and the national executive of the women-focused CSOs, which allowed for local ownership and alignment with national and district-level peacebuilding priorities. Annual and quarterly work plans were developed collaboratively, and implementing partners participated in regular coordination meetings. Evidence also shows funds for the projects were not promptly disbursed, thus affecting the early takeoff of the project as planned. The project management structure, the implementation partners' organizational structure, management support, and coordination mechanisms were moderately effective in supporting project delivery. The management structure was largely a loose consortium with each fund recipient partner managing its downstream partners. This disjointed management and coordination structure was observed in the field data collection processes, where some CSOs and participants only know UN Women (especially the coalition members), while others can only speak of 50/50 and Women in the Media, who are sub-grantees to World Vision. The evaluation confirmed that the consortium approach (UN Women, UNDP, World Vision) adopted for project implementation was strategic and efficient in leveraging each agency's comparative strengths. The evaluation found that the project ensures synergies within different programs of UN agencies, other implementing organizations, and donors to a large extent. The project team intentionally aligned with and complemented ongoing interventions by UN agencies in Sierra Leone, particularly those focused on gender equality, peacebuilding, and women's empowerment.

## **Sustainability**

The endline evaluation findings show that the intervention design includes appropriate sustainability measures, but with a limited, comprehensive exit strategy. From its inception, the project prioritized local ownership and leadership as a core strategy for sustainability. This was reflected in its implementation approach, which included partnership and capacity building of women-focused CSOs to lead peacebuilding and advocacy efforts at the community and district levels. The project contributed to the development of a national WPS Strategy that is context-specific to drive advocacy initiatives within the targeted locations.

Engagement with the Female caucus, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, National Apparatus like SMeDA, NASSIT, private sector, Female SMEs, all over the country in the Financing for Women Peace Security in the country created opportunities for continued engagement of the Coalition with the various stakeholders to identify innovative financing options for WPS in the country. The Policy on the Informal Economy, grant support, and the introduction of the Green Bank are all catalytic opportunities that have been identified by the project. There was also alignment with national frameworks such as SiLNAP II, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Policy, thereby anchoring project objectives within national and sub-national priorities. As part of sustainability, the project also promoted the inclusion of local structures, traditional leaders, and security sector actors in dialogues and training, enhancing local buy-in and legitimacy. These various elements demonstrated a deliberate effort to embed change within existing national and community systems, which is a key indicator of sustainability planning. Another key element of sustainability embedded in project design is capacity building. However, despite the project's implementation supported by sustainability goals, the design did not include a fully developed or explicit exit strategy.

## Impact

The evaluation found that significant measurable changes have occurred because of supported efforts and strengthened capacities of women candidates, aspirants, or elected, as well as the national partners from government and CSOs to advance gender equality and women's human rights in Sierra Leone. The project contributed to increasing the level of collaboration and communication among women-focused civil society organizations from 67 percent at baseline to 95 percent at project closure, as well as increasing the number of joint actions taken by the women-focused CSOs coalition from 0 at baseline to 37 joint actions at project closure. Also, 95 percent of the coalition noted that the project contributed to increasing the level of communication among women-focused civil society organizations. The project also contributed to increasing women's participation at the chiefdom, district, and national governance levels, of which 573 female aspirants were trained on electoral processes and leadership skills for the positions of Members of Parliament and Councilors in the six project locations. 16 became Members of Parliament and 68 became councilors in the 2023 elections. Thus, the project contributed towards increasing female representation in politics from 14.5 percent to 30.4 percent in Parliament and 19 percent to 34 percent in local councils during the 2023 general elections. The elected female parliamentarians are influencing gender-transformative policy formulation, including the Child Marriage Act, advancing the fight against gender-based violence to promote an inclusive and peaceful society. Also, the project contributed to increasing the number of women-focused CSOs participating in policy dialogue processes that seek to increase women's participation and representation in decision-making at the local and national level from 0 at baseline to over 80 at project closure. Further, the project contributed to enhancing the speedy trial of GBV cases, access to services for GBV survivors, women's involvement in decision-making and leadership, and participation in peace-building processes both at the community and national levels. Overall, the project generated tangible, measurable changes in both women's participation in political processes and the capacity of institutions to uphold gender equality and women's human rights.

## Coherence

The evaluation findings confirmed that the project complements work among different entities, especially with other UN actors, to a moderate extent. The project complemented the EU-UN Spotlight initiative project in Sierra Leone, which focuses on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) as well as traditional harmful practices (HP) such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). The project also complemented the UNDP project (Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone implemented from 2022-2024). The project also complemented Christian Aid Ireland's 'Uman, Land En Kol At' (Women's Land for Peace): Women Lead Transformative Pathways to Peace project funded by PBF, which focuses on catalyzing women's leadership to drive peaceful, gender transformative natural resource management (NRM) of land. The evaluation found that the project was designed and implemented as part of the broader United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) portfolio in Sierra Leone and was a complementary effort under the PBF's thematic priority on inclusive peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The project design was well-aligned with the overarching strategic priorities of the PBF in Sierra Leone. The UN PBF promotes coordination with all its grant recipients. This helped to promote alignment in project design and implementation with other projects funded by PBF. Overall, the project demonstrated a high degree of alignment in design and implementation as part of the broader United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) portfolio.

## **Gender Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming in the Project**

The evaluation confirmed that human rights-based approaches and gender equality were incorporated in the design and implementation of the project. Evidence shows that the project was grounded in strong human rights-based approaches (HRBA) and principles of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). These were not only integrated conceptually but also operationalized throughout the design and implementation of project activities. All objectives, strategies, approaches, and activities highlighted in the project are focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in political participation and peacebuilding activities. The project placed rights-holders, particularly women, at the center of interventions. Women-focused CSOs were actively involved in designing local action plans for WPS and leading advocacy on gender-responsive governance. Also, duty bearers (e.g., local councils, traditional authorities, security actors) were engaged and trained to uphold gender equality standards and inclusive governance. The project encouraged accountability through community dialogues and feedback mechanisms. The project promoted non-discrimination and inclusion by targeting underrepresented groups such as women and survivors of GBV. The project directly contributed to localizing the WPS Agenda by aligning its objectives with the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 (SiLNAP II & III). The project involvement of people with a disability further demonstrates that human rights-based approaches and gender equality were incorporated in the design and implementation to a large extent.

## **Conflict-Sensitivity**

The project adopted explicit approaches to conflict sensitivity. The project recognized the complex socio-political context of Sierra Leone, including the historical legacies of conflict, ongoing community-level disputes, and gender-based marginalization, and took deliberate steps to ensure that interventions would “do no harm” and instead promote social cohesion. At the design stage of the project, the project was preceded by contextual and conflict analysis in targeted districts. This informed the geographic targeting of the six districts targeted by the project and the choice of local partners. The project also maintained inclusive stakeholder engagement, which ensured that all categories of stakeholders were engaged in the project design and implementation, thus promoting inclusive dialogue and reducing the potential for exclusion-driven grievances. By working with Coalition members across the six districts, the project contributed to the early identification and resolution of local tensions. The final evaluation of the localizing for Change project found no major unintended negative impacts. Many stakeholders, including the beneficiaries across the districts targeted by the project, were affirmative in stating that the project did not have unintended negative impacts at the district level.

## **Catalytic**

The localizing for change project demonstrated moderate to strong catalytic effects, especially regarding programmatic influence, partnership development, and policy dialogue. While the project had limited direct leverage of financial investments, it catalyzed visibility, awareness, and local ownership of the WPS Agenda. One of the programmatic catalytic effects of the project is the strengthening of the women-focused CSOs in resource mobilization and project management. Skills and knowledge acquired by the coalition can be adapted to mobilize resources for WPS. Additionally, the project engagement with the Female Caucus of parliament, Ministries Departments and Agencies, private sector and donor partners contributed to shaping the development of key action and initiatives that will foster collaborative engagement with SMEs and other women's groups for funding, policy reform for private sector engagement and in driving key actions to enhance women's economic, social security and their participation in national platforms. The project enhanced their technical, advocacy, and coordination capacities. This has contributed to increased collaboration and working together of women-focused CSOs in the pursuit of the WPS Agenda at the grassroots. Financially, there was no evidence of any catalytic effect as the project itself did not directly mobilize significant additional funding during its lifetime. However, its demonstration effect helped position local partners for future grants. At least two donors (Iceland, Irish Aid, and Feminist Movement in South Africa) have expressed interest in working with the Coalition. For Iceland, a concept note has been developed. However, the short project duration of the project limited long-term investment leverage. There was no dedicated follow-on funding strategy or formal resource mobilization plan built into the project design, especially for the established Coalition. There was also limited engagement with the private sector or high-level political stakeholders, which limited broader catalytic influence. Overall, the project was programmatically catalytic, especially in empowering women-focused CSOs, increasing their visibility, and strengthening WPS collaboration. Financial catalytic effects were modest but promising, with evidence of

follow-on engagement and potential for future investment.

### Localization

The evaluation found that national and local stakeholders were sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle. The project team carried out robust consultations with different national, regional, provincial, district, and local stakeholders. The project contributed to strengthening the capacities of national and local stakeholders (national and local governments and CSOs). Overall, the project made notable contributions to strengthening the technical, organizational, and participatory capacities of national and local stakeholders, particularly women-led CSOs and local authorities. Evidence also shows that national and local stakeholders perceived the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)'s support as highly useful, timely, and relevant to the local context of Sierra Leone. The support was valued not just for its financial input, but for its strategic focus on inclusive peacebuilding, particularly through the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and local ownership of peacebuilding processes. Overall, PBF's support was widely perceived as useful and impactful, particularly for empowering women-led peacebuilding efforts, enabling inclusive dialogue, and supporting national-local synergies around the WPS agenda. While stakeholders welcomed its catalytic nature, they also expressed the need for longer-term, sustained support and deeper engagement to maximize and maintain the outcomes of peacebuilding initiatives.

### Time Sensitivity

The evaluation confirmed that the project was well-timed and contextually relevant, both in terms of addressing ongoing conflict drivers and seizing a strategic window of opportunity to influence peace and governance processes in Sierra Leone. At the time of project design, several targeted districts were experiencing intercommunal tensions, political disputes, and electoral-related violence risks. The project addressed these through local dialogue mechanisms, the inclusion of women in peace structures, and early warning capacities. In terms of capitalizing on a strategic window of opportunity, the project was implemented in the lead-up to Sierra Leone's June 2023 general elections, a period marked by heightened political tensions, risk of electoral violence, and opportunities to influence political participation and civic awareness. The project leveraged this period to empower women candidates and aspirants, strengthen local peace infrastructure. The evaluation notes that while timing was appropriate, the project's relatively short duration limited its ability to deeply embed some of its more transformative elements, particularly around institutional change and post-election follow-up. Overall, the project was strategically timed and well-positioned to address key conflict dynamics related to exclusion, electoral risk, and local peace deficits.

### Risk Tolerance and Innovation

Evaluative evidence confirmed that the project operated in a moderate to high-risk environment, given the political sensitivities surrounding elections, gender equality, and peacebuilding in post-conflict Sierra Leone. While the project was not officially classified as "high risk" in all formal documents, several elements of its context and target outcomes carried inherent risks, especially around political tensions during the 2023 general elections and pushback against women's political participation. Despite these factors, the project implemented a series of risk mitigation and monitoring strategies that were generally appropriate and effective. Evaluative evidence confirmed that the project employed a relatively innovative approach, particularly in how it integrated localization, women-led peacebuilding, and policy advocacy. While individual components of the project (e.g., capacity building, awareness raising, policy engagement) were not entirely new in themselves, the combination, sequencing, and delivery mechanisms offered some innovative features that contributed to effectiveness and replicability. Overall, the evaluation notes that the project was innovative in how it localized and operationalized the WPS agenda using a women-led and community-anchored approach.

### Lessons Learnt

The localizing for change project yielded several strategic lessons that are critical for improving future programming in WPS in Sierra Leone. The lessons are presented below:

#### **Lesson 1: Localization requires deep contextual understanding.**

The project undertook several assessments of the socio-cultural norms, gender roles, and conflict histories to ensure the project activities are relevant to the target communities.

#### **Lesson 2. Localization Enhances Ownership and Sustainability**



Localizing the WPS agenda through grassroots women-led CSOs fostered greater local ownership, relevance, and sustainability of interventions, especially in post-conflict communities.

**Lesson 3: Localization of the WPS Agenda is Most Effective When Women's CSOs Lead Implementation.**

Empowering women-focused CSOs to lead advocacy and awareness creation at the community level ensures contextual relevance and strengthens local ownership.

**Lesson 4: Capacity Building is Foundational but Needs Continuity**

Capacity strengthening of women-focused CSOs improved organizational performance, advocacy skills, and engagement in peacebuilding. However, short-term training was not enough—ongoing mentorship and funding access are critical.

**Lesson 5: Strong Consortium Coordination Enhances Delivery**

Collaboration among UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision brought diverse strengths—technical, operational, and community-level reach. Regular coordination meetings and joint planning were essential to avoid duplication and ensure synergy.

**Lesson 6: Multi-stakeholder engagement is essential**

The localizing for change project involved a broader coalition of actors, men, women, youths, and traditional leaders in the design and implementation. This contributed to the success recorded by the project.

**Lesson 7: Institutional and Traditional Barriers Require Long-Term Engagement**

Despite progress, deep-rooted structural barriers such as patriarchal norms and weak policy implementation remained significant. Addressing these requires sustained investment beyond the project's lifecycle.

**Lesson 8: Women-Focused CSOs Still Face Resource Constraints**

While the women-focused CSOs gained skills and visibility, their access to national WPS platforms, funding and remains limited. Future initiatives should prioritize advocacy and linking the coalition at higher levels of governance.

**Lesson 9. Mentorship Strengthens Women's Political Participation Beyond Training.**

Pairing aspirants with experienced women leaders enhances confidence, networks, and campaign strategies.

**Lesson 10: The Separate engagement of implementing partners in a consortium makes coordination by the lead agency cumbersome.** The consortium partners were separately engaged by members of the consortium. It was difficult for UN Women, which is the lead agency, to effectively coordinate the activities of the implementing partners.

**Recommendations**

The evaluation has identified eight recommendations that are critical for UN Women, UNDP, WV, and PBF's contribution to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. They have been sequenced by their importance, as perceived by the evaluation team. The recommendations are based on the evaluation framework and the analysis that informed the findings and conclusions. They were validated by key stakeholders in an Exit Workshop carried out at the end of the field mission and also through the review of the evaluation report.

## Recommendations with the specification of action and timeframe

Specific Recommendations	Responsibility	Priority
<b>Programmatic recommendations:</b>		
1. <b>Institutionalize the training curricula for security actors by integrating it into police training academies to ensure long-term effectiveness and sustainability.</b> The project team should consider institutionalizing the training curricula for security actors developed under the project in a subsequent phase to promote their effectiveness and sustainability (Findings 28).	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Intermediate
2. <b>The consortium should consider developing and using more outcome-level indicators that reflect changes in relationships, attitudes, power dynamics, and institutional responsiveness.</b> Most of the outcome-level indicators were activity- or output-based. There were fewer indicators explicitly focused on capturing intermediate or long-term peacebuilding outcomes. Future project design should consider the Engagement of the M&E officer at the design stage of the project (Findings 9 &13).	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Intermediate
3. <b>The project should consider the joint engagement of implementation partners to foster seamless coordination by the lead agency.</b> The consortium members have separately engaged their CSOs for project implementation. Thus, implementing CSOs' allegiance was with their granting agency. This made the coordination of activities cumbersome for the lead agency (Findings 17)	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
4. <b>The Strengthen Consortium Approach:</b> We noted that while the partners of the consortium worked as a team and complemented each other, there was no evidence of a centralised consortium operation and systematised cooperation and coordination. During field data gathering, the UN Women representative struggles to mobilise implementing partners who received funding from UNDP and World Vision. A centralised and coordinated consortium, with consortium staff and a consortium partner with fiduciary responsibilities, could have reduced some of these challenges. We recommend that a future intervention consider a centralised and well-coordinated consortium (Findings 17)	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
5. <b>The consortium should consider sustaining post-election capacity building for women councillors and Parliamentarians.</b> This is necessary given that some of the elected councillors and parliamentarians are new, and many of them stressed the importance of the post-election capacity building during the mission for final evaluation for the localizing for change project(Findings 3 &29).	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
6. <b>Strengthen the CSO Coalition and reach expansion.</b> Noting the centrality of the CSO coalition as one of the major outputs and outcomes of the Localisation for Change project, findings indicate that the CSO coalition provides an important platform for civil society working in the WPS ecosystem to effectively coordinate and implement joint actions in support of women peace, and security. Coalition members unanimously indicate a willingness to expand in rural communities beyond their communities. It is there recommended that future UNPBF funding should provide dedicated support to coalition to expand its work across all sixteen districts, provide resources for the coalition to implement joined up interventions (Findings 40).	PBF/UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
7. <b>Timing:</b> The project was implemented before the 2023 elections and continued after the elections. While this timeline was good, elections are a five-year cycle in Sierra Leone. We noted that the project started too close to elections and some critical pre-election activities were not delivered. A future intervention should be timed such that it provides enough time for pre-elections interventions to support women political candidates and train	PBF/UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate

CSOs to prioritise WPS interventions before the elections. An electoral cycle approach is therefore recommended (Findings 44 &45)		
8. <b>Institutionalize Women-Focused CSOs within Local Governance Structures</b> To enhance the sustainability of the project's outcomes, it is essential to formally integrate women-focused Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) into existing local governance, peacebuilding, and development frameworks. This will involve establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between CSOs, the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs, local councils, traditional authorities, and security actors to ensure continued collaboration beyond the life of the project (Findings 25).	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
9. <b>Develop a Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Plan with Clear Ownership.</b> The project team should consider supporting the Coalition CSOs partners to develop a joint Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Plan that will identify potential local and international funding sources to support continued CSO activities.	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
10. <b>Consider having another phase of this project.</b> This is necessary to deepen impact and consolidate gains. While the project has made commendable progress in strengthening the capacity of women-focused CSOs and amplifying women's voices in peace and security processes, many of these changes are still in their early stages. A follow-up phase is necessary to consolidate these initial gains, ensure that behavioral and institutional shifts are sustained, and prevent a reversal of progress. Building lasting peace and inclusion requires longer-term engagement to shift deeply rooted social norms and power dynamics. Also, the project has likely identified best practices and models that have effectively enhanced women's participation and improved local peace outcomes. A new phase would allow these tested approaches to be replicated and scaled to other conflict-affected districts and communities that face similar challenges but were not covered in the current phase. (Findings 42, 43).	UN Women, UNDP	Immediate
11. <b>The consortium should consider strengthening project complementarity with other projects in the same districts.</b> While the project complemented work among different entities, there was no evidence of programmatic integration (e.g., joint planning, shared outcomes, or pooled funding) among the projects. Thus, complementarity with other programmes being implemented at the district level needs to be coordinated rather than happening by chance, as is the case in the project (Findings 30).		

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Vision (WV) commissioned a final project evaluation of an eighteen month project titled “Localizing for change: Positioning women’s Civil Society Organizations for effective implementation of the WPS agenda in *Sierra Leone* hereafter referred to as “localising for change project or the project”. With funding from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF) to the tune of USD 2 million, the project's initial design was to run from April 2023 to September 2024. However, following delays in the initial start-up, a six-month no-cost extension (NCE) was approved by the donor, bringing the project to a close in March 2025 (24 months). The project aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of women-focused Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to coordinate their effort in sustaining peace and enhancing the safety and security of women and girls in Sierra Leone. This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of the project.

### 1.1. Background and Context of the Evaluation

#### 1.1.1. Location and Demographic Characteristics

Sierra Leone is located on the West Coast of Africa between 7 and 10° N, and longitudes 10.5 and 13° W. The Republic of Guinea is to the north and northeast; Liberia is to the east and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west and south. It has 300 miles of coastline<sup>1</sup> and covers an area of 73,252 km, divided into a land area of 73,132 km<sup>2</sup> and water of 120 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup> The provisional 2021 Census result released by the Statistics Sierra Leone revealed that the country’s population stands at 7,541,641, with 3,716,263 males (49.3%) and 3,825,378 females (50.7%). There are 109,121 more women than men in Sierra Leone.<sup>3</sup> The demographic profile, reflecting an almost equal proportion of women and men in the total population, underscores the importance of promoting inclusive political participation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

#### 1.1.2. Human Rights Treaties and Gender Inequalities in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has made significant progress in peacebuilding and human rights promotion since the end of the country’s civil war in 2002. Five (2002, 2007, 2012, 2018, and 2023) post-war democratic elections have been conducted, with far-reaching gender empowerment legislations<sup>4</sup> and increased women's participation in political and public spaces.<sup>5</sup> The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) is a signatory to multiple human rights treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) ratified in 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also ratified in 1966, and the Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified in 1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (ratified in 1981), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified in 1993), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified 1990), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) ratified in 2003, and the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1325), domesticated in 2001 through the development of the Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SiLNAP) for Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP).

In addition to the ratification of these treaties, the Government of Sierra Leone has introduced some new legislation and policies to address gender challenges in the country. Some of these gender transformative legislations include Security and UNSCR 1820 on Sexual Violence, Sexual Offences Act (2012) and its Amendment (2019) and the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Act (2022), the Customary Land Rights Act (2022), Land commission Act and the review of the Political Parties Act (2022) and the Public Elections Act (2022) to accommodate the provisions of the GEWE Act. These instruments have played important roles in the progression of gender equality and the protection of the rights of women and girls, which was achieved by the integration of the instruments into Sierra Leone’s national actions. For instance, in the past decade, Sierra Leone has made significant strides in closing the gender gap, as evidenced

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.visitsierraleone.org/geography/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/sierra-leone/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.statistics.sl/census/>

<sup>4</sup> Such as the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act (GEWE) of 2022 and the three gender Act of 2007

<sup>5</sup> Women’s representation improved from around 12% in 2018 to 30% in 2023 . See for instance: <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2023-07/record-number-women-mps-elected-in-sierra-leone>



by the consistent increase in its Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) score and improved global ranking. The most notable improvement occurred in 2024, with the GGGI rising to 0.708, and its global ranking rose by 32 positions to 80th place (Table 1). This progress was attributed to the policy reforms, including:

1. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act (2022): This landmark legislation mandates that 30 percent of public and private positions be reserved for women, ensures equal pay for equal work, and provides for increased workplace training opportunities for women.
2. Public Elections Act (2022): Introduced district block proportional representation, resulting in a significant increase in women's representation in the National Parliament and Local Councils to 30.4 percent and 34 percent, respectively, in the 2023 general elections.<sup>6</sup>

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Policy was implemented with UN Women's support. This policy has led to effective gender-transformative programs in government ministries and the establishment of gender focal points and desks.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 1: Sierra Leone – Global Gender Gap Index (2015–2024)**

Year	Gender Gap Index	Global Ranking
2015	0.438	185th
2016	0.446	184th
2017	0.448	184th
2018	0.661	114th
2019	0.457	184th
2020	0.668	111th
2021	0.655	121st
2022	0.672	109th
2023	0.667	112th
2024	0.708	80th

Despite this policy and legislative advancement, implementation remains a challenge, particularly in rural areas where customary laws often override statutory provisions. More work needs to be done in Sierra Leone to achieve meaningful gender equality and inclusion. The country continues to grapple with significant gender disparities despite various legislative and policy interventions, with low women's political participation and representation, even though the government achieved it 30 percent quota in 2023 after the 2023 election.<sup>8</sup> While progress has been made in areas such as education and political representation, deep-rooted cultural norms and systemic barriers persist, hindering the full realization of gender equality.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.1.3. Socio-Economic Indicators and the Situation in Sierra Leone

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has also made significant progress in the last decades in improving the socio-economic situation of its citizenry. Under the Free Quality School Education Programme, school enrolment has increased by more than one million to date since 2018, covering all school levels, from pre-primary to senior secondary.<sup>10</sup> The maternal mortality rate has substantially fallen to 443 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2024, from 717 deaths in 2019 and 1,165 deaths in 2013. Infant mortality rate dropped from 92 deaths per 1,000 births in 2013 to 71.2 deaths in 2024<sup>11</sup>; as well as the under-five mortality rate, from 156 to 122 deaths during 2013-2019<sup>12</sup> and 100.8 deaths in 2024<sup>13</sup>. However, income poverty at current prices remains high. Approximately 32.7 percent of the population lived on less than US\$2.15 per person per day

<sup>66</sup> [https://open.unwomen.org/en/outcome-detail/XM-DAC-41146-SLE\\_D\\_1.5?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://open.unwomen.org/en/outcome-detail/XM-DAC-41146-SLE_D_1.5?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>7</sup> [https://open.unwomen.org/en/outcome-detail/XM-DAC-41146-SLE\\_D\\_1.6?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://open.unwomen.org/en/outcome-detail/XM-DAC-41146-SLE_D_1.6?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.statistics.sl/images/StatisticsSL/Documents/Census/MTPHC\\_Preliminary\\_Report/Final\\_Preliminary\\_Report\\_2021\\_MTPHC.pdf](https://www.statistics.sl/images/StatisticsSL/Documents/Census/MTPHC_Preliminary_Report/Final_Preliminary_Report_2021_MTPHC.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://thegenderhub.com/publications/country-briefing-sierra-leone/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://thegenderhub.com/publications/country-briefing-sierra-leone/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>10</sup> [https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/country-profile/Sierra%20Leone\\_SDG4-Profile.pdf](https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/country-profile/Sierra%20Leone_SDG4-Profile.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.globaldata.com/data-insights/macroeconomic/the-infant-mortality-rate-in-sierra-leone-218194/>

<sup>12</sup> Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024 – 2030: Transformative Acceleration Agenda for Food Security, Human Capital Development and Job Creation

<sup>13</sup> <https://data.unicef.org/country/sle/>

(2017 PPP) in 2024.<sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> In addition, female-headed households are less likely to be multi-dimensional poor than male-headed households, while those households with secondary or higher education are far less likely to be poor.<sup>16</sup> The multi-dimensional poorest districts in 2019 were Pujehun (0.500), Karene (0.473), Falaba (0.448), Moyamba (0.433), Tonkolili (0.418), and Bonthe (0.406), which have MPIs above the national average of 0.309.<sup>17</sup> While labour force participation has dropped for both men and women, the gender gap has widened in the past two decades, increasing from nearly zero percent in 2003 to almost 0.8 percent in 2023. Nearly half of women aged 15+ are currently out of the labour force in Sierra Leone as opposed to nearly 44 percent of men in the same age group.<sup>18</sup> Sierra Leone has shown a minor improvement in the Human Development Index (HDI) with an increase of 0.02 between 2015 -2022. Sierra Leone's HDI value for 2021 and 2022 was 0.477 and 0.458, respectively, which puts the country in the low human development category and keeps it 181<sup>st</sup> and 184<sup>th</sup> out of 195 countries and territories, respectively.

#### 1.1.4. Gender Based Violence in Sierra Leone

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Sierra Leone remains a significant public health, human rights, and development issue. Despite progressive policies and legal reforms, the prevalence of GBV, including domestic abuse, sexual assault, child marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), continues to hinder women's rights and social equity. Evidence shows that 62 percent of women in Sierra Leone aged 15–49 have experienced physical or sexual violence<sup>19</sup>, with 61 percent reporting spousal violence.<sup>20</sup> Female genital mutilation (FGM) remains widespread, with a prevalence of approximately 83 percent among women aged 15–49<sup>21</sup>.

The incidence of intimate partner violence increased between 2013 and 2019. The share of respondents who reported having experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months increased from 28.6 percent in 2013 to 39.8 percent in 2019.<sup>22</sup> The share of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime increased from 45 to 51.7 percent. In 2019, there was a significant percentage of women who encountered physical (38.2 percent), sexual (6.2 percent), or emotional (38.2 percent) violence in the last 12 months<sup>23</sup>. Evidence reveals that 49 percent of women and 31 percent of men believed that a husband is justified in beating his wife under at least one of five specified circumstances—if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses sexual intercourse.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, about 40 percent of women and 24 percent of men believe that a man is justified in beating his wife if she goes out without him, and 19 percent of women and 9 percent of men agreed that spousal violence is justified if a wife refuses sexual intercourse.<sup>25</sup> However, the reporting rates for GBV have remained low, as it is often viewed as a private issue. Of those who experienced physical or sexual violence by their husband or partner, about 79 percent reached out for help within their own family, but less than 14 percent sought help from the police.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>14</sup> <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f2fc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-sle.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> African Development Bank (2024). Country Focus Report (Sierra Leone): Driving Sierra Leone Transformation. The Reform of the Global Financial Architecture

<sup>16</sup> Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024 – 2030: Transformative Acceleration Agenda for Food Security, Human Capital Development and Job Creation

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2024/322/article-A006-en.xml#:~:text=Nearly%20half%20of%20women%20aged%2015+,%20are,%20of%20men%20in%20the%20same%20age%20group.>

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Sierra Leone Stats SL and ICF. Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey 2019. Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Stats SL and ICF Macro; 2020 October. 329-342

<sup>20</sup> World Bank. (2024). Breaking the cycle: Ending gender-based violence and empowering women in Sierra Leone. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/african/breaking-cycle-ending-gender-based-violence-and-empowering-women-sierra-leone>

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Sierra Leone Stats SL and ICF. Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey 2019. Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Stats SL and ICF Macro; 2020 October. 329-342

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

On the other hand, Sierra Leone made significant progress in addressing the pervasive challenge of child marriage with the enactment of the law on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act in 2024. In 2025, Sierra Leone had one of the highest rates of child marriage globally, with about 30 percent of girls married before the age of 18 and 9 percent before the age of 15.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the government launched a series of campaigns, including the “Let Girls Be Girls, Not Mothers” campaign between 2023 and 2015 and the National Strategy for the reduction of Teenage Pregnancy (2028-2022), which aimed to promote legal reforms, adolescent health services, and community-based awareness to reduce both teenage pregnancy and child marriage.<sup>28</sup> Other legal reforms include the signing into law of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. This law sets the minimum legal age of marriage at 18 without exceptions, aligning all laws and closing loopholes<sup>29</sup>. It criminalizes marriage to anyone under 18, with a minimum sentence of 15 years’ imprisonment and/or substantial fines, including for parents, religious leaders, and others who facilitate such unions.<sup>30</sup> Despite the new law, deep-rooted practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) affecting 83 percent of women aged 15–49 remain prevalent and legal in Sierra Leone.<sup>31</sup>

#### 1.1.5. Women's Participation in Politics and Leadership in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has a long history of women’s participation in politics, beginning in 1938 when Constance Cummings-John became the first woman elected to the Freetown Council and later served as the city mayor.<sup>32</sup> The Sierra Leone Women’s Movement (SLWM), established in 1951, was at the forefront of promoting women’s rights before independence. After independence between 1991 -2002, the glamour for gender inclusivity in governance gained prominence, with organizations such as the 50/50 Group, established in 2000, playing important roles in advocating for gender parity in political leadership. Their effort yielded more fruit by increasing the number of women elected to parliament between 1996 and 2002<sup>33</sup>. However, the turning point for support for gender inclusivity in Sierra Leone came with the signing into law of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Act in November 2022. This law mandates a minimum 30 percent quota for women in parliament, cabinet, and other public appointments. The Act also stipulates equal pay for equal work, extends maternity leave to 14 weeks, and promotes women’s access to finance.<sup>34</sup>

The 2023 general elections provided the first test of the GEWE Act. Women secured 41 out of 135 directly elected seats in Parliament, increasing female representation from 14.5 percent in 2018 to 30.4 percent in 2023<sup>35</sup>. In local government, women occupied 34 percent of elected positions, with some councils exceeding the quota.<sup>36</sup> Despite these achievements, there remains the need for sustained commitment to increase women’s participation in governance, support newly elected women who are leaders and decision-makers to perform their functions as duty-bearers, and ensure this participation reaches local governing structures where participation remains minimal.

#### 1.1.6. Women’s Participation in Peace and Security Processes in Sierra Leone

Women have played a critical role in harnessing peace during the 11-year war from 1991 to 2002. They contributed to bringing democratic rule to the country and the restoration of peace. In 1995, the Sierra

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/sierra-leone/>

<sup>28</sup> Government of Sierra Leone. National Strategy for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy and Ending Child Marriage 2018–2022, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Equality Now. “Understanding the New Law Against Child Marriage in Sierra Leone.” Equality Now, July 2024. [https://equalitynow.org/news\\_and\\_insights/understanding-the-new-law-against-child-marriage-in-sierra-leone](https://equalitynow.org/news_and_insights/understanding-the-new-law-against-child-marriage-in-sierra-leone)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> The Guardian. “Sierra Leone Has Banned Child Marriage. To Truly Set Women Free, It Must End FGM.” *The Guardian*, July 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/article/2024/jul/05/sierra-leone-has-banned-child-marriage-to-truly-set-women-free-it-must-end-fgm>

<sup>32</sup> Wikipedia. “Constance Cummings-John.” Accessed May 2025. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constance\\_Cummings-John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constance_Cummings-John)

<sup>33</sup> National Democratic Institute (NDI). “50/50 Group of Sierra Leone: Electing and Empowering Women.” <https://www.ndi.org/our-stories/5050-group-sierra-leone-electing-and-empowering-women>

<sup>34</sup> Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). “Advancing Women's Political Inclusion in Sierra Leone Ahead of the 2023 Elections.” <https://www.wfd.org/story/advancing-womens-political-inclusion-sierra-leone-ahead-june-2023-general-elections>

<sup>35</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). “Record Number of Women MPs Elected in Sierra Leone.” <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2023-07/record-number-women-mps-elected-in-sierra-leone>

<sup>36</sup> Awoko Newspaper. “UN Women Highlights Sierra Leone’s Progress and Challenges in Women’s Participation in the 2023 Elections.” <https://awokonewspaper.sl/un-women-highlights-sierra-leones-progress-and-challenges-in-womens-participation-in-the-2023-elections>

Leone Women's Movement for Peace, in collaboration with other women's groups, galvanized support for democracy through the Bintumani one and two, calling for elections before peace and negotiating with rebel leaders.<sup>37</sup> The consultations contributed to the conduct of four successful general elections (2002, 2007, 2012, and 2018). Their active involvement through the Elections Situation Room (ESR) in the 2012 and 2018 elections as a crucial conflict prevention and conflict resolution mechanism has reinforced the pivotal role that women play in peacebuilding. They mobilize women and youth organizations to develop strategies and respond to election-related issues. They worked with law enforcement agencies and the electoral management bodies to enhance participation in elections and support a peaceful environment. They mobilize women and showcase their ability to promote preventive measures to ensure that the elections take place in a manner that fosters inclusion and participation. They have also been very vocal in promoting women's participation in public life by mobilizing women to vote and be voted for, monitoring elections, promoting reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence. Sierra Leone has demonstrated sustained commitment to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, being the 4th country in West Africa, 7th in Africa, and 17th globally for the implementation of the UNSCR, particularly since adopting its first National Action Plan (SiLNAP I) in 2010. From 2015 onwards, the country has advanced in integrating gender perspectives into peacebuilding, post-conflict recovery, and governance. These efforts align with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its successor resolutions, which emphasize women's participation in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacekeeping, and post-conflict governance reforms.

The second Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SiLNAP II, 2019–2023) prioritized six pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, participation, promotion of a peace culture, and coordination. It aimed to increase women's involvement in peacebuilding, enhance access to justice, and improve protection mechanisms for women and girls in conflict settings. In October 2024, Sierra Leone launched SiLNAP III, reinforcing its alignment with regional commitments such as the ECOWAS Plan of Action on UNSCR 1325 and the African Union Agenda 2063

Civil society actors have played a pivotal role in peacebuilding. The CSO Coalition for Women, Peace and Security, formed in 2023, brings together over 120 women-focused organizations advocating for inclusive peace processes and legal reforms.<sup>38</sup> The coalition actively engaged in post-election peace dialogue, capacity-building of members, and pushed for the implementation of SiLNAP and the GEWE Act at the local levels. Another key initiative was the establishment of the Election Situation Room in 2023 by a group of “Eminent Women Peace Mediators,” supported by UNDP and the UN Peacebuilding Fund. The platform provided early warning and response mechanisms to mitigate electoral violence and ensure women's safety during elections.<sup>39,40</sup> In the security sector, efforts to improve women's representation in the security sector have yielded measurable gains. As of 2023, women constituted nearly 25 percent of the Sierra Leone Police Force, up from 18 percent in 2015.<sup>41</sup> In the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), the proportion of female personnel grew from 6 percent in 2018 to 12 percent in 2022, supported by assessments under the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) project.<sup>42</sup> Training and mentorship programs have also improved the visibility and effectiveness of female officers in peacekeeping operations.

The justice sector has undergone reforms to align with the WPS agenda. Amendments to the Sexual Offences Act and the passage of the Cybercrime Act in 2021 have created safer environments for women

<sup>37</sup> Accord : An International Review of Peace Initiatives: Women Building Peace [https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Women\\_building\\_peace\\_Accord\\_Insight\\_1.pdf](https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Women_building_peace_Accord_Insight_1.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> UNDP Sierra Leone (2023). *Eminent Women Sierra Leone launches Election Situation Room ahead of 2023 general elections*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/sierra-leone/news/eminant-women-sierra-leone-launches-election-situation-room-ahead-2023-general-elections>

<sup>40</sup> UNDP Sierra Leone (2023). *Eminent Women Sierra Leone launches Election Situation Room ahead of 2023 general elections*. Retrieved from <https://www.undp.org/sierra-leone/news/eminant-women-sierra-leone-launches-election-situation-room-ahead-2023-general-elections>

<sup>41</sup> United Nations in Sierra Leone (2023). *UN to collaborate with the Sierra Leone Police to attain 30% women's participation in peacekeeping deployment*. Retrieved from <https://sierraleone.un.org/en/240595-un-collaborate-sierra-leone-police-attain-30-women%E2%80%99s-participation-peacekeeping-deployment>

<sup>42</sup> United Nations in Sierra Leone (2022). *UN Women-supported Sierra Leone Armed Forces report on measuring opportunities for women in peacekeeping launched*. Retrieved from <https://sierraleone.un.org/en/209706-un-women-supported-sierra-leone-armed-forces-report-measuring-opportunities-women>



and girls, both physically and digitally<sup>43</sup>. Additionally, access to justice has improved through mobile complaint handling mechanisms, paralegal services, and expanded legal aid. In 2023 alone, over 1,000 women accessed legal remedies through community-based justice interventions<sup>44</sup>. Despite these achievements, challenges persist. Women continue to face structural and societal barriers, including patriarchal norms, limited financial support, and tokenism in peace processes. The UN Women Sierra Leone, UNDP, and WV jointly implemented the localising for change project to address the above-identified challenges to women's inclusive political participation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

## 1.2. Description of the Programme

UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision were awarded funding from UNPBF to implement in Sierra Leone a joint project "PBF/IRF-504: Localizing for change: Positioning women's Civil Society Organizations for effective implementation of the WPS agenda as part of the PBF's global competitive gender and youth promotion initiative call in 2022. As stated previously, the project's initial design was to run from April 2023 to September 2024 (18 months), but it received a six-month no-cost extension to enable the project team to complete outstanding project activities, bringing the project to a close in March 2025, making the implementation 24 months. However, it is important to state that the changes in the implementation plan did not have any implications on the evaluability of the project. The project was implemented across 6 project districts with a budget value of USD 2 million. The project aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of women-focused CSOs to coordinate their effort in sustaining peace and enhancing the safety and security of women and girls in Sierra Leone.

The project brought together core CSOs/women-focused organisations with requisite skills and experiences already working on peacebuilding and governance to form a strong coalition with a shared vision for sustainable peace and inclusion before, during, and after the 2023 general elections. 120 women-focused CSO coalition was established and formally launched by the Honorable Minister of Gender and Children Affairs and endorsed the coalition leadership, informed by mapping and capacity assessment of women focused, and women owned CSOs working on WPS across the project six districts (Bombali, Karene, Kono, Pujehun, Western Area Urban and Western Area Rural).

The established 120 women-focused CSOs coalition was strengthened to serve as a vehicle for joint planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting on a robust and coordinated approach, aligned with the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. It promoted division of labour and specialisation within the coalition to ensure that members' competitive advantages are recognized and utilized/maximized to achieve effective, efficient, and coherent outcomes and impact. The collaboration enhanced advocacy, influenced policy and mobilized voices, and pooled funds and efforts for the prevention of conflict and improved women's participation in politics. It discouraged working in silos as bridges were created between national and sub-national CSOs and groups to ensure mentorship and coaching for cross learning among CSOs and inter-generational exchanges between the older and younger generations. Tailor-made capacity building was conducted on relevant themes. The project documented and shared lessons learned to contribute to the national, regional, and global body of knowledge and possible replication. Forged partnerships with relevant government and non-governmental organizations/partners ranging from policy makers, the executive, the security sectors, formal and informal institutions, including traditional, religious, as well as men's, youth organizations, and marginalized groups.

This joint project was implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs of the Government of Sierra Leone, Women-focused CSOs working on WPS interventions. The project contributed to the Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development, Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SiLNAP) II for the Full Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) (2019-2023), the CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and supports the implementation of the UNSDCF cycle 2020-2024 under the framework of the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. The project outcomes and contributing outputs, and activities are listed below:

**Outcome 1: The Women-focused CSOs Coalition is coordinated and has the requisite capacity to promote women's participation in peacebuilding and elections in Sierra Leone.**

<sup>43</sup> Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations (2024). *Cybercrime Act and WPS Statement*. Retrieved from <https://www.slmissionun.gov.sl/>

<sup>44</sup> UNDP Rule of Law and Human Rights Annual Report (2023). *Sierra Leone Country Report*. Retrieved from <https://rolhr.undp.org/annualreport/2023/africa/sierra-leone.html>

	Output 1.1: Coalition of Women-focused CSOs working on conflict prevention/mitigation and meaningful participation of women established and functional.
	Output 1.2: Technical capacity of Women-focused CSOs coalition on a range of normative frameworks, messaging, advocacy, ICT, and other requisite knowledge and skills enhanced.
	Output 1.3: Women-focused CSOs coalition's ability to develop quality proposals for joint programs and sustainability is enhanced.
<b>Outcome 2: Coalition of Women-focused CSOs able to initiate and lead conflict prevention, mitigation, and promote women's participation in a coherent manner before, during, and after the 2023 elections.</b>	
	Output 2.1: The Capacity of the Coalition of women-focused CSOs to jointly plan, design, and carry out coherent advocacy messages to relevant partners and stakeholders before the 2023 elections is enhanced.
	Output 2.2: Coalition CSO members mobilize support for female candidates, aspirants and create enabling platforms for women's meaningful participation and protection during the 2023 elections, enhanced.
	Output 2.3. The Coalition CSO members' ability to initiate reconciliation, provide counseling and psychosocial support, and access to justice for aspirants, affected women, and girls after the 2023 elections was enhanced.

The project implementation strategy is underpinned by a twin-track approach to enable it to achieve its goal by strengthening the coalition on one hand and supporting and driving the expected change on the other hand. The Programme Theory of Change (ToC) is discussed in section 2.3 below. The primary stakeholders of the project are the 50/50 Group SL, Women's Forum for Human Rights and Democracy (WOFHRAD), WANEP-SL, Media Matters for Women, Mission for Salone Inter Religious Council, Women's Forum SL, and Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL) as well as the 120 women focused CSOs coalition. The specific activities of the stakeholders are shown in Annex 1.

## 2.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE FINAL EVALUATION

The main purpose of the final project evaluation is to assess the results of the project interventions and, to the extent, the PBF support has been effective in contributing to women's leadership and participation in peace and security in Sierra Leone. The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- ✚ Assess the relevance of the project, implementation strategies, and processes applied in the joint program to address women's issues and interests at the country level as well as the PBF's added value for national efforts to consolidate the overall peacebuilding processes.
- ✚ Assess the organizational efficiency (status of the results/performances) of funds users (human, financial, and time cost) of the joint project in terms of peacebuilding priorities for Sierra Leone at the end of the funding.
- ✚ Assess efficiency progress towards achieving project objectives, including identifying any catalytic or potentially catalytic results and the PBF strategic positioning at the country level.
- ✚ Assess the effectiveness of the project on achieving outcomes of the national action plans on women, peace, and security, SILNAP 2 & 3, with key stakeholders, including women-focused CSOs, media, and female parliamentarians.
- ✚ Assess the sustainability of the projects' results in contributing to transformational change for gender equality and women's empowerment, the impact, and ownership of the results.
- ✚ Assess the adherence to the Gender and human rights aspect in the project implementation.

### 2.0. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation covered the implementation period from April 2023 to March 2025 (24 months). The evaluation focused on assessing the project's progress against its intended results and indicators, its contribution to specific themes such as peacebuilding, prevention of gender-based violence, and pre- and post-election violence, women's participation in leadership positions, and gender equality policy reforms. The evaluation covered the two outcomes of the project and their 5 outcome level indicators as well as 17 output level indicators. The final evaluation also covered all the project locations, and that is the 6 districts targeted by the intervention (Western Area Urban, Western Area Rural, Pujehun, Kono, Karene, Bombali).

## **2.1. Stakeholders of the Evaluation**

A stakeholder analysis using the UNEG Matrix was developed and applied (Annex 1). The analysis indicated that there were three main levels of stakeholders. At the first level are the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). These first-level stakeholders were involved in the joint evaluation of the project. The Evaluation Management Group (EMG) is UN Women personnel responsible for the management of the evaluation. This group includes Regional Evaluation Specialist UN Women, Regional M&E Analyst, M&E officer Sierra Leone, WPS/HS Program Specialist, Head of Office or WPP Programme Specialist (OiC) UNW Sierra Leone. The Evaluation Reference Group is the project's key stakeholders providing direct oversight, safeguarding independence, and giving technical input throughout the evaluation. Overall, they are expected to provide an oversight function in the validation of the inception report by reviewing the draft report and participating in the validation workshop. They are also expected to contribute to the finalization of the draft report. In the second level are stakeholders at the national level, such as the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs, and the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC). This category represents national institutions and ministries that participated in the project.

The third level includes women-led CSOs that participated in the implementation of the project. They include the 50/50 Group SL, Women's Forum for Human Rights and Democracy (WOFHRAD), WANEP-SL, Media Matters for Women, Mission for Salone Inter Religious Council, Women's Forum SL, and Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL). The last categories are the project beneficiaries at the district level, which include the 120 women-focused CSOs in Western Area Urban, Western Area Rural, Pujehun, Kono, Karene, and Bombali. This list of stakeholders helped to identify key informants with whom in-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted during the evaluation. The project team provided a self-assessment of the project performance, challenges, and lessons learned. They are also expected to provide logistical support to the evaluation team by mobilizing the project beneficiaries at the district level. The implementing partners, on the other hand, supported the mobilization of the project beneficiaries for interviews while also providing information on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project benefits at the community level. The project beneficiaries provided the needed information on the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project benefits at the community level.

## **2.2. Users of the Evaluation**

The primary users of the evaluation are the consortium members (UN Women, UNDP, and WV), the Government of Sierra Leone, implementing partners, 120 CSO coalition working on the WPS agenda, the community, as well as PBF. This evaluation should inform the implementation of the Government's Strategic Plan, new strategic documents such as the new United Nations Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF), and future programming actions of UN Women and UNDP, including joint programming actions. The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the UN to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of inclusive political participation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. Ultimately, the results of the evaluation will be publicly accessible through the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) system for global learning and the PBF website.

## **2.3. Existing Data Availability**

The evaluation team reviewed the project documents shared with them by the project team using the content analysis method. This is necessary to understand the theory of change and provide a robust analysis of the results framework. Three progress reports were shared with the evaluation team. They include the PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, updated April 2024, and the PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, updated November 2024 and June 2025. Others are Mid-year PBF brief Reporting, and the final PBF proposal document. A review of the documents shared indicates that they are generally good and provide clear directions for the project's focus, design, and activities implemented. More importantly, it shows progress and results achieved in the Result Framework of the project. Also, all the progress reports show a disaggregation of data by sex, geographical location, and disability status of participants. The evaluation will sustain the disaggregation of data following the example from the project progress report.

## 2.4. Theory of Change

The review of the project documents, especially the final PBF proposal document, indicates that the project is anchored on a Theory of Change (ToC). This final evaluation was assessed against the main evaluation questions. The ToC states:

*If (1) A Coalition of Women-focused organizations and networks working on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and participation of women is formed; and If (2) The Coalition and its members are capacitated to drive a coherent and an inclusive implementation strategy on conflict prevention and participation of women and girls before, during and after the elections across national and sub-national levels in Sierra Leone; Then (3) more women and girls, as individuals and organizations, will participate meaningful and make sustainable contribution to peacebuilding and elections.*<sup>45</sup>

The assessment of the ToC underpinning the localization for change project reveals that the ToC is broadly logical, aligning with the global and national framework for implementing the WPS Agenda. It shows a plausible, clear, and logical flow to describe how the project strategy intends to contribute to the desired changes at the outcome and impact level without any knowledge gap. The ToC reflects UN Women's focus on localization and women's agency in peacebuilding. However, there was little or no evidence to show that the ToC was based on knowledge and lessons learned from credible sources, as no reference was made to any empirical or normative frameworks. Additionally, the ToC tends to oversimplify the complexity of local political and traditional power dynamics. It assumes that once CSOs are capacitated, they will be able to effectively influence local decision-making structures, but it does not sufficiently account for resistance from patriarchal institutions or local power brokers. Also, the assumptions and risks most relevant to whether the change will be realized were not specified in the ToC. Undoubtedly, the ToC provides a useful framework to guide the project implementation, but it requires a stronger integration of contextual risks and stated assumptions. It should engage with traditional power structures and incorporate regular validation of stated assumptions to ensure that the ToC remains valid and relevant throughout implementation. This largely resulted in the limited M&E support during the design phase of the project, and M&E recruitment after the 1<sup>st</sup> year of implementation.

## 3.0. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### Results-Based Management (RBM) Approach: Theory of Change

The localizing for change project was evaluated using the Results-Based Management (RBM)<sup>46</sup> - Theory of Change Approach. The project documents, as listed previously, were content analysed. These were complemented with information from other sources such as key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions. This provided a clear understanding of the project ToC, and evidence from the review was used to derive information for assessing the Theory of Change (ToC). The evidence from the review also promotes a clear understanding of the project logic, inputs, and outputs, as well as planned and expected outcomes. This understanding of the ToC guided the design of detailed evaluation questions, guiding the development of related methods and protocols.

### 3.1. Evaluation criteria elaboration of key questions

The evaluation applied the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Sustainability, Impact, Gender Equality, and Human Rights (GEHR). In line with the donor requirements, the following additional PBF-specific evaluation criteria were also assessed by the evaluation: catalytic, time-sensitivity, localization, risk tolerance, and innovation. This will be used as the main analytical framework in line with the UN Women evaluation policy.<sup>47</sup>

The evaluation questions were further expanded in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2) to indicate key questions, indicators to measure progress, data sources, and methods of collection, as well as the basic assumptions. The entire evaluation process mainstreamed gender and inequality concerns in line with the UN Women's gender-responsive evaluation Policy<sup>48</sup>. All data collected were gender-disaggregated by sex, age, district, and disability status of the participants. The evaluation process adopted the UNEG Norms and Standards and

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<sup>45</sup> PBF Final Project Proposal

<sup>46</sup> <https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Africa/Attachments/Publications/2020/8%20Results%20Based%20Management%20June%202020.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/gender%20evaluation/handbook/evaluationhandbook-web-final-0apr2015.pdf?la=en&vs=4246>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid



UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations.<sup>49</sup> The process followed the UN Women Evaluation Policy and the Ethical Guidelines for evaluations in the UN system. The final evaluation report was developed following the UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS). The evaluation team took steps to ensure the inclusion of a full range of appropriate stakeholder groups identified through the stakeholder analysis and used a variety of data collection tools to avoid potential biases that may arise in the selection of methods and stakeholders of the evaluation. To facilitate more transparent and participatory processes, enabling more equitable gender-balanced contributions by all stakeholders, and to facilitate capacity building of all stakeholders to contribute freely, the evaluation team addressed issues of transparency, independence, evaluation ethics, and confidentiality issues, including sensitivity to language use during the data collection process.

For transparency, the evaluation report described the sources of information used (documentation, respondents, literature, etc.) in sufficient detail so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed by stakeholders. Also, complete lists of interviewees and documents consulted were included in the Annex to the extent that this does not conflict with the privacy and confidentiality of participants. For reliability, the evaluation cross-validated and critically assessed the information sources used and the validity of the data using a variety of methods and sources of information. For independence, the evaluators exhibited a high level of independence during the evaluation process, and possible conflicts of interest were addressed openly and honestly. Relevant critical measures taken during the data collection include gathering stakeholders in separate groups where they can express themselves freely through the creation of safe spaces. The evaluation team also visited stakeholders in their localities and used appropriate cultural approaches and local languages to facilitate easy access and increased participation.

### 3.2. Methodological Approach

The final evaluation of the localizing for change project will serve two main purposes: formative and summative. This implies that it will inform UN Women, UNDP, and WV's future programming in inclusive political participation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, as well as determining the extent to which the localizing for change project achieved its planned goals and objectives. Consequently, the evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach relying heavily on both quantitative and qualitative research methods and a desk review of project documents. Primary and secondary sources of data were utilized to inform the findings of the evaluation. This mix of methods allowed for information to be triangulated across different sources of evidence. Thus, a mixed methodological approach to data collection was used, including document analysis, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and questionnaire administration. The key informants, focus group discussants, and the respondents for the questionnaire administration include the Coalition of 120 women-focused CSOs working on conflict prevention/mitigation.

Other key informants include the project team from UN Women, UNDP, and WV, government partners, women candidates, aspirants, elected and the implementing partners. The information is expected to consist of both individual and institutional responses to the questions of the evaluation. This mixed approach ensured that the collection of different types of data from different stakeholders would enrich data quality and result in a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the project. The approach also ensured that the evaluation is utilization-focused, gender-responsive, and explicitly integrates human rights-based approaches to data management.

The evaluation utilized gender-sensitive participatory methods to capture relevant case studies. As noted previously, data were disaggregated by age, sex, district, and disability status of participants. This helped to present the differential impact of the project on different categories of stakeholders. The use of different tools for data collection also enhanced the triangulation of evidence collected from different sources, thus enhancing the reliability and validity of the data collected. The methodology was process- and outcome-based, and the evaluation team employed triangulation in data analysis procedures.

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[https://www.unevaluation.org/sites/default/files/file\\_uploads/2024%20UNEG%20Guidance%20on%20Integrating%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Evaluations%20-%20Final.pdf](https://www.unevaluation.org/sites/default/files/file_uploads/2024%20UNEG%20Guidance%20on%20Integrating%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Evaluations%20-%20Final.pdf)

### 3.3. Secondary Data Collection

A desk review of all relevant documentation on the project was carried out. The documents have been shared by the project team. The review processing was ongoing throughout the evaluation process. As stated in section 2.3, two progress reports were shared with the evaluation team. They include the PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, updated April 2024, and the PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, updated November 2024. Others are Mid-year PBF brief Reporting, and the final PBF proposal document. The document reviews were done in line with the key evaluation questions and the listed indicators in the project Result Framework using the content analysis method. This provided useful background information to the evaluation team in understanding the project and assessing the extent of project activity implementation. The information was also used to verify and validate (triangulate) the data that was obtained from other tools. The review, therefore, helped to provide evidence to meet some of the log frame indicators and the evaluation questions. As stated earlier, the desk review was used at inception, during data collection, and at the triangulation stage. Its advantage is that it is inexpensive, and data is relatively fast and easy to obtain because of the project's rich literature and reports.

### 3.4. Primary Data Collection

Considering the mixed-methods research design adopted as described in 3.1 above, the collection of data, therefore, involved the use of qualitative and quantitative tools. The quantitative tools involved the use of a questionnaire targeting the 120 women-focused CSOs across the districts, while the qualitative tools involved the use of key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussion (FGD) guides. The evaluation team developed different tools for different categories of stakeholders, depending on their roles in the design and implementation of the project. The data collected using these different sets of tools covered all the evaluation questions raised across the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, and sustainability, in addition to gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion from the donor and UN Women perspectives. The combination of key informant interview guides, questionnaire, and focus group discussion guides is useful for this evaluation as it helped to generate both qualitative and quantitative data that facilitated the triangulation of data. The focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) provided qualitative data that are relevant in increasing the depth of issues relevant to the evaluation questions raised in the ToR. It also enabled the evaluation team to have a deeper understanding of the context of the evaluation. In addition, FGDs are preferred because they are very useful in obtaining detailed information about individual and group feelings, perceptions, and opinions, while group interactions have the advantage of bringing out nuances of stakeholder dynamics. Also, it allows the evaluation team to obtain information in the participants' language while at the same time allowing the evaluation team to interact with the participants, which allows for follow-up questions. The questionnaire helped to generate quantitative data used for triangulation with the qualitative data, as well as meeting some outcome-level indicators.

### 3.5. Sampling Strategy and Data Collection

As stated previously, the evaluation utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. The sample size for the quantitative data collection covered the 120 women-focused CSOs who are the direct beneficiaries of the project, and they were selected using a cluster sampling approach. This covered all 6 Districts (Western Area Urban, Western Area Rural, Pujehun, Kono, Karene, Bombali) targeted by the intervention. In each of the districts, members of the coalition were gathered in a safe location for questionnaire administration. In this approach, all coalition members present during the questionnaire administration were selected using the census sampling approach. For the KII and FGDs, purposive sampling was utilized to choose specific individuals depending on their involvement. Purposive sampling involves the intentional selection of information-rich individuals or cases who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest.<sup>50</sup> This method allowed the evaluation team to focus on key informants, such as beneficiaries, project staff, and community leaders who can provide deep insights into the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of a project.

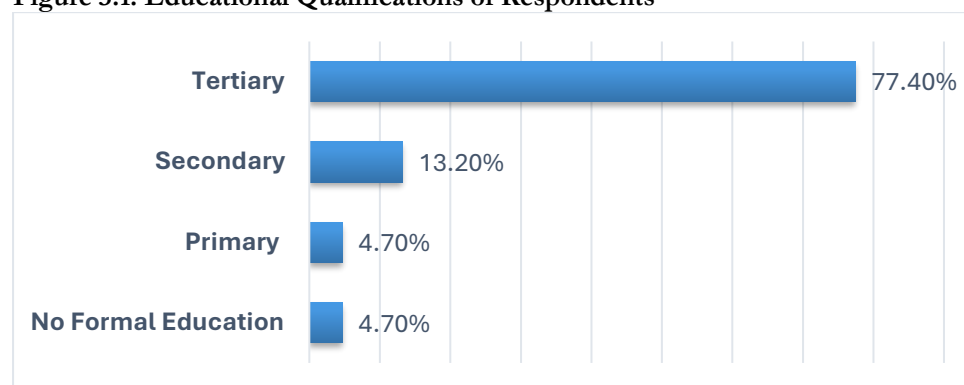
The use of purposive sampling for the selection of the participants for FGDs and KIIs ensured that all categories of stakeholders were included in the data collection process. Using the stakeholder analysis matrix that defined the roles and nature of participation of stakeholders in various interventions, the evaluation

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<sup>50</sup> UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation (2015)

team purposively selected key stakeholders across the districts for data collection. This approach provided the needed representation of all the stakeholders covered by the intervention as well as guaranteed the needed reliability, validity, and generalizability of the findings derived from the data collected. In each District, 2 FGDs were conducted by the evaluation team. In all, a total of 12 FGDs were conducted across the 6 districts visited. Tables 2 and 3 in Annex 3 show the disaggregation of data collection at the national and district levels, respectively. In all, a total of 17 and 25 KIIs were conducted at the national and district levels, respectively. Also, 12 FGDs were conducted while 106 questionnaires were administered out of the targeted 120 Coalition members, which represents 88.3 percent response rate. Findings show that the majority (65.1%) of the respondents to the questionnaire were females, while the majority (56.6%) are within the age bracket of 30-49 years. Also, about 77.4 percent of the respondents had a tertiary educational qualification, while only 4.7 percent of the respondents had no formal education (Figure 3.1). By category of respondents, evidence from the analysis of the quantitative data shows that 74.5 percent, 10.4 percent, and 7.5 percent of the respondents were made up of Coalition members, parliamentarians/Local Councillors, youths/young women, respectively.

**Figure 3.1: Educational Qualifications of Respondents**



**Figure 3.2: Categories of Respondents**



### 3.6. Gender and Human Rights

The evaluation also assessed the extent gender and human rights considerations were integrated in the design and implementation of the project. On the part of the evaluation team, mainstreaming gender and human rights was taken into consideration in this evaluation, which involved including women and men marginalized and/or discriminated against in the evaluation process. The Integration of human rights and gender equality issues into the evaluation requires adherence to three main principles – inclusion, participation, and fair power relations. Applying these principles to the evaluation process, the evaluation team carried out inclusive stakeholder mapping, used a power analysis tool to understand who holds decision-making power or who is marginalised, and used co-creation approaches to shape the evaluation questions through feedback from EMG and ERG. The evaluation team also used participatory data collection tools such as FGDs and KIIs that allowed marginalized populations to share their insights as well

as disaggregate data by gender, age, district, and disability. The evaluation team conducted the data collection in safe spaces for the participation of women and vulnerable groups.

The evaluation team further obtained informed consent and maintained confidentiality. In the analysis of data, the evaluation team went beyond counting participation to analyse the quality of inclusion and influence. The evaluation team further utilized participatory validation, where the evaluation team shared preliminary findings in feedback sessions with stakeholders, including marginalized groups. The evaluation team also explored barriers these groups face in their participation, and strategies devised to address the barriers. For instance, people living with disabilities were considered first during interviews by the evaluation team during the data collection, while people in remote locations were visited by the evaluation team to allow them to participate in the evaluation process. The evaluation team also incorporated a cultural lens in the evaluation process.<sup>51</sup> Also, some rights-based and gender-sensitive indicators were incorporated into the evaluation questions to ensure the evaluation is gender and human-rights-responsive.

### 3.7. Validity and reliability of data

Validating the accuracy, clarity, and specificity of data collected is crucial for this evaluation due to its implications for the validity of findings and general inferences from the analysis of data. Therefore, throughout the various stages of the evaluation, ensuring the validity and reliability of the data was given adequate attention. Several approaches were utilized by the evaluation team to ensure the validity and reliability of data. Firstly, the evaluation team triangulated data sources by combining qualitative and quantitative methods to increase validity and reliability. The team also used multiple sources (the Project team, beneficiaries, government partners, and project documents) to validate findings through triangulation. The team also revised the tools based on feedback from the review of the tools by the project team. The evaluation team further ensured inclusive participation by ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged throughout the evaluation process. One approach to achieve this was to use purposive sampling in the selection of key informants and FGD discussants, while cluster sampling was utilized for the questionnaire administration, as earlier stated. The team also ensured quality control and the data collection process by conducting the data collection themselves and using digital data collection software (Kobo Collect) with built-in constraints to reduce errors. The draft report was further subjected to a validation workshop with all key stakeholders, where the findings were examined through engagement with stakeholders at a stakeholder workshop and management debriefings.

### 3.8. Data Analysis and Reporting

The data analysis ran through all the various stages of the evaluation process. Different analytical processes were adopted and involved systematic organization, comparison, and synthesis of information and data derived from different tools.<sup>52</sup> The evaluation triangulated data obtained from stakeholders using different data collection tools and sources of information to ensure robust findings. The evaluation team made judgments based on the evidence from the findings. The evaluation report described the analytical process undertaken and the underlying rationale for judgments made. To increase the gender-responsiveness of evaluation findings, the evaluation team adopted a gender analysis framework that examined factors related to gender, assessed and promoted gender equality, and provided an analysis of structures of political and social control that create gender equality. This technique ensured that the data collected was analyzed in the following ways:

- ✚ Determining the claims of rights-holders and obligations of duty-bearers within the context of the project.
- ✚ Assessing the extent to which the intervention was guided by the relevant international (national and regional) normative frameworks for gender equality and women's rights, UN system-wide mandates and organizational objectives, including maintenance of peace and security, improved status for women and population, etc.
- ✚ Comparing data and information collected with existing information about human rights and gender equality in the country, etc.
- ✚ Identifying trends, common responses, and differences between groups of stakeholders (disaggregation of data), for example, using graphs or illustrative quotes (that do not allow for identification of the individual).

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<sup>51</sup>[https://www.unevaluation.org/sites/default/files/file\\_uploads/2024%20UNEG%20Guidance%20on%20Integrating%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Evaluations%20-%20Final.pdf](https://www.unevaluation.org/sites/default/files/file_uploads/2024%20UNEG%20Guidance%20on%20Integrating%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Evaluations%20-%20Final.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> How to manage Gender-responsive Evaluation- Evaluation Handbook, p76



- ✚ Integrating into the analysis the context, relationships, power dynamics, etc.
- ✚ Analyzing the structures that contribute to inequalities experienced by women, men, girls, and boys, especially those experiencing multiple forms of exclusion within the context of the project.
- ✚ Assessing the extent to which participation and inclusiveness (with respect to rights-holders and duty-bearers) were maximized in the interventions planning, design, implementation, and decision-making processes.
- ✚ Triangulating information and sources of information to identify similarities and/or discrepancies in data obtained in different ways (i.e., interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.) and from different stakeholders (e.g., duty bearers, rights holders, etc.).
- ✚ Identifying the context behind the numbers and people (using case studies to illustrate broader findings or to go into more depth on an issue).
- ✚ Comparing the results obtained with the original plan (e.g., through the application of the evaluation matrix).
- ✚ Assessing the extent to which sustainability was built into the intervention through the empowerment and capacity building of women and groups of rights holders and duty bearers<sup>53</sup>.

**Quantitative Data Analysis** – Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to meet the objectives of the evaluation. Relevant tables and columns were developed showing disaggregated data by gender, age, district, category of beneficiary, and disability, and were used in drafting the various sections of the report.

**Qualitative data analysis** –The evaluation team used thematic coding to analyze qualitative data. The codes and themes followed the evaluation objectives and criteria. Examples of the themes include Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability, as well as Cross-cutting issues and Disability inclusion. Content analysis was employed in the desk review of all available reports, documents, and collected data sets. The evaluation team also reviewed all relevant project documents, and findings were triangulated and refined based on the comments of key informants and through cross-checking to ensure factual credibility. The findings from the qualitative and quantitative data analysis were triangulated by source and methods to obtain descriptive findings and conclusions relevant to the objectives of this evaluation.

### 3.9. Ethical Considerations

The consultant adhered fully to the ethics and principles for research and evaluation. In addition, the consultant also adhered strictly to the UN Evaluation (Group UNEG) standards for evaluation, the UN Women Evaluation policy, as well as the ethical Guidelines for evaluations in the UN System. Once finalized, the evaluation report was quality assessed based on the UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System. Specific safety considerations were put in place to promote the safety of both the respondents and the evaluation team during data collection. The critical ethical considerations that were mainstreamed during the data collection exercise include the following:

- ✚ Data collection tools were designed in a way that is culturally appropriate and does not create distress for respondents.
- ✚ Data collection visits were organized at the appropriate times and places to minimize risk to respondents.
- ✚ Interviewers were provided with information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support.
- ✚ A plan was put in place to protect the rights of the respondent, including privacy and confidentiality.
- ✚ The evaluators are competent to identify the complexity of cultural identities, identifying power dynamics between and within different groups, and were cognizant of existing services for GBV survivors and referral processes, and the use of language among respondents.

### 3.10. Risks and Assumptions

The following Risk Management Table summarizes critical risks to the evaluation, along with mitigation measures (Annex 3). Risk level refers to the likelihood of the risk occurring (low, medium, high), while risk impact describes the degree of potentially negative impact (low, medium, high) the risk would have on evaluation quality and feasibility.

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<sup>53</sup> How to manage Gender-responsive Evaluation- Evaluation Handbook, p77

## 4.0. Findings of the Evaluation

This section provides the findings of the evaluation, and they are structured according to the objectives, evaluation criteria, and questions.

### 4.1. Relevance

#### **EQ. 1: Was the project relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis?**

##### **Findings 1**

Our evidence set from document reviews, interviews, and FGDs conducted with project beneficiaries confirmed that the project was highly relevant in addressing key conflict drivers and advancing peace in Sierra Leone, as identified in national and local conflict analyses. The project's relevance in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis can be seen in several dimensions. Firstly, the project was designed to focus on tackling gender-based exclusion, which is one of the key drivers of conflict in Sierra Leone. Our evidence shows that the project directly responded to the structural exclusion of women from peacebuilding and governance processes, which is a core driver of inequality, frustration, and community-level tensions. By supporting women's participation as peace actors, political aspirants, and civic leaders, the project worked to transform exclusionary norms and practices. The following excerpt from KIIs with women members of the Parliaments helped to buttress this finding.

*The project's design was very intentional in addressing key barriers to women's political participation. It built the capacity of women candidates on development campaign manifestos. The men candidates know the weaknesses of the female candidates. Like during the election, they called the women candidates all sorts of names, but the capacity-building programme of the project gave us confidence to withstand all those changes from the men.<sup>54</sup>*

*One of the main structural changes affecting women candidates during electioneering is electoral violence against women. Before the project, the security actors had never given security support to women candidates, but this project helped by addressing the challenges as they actively engaged security actors and provided capacity building for them on how to provide security for women candidates, and this helped.<sup>55</sup>*

Secondly, the project, through its various capacity-building activities and awareness creation at the community level, contributed to strengthening community peace structures, women-focused CSOs, and traditional leaders, which are the entities vital for mediating local disputes and promoting social cohesion, especially in politically fragile and post-conflict districts at the district level. Thirdly, the project was implemented around the 2023 general elections. Elections are usually associated with conflicts, as identified in the National Threat Assessment District risk mapping for the 2023 general elections. Thus, the project was implemented during a politically sensitive period (the 2023 elections), when the risk of violence and political exclusion was heightened. Thus, through its various capacity-building activities and awareness creation among political actors, including women candidates, political parties, and security actors, it contributed to addressing electoral-related risks. Also, Activities such as political empowerment for women candidates and peace messaging contributed to addressing conflict drivers during the election period. The following excerpt from FGDs with women-focused CSOs supports this finding.

*This was helpful during the 2023 election. The coalition members conducted several awareness campaigns and sensitization activities at the community level about the need for a peaceful election, as well as the importance of supporting women candidates and other peace messaging using radio jingles before the 2023 election helped to a large extent in addressing conflict risks during the period.<sup>56</sup>*

Also, the project adopted conflict-sensitive approaches in its design and implementation. The project

<sup>54</sup> KII excerpt from Woman Parliamentarian from Pujuhun district

<sup>55</sup> KII excerpt from Woman Parliamentarian from Kono district

<sup>56</sup> FGD Excerpt from CSOs Coalition in Kerene Districts

incorporated local context assessments, gender and conflict analysis, and consultations to guide programming. This ensured relevance to community-specific dynamics. Additionally, the project was responsive to the evolving conflict contexts and focused on districts with heightened tension (Bombali, Karene, Kono, Pujehun, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban), reinforcing its conflict-sensitive relevance. On the other hand, evidence from the quantitative survey among the beneficiaries reveals that over 80.2 percent of the beneficiaries perceived the project as relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis. However, some of the beneficiaries noted that the project could have more actively addressed economic drivers of conflict, such as youth unemployment, which remains a source of instability across the district. Overall, the evaluation notes that the project was strategically relevant to the peacebuilding landscape in Sierra Leone.

## **EQ. 2: Was the project appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the project's design? Did relevance continue throughout implementation?**

### **Findings 2**

The evaluation found that the project was both appropriate and strategically aligned with Sierra Leone's peacebuilding priorities and challenges at the time of its design. Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team reveals that at the time of the project design, the country was faced with a three-pronged challenge of gender-based exclusion, limited representation of women in political and peacebuilding processes, as well as a lack of local mediation capacity and weak coordination among women-focused CSOs. Also, the government and donors were emphasizing localization of peacebuilding efforts, seeking to strengthen grassroots mechanisms for conflict prevention and response. In this context, the project was appropriately designed to bridge the gap in the representation of women in political and peacebuilding processes, as well as to strengthen the weak coordination capacity of women-focused CSOs in the targeted districts. The evaluation also found that the project was strategically fit with the national peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone. First, the project directly supported the implementation of SiLNAP II and the broader WPS agenda and the development of a new SiLNAP III, which are central to the country's peacebuilding and gender equality commitments. The project also complemented the objectives of the Peace and National Cohesion Policy and the GEWE Act (2023) by promoting inclusive governance, political participation of women, and localized peacebuilding structures.

Evidence from the review of project documents and interviews conducted among the parliamentarians also confirmed that the project was appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the project's design. It was noted that the project came on board in the lead-up to the 2023 general elections and thus, the project strategically targeted women candidates for capacity building and mentorship for the women candidates to address one of the peacebuilding goals, as shown in this excerpt from a woman parliamentarian.

*As you know, women's exclusion from politics and other peacebuilding activities has been identified as one of the drivers of conflict in Sierra Leone. You see the government coming up with different policies like the GEWE and the Customary Land Acts that show you how the government takes the issues seriously. These project activities helped to popularise the GEWE and Land Acts, especially at the community level. It targeted women candidates for support and also conducted awareness creation and sensitization at the community level to address some traditional norms that promote women's exclusion. All these made the project appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals.<sup>57</sup>*

The evaluation found that project-level activities such as political mentorship, peace messaging, and dialogue platforms responded directly to risks such as exclusion of women candidates, election violence, and community-level political polarization, making the project both timely and relevant.

## **EQ. 3: Were the programmatic strategies appropriate to address the identified needs of beneficiaries?**

### **Findings 3**

Yes, the programmatic strategies employed by the Localizing for Change project were largely appropriate and well-aligned with the identified needs of the key beneficiary groups, particularly women-focused CSOs, female political aspirants, traditional leaders, and marginalized community members. Several pieces of evidence supported the appropriateness of the programmatic strategies adopted by the project. Firstly, is the alignment of the project activities with the expressed needs of women-focused CSOs. Several

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<sup>57</sup> KII excerpt from Woman Parliamentarian from Bombali district

consultations conducted by the project team during the project design highlighted the capacity gaps of women-focused CSOs in advocacy, working in silos, coalition-building, and peacebuilding.<sup>58</sup> In response, the project delivered targeted support such as capacity building in peace mediation, mentorship programmes, WPS policy advocacy, and organizational strengthening, including the establishment of an umbrella coalition of women-focused CSOs working on conflict prevention and political inclusion/governance.

The second evidence of the appropriateness of programmatic strategies of the project is its responsiveness to the needs of female political aspirants. Women candidates and aspirants often face barriers such as harassment, limited campaign resources, and socio-cultural resistance. The project's strategy of providing political mentorship, media training, leadership training, special protection for women voters and candidates, and support for developing campaign messages and manifestos directly addressed these obstacles and supported women's political empowerment. Evidence from interviews with the project team, beneficiaries, and project documents confirmed that the programmatic strategies were highly appropriate to address the identified needs of beneficiaries and were largely aligned with the needs of the beneficiaries, as shown in the following excerpts:

*First, I will say that the programmatic strategies of the project were very appropriate to address the identified needs of beneficiaries. I am a parliamentarian, and I know what this project has done for the women candidates. The project helped to bridge a huge gap among the women candidates. Before the PBF project, all the women candidates were working in silos, and we do see ourselves like competitors, but the PBF project brought all the women candidates as one irrespective of your political party. There is now inter-party collaboration for women candidates because the PBF project brought all the women candidates together and trained us together. However, I think the major gap is post-election support, which the project is not currently providing.<sup>59</sup>*

*For me, this project is very crucial for the new parliamentarians. But I think that post-election training and other programmes for parliamentarians are crucial. You cannot support me to win an election to the parliament and abandon us here. There are so many new things to learn to enable us to function perfectly.<sup>60</sup>*

*The formation of the Coalition is one of the most important needs that have been addressed by this project. There are so many CSOs working on WPS issues at the district level, but nobody knows each other and we are all working in silos. The PBF project helped us to bridge that gap with the formation of the CSOs coalition at the district level. Now, the level of collaboration, coordination, and information sharing among the CSOs is seamless. All thanks to the Localizing for Change project.<sup>61</sup>*

Also, the project engaged traditional and community leaders through dialogue forums, supporting the transformation of social norms that limit women's public participation. This was critical in the targeted districts where traditional leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping attitudes toward women's rights and conflict resolution. Also, the adaptive implementation strategy of the project promoted its programmatic strategies. The project adapted its strategies to respond to changing needs, particularly around the 2023 elections and the rollout of new legislation like the GEWE Act and the Customary Land Rights Act, which the project helped to popularise in local communities. However, some of the women-focused CSOs interviewed noted that while the support was timely, it needed a follow-up mentoring and funding support to continue the engagement. Also, while the project focused on capacity building and advocacy for women's participation, there was no integration of economic strengthening, which would have benefited the women and youths whom many stakeholders interviewed identified as vital in peacebuilding across the districts. Overall, the evaluation notes that the programmatic strategies deployed in the localizing for change project were appropriate and responsive to the priority needs of the targeted beneficiaries.

#### **EQ. 4. Was the project relevant to the national strategies, policies, plans, CEDAW, Beijing +25, and UNSCR 1325 and 1820 principles, UN's peacebuilding mandate, and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?**

##### **Findings 4**

<sup>58</sup> Final PBF Proposal for UN Women, UNDP and WV

<sup>59</sup> Excerpt from KII Woman Parliamentarian

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Excerpt from FGD with Coalition members in Karene District

The project was found to be relevant to the national strategies, policies, plans, CEDAW, Beijing +25, and UNSCR 1325 and 1820 principles, UN's peacebuilding mandate, and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16. The project aligns with Sierra Leone's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (SiLNAP III, 2024–2029), which prioritizes women's participation in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, protection from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and access to justice. SiLNAP III explicitly calls for the localization of the WPS agenda, a central strategy of this project. The project also aligns with Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024 – 2030, which identified gender mainstreaming as one of the five critical enablers. Other national policies which the project is relevant to include the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act (2023) and the Customary Land Rights Act (2023). The project advanced the implementation of the GEWE Act by building women's political leadership capacity and contributed to awareness-raising and mobilization around women's rights to land, which are fundamental to social equity and conflict prevention.

With respect to CEDAW, the project is relevant to CEDAW as it supports the advancement of its commitments, especially enhancing women's public life and political participation (Article 7) and addressing discrimination in access to justice and peace processes. The project contributed directly to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (+25), especially Critical Area E: Women and Armed Conflict,<sup>62</sup> by supporting women's leadership roles in peacebuilding and providing institutional support to women-focused CSOs across the targeted district. The localizing for change project was also relevant to the UN Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. UNSCR 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) recognize the importance of women's full and equal participation in peace and security efforts, as well as protection from sexual violence in conflict. The project aligned with the four pillars of UNSCR 1325:

- Participation: By strengthening women's CSOs to participate in peace structures.
- Protection: Through advocacy and referral systems for SGBV survivors
- Prevention: By enhancing early warning and conflict mitigation strategies with women's leadership.
- Relief and Recovery: Supporting women's voices in post-conflict dialogue and recovery processes

The evaluation also found that the project was relevant to the UN's peacebuilding mandates. The project's support to women-led CSOs, community mediation, and peacebuilding mirrors key priorities of the UN Peacebuilding Fund peacebuilding framework, which emphasize promoting inclusive peace processes, addressing the root causes of conflict, and fostering social cohesion as well as prioritizes gender-sensitive and youth-focused initiatives, recognizing the vital roles women and young people play in sustaining peace.<sup>63</sup> The evaluation also found that the project is relevant to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). The project has strongly advanced SDG 16.7: Ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making. Overall, the localizing for change project was evidently relevant to national strategies, policies, plans, and other global commitments.

#### **EQ. 5: Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? Were they consulted during the design and implementation of the project?**

##### **Findings 5**

Our evidence set from document reviews and FGDs conducted with the beneficiaries reveals that the project was highly relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups. Evidence from the various assessments and consultations by the project with the beneficiaries at the design stage of the project confirmed that the targeted beneficiaries (Women-focused CSOs), were faced with marginalization from formal peacebuilding spaces and local governance structures, low institutional capacity to influence policy, access funding, or coordinate effectively and limited knowledge of legal frameworks and national commitments such as the WPS agenda and SiLNAP II. The programmatic approaches of the project, such as capacity building, mentorships, network building, and awareness campaigns, responded directly to these needs. Many of the coalition members who participated in the FGD sessions reported that the project helped them to gain confidence, knowledge, and recognition as actors in peace and security processes and therefore stated that the project was relevant to their needs, as shown in the excerpts below:

*Our needs as coalition members were appropriately addressed by this project. The problem*

<sup>62</sup> [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/PFA\\_E\\_Final\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/PFA_E_Final_WEB.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> <https://everydaypeacebuilding.com/peacebuilding-fund/>



*of working in silos by women-focused CSOs and poor collaboration and coordination was effectively addressed by the localizing for change project with the establishment of the coalition across the districts.<sup>64</sup>*

*The project activities were relevant to the needs of women candidates. The training on leadership, writing of campaign manifestos, and public speaking was an eye-opener for the women candidates. For me, before the election, speaking in public was a big challenge for me but with the training on public speaking by the project, I can say boldly that I overcame that challenge. Now, I can speak anywhere without trembling like I used to before. I will say that this project was relevant to my needs.<sup>65</sup>*

Furthermore, evidence from document reviews and FGDs conducted with the beneficiaries noted that there was consultation with the CSOs at the national and district levels, as well as community leaders during the project design, and feedback from the beneficiary consultation was incorporated during the project's design phase. The following excerpt from FGDs with CSO coalition members supports this finding.

*The project team held several meetings with us during the development of the project proposal. That gave many of us the opportunity to make our input into the project. I remembered during one of the meetings, the issue of capacity building for CSOs in the areas of proposal development, monitoring, and evaluation were raised, and it was incorporated into the design of the project.<sup>66</sup>*

This was also confirmed in the project document that there were consultations between April and September 2022, both at the community and national levels, before and during the development of the concept note/full proposal.<sup>67</sup> Also, evidence from the quantitative survey reveals that 91.5 percent of the surveyed respondents noted that they were consulted at the conceptualization stage of the project. By gender, 66.7 percent of female respondents noted that they were consulted. Evidence also shows that beneficiaries were actively involved throughout implementation, not just as recipients but as co-implementers and feedback providers. Overall, the evaluation notes that the Localizing for Change project was clearly relevant to the needs and priorities of its target groups.

## **EQ. 6: How relevant and responsive has the project been to supporting peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone?**

### **Findings 6**

Evidence set from document reviews and interviews with the project team, as well as government partners from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, confirmed that the localization for change project was highly relevant and responsive with Sierra Leone's national peacebuilding priorities, as outlined in several strategic frameworks including the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019–2023) which emphasizes peaceful, inclusive governance, gender equality, and strengthening civil society participation in national cohesion and reconciliation. The National Peacebuilding Strategy and SiLNAP II (2024–2029) prioritize the inclusion of women in peace processes, strengthening local peace structures, and promoting social cohesion, especially in rural and post-conflict communities.

Sierra Leone's post-war context is marked by fragile peace, intermittent local conflicts (often over land, chieftaincy, and political tensions), and persistent gender inequality. In response, the project targeted conflict-prone districts *Bombali, Karene, Kono, Pujehun, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban*, where community-level tensions and exclusion of women from decision-making were evident. The project contributed to addressing harmful gender norms that perpetuate violence and exclusion through sensitization and advocacy in local communities in the districts. Evidence from Figure 4.1 shows that 92.4 percent of the respondents noted that the project was relevant and responsive to peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone. By gender, 89.8 percent and 97.2 percent of male and female respondents, respectively noted that the project was relevant and responsive to peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone (Figure 4.1).

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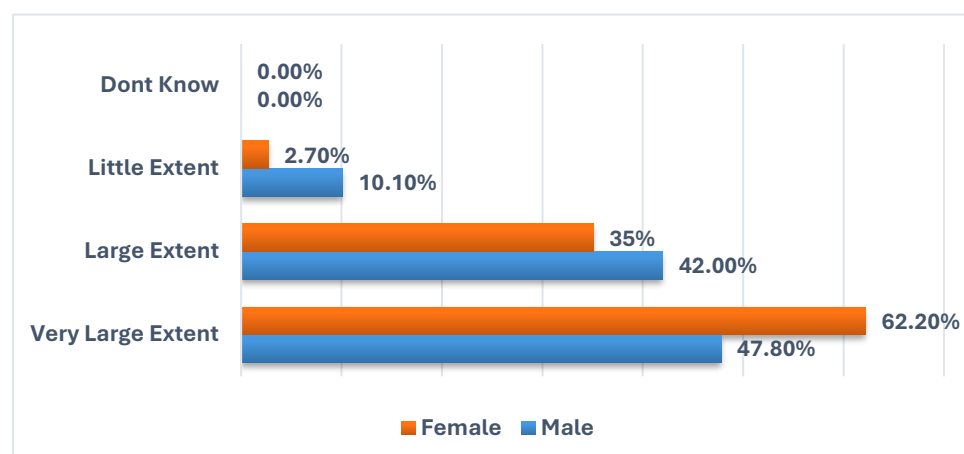
<sup>64</sup> Excerpt from FGD with a Coalition member in Bombali District

<sup>65</sup> Excerpt from KII with a Women's Councilor in Karene District.

<sup>66</sup> Excerpt from FGD with a Coalition member in Western Area Urban District

<sup>67</sup> Final PBF Proposal for UN Women, UNDP, and WV

**Figure 4.1: The Extent the project was relevant and responsive to peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone**



Overall, the Localizing for Change project has been both relevant and responsive to Sierra Leone's peacebuilding priorities. It complemented national policy frameworks, especially the GEWE and Customary Land Acts, strengthened local peace infrastructures, and empowered women to lead and participate in peace processes.

**EQ. 7: Did the project's theory of change articulate assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change? Was the theory of change grounded in evidence?**

**Findings 7**

As stated in section 2.4 of this report, the project is anchored on a Theory of Change (ToC). The assessment of the ToC of the project shows that the ToC is broadly logical, aligning with the global and national framework for implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. It shows a plausible, clear, and logical flow to describe how the project strategy intends to contribute to the desired changes at the outcome and impact level without any knowledge gap. The ToC reflects UN Women's focus on localization and women's agency in peacebuilding. However, no evidence to show that the ToC was based on knowledge and lessons learned from credible sources, as no reference was made to any empirical or normative frameworks. Additionally, the ToC tends to oversimplify the complexity of local political and traditional power dynamics. It assumes that once CSOs are capacitated, they will be able to effectively influence local decision-making structures, but it does not sufficiently account for resistance from patriarchal institutions or local power brokers. Also, the assumptions and risks most relevant to whether the change will be realized were not specified in the ToC. While the ToC was grounded in evidence, such as contextual evidence and global peacebuilding research, it was not explicitly stated in the ToC. Overall, the project's ToC was clearly defined. It successfully articulated how capacitating the Coalition and its members to drive a coherent and inclusive implementation strategy on conflict prevention and participation of women and girls before, during, and after the elections across national and sub-national levels in Sierra Leone will contribute to sustainable peacebuilding and elections. However, there is a need to explicitly state the basic assumptions and underlying evidence of the ToC as a best practice. This largely resulted in the limited M&E support during the design phase of the project, and M&E recruitment after the 1<sup>st</sup> year of implementation.

**EQ. 8: To what extent did the project respond to peacebuilding gaps?**

**Findings 8**

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team reveals that at the conceptualization of the localizing for change project, there were several observed peacebuilding gaps in Sierra Leone including limited participation of women in politics and the peacebuilding process, limited inclusion of women and women-focused CSOs in formal and informal peace and security processes, weak coordination mechanisms between local CSOs, traditional authorities, and formal governance structures, inadequate institutional and technical capacity of women-focused CSOs to effectively engage in peacebuilding, low public awareness of WPS Agenda and related national frameworks (e.g., SiLNAP II & Customary Land Rights Act) and persistent gender norms and power structures that hindered women's participation in conflict resolution and decision-making.

These gaps were identified in the consultations conducted by the project team at the point of conceptualization of the project and other assessments such as, Observer reports of the European Union in 2018 elections, the Truth and Reconciliation report, and the UN WOMEN's 2019 Study on 'Women's Movement in Sierra Leone, among others.

*The project was designed based on various assessments conducted in the country on the peacebuilding needs of the country, especially the Truth and Reconciliation report and the UN WOMEN's 2019 Study on 'Women's Movement in Sierra Leone.<sup>68</sup>*

The localizing for change project responded strategically and effectively to these gaps by training, mentoring, and supporting 120 women-focused CSOs and community peace structures, directly addressing their exclusion from peace structures, and institutional strengthening of the women-focused CSOs through capacity building. Overall, the evaluation notes that the project, to a large extent, responded to peacebuilding gaps in Sierra Leone.

## **4.2. Effectiveness**

### **EQ. 9. To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the project's strategic vision?**

#### **Findings 9**

Progress on results at outcome and output levels was measured using indicators in the results framework. Progress on the outcomes and outputs is discussed below. Evidence from Table 4.1 Annex 4 indicates that 6 indicators were used to measure progress on the outcomes of the project. Out of this, five of the indicators were achieved at the end of project implementation, while only one indicator was not achieved. This is indicator 2c, which measures the number of cases of violence against girls and women reported during the election cycle. The project team was unable to establish the baseline value due to the absence of reliable secondary data on the indicator. However, the project team recorded 101 cases of violence against girls and women during the election cycle. Due to the absence of a baseline and end of project target for the indicator, the evaluation was unable to determine the progress on the indicator at the end of implementation.

#### **Output 1.1: Coalition of women-focused CSOs working on conflict prevention/mitigation and meaningful participation of women established and functional, Indicative activities**

Evidence from Table 4.2 in Annex 5 indicates that there are 8 indicators to measure output 1.1, and out of these, 7 of the indicators were achieved at the end of project implementation, recording over 100 percent achievements across the 7 indicators. The only indicator not achieved by the project is indicator 1.1.8, which measures the number of women-focused CSOs actively advocating for SILNAP financing, with a target of 120, but with an overall achievement of 78, which translates to 73 percent, implying that significant progress was made on the indicator.

#### **Output 1.2: Technical capacity of Women-focused CSOs coalition on a range of normative frameworks, messaging, advocacy, ICT, and other requisite knowledge and skills enhanced**

Evidence from Table 4.3 in Annex 6 shows that there are 7 indicators used to measure output 1.2. Out of these, the project achieved 6 indicators and included indicators 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.5, and 1.2.6. The only indicator not achieved was indicator 1.2.7, which measures the number of market women trained on basic use of technologies, was not implemented. Overall, the project made significant progress in the attainment of output indicators for output 1.2.

#### **Output 1.3: Women-focused CSOs coalition's ability to develop quality proposals for joint programme and sustainability is enhanced**

Evidence from Table 4.4 in Annex 7 shows that 6 indicators were used to track output 1.3 of the project. Out of the 6 indicators, 5 of the indicators were achieved by the project at the end of the implementation. The level of achievement for the indicators achieved ranges from 100 percent to 232 percent, indicating significant achievement of the output indicators. However, the only indicator not achieved is indicator 1.3.3, recording only 58 percent of the set target (Table 4.4 in Annex 7). Also, evidence from Table 4.5 in Annex 8 shows that 3 indicators were used to measure output 2.2, and out of these, two indicators were achieved,

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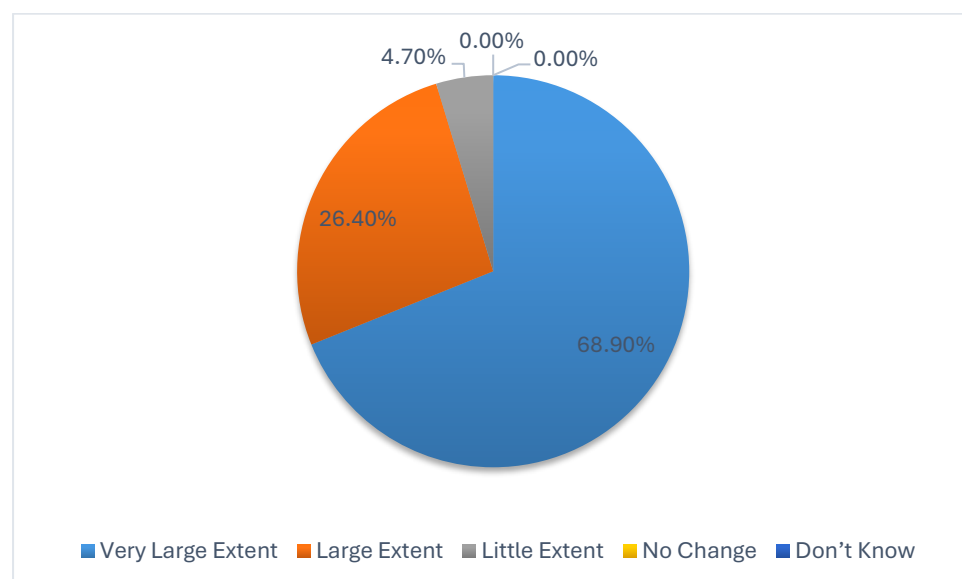
<sup>68</sup> KII excerpt from Members of the Project Consortium

while only one of the indicators was not achieved, but it recorded 40 percent achievements against the set target (Table 4.5 Annex 8).

### **Output 2.2: Coalition CSO members mobilize support for female candidates and aspirants, and create enabling platforms for women's meaningful participation and protection during the 2023 elections, enhanced**

Table 4.6 in Annex 9 shows that 8 indicators were used to measure output 2.2. Evidence shows that all the 8 indicators were achieved, including indicators 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.6, 2.2.7, and 2.2.8. Only one indicator was not achieved and that is indicator (2.2.5), which measures the number of election-related violence cases reported before, during, and after the elections that does not have a baseline or set target. Thus, the opportunity to assess project performance on the indicator was missed. However, evidence from the quantitative survey data indicates that over 68 percent of the respondents noted that the project activities contributed to promoting women's participation in peacebuilding and elections in Sierra Leone to a very large extent (Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2: The Extent the Project activities contributed to promoting women's participation in peacebuilding**



### **Output 2.3: Coalition CSO members' ability to initiate reconciliation, provide counseling and psychosocial support, and access to justice for aspirants, affected women, and girls after the 2023 elections is enhanced**

Evidence from Table 4.7 Annex 10 shows that there are 6 indicators measuring output 2.3. Evidence from Table 4.7 in Annex 10 shows that all 6 indicators were achieved at the end of project implementation. Overall, the localizing for change project was largely effective in achieving its stated objectives and made significant contributions to its strategic vision of strengthening women's CSOs and localizing the WPS Agenda in Sierra Leone. There is a total of 42 indicators in the entire project log frame; out of these, 38 indicators were achieved at the end of project implementation, recording over 90 percent overall achievement on the 42 indicators. The evaluation rated project achievement of outcome and output indicators as good after achieving over 90 percent of the stated outcome and output indicators at the end of the implementation period.

## **EQ. 10. What influence have contextual factors (political, social, economic, and other) had on the effectiveness of the project?**

### **Findings 10**

Our evidence set from document reviews and interviews conducted among the key stakeholders confirms that the effectiveness of the localizing for change project was shaped by the interplay of political, social, economic, and other contextual factors in Sierra Leone. Our evidence shows that the political environment

in Sierra Leone presented both opportunities and challenges. As an opportunity, the supportive policies and commitments to the WPS agenda, including the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act (GEWE Act) and the adoption of the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (SiLNAP II), created an enabling policy framework for project implementation. However, the political tensions and the 2023 elections created periods of uncertainty, affecting the scheduling of activities, the participation of government stakeholders, and the ability of CSOs to advocate without fear of political backlash.

On the other hand, the Sierra Leone social context had a mixed influence on the effectiveness of the project. The project's advocacy and awareness-raising activities among traditional leaders and male allies on the importance of women's political participation led to increased community acceptance of women's participation in peace and security decision-making. Many of the community leaders engaged during the field mission confirmed this as shown in this as shown in this excerpt:

*The meeting with coalition members before the 2023 election was very good. They told us the importance of supporting women candidates and the benefits it will bring to our community. Since then, the community leaders have accepted and included women in the traditional council. Even during the election, we supported the women candidates, unlike in previous elections.<sup>69</sup>*

Evidence also shows that economic factors also affected the effectiveness of the project. Some of the project team members noted that the project was designed before the election, and implementation was before and after the election, and within these periods, the general inflation in the country affected the planned budget of the various activities. However, the project team was able to adapt the budget to the present economic realities in the country without significantly affecting project implementation. Additionally, limited resources for women-focused CSOs targeted by the project made them heavily dependent on the project funds, raising questions about the sustainability of gains once funding ends. Also, there were some observed localized security challenges in some districts, including Western Area Urban and Rural and Bombali districts, especially before and after the election, which affected the smooth implementation of project activities during the period. Overall, contextual factors (political, social, economic, and other) had a significant influence on the effectiveness of the project.

## **EQ. 11: To what extent did the project substantively mainstream gender and support gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding?**

### **Findings 11**

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team indicates that the project significantly mainstreamed gender and made modest but strategic efforts to support youth-responsive peacebuilding, though youth inclusion was not a central focus. The project demonstrated a strong commitment to gender mainstreaming both in the design and implementation of the project as shown by different evidence. First, 100 percent of the entire project budget was allocated to GEWE.<sup>70</sup> There was also a disaggregation of most of the output-level indicators by age. Evidence shows that the project design, planning, and implementation have ensured the equal participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities by applying age and gender considerations in all activities. The project was gender focused with its central objective of supporting women-focused CSOs and enhancing their role in localizing the WPS Agenda. The project has also capacitated the women-focused CSOs in various areas, including UNSCR 1325, leadership, advocacy, and negotiation skills, which include both women-led and men-led CSOs in the targeted districts. Many of the women coalition members who participated in the various FGD sessions reported increased confidence, improved technical capacity, and stronger collaboration with local authorities and security actors, as shown in these excerpts:

*This project has supported both women and men across the district. You can see that our coalition is made up of both men and women, and all our activities have focused on supporting women to address their challenges, including their participation in politics and peacebuilding activities in the local communities.<sup>71</sup>*

Also, evidence from the survey (Figure 4.3) shows that over 70 percent of the male and female respondents reported that the project substantively mainstreamed gender and supported gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding to a very large extent.

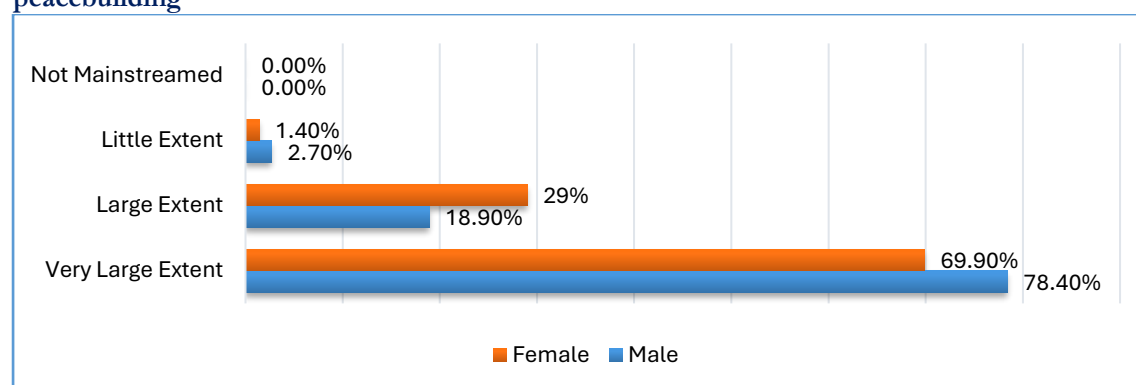
<sup>69</sup> Excerpt from KII with Community Leader in Bombali District

<sup>70</sup> Final PBF Proposal for UN Women, UNDP and WV

<sup>71</sup> FGD Excerpt from Coalition member in Kono District



**Figure 4.3: The extent the project mainstreamed gender and gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding**



Evidence shows that youth-responsive elements were present, particularly in the inclusion of young women, and inclusion of youths as targets for advocacy activities at the district level; however, there was no intentional youth-centred activity that would have strengthened the project's impact and sustainability in addressing broader peace and security dynamics in the targeted districts especially when viewed from the angle of the roles of youths in the perpetuation of violence during the electioneering period. Overall, the project substantially mainstreamed gender and made meaningful contributions to women-led peacebuilding in line with the WPS agenda. Gender was not treated as an add-on but rather as a central pillar of the intervention.

#### **EQ. 12: How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?**

##### **Findings 12**

Evidence from document reviews shows that the project's geographic and beneficiary targeting strategy was appropriate and moderately clear. From the project design, the project targeted six districts, namely Bombali, Karene, Kono, Pujehun, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban, based on their vulnerability to security challenges as identified by the National Threat Assessment district risk mapping for the 2023 general elections report which described the six districts as security hotspot. The selected districts were appropriate as they had active women-focused CSOs or networks with prior engagement on peace and security issues, and also were areas with histories of conflict or gender-based violence, making them priority regions for localizing WPS interventions. For the direct beneficiaries, the project appropriately prioritized women-focused CSOs as key beneficiaries, in line with its objectives. The strategy ensured representation from both urban and rural CSOs. However, the evaluation notes that as a best practice in project design, the targeting criteria for the districts and the direct beneficiaries should have been clearly stated before their application in the selection of the districts and the direct beneficiaries. The criteria for selecting the specific districts and direct beneficiaries were not explicitly communicated to stakeholders or in project documents. This can create a lack of understanding of why they were excluded, thereby generating perceptions of exclusion or favouritism.

#### **EQ. 13. Was the project monitoring system adequately capturing data on peacebuilding results at an appropriate outcome level?**

##### **Findings 13**

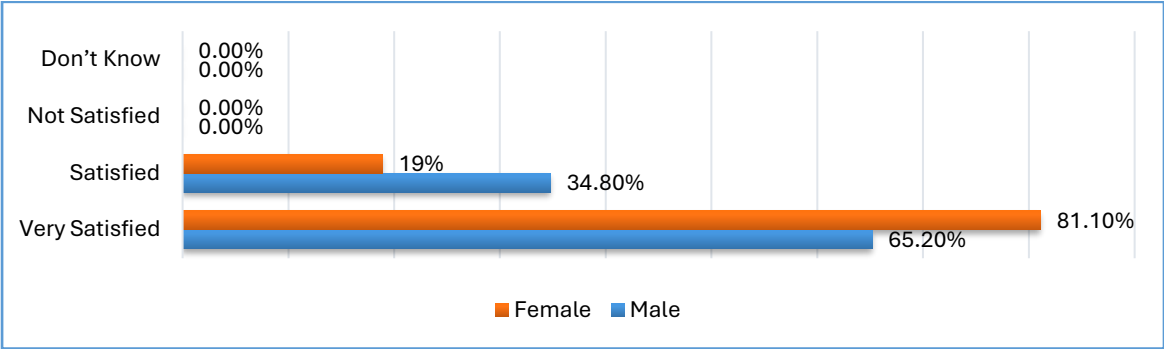
The evaluation found that the project monitoring system was adequate in capturing data on peacebuilding results at an appropriate outcome level, with a structured result framework in place to track output and outcome level results. However, several limitations affected the adequacy of the project monitoring system to consistently measure outcome-level changes, particularly those related to behavioral, relational, and structural shifts in peacebuilding. Our evidence from the review of the result framework shows that the project had a result framework with clearly defined indicators disaggregated by gender, age, and districts, updated data which shows regular progress tracking and reporting on progress of the project. However, most of the indicators were activity or output-based, such as the number of functional coalition groups established at the national and district levels, the number of coalitions CSO members trained in tracking, monitoring, and advocating for SILNAP financing (disaggregated by sex, age, and disability). There were

fewer indicators explicitly focused on capturing intermediate or long-term peacebuilding outcomes, as earlier stated.

**EQ. 14. To what extent have beneficiaries been satisfied with the results?**  
**Findings 14**

External stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, were unanimous in expressing their satisfaction with the project results based on evaluative evidence from the quantitative survey and interviews conducted among the beneficiaries across the districts. For instance, about 100 percent of the participants noted that they were satisfied with the project results. By gender, 81.1 percent and 65.2 percent of female and male beneficiaries respectively, noted that they were very satisfied with the results achieved by the project (Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.4: The extent the beneficiaries are satisfied with the project results.**



The following excerpts from FGDs conducted among the beneficiaries in the districts also helped to support the above finding.

*This project was very useful to men, especially the various things and knowledge gained from the training. Before now, I used to think of conflict as anytime there is a full-blown war, but now I have a different understanding of conflict and what can drive them in the community, and how to mitigate them. Thanks to the localizing for change project. It is really transforming<sup>72</sup>*

**4.3. Efficiency**

**EQ. 15. Were resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) allocated strategically, were sufficient, and were efficiently used to achieve the project outcomes?**  
**Findings 15**

The review of project documents and interviews with the project team confirmed that available resources were allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes. The project’s duration lasted 24 months with a planned budget of USD 2,000,000 (Table 4.1). Of these funds, USD 1,469,158.88 was budgeted for project implementation activities, which represents 73.5 per cent of the total budget, while USD 400,000 was budgeted for personnel, which represents 20 per cent of the total budget of the project (Table 4.1). As of March 2025, 97.5 per cent of all allocated budgets for the project activities have been spent, which represents a good absorption rate for the project. This was also good given that most of the planned activities of the project have been implemented using the allocated resources.

As noted previously, the targets for several of the indicators were achieved by the project at the end of implementation, which suggests that the resources of the project have been optimally utilized. Also, from Table 4.1, most of the disbursements and project expenditures are in line with the budgetary

<sup>72</sup> Excerpt from FGD with Women-Focused CSOs discussant in Western Urban Area

allocations to a large extent. In addition, the project's utilization of 73.5 per cent of the total budget on project implementation activities compared to 20 percent on personnel is highly commendable by the evaluation. Considering the above finding, it is fair to conclude that the financial resources of the project were strategically allocated to achieve the project outcome.

Table4.1: **Total Budget Spent by Sector**

CATEGORIES	PROJECT TOTAL	Overall Expenses	Overall delivery of the Total budget (%)
1. Staff and other personnel	400,000.00	341,657.86	85%
4. Contractual services	335,000.00	285,865.89	85%
5. Travel	216,000.00	230,047.35	107%
6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	595,100.00	702,200.87	118%
7. General Operating and other Direct Costs	323,058.88	283,431.12	88%
Sub-Total Project Costs	<b>1,869,158.88</b>	<b>1,843,203.09</b>	99%
8. Indirect Support Costs (must be 7%)	130,841.12	129,024.22	99%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,000,000.00</b>	<b>1,972,227.31</b>	97.50%

**EQ. 16. How efficient was the overall staffing, planning, and coordination within the project (including between the implementing agencies and with stakeholders)? Have project funds and activities been delivered promptly?**

#### **Findings 16**

The evaluation found that the project has a lean staff structure but with a clear structure that delineated roles and responsibilities across the lead agency. The project implementation team consists of management and technical staff from UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision. UN Women, as the lead agency, has three main staff including the Programme Coordination Specialist, as well as the M&E specialist. There is also the WPS Program Specialist, which is a national position. World Vision has one staff member attached to the project, which is a Gender and Peacebuilding Specialist. UNDP also has one programme staff member supporting the project. The lean staff structure affected the effective monitoring of the project activities by the consortium members. For instance, some activities were implemented by the IPs without the knowledge of the Lead agency which is UN Women.

Concerning planning and coordination, evidence shows that there were monthly coordination meetings by the consortium and the national executive of the women-focused CSOs, which allowed for local ownership and alignment with national and district-level peacebuilding priorities. Annual and quarterly work plans were developed collaboratively, and implementing partners participated in regular coordination meetings. Coordination mechanisms between the lead agency and implementing CSOs were generally weak, as each member of the consortium engaged their implementing partner to implement their activities. Thus, implementing partners showed more loyalty to their sub-grantor than to the lead agency of the consortium. This would not have happened if the IPs were jointly engaged by the consortium. Coordination with national stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, was strong, facilitated by joint events, technical steering committees, and community dialogue platforms. That said, coordination could have been improved in a few areas, especially in the joint engagement of the implementing partners by the consortium, with the lead agency taking the lead. This would promote effective coordination and monitoring of the implementation activities of the implementing partners.

On the other hand, evidence also shows funds for the projects were not promptly disbursed, thus affecting the early take of the project as planned. For instance, due to an unforeseen technical challenge in receiving funds transferred to World Vision International, it took over 3 months for their funds to reflect.<sup>73</sup> The use of phased funding tied to performance-based reporting helped maintain accountability, although a few CSOs faced delays due to procurement challenges and financial reporting compliance requirements. Despite some logistical delays relating to procurement, most key activities such as community sensitization campaigns and capacity-building workshops were implemented on schedule. Overall, the staffing, planning, and coordination of the project were moderately efficient and contributed to the timely implementation of activities

**EQ. 17. To what extent have the project management structure, the Implementation partners' organizational structure, management support, and coordination mechanisms supported the delivery of the project to achieve good results?**

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team reveals that the project management structure, the implementation partners' organizational structure, management support, and coordination mechanisms were generally effective in supporting project delivery and contributed meaningfully to achieving results. However, there were areas where greater efficiency and integration could have enhanced overall effectiveness.

The management structure is made up layers of committees with defined responsibilities. At the top is the Project Oversight Committee composed of the UN Resident Coordinator, the three Heads of the recipient organizations (UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision), and the Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs. They strategic and oversight functions for the project direction. They will meet twice a year to look at project progress against planned outcomes and proffer guidance and recommendations. Below is the Project Management Team (PMT), which provides direction for the general project management and meets quarterly to give updates on project progress, successes, and next steps. Below this is the Project Coordination Technical Team (PCTT), comprised of the technical team from the three recipient organizations and implementing partners. The team was responsible for the project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting for the project. The team meets monthly and sometimes bi-weekly to review project progress and challenges and advance the next steps.

The key strengths of the management structure lie in the inclusive and multi-stakeholder management structure. The project adopted a collaborative management arrangement involving UN Women, UNDP, World Vision, and local women-focused CSOs, which facilitated joint planning meetings and regular coordination forums. This enhanced alignment and reduced duplication of effort. The collaborative management structure also promoted the leveraging of the implementing Partners' Strengths. Each partner brought specific competencies. For instance, UN Women led on gender equality and WPS policy advocacy, UNDP's local governance and rule of law programming, and World Vision community mobilization strategies were all brought to bear in the collaborative management arrangement. The management structure also enhanced monthly technical coordination meetings and joint field monitoring, which helped to align activities, share learnings, and troubleshoot implementation challenges in real time.

However, a confluence of factors influenced the extent the project management structure, the implementation partners' organizational structure, management support, and coordination mechanisms supported the delivery of the project to achieve good results. First, we noted that the consortium partners (funds recipient agencies – UNW, UNDP, and WV) could have created a more coordinated and united management unit with a clear and centralised consortium project management team to provide centralised communication and technical backstopping to all project partners. However, the management structure was largely a loose consortium with each fund recipient partner managing its downstream partners. This disjointed management and coordination structure was observed in the field data collection processes, where some CSOs and participants only know UN Women (especially the coalition members), while others can only speak of 50/50 and Women in the Media, who are sub-grantees to World Vision. Very few beneficiaries (mostly the CSO coalition members) can speak about the project with a clear understanding of its three grant recipients as part of a consortium. Overall, the project's management and coordination arrangements were largely effective, enabling the timely delivery of activities and measurable results, especially in gender-

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<sup>73</sup> PBF UN Women, UNDP and WV No Cost Extension Document

responsive peacebuilding. However, there is a need to strengthen the coordination of activities among the consortium members.

## **18. How efficient and successful was the project's implementation approach, including procurement, the number of implementing partners, and other activities?**

### **Findings 18**

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team confirmed that the consortium approach (UN Women, UNDP, World Vision) adopted for project implementation was strategic and efficient in leveraging each agency's comparative strengths. UN Women led gender technical support; UNDP provided institutional engagement and peacebuilding oversight, while World Vision led grassroots community mobilization. This division of labour avoided duplication, improved delivery speed, and ensured that activities were contextually adapted across regions. Evidence also shows that the procurement activities followed UN rules and procedures, which ensured transparency and accountability, though sometimes led to delayed delivery of funds to consortium members. For instance, the system shifts from Atlas to Quantum resulted in several operational challenges for UNDP and UN Women, such as integrating new projects into the new system. This delayed project setup and internal transfer of funds to various vendors affected project operational timelines. Also, the Socio-Political environment in the country affected project implementation a month to the election and 4 months after the June 2023 elections, which restricted the movement of the project team to districts for project implementation. All these challenges affected the timely delivery of project activities.

Also, the evaluation notes that the project implementation approach - especially its approach of direct implementation and indirect activity delivery via sub-granting - while capacitating some members of the CSO coalition in some form, inadvertently ended up becoming a micro sub-granting enterprise with more than six sub-grants provided to Women-Focused CSOs, most of whom have limited or no presence in the communities where they delivered activities. In Kamabai Town, Biriwa Limba Chiefdom in Bomabli District, for instance, the evaluation team spoke to a couple of project beneficiaries who participated in a town hall meeting to mitigate conflict and promote women's participation, led by Women in the Media - Sierra Leone (WiMSAL) with a sub-grant from World Vision. The participants could not recall the CSO that led the training, and further conversation reveals that apart from the fact that WiMSAL's expertise is largely on media, it has no physical presence in Bombali, nor the proper expertise on WPS and peace promotion programme. An effective and efficient approach would have been such an awareness training led by a CSO partner in the Bombali coalition, with the expertise of WPS and peace promotion and women's political participation.

The project could have benefited from a leaner team in terms of the number of implementing partners who received sub-grants from different consortium members and focused on providing direct support to the CSO coalition to lead activity implementation at the district level. Experience indicates that the more sub-grants, the more additional lawyers of staffing, overheads, and other forms of indirect expenditure are charged to that project, and in the process, reducing the available cash for meaningful activity implementation. However, the evaluation team noted that the capacity transfer aspirations and value for money were achieved as a result of the project's implementation approach, as noted by staff of one of the Consortium members in a KII session:

*We've achieved a lot with limited resources via sub-granting. We could have spent more had we decided to directly implement. Consider, for instance, that WiMSAL with a sub-grant of \$ 29,000 was able to conduct mass media sensitisation on peace promotion using the town hall meetings and Vox pops directly reaching over 10,000 listeners/participants...that's less than \$3 for every listener/participant reached.<sup>74</sup>*

Overall, the evaluation concluded that the project's implementation approach, including procurement, the number of implementing partners, and other activities, was moderately efficient and contributed to the success recorded by the project.

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<sup>74</sup> Excerpt from KII with Consortium member



**EQ. 19. How well did the project collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to manage the project?**

**Findings 19**

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews conducted among the project team reveals that the project utilized result-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in tracking project progress to outcome. Evidence shows that data was collected regularly using a mix of quantitative tools (attendance sheets, pre/post-tests for trainings, and surveys and qualitative tools such as focus group discussions, outcome harvesting, and Most Significant Change stories. The project team also developed indicator tracking tools for implementing partners to support project progress tracking. In the life of the project, the project team conducted a rapid Assessment in the 6 project locations to collect progress data, report on the result indicators, and address critical data gaps. There was also spot check and field monitoring visits during the implementation period.

Evaluative evidence further reveals that project data was reviewed regularly through monthly review meetings, enabling the project team to track progress against indicators and flag issues in real time. This adaptive monitoring approach allows mid-course corrections. One notable example of data-driven adaptation was the introduction of dispute resolution and conflict management training for coalition members based on the findings of the Rapid Assessment conducted by UN Women, UNDP, and WV, which identified disputes among CSOs as a major challenge. To address the challenge, the project team introduced dispute resolution and conflict management training for coalition members. The project collected and used data reasonably well to monitor progress and inform management decisions. The iterative use of updated data improved the responsiveness of interventions and strengthened local engagement.

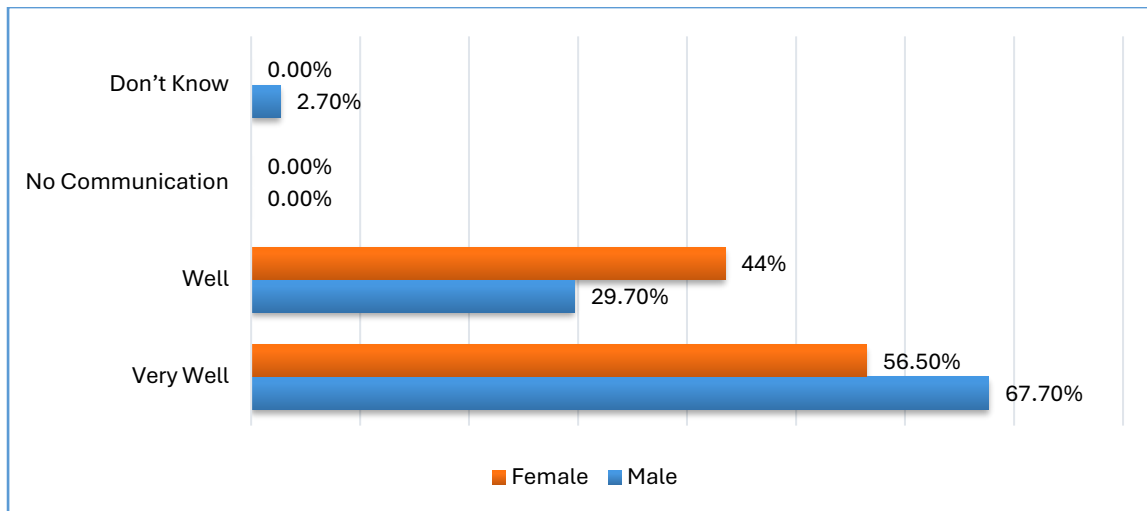
**EQ. 20. How well did the project team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders, and project beneficiaries on its progress?**

**Findings 20**

Our evidence set from document reviews and interviews with stakeholders confirmed that the project was effective in maintaining regular and structured communication with its implementing partners, particularly local women-focused CSOs. Communication channels included scheduled coordination meetings (monthly), joint planning sessions, and virtual updates via email. The implementing partners reported that they felt well-informed about project goals, timelines, deliverables, and reporting expectations. The coalition members who are the primary beneficiaries of the project also noted that they were informed of progress in the implementation of the project by the implementing partners. The project team effectively engaged government ministries such as the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and local councils. These engagements helped align project activities with national WPS priorities and ensured buy-in from local authorities. National stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation appreciated the visibility of the project and noted that they were kept informed about its progress, especially during joint review sessions and public advocacy campaigns.

At the community level, communication with project beneficiaries (coalition members) was facilitated through sensitization meetings and training feedback sessions. Beneficiaries consistently reported that they were aware of the project's objectives and activities and felt engaged throughout the process. The project's implementing partners and some of the CSO coalition members have functional community feedback mechanisms, including the use of office lines, suggestion boxes, and WhatsApp platform to report on issues of GBV and general project management feedback. Evidence from the beneficiary survey indicates that over 99 percent of the beneficiaries noted that the project communicated very well with the beneficiaries. By gender, 100 percent of the female beneficiaries noted that the project team communicated well with them, against 97.3 percent of male beneficiaries (Figure 4.5). Overall, the project demonstrated strong communication practices with implementing partners and stakeholders, contributing to coordinated action and shared ownership.

**Figure 4.5: The Extent the Project Team communicated with Beneficiaries**



#### EQ. 21. Did the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?

##### Findings 21

The evaluation team carried out a cost analysis of the project, and the findings indicate that it provided good value for money, considering the scale of outcomes achieved relative to the resources invested. The assessment considered the four key elements of value for money: economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. The project demonstrated prudent use of resources. Procurement records show competitive bidding for equipment and services, which helped reduce input costs. There was also evidence in the use of local resources, particularly in the local implementing partners and women-focused CSOs, which further reduced operating costs. Also, most of the project's intended outcomes were achieved within the budget. Overall, the project delivered solid value for money by achieving a good balance between cost control and impact delivery. It is important to state that the social values, such as strengthening of the capacities of women-focused Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to effectively engage in peacebuilding and decision-making processes as well as the enhancement women's leadership roles at community, district, and national levels, ensuring their voices are heard and their contributions recognized in peace and security dialogues cannot be quantified in monetary terms. The evaluation notes that the project provided good value for money in its implementation.

#### EQ. 22. To what extent did the project ensure synergies within different programs of UN agencies and other implementing organizations, and donors?

##### Findings 22

The evaluation found that the project ensures synergies within different programs of UN agencies, other implementing organizations, and donors to a large extent. The project team intentionally aligned with and complemented ongoing interventions by UN agencies in Sierra Leone, particularly those focused on gender equality, peacebuilding, and women's empowerment. For example, coordination with the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) programs and UNDP-led local governance initiatives allowed the project to avoid duplication, leverage shared platforms (e.g., community peace structures), and amplify advocacy messages around the WPS Agenda. In addition, the UN PBF also implements coordination meetings with all its grant recipient organizations to build synergies and avoid duplication of activities. This also promoted **synergies** of the project within different programs of UN agencies.

UN Women, as the lead agency, regularly participated in UN Country Team gender and peacebuilding working groups, ensuring that project priorities were synchronized with broader UN frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. The project fostered collaboration with other INGOs and bilateral development partners working in similar thematic areas. Joint events, such as 16 Days of Activism campaigns, policy dialogues, and district-level peace forums, were co-hosted with other organizations, thereby increasing reach and impact.

Additionally, the project complemented other donor-funded programs such as Christian Aid Ireland's 'Uman, Land En Kol At' (Women's Land for Peace): Women Lead Transformative Pathways to Peace

project funded by PBF, which focuses on catalyzing women's leadership to drive peaceful, gender transformative natural resource management (NRM) of land. At the community level, the project was built on existing structures such as CSOs and women's networks, many of which were also supported by other actors. This helped to consolidate community ownership and reinforce messaging on women's participation in peacebuilding. In several districts, coalition members reported that the project allowed them to collaborate, enabling them to scale their advocacy and training efforts beyond the original scope of the project. Overall, the evaluation concluded that the project ensures synergies within different programs of UN agencies, other implementing organizations, and donors to a large extent.

#### **4.4. Sustainability:**

##### **EQ. 23. To what extent did the project contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas, and policies?**

###### **Findings 23**

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team reveals that the localizing for change project contributed to the broader strategic outcomes identified in nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas, and policies, to a large extent, particularly the following:

- Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SiLNAP) II on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820. The project directly supported several strategic objectives of SiLNAP II, including enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding, strengthening the institutional capacity of women's organizations, and promoting gender-responsive community conflict prevention.
- Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019–2023 and 2024–2029. The project contributed to Pillars 4 and 2 of the MTNDP 2019 -2023 and 2024–2029 (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment) by strengthening the voice and agency of women in governance and peace processes.
- Sierra Leone Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act and Customary Land Rights Acts of 2022. The project aligned with the GEWE Policy's goals of expanding women's participation in public life and improving their access to decision-making. Through leadership training, mentoring, and advocacy, the project helped to prepare women leaders to engage in political and civic spaces.

Overall, the evaluation findings confirmed that the project made a significant contribution to the realization of strategic outcomes outlined in national plans and policies, particularly SiLNAP II, the MTNDP, and the GEWE Policy to a large extent.

##### **EQ. 24. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonable period after the project is closed?**

###### **Findings 25**

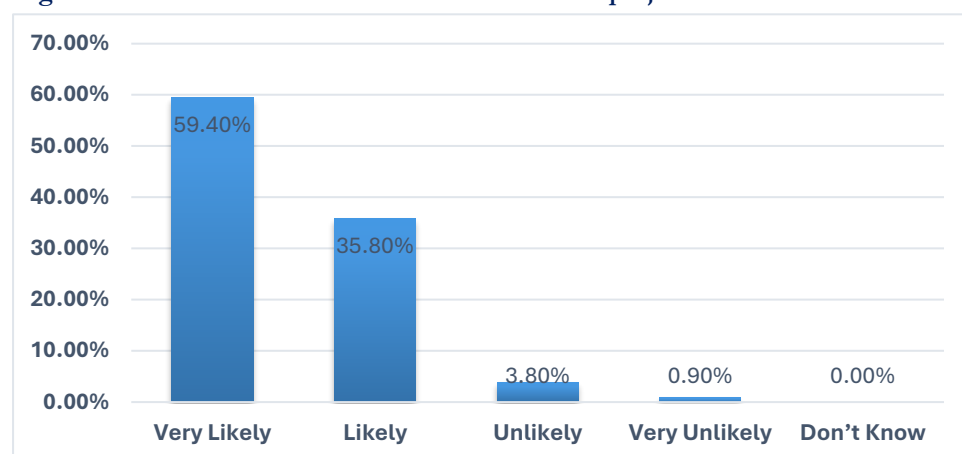
Evidence from the review of project documents and interviews conducted among the project team shows that from the design of the project, the sustainability of project benefits was given adequate attention. Thus, from the design, the project placed strong emphasis on local ownership by strengthening the capacity of women-focused CSOs and embedding project activities within existing community structures. The skills acquired in leadership, advocacy, conflict mediation, and organizational development are expected to endure and be replicated, especially where CSOs have integrated the tools and practices into their regular programming.

Evidence shows that several women-focused CSOs supported by the project are now actively engaging with local councils, peace committees, and traditional leaders' roles, and they are expected to continue beyond the project lifespan. For instance, the project has been engaging with traditional leaders at community level including (Mamie Queens, Chiefs, youth leaders, etc) in providing awareness raising and popularization on the GEWE ACT, this have provided significant changes within the project implementing location by having a female town chief in Pujehun district Gbanga chiefdom and the inclusion of 2 female

jurors in Karene district local court.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the project established or strengthened community peace structures such as the One Stop centres and Rainbow Centres. With the linkage of the project to these existing structures, the likelihood of continued functionality is high.

Similarly, the project's alignment with national frameworks such as the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (SiLNAP III) and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act (2022) provides a strategic foundation for sustainability. However, sustained engagement will depend on ongoing access to funding and political space for civic actors. While some CSOs have developed resource mobilization strategies, financial sustainability remains a concern, especially for smaller, rural-based organizations. Also, evidence from the survey among the beneficiaries (Figure 4.6) confirmed that over 59 percent of the respondents noted that it is very likely that the benefits of the project will be sustained.

**Figure 4.6: The likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a long time**



The evaluation identified several gaps to project sustainability, including funding gaps in post-project remain a major threat, particularly as many local CSOs continue to rely heavily on external donor support. Also, the lack of formal institutionalization of some community structures, such as the coalition itself, may hinder their long-term viability without continued external or government support. Overall, the evaluation found that there is a high likelihood that the project's benefits, especially those related to capacity building, local ownership, and institutional engagement. However, continued support (financial, technical, and political) will be essential to consolidate and scale the gains achieved.

**EQ. 25. Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity, etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project?**

**Findings 25**

The endline evaluation findings show that the intervention design includes appropriate sustainability, but with a limited, comprehensive exit strategy. From its inception, the project prioritized local ownership and leadership as a core strategy for sustainability. As noted previously, there was alignment with national frameworks such as SiLNAP II, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Policy, thereby anchoring project objectives within national and sub-national priorities. The project also promoted the inclusion of local structures, traditional leaders, and security sector actors in dialogues and training, enhancing local buy-in and legitimacy. These various elements demonstrated a deliberate effort to embed change within existing national and community systems, which is a key indicator of sustainability planning. Another key element of sustainability embedded in project design is capacity building aimed at enhancing the organizational and leadership capacity of local women's CSOs. The integration of these key elements in the project design increased the likelihood that local actors could continue peacebuilding efforts beyond the life of the project.

<sup>75</sup> PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, November 2024

However, despite the project's implementation supported by sustainability goals, the design did not include a fully developed or explicit exit strategy. For instance, there were no formal guidelines or phased transition plans for transferring responsibility or resources to local institutions, like transferring the supervision of the coalition to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. Also, there was no strategy put in place to ensure the continuous coordination and monitoring of the results of the activities of the Coalition members and post-project resource mobilization or linking CSOs to long-term funding pipelines. Overall, the evaluation noted that the project design included several key elements supportive of sustainability, notably strong local ownership, capacity strengthening, and alignment with national frameworks. However, the absence of a comprehensive, documented exit strategy and limited institutionalization of gains within national systems pose risks to the continuity of positive peacebuilding outcomes after project closure.

**EQ. 26. Are there any good practices and lessons learned that can be replicated or taken into consideration in future programming by UNDP, UN Women and World Vision in the region?**

**Findings 26**

The evaluation identified good practices and lessons learned that can be replicated or taken into consideration in future programming by UNDP, UN Women, and World Vision. One of the critical good practices of the project was localizing the WPS Agenda through women-focused CSOs. The project successfully translated global and national WPS commitments into actionable community-level initiatives by partnering with women-focused CSOs, which enhanced grassroots relevance, built community trust, and fostered ownership.

Additionally, the project approach of capacity strengthening and mentorship of women-focused CSOs was a notable strategy. The project went beyond one-off training sessions by offering continuous capacity development, mentoring, and peer learning opportunities. This approach allowed CSOs to internalize knowledge and apply it practically over time. Combining technical training with coaching, organizational development, and leadership support helped CSOs evolve into credible peacebuilding actors. This is recognized as a good practice by the evaluation. Going forward, long-term mentorship and tailored support to local actors should be integrated into future programming by the consortium. Furthermore, the strategic multi-stakeholder dialogue approach adopted by the project was rated good. The project created safe spaces for dialogue among women, local authorities, security actors, and traditional leaders. These platforms enabled collaborative problem-solving and trust-building around peace and gender issues. Some critical lessons learnt identified by the evaluation are as follows:

**1. Sustainability Requires Formal Exit Planning.**

While the project promoted ownership and built local capacity, the lack of a structured exit strategy limited clarity on how results would be maintained. Future projects must plan for sustainability from the design phase, including funding transition and institutional integration.

**2. Need for Robust Resource Mobilization Support for Women-Focused CSOs**

Many coalition members expressed concern about post-project funding. Training on proposal writing and donor mapping was appreciated, but insufficient for long-term sustainability. Future programming should embed resource mobilization strategies early and connect CSOs to potential donors or grant schemes.

Overall, the project offers several highly replicable practices that UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision can incorporate into future WPS and peacebuilding programming in Sierra Leone and similar contexts. Emphasis should be placed on localization, integrated capacity building, inclusive dialogue platforms, and sustainability planning.

**EQ. 27. How strong is the commitment of the government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives?**

**Findings 27**

Our evidence from document reviews and interviews with government officials from the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs indicates that the commitment of the government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives is strong to a large extent. As earlier stated, the project aligned well with national priorities, particularly the implementation of SiLNAP III and the Gender Equality



and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Policy. Key government ministries, including the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA), demonstrated a strategic interest in the project's objectives.

The Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, in its capacity as co-chair of the project board, provided strategic oversight on the planning and implementation of the project. The Ministry was also engaged in training of coalition members on relevant gender normative WPS frameworks (Beijing 30+, CEDAW, GEWE Act, UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, etc). The Ministry has also been instrumental in providing legislative and policy guidance in the project implementation locations.<sup>76</sup> The following excerpt from the interview with the official from the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs confirmed that the Ministry is committed to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives.

*The localizing for change project supports the work of our Ministry and was instrumental in the successful development of the SiLNAP III. Currently, we are developing the budget for the implementation of the plan with the support of the Coalition members at the national level, and they will play a major role in the implementation of the plan. So, I will say that the government is fully committed to sustaining the results of the project.*<sup>77</sup>

At the district level, although District Councils, Paramount Chiefs, and security actors actively engaged with women-focused CSOs in implementing peacebuilding initiatives, there was no evidence of commitments to include WPS indicators in their local development plans and recognized CSOs as key partners in conflict prevention. On the other hand, among the women-focused CSOs, there is high enthusiasm and ownership of project results. Many have continued peace dialogues, community monitoring, and awareness activities independently or with minimal support. Some CSOs are seeking new funding opportunities to sustain their initiatives through the development of proposals for donor funding, although none of the Coalition members across the 6 districts have received any funding from donors. Thus, without additional institutional or financial support, volunteer fatigue and capacity constraints could affect continuity. Overall, the evaluation findings indicate that the commitment of government and stakeholders to sustaining results is moderately strong.

#### **EQ. 28. How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity to ensure the sustainability of efforts and benefits?**

##### **Findings 28**

The evaluation found that the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity to ensure the suitability of efforts and benefits. The project's investment in capacity building has empowered coalition members in the following areas: 1) Conflict transformation, 2) resource mobilization, 3) group dynamics, 4) Advocacy and communication, 5) Relevant Normative Policy Frameworks, 6) Institutional Strengthening and financial management, etc. These trainings have contributed to enhancing the skills and capabilities of CSO members in advocating for gender-sensitive policies and contributing to conflict prevention and dispute resolution. These skills have provided a platform for coalition members in Karene District to jointly develop a grant proposal for funding, although the review was not successful with the donor.

Another evidence of the project demonstration contributing to the development of national capacity to ensure the suitability of efforts and benefits is the enhancement of the capacities of local governance and traditional institutions. The project targeted local councils, security structures, and traditional leaders, offering training and tools to integrate gender-sensitive peacebuilding into their mandates. One of the corollaries of this is the current inclusion of trained women representatives into the District Peace and Security Committees (DPSCs) and chiefdom councils in multiple districts. In Kono district, for instance, as a result of the project's interventions, local women successfully advocated for access to land to establish a marketplace, demonstrating their improved capacity and hands-on skills to advocate for change. In Kamabai, the Paramount Chief and local authorities revealed a groundbreaking change: they have agreed to include women on the jury for local court proceedings, a role previously reserved only for men. In Kamabai, the project contributed to increasing women's participation in the jury by the chiefdom authority

<sup>76</sup> PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, November 2024

<sup>77</sup> Excerpt from KII with an official from MoGCA

to have women sit on the jury and actively participate in local court proceedings along with men. This has enhanced women's inclusion in local dispute resolution structures. In Pujehun district, the project engaged with traditional leaders at community level including (Mamie Queens, Chiefs, youth leaders, etc) in providing awareness raising and popularization on the GEWE ACT, this have provided significant changes as there is now female town chief in Pujehun district and the inclusion of 2 female jurors in Karene district local court.<sup>78</sup>

Additionally, the project worked in alignment with the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 (SiLNAP II) and the GEWE Policy, contributing to national capacity by building awareness and technical understanding of these frameworks at the local level. Overall, the evaluation found that the project made a measurable contribution to national and local capacity development, particularly through empowering women-focused CSOs, strengthening gender-responsive governance at the local level. These efforts significantly improve the likelihood of sustainability, though greater institutional anchoring and resource commitment are still required to fully embed the results.

#### **4.5. IMPACT**

**EQ. 29: What measurable changes have occurred because of supported efforts and strengthened capacities of women candidates, aspirants, or elected, as well as the national partners from government and civil society to advance gender equality and women's human rights in Sierra Leone? And what LNOB groups have been impacted by the project?**

##### **Findings 29**

The evaluation found that significant measurable changes have occurred because of supported efforts and strengthened capacities of women candidates, aspirants, or elected, as well as the national partners from government and CSOs to advance gender equality and women's human rights in Sierra Leone. The evaluation found that the project contributed to increasing the level of collaboration and communication among women- focused civil society organizations. It also contributed to increasing the number of actions taken by the Coalition as well as joint actions taken by the women-focused CSOs coalition to prevent conflict and promote meaningful participation of women. The project also made important contributions in increasing the number of women-focused CSOs participating in policy dialogue processes. Evidence shows that 36 coordination meetings were held by women-focused coalition Organisations established in the 6 project locations. Their engagement with religious, traditional leaders, the justice sector, and security apparatus both at the local and national level, resulted in enhancing, speedy trial of GBV cases, increased access to services for GBV survivors, women's involvement in decision-making and leadership as well as participation in peace-building processes both at the community and national levels.<sup>79</sup>

For instance, based on the intervention of the Coalition Members in Karene District, a GBV survivor was able to get justice, and the perpetrator, a key figure in the community (police officer), was dismissed from service and sentenced to jail. The coalition actively contributed both at the district and national level in the development, validation, and launch of the third generation National Action Plan 1325 (NAP III). The project's investment in capacity building enhanced the skills and capabilities of CSO members in advocating for gender-sensitive policies and contributing to conflict prevention and dispute resolution. The project has also contributed to shifts in local policies and bylaws that promote women's involvement in peacebuilding and security. In Kamabai, local leaders committed to including women on local court juries, a role previously limited to men. These policy changes underscore the project's influence on traditional norms, paving the way for greater gender inclusivity and support for women's roles in governance and community justice.

The project also contributed to increasing women's participation at the chiefdom, district, and national governance levels, of which 573 female aspirants were trained on electoral processes and leadership skills for the positions of Members of Parliament and Councilors in the six project locations. 16 became Members of Parliament and 68 became councilors in the 2023 elections. Thus, the project contributed towards increasing female representation in politics from 14.5 percent to 30.4 percent in Parliament and 19

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<sup>78</sup> PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, November 2024

<sup>79</sup> PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, November 2024

percent to 34 percent in local councils during the 2023 general elections.<sup>80</sup> The project demonstrated a deliberate focus on marginalized and underrepresented women, in line with the Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) principle. Evidence from the survey among the parliamentarians and Councillors shows that 90.9 percent of the respondents stated that the project activities strengthened their capacity as women candidates during the 2023 general election. The project was also effective in strengthening the capacities of national partners. For instance, evidence from the survey reveals that 72.7 percent of the respondents noted that the project activities contributed to strengthening their capacity at the national level.

The project targeted women with disabilities and survivors of GBV and was linked with the Coalition member that provided safe spaces for them, and GBV survivors were able to get justice through the support of the Coalition. In Pujehun district, the Coalition members established a Safe Space for GBV survivors, which supports many GBV survivors across the district. During the field mission by the evaluation team, over 10 GBV survivors were seen in the Safe Space. The project also targeted rural women across the districts and provided awareness raising on GEWE, the National Unity agreement, Customary Land Rights Acts, prevalence and impact of GBV, and national issues that have the potential to create instability in communities. Overall, the project generated tangible, measurable changes in both women's participation in political processes and the capacity of institutions to uphold gender equality and women's human rights. It also successfully prioritized and impacted LNOB groups, helping broaden the base of women peacebuilders and rightsholders who are empowered, visible, and engaged in advancing Sierra Leone's WPS and GEWE commitments. An elected female councillor in the Western Area – Urban (Freetown City Council) noted in the KII session as follows:

*The biggest impact of the impact of the Localisation for Change Project in her career is the skills in engaging with different stakeholders and constituents within his ward.....knowing and appreciating that she is councillor for all, and not only her part members, has helped her to build community cohesion and trust among her constituents. Subsequently, she noted, 'My ward committee has an equal gender split and includes members from across different political parties', she concluded. Similar sentiments of improved capacity, confidence, and engagement of elected female representatives were noted across the other project districts. However, I would like to add that we, the councillors, need more capacity building, especially on how to make laws and other support that will make us function properly at the council'*<sup>81</sup>

#### 4.6. COHERENCE:

##### **EQ. 30. To what extent did the PBF project complement work among different entities, especially with other UN actors?**

##### **Findings 30**

The evaluation findings confirmed that the project complements work among different entities, especially with other UN actors to a moderate extent. Evidence shows that the project complemented the EU-UN Spotlight initiative project in Sierra Leone, which focuses on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) as well as traditional harmful practices (HP) such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).<sup>82</sup> The project also complemented the UNDP project (Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone implemented from 2022-2024). The project aims to enhance the institutional capacity of key election management bodies, the judiciary, and the police to implement and oversee the 2022-2023 electoral cycle.<sup>83</sup> Evidence also shows that the project complemented the Youth in Politics and Peacebuilding project implemented by UNDP. The project aims to promote an inclusive political process, social cohesion, and socio-economic improvement for young people in Sierra Leone.<sup>84</sup>

As mentioned previously, the project also complemented the Christian Aid Ireland's 'Uman, Land En Kol At' (Women's Land for Peace): Women Lead Transformative Pathways to Peace project funded by PBF, which focuses on catalyzing women's leadership to drive peaceful, gender transformative natural resource

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Excerpt from KII with Elected female Councillor the Western Area – Urban

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<sup>83</sup> [https://www.gtai.de/resource/blob/1066466/8c0bd4b5aa822da010a310c55add7ef2/PRO202401021066456\\_Annex%202.pdf](https://www.gtai.de/resource/blob/1066466/8c0bd4b5aa822da010a310c55add7ef2/PRO202401021066456_Annex%202.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/p011886001?wbdisable=true>

<sup>84</sup> <https://mptf.undp.org/project/00140111>

management (NRM) of land.<sup>85</sup> However, there was no evidence of programmatic integration (e.g., joint planning, shared outcomes, or pooled funding) among the projects. Thus, complementarity with other programmes being implemented at the district level needs to be coordinated rather than happening by chance, as is the case in the project. To this extent, the evaluation noted that the project demonstrated moderate complementarity with other actors.

**EQ. 31. If the project was part of a broader package of PBF, to what degree were the project's design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting aligned with those of other projects?**

**Findings 31**

Evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team confirmed that the localizing for change project was designed and implemented as part of the broader United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) portfolio in Sierra Leone and was a complementary effort under the PBF's thematic priority on inclusive peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The project design was well-aligned with the overarching strategic priorities of the PBF in Sierra Leone, particularly the promotion of inclusive governance, women's leadership in peacebuilding, and the operationalization of the WPS Agenda. As noted previously, the UN PBF promotes coordination with all its grant recipients. This helped to promote alignment in project design and implementation with other projects funded by PBF. However, there was no evidence of joint monitoring visits with other PBF-funded projects. Overall, the project demonstrated a high degree of alignment in design and implementation as part of the broader United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) portfolio; there was little or no evidence of the project's alignment in monitoring and reporting with those of other projects. It is therefore important to strengthen joint planning and design at the inception of new PBF cycles to ensure harmonization, as well as implement joint monitoring and evaluation processes for PBF-funded projects.

**EQ. 32. How were stakeholders involved in the project's design and implementation?**

**Findings 32**

Our evidence set from document reviews and interviews with various stakeholders of the project, including government partners, women-focused CSOs, and traditional leaders at the district level, indicates the involvement of stakeholders in the project's design and implementation, which was evident at various stages of the project. At the design stage, evidence shows that the project team had robust consultations with different national, regional, provincial, district, and local stakeholders.

There were also consultations with the Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs and her team, which helped to shape the choice of interventions in the proposal. In addition, consultations were held with the Executive Secretary of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion.<sup>86</sup> Traditional leaders and local governance structures were engaged early to gain buy-in and to shape culturally sensitive approaches for working in rural and conflict-affected areas. These consultations helped ensure that the project addressed locally relevant peace and gender concerns, including the need for stronger localization of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. At the implementation phase, the project adopted co-implementation with Women-focused CSOs were not only beneficiaries but also served as implementing partners, leading activities such as community outreach and sensitization campaigns, training and mentoring for women aspirants, as well as monitoring and reporting on local peace and security dynamics.

At the district levels, stakeholders were brought together regularly through the formed Coalition of women-focused CSOs, allowing for continuous feedback and adaptation of strategies. The project deliberately included youth groups in the various capacity-building programmes, community dialogues, and advocacy campaigns to foster broader societal support for gender equality and inclusive peace. Overall, the project demonstrated high stakeholder participation throughout its design and implementation.

**4.7. Gender Equality and Human Rights (GE&HR)**

**EQ. 33. To what extent were human rights-based approaches and gender equality incorporated in the design and implementation of project interventions?**

**Findings 33**

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<sup>85</sup> <https://mptf.undp.org/project/00132863>

<sup>86</sup> PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, November 2024

Evidence from document reviews, FGDs, and KIIs with key stakeholders confirmed that human rights-based approaches and gender equality were incorporated in the design and implementation. Evidence shows that the project was grounded in strong human rights-based approaches (HRBA) and principles of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). These were not only integrated conceptually but also operationalized throughout the design and implementation of project activities. All objectives, strategies, approaches, and activities highlighted in the project are focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in political participation and peacebuilding activities. The project placed rights-holders, particularly women, at the center of interventions. Women-focused CSOs were actively involved in designing local action plans for WPS and leading advocacy on gender-responsive governance.

Also, duty bearers (e.g., local councils, traditional authorities, security actors) were engaged and trained to uphold gender equality standards and inclusive governance. The project encouraged accountability through community dialogues and feedback mechanisms. The project promoted non-discrimination and inclusion by targeting underrepresented groups such as women and survivors of GBV. The project directly contributed to localizing the WPS Agenda by aligning its objectives with the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 (SiLNAP II). Over 573 female aspirants were trained on electoral processes and leadership skills for the positions of Members of Parliament and Councilors in the six project locations.<sup>87</sup> The project applied do-no-harm principles, ensuring that women's participation did not expose them to backlash or risks of violence by engaging security actors to provide special protection for women voters and candidates and observers during the 2023 elections.<sup>88</sup> Overall, evidence shows that different categories of stakeholders, including women, men, boys, and girls as well as people living with disabilities, were involved in the design and implementation of the project. The project involvement of people with a disability further demonstrates that human rights-based approaches and gender equality were incorporated in the design and implementation to a large extent.

**EQ. 34. Were there any constraints (e.g. political, practical, and bureaucratic) to addressing human rights and gender equality efficiently during implementation? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?**

**Findings**

**Findings:**

As stated previously, while the project was firmly rooted in human rights and gender equality principles, several constraints were encountered during implementation that posed challenges to fully realizing these objectives. However, the constraints were mitigated to a large extent. The constraints include traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms in rural communities, which often led to resistance against women's leadership and participation in peacebuilding, and male-dominated local governance structures, which often pose resistance to power sharing with women or endorse gender-sensitive community actions. There were also political barriers from some local political actors who viewed the empowerment of women aspirants as a threat to existing power hierarchies. There were also resource constraints for members of the Coalition across the district. For instance, most of the coalition members complained of a lack of financial resources to implement the activities in their work plan, which hindered their ability to sustain in key activities across the districts.

As part of the mitigation measures for the above constraints, the project team conducted targeted sensitization sessions with traditional leaders to address resistance and reshape gender norms. This helped foster greater acceptance of women's participation in peace and governance structures across the districts, as earlier stated. The Coalition members were trained in resource mobilization to address resource constraints. The project also provided tailored support for women aspirants in areas of mentorship and capacity building to navigate hostile political environments and participate safely in political spaces. Overall, the evaluation notes that despite significant socio-political constraints, the project made deliberate and strategic efforts to uphold human rights and gender equality standards during implementation.

#### **4.8. CONFLICT-SENSITIVITY**

**EQ. 35. Did the project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?**

**Findings 35**

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<sup>87</sup> PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, November 2024

<sup>88</sup> PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT, November 2024



The desk review, as well as discussions with key informants and beneficiaries, indicates that the PBF project adopted explicit approaches to conflict sensitivity. The project recognized the complex socio-political context of Sierra Leone, including the historical legacies of conflict, ongoing community-level disputes, and gender-based marginalization, and took deliberate steps to ensure that interventions would “do no harm” and instead promote social cohesion. At the design stage of the project, the project was preceded by contextual and conflict analysis in targeted districts. This informed the geographic targeting of the six districts targeted by the project and the choice of local partners. Risks such as leadership failure, bad governance, corruption, mistrust, economic hardship, unemployment, access to land, political polarization as well as cultural and traditional and socio-cultural norms which limit women's access to and participation in politics and decision-making were identified and factored into the project strategy.

The project also maintained inclusive stakeholder engagement, which ensured that all categories of stakeholders were engaged in the project design and implementation and thus promoted inclusive dialogue and reduced the potential for exclusion-driven grievances. By working with Coalition members across the six districts, the project contributed to the early identification and resolution of local tensions. Also, feedback mechanisms allowed community actors and CSO partners to flag risks and tensions, leading to adjustments in activity scheduling or messaging. The project demonstrated a strong commitment to conflict-sensitive programming, balancing its empowerment objectives with careful analysis of community dynamics, power relations, and local risks.

**EQ. 36. Were the funds’ recipients’ internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach?**

**Findings 36**

The evaluation found that the internal capacities of the project’s primary funds recipients—UN Women, UNDP, World Vision, and local civil society organizations (CSOs) were generally adequate to implement a conflict-sensitive approach, but there were variations in capacity, depth of application, and sustainability across implementing partners. Evidence shows that by category, three institutions received the PBF funding. They include two UN agencies (UN Women and UNDP), World Vision, and the Women-focused CSOs. UN Women and UNDP brought strong institutional frameworks, tools, and experience in conflict-sensitive programming, particularly in fragile and post-conflict contexts like Sierra Leone. Their existing conflict analysis frameworks, gender-conflict integration tools, and do-no-harm protocols were leveraged during activity planning and implementation. On the other hand, World Vision Sierra Leone demonstrated good operational capacity at the community level, with trained field officers skilled in navigating local tensions, youth conflict, and gender-based violence risks. As stated in the earlier sections, the project prioritized working with local women-focused CSOs, many of which had experience in peacebuilding, mediation, and community dialogue. The women-focused CSOs were further exposed to capacity-building conflict management-related topics such as conflict resolution techniques, Gender-sensitive peacebuilding, and risk analysis and community engagement strategies.

However, while some CSOs demonstrated a strong grasp of conflict-sensitive approaches, others lacked the tools or experience to systematically apply them. Monitoring revealed that some grassroots partners defaulted to reactive rather than proactive risk mitigation. There was also evidence of high staff turnover within the CSOs, which poses risks to institutional memory on conflict-sensitive approaches. Overall, the evaluation concluded that the internal capacities of UN agencies and lead partners were broadly adequate to support a conflict-sensitive approach. However, among local CSOs, capacity levels were mixed, and ongoing conflict sensitivity depended heavily on continuous external technical support and training.

**EQ. 37. Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?**

**Findings 37**

The final evaluation of the localizing for Change project found no major unintended negative impacts. Many stakeholders, including the beneficiaries across the districts targeted by the project, were affirmative in stating that the project did not have unintended negative impacts at the district level.

**EQ. 38. Was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?**

**Findings 38**

Evidence shows that the localizing for change project had adequate monitoring framework. The project utilized standard results-based monitoring frameworks aligned with UN Women and UNDP templates. Also, implementing partners submitted quarterly reports, which included updates on activities, outputs, and basic risk narratives. There were also periodic joint review meetings with partners (including World Vision and women-led CSOs) that allowed for collaborative problem-solving and some course correction. Additionally, there were community feedback sessions and focus group discussions organized by the implementing partners, which were used to gather reflections from beneficiaries, especially women aspirants and women-focused CSOs. These sessions occasionally identified early warning signs of resistance and challenges, which the project team attempted to address. The evaluation concluded that the project had routine monitoring structures that helped to track the unintended impacts of the project.

#### **4.9. CATALYTIC:**

##### **EQ. 39. Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic?**

###### **Findings 39**

Evaluative evidence reveals that the localizing demonstrated moderate to strong catalytic effects, especially in terms of programmatic influence, partnership development, and policy dialogue. While the project had limited direct leverage of financial investments, it catalyzed visibility, awareness, and local ownership of the WPS Agenda. One of the programmatic catalytic effects of the project is the strengthening of the women-focused CSOs. The project enhanced their technical, advocacy, and coordination capacities. This has contributed to increased collaboration and working together of women-focused CSOs in the pursuit of the WPS Agenda at the grassroots. Several members of the Coalition reported that, following the project, the Coalition is more united in working together and initiating activities for joint implementation in the communities. The project contributed to elevating the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, particularly in decentralizing its implementation through the Coalition members at the districts. Programmatically, the project catalysed multi-stakeholder collaboration. The project encouraged collaboration between UN Women, UNDP, World Vision, local CSOs, and government stakeholders, which laid the groundwork for more integrated, multi-actor programming.

Financially, there was no evidence of any catalytic effect as the project itself did not directly mobilize significant additional funding during its lifetime. However, its demonstration effect helped position local partners for future grants. At least two donors (Iceland, Irish Aid) have expressed interest in working with the Coalition. For Iceland, a concept note has been developed. However, the short project duration of the project limited long-term investment leverage. There was no dedicated follow-on funding strategy or formal resource mobilization plan built into the project design, especially for the established Coalition. There was also limited engagement with the private sector or high-level political stakeholders, which limited broader catalytic influence. Overall, the project was programmatically catalytic, especially in empowering women-focused CSOs, increasing their visibility, and strengthening WPS collaboration. Financial catalytic effects were modest but promising, with evidence of follow-on engagement and potential for future investment.

##### **EQ. 40. Has PBF funding been used to scale up other peacebuilding work, and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?**

###### **Findings 40**

Findings from document reviews and interviews with the project team, including the IPs, confirmed that the PBF funding for the localizing for change project contributed to scaling up peacebuilding work and establishing broader platforms for inclusive and gender-responsive peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. While the scale-up was not always direct or immediate, the project played a strategic enabling role, particularly in localizing Women, Peace and Security (WPS) efforts and linking grassroots actors with national peacebuilding structures. During the field visits, there was evidence that many of the established women-focused CSOs were advancing their peacebuilding activities in the communities. In Pujehun District, the Coalition has constructed an additional 4-bedroom apartment in the Safe Home for victims of GBV in the district, and also integrated other important stakeholders, such as the Family Support Unit (FSU) and the Gender Unit of the District Council, to enhance the effectiveness of the Coalition's activities.

Evidence also reveals that the project has created a broader platform for peacebuilding across the districts. The project contributed to the revitalization of traditional district Peace and Security Committees, especially through the inclusion of Mamie Queens, Chiefs, youth leaders, female town chiefs in the

traditional community council, as well as the inclusion of 2 female jurors in Karene district local court. It also supported the WPS National Action Plan (NAP) implementation platform, bringing grassroots women's voices into policy monitoring as well as the development of the SilNAP III 2025-2029. The project also created cross-sectoral linkages through joint implementation by UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision, and served as a model for multi-sectoral peacebuilding programming, linking WPS, governance, community development, and civic engagement. This collaboration encouraged more integrated proposals and coordination under the PBF umbrella. Overall, the evaluation noted that the project has helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding across the targeted district.

#### **4.10. LOCALIZATION:**

##### **EQ. 41. Were national and local stakeholders sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle?**

###### **Findings 41**

As previously noted, national and local stakeholders were sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle as noted by 91.5 percent of the respondents. The project team carried out robust consultations with different national, regional, provincial, district, and local stakeholders. At the national level, evidence from interviews with government partners confirmed that there were consultations with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs. In addition, consultations were held with the Executive Secretary of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion. In addition, there were consultations with CSOs at national and sub-national levels. These consultations were done to ensure national ownership and greater inputs regarding grassroots mobilizations and priorities. The CSOs provided valuable inputs on critical challenges facing CSOs working on women's peace and security/peacebuilding issues, and women's political participation/elections issues. At the district levels, traditional leaders and local governance structures were also engaged early to gain buy-in and to shape culturally sensitive approaches for working in rural and conflict-affected areas. Broadly, there was a baseline conducted by the project team at the beginning of the project, which helped to gather feedback from diverse stakeholders that informed the design of the project. However, there was limited stakeholder engagement at the national level, especially members of parliament, political parties, which could have further deepened stakeholders' involvement at the design stage of the project.

At the implementation stage, the project team engaged several CSOs who were sub-granted to support the implementation of the project activities. The Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, in its capacity as co-chair of the project board, provided strategic oversight on the planning and implementation of the project. At the monitoring and evaluation stage, the project team was intentional in engaging relevant stakeholders, including the government partners, parliamentarians, local district councilors, CSOs, and community leaders, as well as members of the coalition. Overall, the project demonstrated high stakeholder participation throughout its design and implementation.

##### **EQ. 42. Did the project strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders (national and local governments and CSOs)?**

###### **Findings 42**

As noted in the earlier sections, the project contributed to strengthening the capacities of national and local stakeholders (national and local governments and CSOs). At the national level, the project collaborated with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and benefited from technical collaboration and evidence-based contributions to WPS NAP implementation. The project further contributed to the strengthening of CSOs (Primary Beneficiaries) in the area of proposal writing, project management, advocacy and policy dialogue, monitoring and reporting, and gender-responsive budgeting. The project also contributed to strengthening CSOs' understanding of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and the National Action Plan (NAP), enabling more strategic engagement in peacebuilding and gender equality dialogues. Many Coalition members reported that the project significantly built their capacity.

At the local level, the project contributed to strengthening the capacity of local government and traditional leaders in inclusive peacebuilding skills, as they were trained on gender equality and conflict sensitivity, mediation and community dialogue facilitation as well as participatory planning and inclusion of women and marginalized groups. The project supported the revitalization of peace committees such as Peace Ambassadors with new mechanisms for integrating women's voices and conflict prevention at the district level. Overall, the project made notable contributions to strengthening the technical, organizational, and

participatory capacities of national and local stakeholders, particularly women-led CSOs and local authorities. The strengthened capacities translated into greater voice, coordination, and engagement in peacebuilding processes aligned with the WPS agenda. However, longer-term support and institutionalization mechanisms would enhance the sustainability of these gains.

#### **EQ. 43. How useful did national and local stakeholders perceive PBF's support?**

##### **Findings 43**

Evidence from the interview with national and local stakeholders indicates that stakeholders generally perceived the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)'s support as highly useful, timely, and relevant to the local context of Sierra Leone. The support was valued not just for its financial input, but for its strategic focus on inclusive peacebuilding, particularly through the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and local ownership of peacebuilding processes. Stakeholders highlighted that PBF's support addressed gaps not covered by other donors, especially in:

- Strengthening grassroots women's organizations
- Linking local-level peacebuilding to national WPS priorities
- Promoting inclusive participation in local governance and elections

Stakeholders saw PBF as a catalyst for multi-stakeholder collaboration, particularly among:

- Government ministries
- Local CSOs
- UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision

The joint implementation model helped improve coherence in WPS programming across sectors. Several stakeholders, particularly local CSOs, expressed concern that the project duration was too short to consolidate gains and ensure sustainability. Some described PBF support as "a good start" but not sufficient to build long-term resilience in fragile communities. Overall, PBF's support was widely perceived as useful and impactful, particularly for empowering women-led peacebuilding efforts, enabling inclusive dialogue, and supporting national-local synergies around the WPS agenda. While stakeholders welcomed its catalytic nature, they also expressed the need for longer-term, sustained support and deeper engagement to maximize and maintain the outcomes of peacebuilding initiatives.

#### **4.11. TIME-SENSITIVITY:**

#### **EQ. 44. Was the project well-timed to address a conflict factor or capitalize on a specific window of opportunity?**

##### **Findings 44**

Our evidence set from document reviews and interviews with stakeholders confirmed that the project was well-timed and contextually relevant, both in terms of addressing ongoing conflict drivers and seizing a strategic window of opportunity to influence peace and governance processes in Sierra Leone. The project directly responded to structural gender inequality and women's marginalization in decision-making, recognized as underlying factors that perpetuate exclusion, grievance, and fragile peace in post-conflict Sierra Leone. At the time of project design, several targeted districts were experiencing intercommunal tensions, political disputes, and electoral-related violence risks. The project addressed these through local dialogue mechanisms, the inclusion of women in peace structures, and early warning capacities.

In terms of capitalizing on a strategic window of opportunity, the project was implemented in the lead-up to Sierra Leone's June 2023 general elections, a period marked by heightened political tensions, risk of electoral violence, and opportunities to influence political participation and civic awareness. The project leveraged this period to empower women candidates and aspirants, strengthen local peace infrastructure. The project aligned with renewed national efforts to implement the Second National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, providing a practical platform to localize WPS commitments and strengthen national-local linkages. The project was also implemented at the point of the development of the SilNAP III and therefore supported the development of the WPS strategic document.

However, the evaluation notes that while timing was appropriate, the project's relatively short duration limited its ability to deeply embed some of its more transformative elements, particularly around institutional change and post-election follow-up. Also, elections in Sierra Leone are a five-year cycle. The

evaluation found that the project started too close to elections, and some critical pre-election activities were not delivered. A future intervention should be timed such that it provides enough time for pre-election interventions to support women political candidates and train CSOs to prioritise WPS interventions before the elections. An electoral cycle approach is therefore recommended.

Overall, the project was strategically timed and well-positioned to address key conflict dynamics related to exclusion, electoral risk, and local peace deficits. It effectively seized a critical moment in Sierra Leone's political calendar to promote gender-inclusive peacebuilding and strengthen community resilience. Future peacebuilding efforts would benefit from building on this momentum through longer-term engagement and follow-up programming.

#### **EQ. 45. Was PBF funding used to leverage political windows of opportunity for engagement?**

##### **Findings 45**

Evaluative evidence confirmed that PBF funding was strategically used to leverage political windows of opportunity to engage stakeholders and promote inclusive peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. The timing and focus of the project enabled targeted interventions that responded to key political dynamics, particularly around elections and women's political participation. Evidence shows that the project leveraged political Windows. Firstly, the 2023 General Elections in Sierra Leone.

The PBF-supported interventions were deliberately aligned with the pre-election period, capitalizing on the increased political attention to women's participation in governance and the heightened risk of political tensions and potential electoral violence. The project supported capacity-building for women candidates and aspirants and conflict prevention training for community stakeholders. Secondly, is the implementation of Sierra Leone's Second National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325. The project complemented national efforts to implement the WPS agenda, helping translate policy into local action.

Thirdly, the decentralization and Local Governance Reforms, especially the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act, 2022, and the Customary Land Rights Act, 2022. The project coincided with the passage of these laws in 2022 and supported their implementation through various activities of the project. However, some stakeholders felt the political engagement could have extended beyond election-focused windows to longer-term post-election governance and accountability follow-up. In conclusion, the evaluation found that PBF funding was effectively leveraged to engage with critical political windows of opportunity, particularly around elections, decentralization, and the rollout of the national WPS agenda. Future programming should aim to sustain and deepen this engagement in post-election contexts to ensure long-term impact.

#### **4.12. RISK-TOLERANCE AND INNOVATION:**

#### **EQ. 46. If the project was characterized as “high risk”, were risks adequately monitored and mitigated?**

##### **Findings 46**

Evaluative evidence confirmed that the project operated in a moderate to high-risk environment, given the political sensitivities surrounding elections, gender equality, and peacebuilding in post-conflict Sierra Leone. While the project was not officially classified as “high risk” in all formal documents, several elements of its context and target outcomes carried inherent risks, especially around:

- Political tensions during the 2023 general elections
- Pushback against women's political participation
- Local-level resistance to WPS norms and land rights reforms
- Security concerns in fragile districts

Despite these factors, the project implemented a series of risk mitigation and monitoring strategies that were generally appropriate and effective, though with some limitations.

As part of the risk mitigation measures, the project adopted context-sensitive design at the initial stage, which involves risk assessments that were conducted during project design. Thus, the project incorporated a



conflict-sensitive approach and built flexibility into implementation timelines. The project activities were delivered in close partnership with local women's CSOs, traditional leaders, and district authorities, helping to de-escalate tensions and foster local ownership. Also, the implementing partners (UN Women, UNDP, World Vision) held regular coordination meetings to review contextual developments and adapt interventions as needed. Also, the project team adopted flexibility and activity sequencing to address emerging risks without significant disruption. Overall, the project demonstrated a proactive and generally effective approach to monitoring and mitigating risks in a politically sensitive and gendered environment. While it was not officially flagged as "high risk," the measures in place reflected a solid understanding of contextual threats.

#### **EQ. 47. How novel or innovative was the project approach? Can lessons be drawn to inform similar approaches elsewhere?**

##### **Findings 47**





Evaluative evidence confirmed that the project employed a relatively innovative approach, particularly in how it integrated localization, women-led peacebuilding, and policy advocacy. While individual components of the project (e.g., capacity building, awareness raising, policy engagement) were not entirely new in themselves, the combination, sequencing, and delivery mechanisms offered some innovative features that contributed to effectiveness and replicability.

Some of the notable achievements of the project include localizing the WPS Agenda through Women-focused CSOs. The project decentralized WPS implementation, translating international frameworks (e.g., UNSCR 1325, Sierra Leone's NAP) into community-level actions. By working through grassroots women's organizations, it enhanced local legitimacy and shifted power to local actors, which is still uncommon in many WPS projects. Another novel approach of the project is the integration of capacity building and mentorship for Women Aspirants. The project moved beyond one-off trainings by combining political literacy and confidence-building, mentorship from experienced female leaders, and linkages with the media. This holistic approach addressed both personal and structural barriers to women's participation in decision-making.

Also, the hybrid peace structures with traditional leaders and women CSOs were innovative. The formation or revitalization of inclusive community peace committees that included both chiefs and women leaders helped bridge the gap between customary and formal governance systems. These platforms offered an innovative way to legitimize women's roles in traditionally male-dominated peacebuilding domains.

The project was also novel in the strategic use of policy and Legal Reform. The project aligned with and amplified recent legislative advances such as the GEWE Act (2022) and the Customary Land Rights Act (2022). By using these as entry points for community engagement, it helped translate abstract policy gains into tangible local change, which many gender-equality programs fail to do effectively.

Several lessons can be learnt from these novel approaches that can inform similar approaches elsewhere and they include:

-  **Genuine localization requires power shifts:** Empowering women-led CSOs to lead implementation fosters trust, responsiveness, and sustainability—but it also requires adequate resources, autonomy, and long-term support.
-  **WPS Implementation Must Be Contextualized:** The project's flexible, context-responsive methods demonstrated that “one-size-fits-all” peacebuilding approaches fail in culturally diverse and decentralized settings.
-  **Inclusive Dialogue Platforms Are Crucial:** Multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces that include traditional leaders, women, and youth offer a safe and credible environment for local peace and policy discourse.
-  **Mentorship and Networks Matter:** Building intergenerational networks of women leaders (aspirants, elected officials, activists) contributes to long-term empowerment and role modeling.

Overall, the evaluation notes that the project was innovative in how it localized and operationalized the WPS agenda using a women-led, community-anchored, and law-linked approach. Its experiences offer valuable lessons for other fragile or post-conflict settings, especially where top-down WPS strategies have

struggled to gain traction.

## **5.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

The overarching conclusion of this evaluation is that the localizing for change project remains relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis. The project made a significant contribution to strengthening the institutional capacity of women-focused CSOs to coordinate their effort in sustaining peace and enhancing the safety and security of women and girls in Sierra Leone. The findings above provide the basis for the overall conclusions and emerging recommendations resulting from this evaluation. Building on the above findings, these conclusions aim to provide UN Women, UNDP, WV, and PBF with actionable suggestions and recommendations to support their future programming in Sierra Leone. The specific conclusions are given below based on the evaluation criteria.

**Relevance of the localizing for change project in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis, appropriateness of the strategy to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the project's design.**

#### **Conclusion 1: (Based on Findings 1-3 on Relevance)**

The project's relevance in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis can be seen in several dimensions. Firstly, the project was designed to focus on tackling gender-based exclusion, which is one of the key drivers of conflict in Sierra Leone. Secondly, the project, through its various capacity-building activities and awareness creation at the community level, contributed to strengthening community peace structures, women-focused CSOs, and traditional leaders, which are the entities vital for mediating local disputes and promoting social cohesion. Thirdly, the project was implemented around the 2023 general elections when the risk of violence and political exclusion was heightened. Also, the project adopted conflict-sensitive approaches in its design and implementation. The project incorporated local context assessments, gender and conflict analysis, and consultations to guide programming. The evaluation found that the project was both appropriate and strategically aligned with Sierra Leone's peacebuilding priorities and challenges at the time of its design. The project was both appropriate and strategically aligned with Sierra Leone's peacebuilding priorities and challenges at the time of its design.

#### **Conclusion 2 (Findings 4-5 on Relevance)**

The evaluation confirmed that the project is relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups, which was facilitated by the assessments and consultation with the target group at the design stage of the project. The evaluation further confirmed that the project was highly relevant and responsive to Sierra Leone's national peacebuilding priorities, as outlined in several strategic frameworks, including the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019–2023), the National Peacebuilding Strategy, and SiLNAP II (2024–2029). Sierra Leone's post-war context is marked by fragile peace, intermittent local conflicts (often over land, chieftaincy, and political tensions), and persistent gender inequality. In response, the project targeted conflict-prone districts Bombali, Karene, Kono, Pujehun, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban, where community-level tensions and exclusion of women from decision-making were evident. Overall, the Localizing for Change project has been both relevant and responsive to Sierra Leone's peacebuilding priorities.

#### **Conclusion 3: (Based on Findings 6-7 on Relevance)**

The evaluation found that the project's Theory of Change (ToC) was logical, clearly defined, and aligned with global and national frameworks for implementing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda. It presented a plausible pathway to achieving outcomes and impact but lacked evidence of being informed by lessons learned or credible sources. The ToC also oversimplified local political and traditional power dynamics, assuming that capacitating CSOs alone would lead to influence without adequately addressing resistance from patriarchal systems. Key assumptions and risks were not explicitly stated. Despite these gaps, the project strategically addressed significant peacebuilding gaps in Sierra Leone, particularly the limited participation of women and women-focused CSOs in peace and political processes. This shows the relevance of M&E involvement during the design of programmes.

## **Effectiveness of the Programme in terms of the extent it achieved its intended objectives and contributed to the project's strategic vision**

### **Conclusion 4: (Based on Findings 8-10 on Effectiveness)**

The evaluation concluded that the Localizing for Change project was largely effective, achieving over 90 percent of its 42 logframe indicators and making significant progress in strengthening women's CSOs and localizing the WPS Agenda in Sierra Leone. The political environment offered both opportunities, through supportive policies, and challenges due to tensions surrounding the 2023 elections. The project's advocacy with traditional leaders and male allies improved community acceptance of women's participation in peace and security. However, deep-rooted gender norms and resistance to women's leadership limited the reach and impact of some advocacy efforts at the community level.

### **Conclusion 5: (Based on Findings 11-12 on Effectiveness)**

The evaluation found that the project showed a strong commitment to gender mainstreaming, with 100 percent of its budget allocated to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). It ensured the inclusion of women, youth, and people with disabilities in all phases and built the capacity of women-focused CSOs in leadership, advocacy, and negotiation. The project enhanced women's participation in district peace and security structures, boosting their confidence, technical skills, and collaboration with authorities. The targeting of six high-risk districts was appropriate, though the evaluation noted that the selection criteria for districts and beneficiaries should have been more clearly defined from the outset.

### **Conclusion 6: (Based on Findings 13-14 on Effectiveness)**

The project monitoring system was adequate in capturing data on peacebuilding results at an appropriate outcome level, with a structured result framework in place to track output and outcome-level results. The project had a result framework with clearly defined indicators disaggregated by gender, age, and district. However, there were fewer indicators explicitly focused on capturing intermediate or long-term peacebuilding outcomes.

## **The efficiency of the project in terms of resource allocation measures taken to ensure that resources are used efficiently.**

### **Conclusion 7: (Based on Findings 15-17 on Efficiency)**

The evaluation found that the project had a lean but well-structured management system with clearly defined roles. Monthly coordination meetings between the consortium and women-focused CSOs supported local ownership and alignment with peacebuilding priorities. However, coordination between the lead agency and implementing CSOs was weak, as partners were more aligned with their respective sub-granting agencies than the lead agency. Delayed fund disbursements also affected the project's early implementation. Despite these challenges, the inclusive, multi-stakeholder management approach facilitated joint planning and regular coordination, contributing to effective delivery and measurable results. Overall, management and coordination were largely effective, though greater efficiency and integration could have enhanced outcomes.

### **Conclusion 8: (Based on Findings 18-20 on Efficiency)**

The evaluation confirmed that the consortium approach used for project implementation was strategic and efficient, leveraging each agency's strengths, avoiding duplication, and ensuring context-specific delivery. Procurement followed UN procedures, promoting transparency but sometimes causing delays in fund disbursement. While the sub-granting approach built some capacity among women-focused CSOs, it also created a micro sub-granting system involving CSOs with limited community presence. The project effectively used data for monitoring and decision-making and ensured strong synergies with other UN programs and community structures. This enhanced community ownership and reinforced support for women's participation in peacebuilding.

### **Conclusion 9: (Based on Findings 21 -24 on Sustainability)**

The evaluation found that the Localizing for Change project significantly contributed to national strategic outcomes, aligning with key policies such as SILNAP II, the Medium-Term National Development Plan, the GEWE Act, and the Customary Land Rights Acts. The project prioritized local ownership and sustainability by strengthening women-focused CSOs and embedding activities within community

structures. Skills in leadership, advocacy, and conflict mediation are likely to endure. However, sustainability faces challenges, including funding gaps and the lack of formal institutionalization of some community structures. Overall, while the project's benefits are likely to be sustained, ongoing financial, technical, and political support will be crucial to fully consolidate and expand its achievements.

#### **Conclusion 10: (Based on Findings 25-28 on Sustainability)**

The endline evaluation findings show that the intervention design includes appropriate sustainability, but with a limited, comprehensive exit strategy. From its inception, the project prioritized local ownership. There was also an alignment with national frameworks such as SiLNAP II and the GEWE Policy. As part of sustainability, the project also promoted the inclusion of local structures, traditional leaders, and security sector actors in dialogues and training, enhancing local buy-in and legitimacy. One of the critical good practices of the project was localizing the WPS Agenda through women-focused CSOs. The project successfully translated global and national WPS commitments into actionable community-level initiatives. Additionally, the project approach of capacity strengthening and mentorship of women-focused CSOs was a notable strategy. However, despite the project's implementation supported by sustainability goals, the design did not include a fully developed or explicit exit strategy. Overall, the project offers several highly replicable practices that UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision can incorporate into future WPS and peacebuilding programming in Sierra Leone and similar contexts.

#### **The impact produced, positive and negative, intended, or unintended, directly (target groups) and indirectly (larger society)**

#### **Conclusion 11: (Based on Findings 29 on Impact)**

The evaluation found that the project led to significant measurable changes in advancing gender equality and women's rights in Sierra Leone. It strengthened the capacities of women candidates, elected officials, and national partners, increasing collaboration among women-focused CSOs and joint actions to promote peace and women's participation. The project trained 573 female aspirants, resulting in 16 women elected to Parliament and 68 as councilors in the 2023 elections, raising female representation in Parliament from 14.5% to 30.4% and in local councils from 19% to 34%. It also enhanced women's participation in policy dialogues and improved responses to gender-based violence (GBV) cases. Overall, the project brought about tangible improvements in women's political participation and institutional capacity for gender equality.

#### **Coherence**

#### **Conclusion 12: (Based on Findings 30-32 on Coherence)**

The evaluation confirmed that the project moderately complemented the work of other UN entities and partners, aligning with initiatives such as the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, UNDP's elections project, and Christian Aid Ireland's women-led peacebuilding project. It was implemented as part of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) portfolio, contributing to inclusive peacebuilding and conflict prevention. While there was no evidence of joint monitoring visits, the project aligned well with PBF's design, implementation, and Results-Based Management (RBM) system. Overall, the project demonstrated strong alignment within the broader PBF framework.

#### **Conclusion 13: (Based on Findings 33-34 on Gender Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming)**

The evaluation confirmed that the project effectively integrated human rights-based approaches (HRBA) and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) throughout its design and implementation. It addressed the root causes of gender inequality in political participation and peacebuilding by placing women and other marginalized groups at the center of interventions. Women-focused CSOs led local action planning and advocacy, while duty bearers were engaged and trained on gender-responsive governance. The project also ensured the inclusion of men, women, youth, and people with disabilities, demonstrating a comprehensive commitment to human rights, equality, and social inclusion.

#### **Conclusion 14: (Based on Findings 35 -38 on Conflict-Sensitivity)**

The project applied explicit conflict sensitivity approaches, recognizing Sierra Leone's complex socio-political context and aiming to promote social cohesion while doing no harm. It was informed by contextual and conflict analysis, which guided the selection of target districts and local partners. The project ensured

inclusive stakeholder engagement throughout design and implementation, fostering dialogue and minimizing the risk of exclusion-related grievances. By working with Coalition members, it helped identify and resolve local tensions early. The final evaluation found no major unintended negative impacts, with stakeholders affirming the project's positive and conflict-sensitive approach.

#### **Conclusion 15: (Based on Findings 39-40 on Catalytic)**

The Localizing for Change project showed moderate to strong catalytic effects, particularly in influencing programs, building partnerships, and advancing policy dialogue around the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda. It strengthened women-focused CSOs, fostering greater collaboration and local ownership of WPS issues. Although the project did not directly attract significant new funding, it increased the visibility and positioning of local partners for potential future grants. The short project duration and lack of a formal resource mobilization strategy limited its financial catalytic impact. Overall, the project was programmatically catalytic, with modest but promising financial effects.

#### **Conclusion 16: (Based on Findings 41-43 on Localization)**

The evaluation found that national and local stakeholders were sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle. The project demonstrated high stakeholder participation throughout its design and implementation. The project contributed to strengthening the capacities of national and local stakeholders (national and local governments and CSOs). Evidence also shows that national and local stakeholders perceived the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)'s support as highly useful, timely, and relevant to the local context of Sierra Leone. The support was valued not just for its financial input, but for its strategic focus on inclusive peacebuilding, particularly through the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and local ownership of peacebuilding processes. While stakeholders welcomed its catalytic nature, they also expressed the need for longer-term, sustained support and deeper engagement to maximize and maintain the outcomes of peacebuilding initiatives.

#### **Conclusion 17: (Based on Findings 44-45 on Time Sensitivity)**

The evaluation confirmed that the project was well-timed and highly relevant, effectively addressing conflict drivers and leveraging a strategic opportunity to influence peace and governance processes in Sierra Leone. Implemented during a period of political tensions and electoral risks, the project used local dialogues, women's inclusion in peace structures, and early warning systems to mitigate conflict and promote participation. It also empowered women candidates and strengthened local peace infrastructure ahead of the 2023 general elections. However, the short project duration limited the depth of its impact, particularly in achieving institutional change and post-election follow-up.

#### **Conclusion 18: (Based on Findings 46-47 on Risk Tolerance and Innovation)**

The evaluation confirmed that the project operated in a moderate to high-risk environment due to political sensitivities around elections, gender equality, and peacebuilding in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Although not officially classified as "high risk," the context and goals involved inherent risks, particularly during the 2023 elections and in fragile districts. The project implemented appropriate and effective risk mitigation and monitoring strategies, demonstrating a proactive approach to managing political and gender-related risks. Additionally, the project was noted for its innovative integration of localization, women-led peacebuilding, and policy advocacy, effectively operationalizing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda through a community-driven approach.

### **5.2. Lessons Learnt**

The localizing for change project yielded several strategic lessons that are critical for improving future programming in WPS in Sierra Leone. The lessons are presented below:

#### **Lesson 1: Localization requires deep contextual understanding.**

The project undertook several assessments of the socio-cultural norms, gender roles, and conflict histories to ensure the project activities are relevant to the target communities.

#### **Lesson 2: Localization Enhances Ownership and Sustainability**

Localizing the WPS agenda through grassroots women-led CSOs fostered greater local ownership, relevance, and sustainability of interventions, especially in post-conflict communities.



### **Lesson 3: Localization of the WPS Agenda is Most Effective When Women's CSOs Lead Implementation.**

Empowering women-focused CSOs to lead advocacy and awareness creation at the community level ensures contextual relevance and strengthens local ownership.

### **Lesson 4: Capacity Building is Foundational but Needs Continuity**

Capacity strengthening of women-focused CSOs improved organizational performance, advocacy skills, and engagement in peacebuilding. However, short-term training was not enough—ongoing mentorship and funding access are critical.

### **Lesson 5: Strong Consortium Coordination Enhances Delivery**

Collaboration among UN Women, UNDP, and World Vision brought diverse strengths—technical, operational, and community-level reach. Regular coordination meetings and joint planning were essential to avoid duplication and ensure synergy.

### **Lesson 6: Multi-stakeholder engagement is essential**

The localizing for change project involved a broader coalition of actors, men, women, youths, and traditional leaders in the design and implementation. This contributed to the success recorded by the project.

### **Lesson 7: Institutional and Traditional Barriers Require Long-Term Engagement**

Despite progress, deep-rooted structural barriers such as patriarchal norms and weak policy implementation remained significant. Addressing these requires sustained investment beyond the project's lifecycle.

### **Lesson 8: Women-Focused CSOs Still Face Resource Constraints**

While the women-focused CSOs gained skills and visibility, their access to national WPS platforms, funding and remains limited. Future initiatives should prioritize advocacy and linking the coalition at higher levels of governance.

### **Lesson 9: Mentorship Strengthens Women's Political Participation Beyond Training.**

Pairing aspirants with experienced women leaders enhances confidence, networks, and campaign strategies.

**Lesson 10: The Separate engagement of implementing partners in a consortium makes coordination by the lead agency cumbersome.** The consortium partners were separately engaged by members of the consortium. It was difficult for UN Women, which is the Lead Agency, to effectively coordinate the activities of the implementing partners.

## **6.0. Recommendations**

The evaluation has identified eight recommendations that are critical for UN Women, UNDP, WV, and PBF contribution to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. They have been sequenced by their importance, as perceived by the evaluation team. The recommendations are based on the evaluation framework and the analysis that informed the findings and conclusions. They were validated by key stakeholders in an Exit Workshop carried out at the end of the field mission and also through the review of the evaluation report.

Table 6.1: Recommendations with the specification of action and timeframe

Specific Recommendations	Responsibility	Priority
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Programmatic recommendations:		
1. <b>Institutionalize the training curricula for security actors by integrating it into police training academies to ensure long-term effectiveness and sustainability.</b> The project team should consider institutionalizing the training curricula for security actors developed under the project in a subsequent phase to promote their effectiveness and sustainability (Findings 28).	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Intermediate
2. <b>The consortium should consider developing and using more outcome-level indicators that reflect changes in relationships, attitudes, power dynamics, and institutional responsiveness.</b> Most of the outcome-level indicators were activity- or output-based. There were fewer indicators explicitly focused on capturing intermediate or long-term peacebuilding outcomes. Future project design should consider the Engagement of the M&E officer at the design stage of the project (Findings 9 &13).	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Intermediate
3. <b>The project should consider the joint engagement of implementation partners to foster seamless coordination by the lead agency.</b> The consortium members have separately engaged their CSOs for project implementation. Thus, implementing CSOs' allegiance was with their granting agency. This made the coordination of activities cumbersome for the lead agency (Findings 17)	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
4. <b>The Strengthen Consortium Approach:</b> We noted that while the partners of the consortium worked as a team and complemented each other, there was no evidence of a centralised consortium operation and systematised cooperation and coordination. During field data gathering, the UN Women representative struggles to mobilise implementing partners who received funding from UNDP and World Vision. A centralised and coordinated consortium, with consortium staff and a consortium partner with fiduciary responsibilities, could have reduced some of these challenges. We recommend that a future intervention consider a centralised and well-coordinated consortium (Findings 17)	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
5. <b>The consortium should consider sustaining post-election capacity building for women councillors and Parliamentarians.</b> This is necessary given that some of the elected councillors and parliamentarians are new, and many of them stressed the importance of the post-election capacity building during the mission for final evaluation for the localizing for change project (Findings 3 &29).	UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
6. <b>Strengthen the CSO Coalition and reach expansion.</b> Noting the centrality of the CSO coalition as one of the major outputs and outcomes of the Localisation for Change project, findings indicate that the CSO coalition provides an important platform for civil society working in the WPS ecosystem to effectively coordinate and implement joint actions in support of women, peace, and security. Coalition members unanimously indicate a willingness to expand in rural communities beyond their communities. It is there recommended that future UNPBF funding should provide dedicated support to the coalition to expand its work across all sixteen districts, provide resources for the coalition to implement joined up interventions (Findings 40).	PBF/UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate
7. <b>Timing:</b> The project was implemented before the 2023 elections and continued after the elections. While this timeline was good, elections are a five-year cycle in Sierra Leone. We noted that the project started too close to elections and some critical pre-election activities were not delivered. A future intervention should be timed such that it provides enough time for pre-election interventions to support women political candidates and train CSOs to prioritise WPS interventions before the elections. An electoral cycle approach is therefore recommended (Findings 44 &45)	PBF/UN Women/UNDP/WV	Immediate

<p>8. <b>Institutionalize Women-Focused CSOs within Local Governance Structures</b></p> <p>To enhance the sustainability of the project's outcomes, it is essential to formally integrate women-focused Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) into existing local governance, peacebuilding, and development frameworks. This will involve establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between CSOs, the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs, local councils, traditional authorities, and security actors to ensure continued collaboration beyond the life of the project (Findings 25).</p>	UN Women/UNDP/ WV	Immediate
<p>9. <b>Develop a Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Plan with Clear Ownership.</b> The project team should consider supporting the Coalition CSOs partners to develop a joint Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Plan that will identify potential local and international funding sources to support continued CSO activities.</p>	UN Women/UNDP/ WV	Immediate
<p>10. <b>Consider having another phase of this project.</b> This is necessary to deepen impact and consolidate gains. While the project has made commendable progress in strengthening the capacity of women-focused CSOs and amplifying women's voices in peace and security processes, many of these changes are still in their early stages. A follow-up phase is necessary to consolidate these initial gains, ensure that behavioral and institutional shifts are sustained, and prevent a reversal of progress. Building lasting peace and inclusion requires longer-term engagement to shift deeply rooted social norms and power dynamics. Also, the project has likely identified best practices and models that have effectively enhanced women's participation and improved local peace outcomes. A new phase would allow these tested approaches to be replicated and scaled to other conflict-affected districts and communities that face similar challenges but were not covered in the current phase. (Findings 42, 43).</p>	UN Women, UNDP	Immediate
<p>11. <b>The consortium should consider strengthening project complementarity with other projects in the same districts.</b> While the project complemented work among different entities, there was no evidence of programmatic integration (e.g., joint planning, shared outcomes, or pooled funding) among the projects. Thus, complementarity with other programmes being implemented at the district level needs to be coordinated rather than happening by chance, as is the case with the project (Findings 30).</p>		

## Annex 1: Roles of stakeholders

WHO	WHAT Role in the Programme	WHY Purpose of involvement in the evaluation	PRIORITY Level of importance in the evaluation	WHEN Stage of their involvement in the evaluation	HOW Extent to which they participated
<b>UN Women, UNDP, and WV</b>	Grant Recipient. UNW, UNDP, and WV jointly implemented the project.	<p>-Review of the inception report and overall design of data collection methodology.</p> <p>-Contact and connection with other recipient organisations and implementing partners</p> <p>-Provision of background documents for review (MEAL approach, log frame, project document etc)</p> <p>-Provide timely feedback and input.</p> <p>They will be engaged during the evaluation in order to assess the programme achievements, implementation challenges and lessons learned.</p>	High Priority and significantly important. Their involvement was extremely important for the purpose of assessing the context in which the project was designed and implemented.	Throughout – from inception to final report	They will participate in inception meetings, collect data, and supervise the evaluation. They will also provide input to the evaluation report and use the findings for future interventions.
<b>The 50/50 Group SL</b>	Implementing Partner. CSOs Coalition member and supported female candidates to develop their manifestos and carry out effective campaigns at the national and at district levels, leveraging the female aspirant caucuses at the subnational levels	-Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). They will be included in the evaluation in order to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation team will have face-to-face meetings and group discussions with their representatives.	High. The 50/50 Group SL will be actively involved in the evaluation as they serve as one of the implementing partners of the project	Throughout – from inception to final report	Stakeholders from the 50/50 Group SL will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection
<b>Women' Forum for Human right and Democracy (WOFHRAD)</b>	Implementing Partner. Provide dleadership training for women and girl candidates at the national and local level	Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). WOFHRAD will be included in the evaluation to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.	High. WOFHRAD will be actively involved in the evaluation as they serve as one of the implementing partners of the project	WOFHRAD will be engaged in all the stages of the evaluation	Stakeholders from the WOFHRAD will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection
<b>WANEP-SL</b>	Implementing Partner. CSOs Coalition member mobilizes opinion leaders, peace ambassadors, mothers' groups, youth leaders at	Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). WANEP-SL will be included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the	High. WANEP-SL will be actively involved in the evaluation as they were one of the implementing partners for the project.	WANEP-SL will be engaged in all the stages of the evaluation	WANEP-SL will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection.

	national and local levels to keep speaking and conscientizing citizens to maintain the peace as well as promote meaningful participation of women. Engage with the security sector to provide special protection for women voters and candidates, and observers during the 2023 elections	project's relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation team will organize a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.			
<b>Media Matters for Women</b>	Implementing Partner. Organized women's peace and security court barrays/ town halls and help them form rural women's listeners groups through a podcast to generate issues and find solutions as they discuss. Support the training of the rural women's groups in using media equipment and tools to document and share their stories	Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Media Matters for Women will be included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation team will organize a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives. They will also support in reaching out to some of their beneficiaries for interviews by the evaluation team.	High. Media Matters for Women played a major role in the implementation of the project. They will be actively involved in the evaluation as they were one of the implementing partners for the project.	Media Matters for Women will be engaged throughout the evaluation stages.	They will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection and provide logistics support, especially in accessing their direct beneficiaries
<b>Mission for Salone Inter Religious Council</b>	Implementing Partner. Supported the CSOs coalition to engage the media, traditional & religious institutions, including male champions to support female and feminist candidature, address gender-based violence, including hate speeches, and bullying.	Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). They will be included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation team will organize a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives. They will also support in reaching out to some of their beneficiaries for interviews by the evaluation team.	High. Mission for Salone Inter Religious Council will play a major role in the implementation of the project. They will be actively involved in the evaluation as they were one of the implementing partners for the project.	They will be engaged throughout the evaluation stages.	They will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection and provide logistics support, especially in accessing their direct beneficiaries
<b>Women's Forum SL</b>	Implementing partner. They Supported Mass Sensitization to promote peace and Women's Participation. The Forum supported the establishment of	Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Women's Forum SL will be included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance,	High. Women's Forum SL will be actively involved in the evaluation as they serve as one of the implementing partners of the project	Women's Forum SL will be engaged in all the stages of the evaluation	Stakeholders from the Women's Forum will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection



	Mechanism to Collect Real Time Data: The forum established a women's situation that recorded 212 cases of violence during elections, including vandalism of a market stall. Establish a Monitoring Mechanism to Monitor Women's Participation in Politics	effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation team will organize a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives. They will also support in reaching out to some of their beneficiaries for interviews by the evaluation team.			
<b>Women in The Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL)</b>	Implementing Partners. Mass Sensitization to enhance Peace: 5 PSA's and videos were designed and shared on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to promote peace and social cohesion in Sierra Leone. The partner trained the coalition on media reporting of project outcomes and in amplifying results in various media platforms	Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). They will be included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation team will organize a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives. They will also support in reaching out to some of their beneficiaries for interviews by the evaluation team.	High. WIMSAL played a major role in the implementation of the project. They will be actively involved in the evaluation as they were one of the implementing partners for the project.	WIMSAL will be engaged throughout the evaluation stages.	They will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection and provide logistics support, especially in accessing their direct beneficiaries
<b>Coalition of Women-Focused CSO</b>	Beneficiary/Participatory Agency (Intervention output). Direct beneficiaries of the project. Received various capacity-building to promote and sustain peacebuilding and women's participation in Sierra Leone as well as initiate and lead conflict prevention, mitigation and promote women's participation before, during and after the 2023 elections	Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), FGDs and questionnaire administration. They will be included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation team will organize a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives. They will also support in reaching out to some of their beneficiaries for interviews by the evaluation team	High Priority and significantly important. Their involvement was extremely important for the purpose of assessing the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability	Inception, Data collection through to report presentation	They will serve as key informant interviewees, FGD discussants and respondents for questionnaire administration
<b>Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs</b>	The Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs in their capacity as co-chair of the project board, provided strategic oversight on the planning and	-Actively participate in the data collection exercise through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). They will be included in the evaluation in order to assess the project's	High. The ministry will be actively involved in the evaluation as they serve as co-chair of the project board	Throughout – from inception to final report	They will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection

	implementation of the project. The Ministry has also been instrumental in providing legislative and policy guidance in the project implementing locations.	relevance and alignment with government policies and strategies and sustainability issues			
<b>District Level Stakeholders</b>	Project Participants/Beneficiaries	Impact and relevance assessment	High	Data Collection	They will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection
<b>Women Leaders and Other Community People</b>	Project Participants/Beneficiaries	Impact and relevance assessment	High	Data Collection	They will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection

## Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Key question(s)	Indicators for measuring progress	Collection Method(s)	Data Source	Assumptions
<b>Relevance</b>	Was the project relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis?	Evidence that the project is relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis	-Document Analysis -KIIs, FGDs, and questionnaire administration with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data	All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.
	Was the project appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the project's design? Did relevance continue throughout implementation?	Evidence that the project is appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the project's design.	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	Project documents are available and accessible. The project team and IPs are available for interviews
	Was the project relevant to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?	Evidence that the project was relevant to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	Project documents are available and accessible. The project team and IPs are available for interviews
	Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? Were they consulted during the design and implementation of the project?	Evidence that the project is relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries.  Evidence of consultation with the project beneficiaries during the design and implementation of the project.	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire administration with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data	All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.
	How relevant and responsive has the project been to supporting peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone	Evidence that the project is relevant and responsive to supporting peacebuilding priorities in Sierra Leone  -	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	Project documents are available and accessible. The project team and IPs are available for interviews
	Were the programmatic strategies appropriate to address the identified needs of beneficiaries?	Evidence that the programmatic strategies are appropriate to address the identified needs of beneficiaries	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data	All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.

			administration with project beneficiaries		
	Was the project relevant to the national strategies, policies, plans, CEDAW, Beijing +25 and UNSCR 1325 and 1820 principles, UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?	Evidence that the project was relevant to the national strategies, policies, plans, CEDAW, Beijing +25 and UNSCR 1325 and 1820 principles, UN's peacebuilding mandate, and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. Project beneficiaries/target groups are available for data collection purposes and are properly mobilised for this purpose by the grant recipients and implementing partners
	Did the project's theory of change clearly articulate assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change?	Evidence that the project's theory of change clearly articulates assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. The project team is available and willing to participate as key informants.
	Was the theory of change grounded in evidence?	Evidence that the theory of change is grounded in evidence	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. The project team is available and willing to participate as key informants.
	To what extent did the project respond to peacebuilding gaps?	Evidence that the project responded to peacebuilding gaps in Sierra Leone.	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. Project beneficiaries/target groups are available for data collection purposes and are properly mobilised for this purpose by the grant recipients and implementing partners
<b>Efficiency</b>	Were resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) allocated strategically, were sufficient, and were efficiently used to achieve the project outcomes? -	Evidence that resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) have been allocated strategically to achieve the Programme outcomes	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project (including between the	Evidence of efficiency in the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project	-Document reviews	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data

	implementing agencies and with stakeholders)? Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? -	Evidence that the project funds and activities have been delivered in a timely manner.	-KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners		
	To what extent have the project management structure, implementing partners' organizational structure, management support and coordination mechanisms supported the delivery of the project to achieve good results?	Evidence that the project management structure, implementing partners' organizational structure, management support, and coordination mechanisms supported the delivery of the project to achieve good results	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	How efficient and successful was the project's implementation approach, including procurement, number of implementing partners and other activities?	Evidence of the efficiency and success of the project's implementation approach, including procurement, the number of implementing partners, and other activities?	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	How well did the project collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to manage the project?	Evidence of the use of data to monitor results.	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	How well did the project team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders and project beneficiaries on its progress	- Existence of a communication strategy Plan - - Communication material produced and disseminated by the project	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Did the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?	Evidence of value for money by the project. No. of beneficiaries of the project Project funds burn rate	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. The project team is available and willing to participate as key informants.
	To what extent did the project ensure synergies within different programs of UN agencies and other implementing organizations and donors?	Evidence that the project ensures synergies within different programs of UN agencies and other implementing organizations and donors?	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and PBF	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and PBF	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
<b>Effectiveness</b>	To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the project's strategic vision?	Evidence that the project achieves its intended objectives and contribute to the project's strategic vision?	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data	All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.



		administration with project beneficiaries		
	What influence have contextual factors (political, social, economic, and other) had on the effectiveness of the project?	Evidence of contextual factors (political, social, economic, and other) affecting the effectiveness of the project	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	To what extent did the project substantively mainstream gender and support gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding?	Evidence that the project substantively mainstreams gender and supports gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire administration with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.
	How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?	Evidence of appropriateness and clarity of the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Was the project monitoring system adequately capturing data on peacebuilding results at an appropriate outcome level?	Evidence that the project monitoring system is adequately capturing data on peacebuilding results at an appropriate outcome level	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	To what extent have beneficiaries been satisfied with the results?	Evidence that the beneficiaries are satisfied with the results.	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire administration with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.
<b>Impact</b>	What measurable changes have occurred because of supported efforts and strengthened capacities of women candidates, aspirants or elected, as well the national partners from government and civil society to advance gender equality and women's human rights in Sierra Leone? And what LNOB groups have been impacted by the project.	Evidence of measurable changes that occurred because of supported efforts and strengthened capacities of women candidates, aspirants or elected, as well the national partners from government and civil society to advance gender equality and women's human rights in Sierra Leone	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire administration with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.

<b>Sustainability</b>	To what extent did the project contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas and policies?	Evidence that the project contributes to the broader strategic outcomes identified in nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas, and policies.	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonable period after the project is closed?	Evidence of the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonable period after the project is closed	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire administration with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data	All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.
	Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project?	Evidence of the suitability plan/exit strategy	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Are there any good practices and lessons learned that can be replicated or taken into consideration in future programming by UNDP, UN Women and World Vision in the region?	Evidence of good practices and lessons learned that can be replicated or taken into consideration in future programming by UNDP, UN Women and World Vision in the region	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and implementing partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team and IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	How strong is the commitment of the government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives?	Evidence of and quality of Government, and or stakeholder commitment to sustaining the project initiatives	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. Project beneficiaries/target groups are available for data collection purposes and are properly mobilised for this purpose by the grant recipients and implementing partners
	How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in order to ensure the suitability of efforts and benefits?	Evidence of the project's contribution to national capacity for sustainability	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. Project stakeholders, including IPs and government partners
<b>Coherence</b>	To what extent did the PBF project complement work among different	Evidence of project complementarity with other interventions, especially with other UN actors?	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and PBF	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team, IPs and PBF	All IPs, the project team and PBF are ready and willing to

	entities, especially with other UN actors?				provide the needed data on complementarity
	If the project was part of a broader package of PBF, to what degree were the project's design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting aligned with that of other projects?	Evidence of project consistency with the wider PBF programme design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting strategies	-Document reviews -KIIs with the Project team and PBF	Project documents, KII Transcripts with the project team, IPs, and PBF	All IPs, the project team, and PBF are ready and willing to provide the needed data on complementarity
	How were stakeholders involved in the project's design and implementation?	Evidence of stakeholder consultation in project design	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, FGDs, and questionnaire administration with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts, survey data	All reports are readily accessible, and all stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data.
<b>Gender Equality and Human Rights</b>	To what extent were human rights-based approaches and gender equality incorporated in the design and implementation of project interventions?	Evidence that gender and human rights, considerations have been integrated into the project design and implementation.	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with Community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts	All IPs government partners, project teams, and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	Were there any constraints (e.g. political, practical, and bureaucratic) to addressing human rights and gender equality efficiently during implementation? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?	Evidence of constraints or facilitators (e.g., political, practical, bureaucratic) to addressing GE&HR issues during implementation	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts	All IPs, government partners, project teams, are ready and willing to provide needed data
	How revised or adopted new policy frameworks are in line with the CEDAW and 1325 are addressing the needs of women?	Evidence that the activities implemented during the intervention were free from discrimination to all stakeholders	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with Community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts	All IPs government partners, project teams, and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	To what extent have the capacities of duty-bearers and rights-holders been strengthened? To what extent have	Evidence that the capacities of duty-bearers and rights-holders have been strengthened.	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts	All IPs government partners, project teams, and beneficiaries

	the capacities of gender equality advocates been enhanced?		-KII with government partners -KII with Community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries		are ready and willing to provide needed data
<b>Conflict Sensitivity</b>	Did the project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?	Evidence of project approach to conflict-sensitivity	-Document Analysis -KIIs with the project team, IPs, and government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts.	The lead Grantee provides the required project documents on time for the review process. Project stakeholders, including IPs and government partners
	Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?	Evidence of unintended negative impact	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with Community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts	All IPs government partners, project teams, and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	Were funds' recipients' internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach?	Evidence that the funds' recipients' internal capacities are adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach.	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners	Project documents, KII Transcripts	All IPs, government partners, project teams, are ready and willing to provide needed data

### Annex 3: Disaggregation of Data collection by National and District level (Tables 2 and 3)

**Table 2: National Level Disaggregation of Data Collection**

Name of Institution	Location	Method of Data Collection	No. of participants	Males	Females	Total
UNW, UNDP, and WV	Freetown	KII	4	1	3	4
The 50/50 Group SL	Freetown	KII	3	0	3	3
Women's Forum for Human Rights and Democracy (WOFHRAD)	Freetown	KII	2	0	2	2
WANEP-SL	Freetown	KII	2	1	1	2
Women's Forum SL	Freetown	KII	2	0	2	2
Women in The Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL)	Freetown	KII	2	1	1	2
Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs	Freetown	KII	1	1	0	1
<b>PBF</b>	Freetown	KII	1	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>

**Table 3: District Level Disaggregation of Data Collection**

Location	Questionnaire	Method of Data Collection		No. of KIIs (Males)	No. of KIIs (Females)	No. of FGDs (Males)	No. of FGDs (Females)
		KII	FGD				
<b>Western Area Urban</b>	<b>11</b>	3	2	1	2	0	2
<b>Western Area Rural</b>	<b>16</b>	3	2	1	2	0	2
<b>Pujehun,</b>	<b>13</b>	6	2	3	3	0	2
<b>Kono</b>	<b>20</b>	3	2	1	2	0	2
<b>Karene</b>	<b>24</b>	6	2	6	4	0	2
<b>Bombali</b>	<b>22</b>	4	2	1	3	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	25	12	13	16	0	12

**Annex 4. Table 4.1: Accomplishment of the Project Outcome Indicators**

Indicators	Disagg.	Baseline Value	End of Project Indicator Target	Indicator progress to Date	Status	% achieved
Outcome Indicator 1a: % Increase in the level of collaboration and communication among women-focused civil society organizations	All	Below average 67%	High collaboration 99%	95%	achieved	95%
Outcome Indicator 1b: Increased in the number of actions taken by Coalition members (Disaggregated by National and District Level)	Total	0	20	30	Achieved	150%
	National	0	5	5	achieved	100%
	District	0	15	47	Achieved	313%



Outcome Indicator 2a: Number of joint actions taken by women-focused CSOs coalition to prevent conflict and promote meaningful participation of women (Disaggregated by National and District level actions)	Total	0	35	37	Achieved	105%
	National Level	0	5	4	Achieved	80%
	District Level	0	30	35		117%
Outcome Indicator 2b: Proportion of seats in parliament and local councils held by women	Total	18%	30%	32%	Achieved	106%
	Parliament	14.5%	30%	30.4%	Achieved	101.3%
	Local Council	17.5%	30%	34%	Achieved	113%
Outcome Indicator 2c: Number of cases of violence against girls and women reported during the elections cycle (Disaggregated by type of violence and geographic location)		0	0	101	NA	-
Outcome Indicator 2d: Number of women-focused CSOs participating in policy dialogue processes that seek to increase women participation and representation in decision making at local and national level	All	0	60	83	achieved	138%

**Annex 5: Table 4.2: Accomplishment of Output 1.1 Indicators**

Indicators	Disaggr.	Baseline Value	Target	Indicator Progress	Status	% achieved
<b>Output Indicator 1.1.1: Number of profiles developed</b>	All	0	218	218	Achieved	100%
<b>Output Indicator 1.1.2: Number of functional coalition groups established at national and district levels</b>	Total	0	7	7	Achieved	100%
	National	0	1	1	Achieved	100%
	District	0	6	6	Achieved	100%
<b>Output Indicator 1.1.3: Quality of the working together toolkit developed and disseminated</b>	Unsatisfactory	0	satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achieved	100%
	moderately					
	satisfactory					
<b>Output Indicator 1.1.4: Number of meetings conducted at the national and district level</b>	Total	0	13	82	Achieved	631%
	National	0	1	10	Achieved	1000%
	District	0	12	72	Achieved	600%
<b>Output Indicator 1.1.5: Number of women-focused CSO members trained on monitoring and advocacy techniques (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)</b>	Total	0	120	144	Achieved	120%
	Women	0	100	81	Achieved	81%
	Men	0	20	63	Achieved	315%
	Disabled	0	2	1	Achieved	50%
	18 - 35	0	80	91	Achieved	114%
	36 - above	0	40	53	Achieved	133%
	Total	0	8	11	Achieved	125%

<b>Output Indicator 1.1.6:</b> <b>Number of information hub setup</b>	National	0	2	4	Achieved	150%
	District	0	6	7	Achieved	117%
<b>Output Indicator 1.1.7:</b> <b>Number of coalitions CSO members trained in tracking, monitoring and advocating for SILNAP financing (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)</b>	Total	0	120	130	Achieved	108%
	Women	0	100	89	Achieved	89%
	Men	0	20	41	Achieved	205%
	Disabled	0	2	3	Achieved	150%
	18 - 35	0	80	88	Achieved	110%
	36 - above	0	40	42	Achieved	105%
<b>Output Indicator 1.1.8:</b> <b>Number of women-focused CSOs actively advocating for SILNAP financing (disaggregated by National and Sub-national)</b>	Total	0	120	87	Not Achieved	73%
	National	0	60	32	Not Achieved	53%
	Sub-national	0	60	55	Not Achieved	91%

**Annex 6: Table 4.3: Accomplishment of Output 1.2 Indicators**

Indicators	Disaggr.	Baseline Value	Target	Indicator Progress	Status	% achieved
<b>Output Indicator 1.2.1: Number of trained coalition members demonstrating skills and techniques in using the 'Working Together Manual and Tool Kit' (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)</b>	Total	0	120	120	Achieved	100%
	Women	0	100	77	Not Achieved	77%
	Men	0	20	43	Achieved	215%
	Disability	0	2	3	Achieved	150%
	18-35 Years	0	80	66	Achieved	82.5%
	Above 36 Years	0	40	54	Achieved	135%
<b>Output Indicator 1.2.2: Number of coalition members trained as TOT on relevant normative frameworks; UN Resolution 1325, Beijing Declaration, Platform for Action and CEDAW (disaggregated by age, sex, disability)</b>	Total	0	120	129	Achieved	107%
	Women	0	90	73	Achieved	81%
	Men	0	30	56	Achieved	187%
	Disability	0	2	2	Achieved	100%
	18 - 35	0	80	43	Not Achieved	54%
	36 - above	0	40	86	Achieved	215%
<b>Output Indicator 1.2.3: Number of coalition members trained on CEDAW and VAW</b>	Total	0	120	139	Achieved	116%
	Women	0	90	96	Achieved	107%
	Men	0	30	43	Achieved	143%
	Disability	0	2	2	Achieved	100%
	18 - 35	0	80	104	Achieved	130%

referral (disaggregated by age, sex, disability)	36 - above	0	40	35	Achieved	87.5%
Output Indicator 1.2.4: Number of coalition members who benefit from advocacy and use of ICT training (disaggregated by sex, age, disability, level of education)	Total	0	120	261	Achieved	218%
	Women	0	90	110	Achieved	122%
	Men	0	30	155	Achieved	516
	Disability	0	2	5	Achieved	250%
	18 - 35	0	80	134	Achieved	168%
	36 - above	0	40	137	Achieved	342%
Output Indicator 1.2.5: Number of CSOs coalition members who benefit from the mentorship and coaching program	Total	0	120	120	Achieved	100%
	Women	0	90	82	Achieved	91%
	Men	0	30	38	Not Achieved	127%
	Disability	0	2	2	Achieved	100%
	18 - 35	0	50	51	Achieved	101%
	36 - above	0	70	69	Achieved	99%
Output Indicator 1.2.6: Number of women-focused CSO's trained on program management proposal writing skill, financial literacy, fund diversification and donor reporting	Total	0	120	127	achieved	105%
	Women	0	90	88	achieved	98%
	Men	0	30	39	achieved	130%
	Disability	0	2	2	Achieved	100%
	18 - 35	0	80	82	Achieved	103%
	36 - above	0	40	45	achieved	113%
Output Indicator 1.2.7: Number of market women trained on basic use of technologies (disaggregated by age, disability)	Total	0	60	0	Not Achieved	0%
	18 - 35	0	40	0	Not Achieved	0%
	36 - above	0	20	0	Not Achieved	0%
	Disabled	0	2	0	Not Achieved	0%

Annex 7:Table 4.4: Accomplishment of Output 1.3 Indicators

Indicators	Disaggr.	Baseline Value	Target	Indicator Progress	Status	% achieved
Output Indicator 1.3.1: Number of proposals and concepts on VAWE and WPS written and submitted to prospective donors by CSOs in the Coalition	All	0	5	10	achieved	200%
Output Indicator 1.3.2: Number of knowledge product generated by partners and coalition members and WPS initiatives	All	0	20	31	Achieved	135%
Output Indicator 1.3.3: Number of women-focused CSOs linked to donors that fund VAWE/P and WPS initiatives	Total	0	60	35	Not achieved	58%

Output Indicator 1.3.4: Quality / Number of monitoring mechanisms set up to monitor meaningful female representation	All	0	3	3	achieved	100%
Output Indicator 1.3.5: Number of women-focused CSO trained on financial literacy skills	Total	0	120	238	achieved	198%
	Women	0	80	158	Achieved	198%
	Men	0	40	80	Achieved	200%
	Disability	0	2	3	Achieved	150%
	18 - 35	0	65	110	Achieved	169%
	36 - above	0	55	128	Achieved	232%
Output Indicator 1.3.6: Number of Coalition and Donor Liaison Meetings conducted	All	0	5	11	achieved	220%

**Output 2.1: Capacity of the Coalition of women-focused CSOs to jointly plan, design, and carry out coherent advocacy messages to relevant partners and stakeholders before the 2023 elections, enhanced**

**Annex 8. Table 4.5: Accomplishment of Output 2.1 Indicators**

Indicators	Disaggr.	Baseline Value	Target	Indicator Progress	Status	% achieved
<b>Output Indicator 2.1.1: Number of people reached through mass sensitization using community and social media platforms, sign a media pack with media houses, bloggers, and influencers with messages on peaceful electioneering</b>	Total	0	108,500	211,064	Achieved	195
	Female	0	73,500	92,000	Achieved	125
	Male	0	35,000	119,064	Achieved	340
	Disabled	0	10	50	Achieved	500
	18 - 35	0	65100	122,323	Achieved	187
	36 - above	0	43400	88,741	Achieved	204%
<b>Output Indicator 2.1.2: Number of joint advocacy undertaken by the project to promote meaningful participation.</b>	Total	0	20	15	Not Achieved	75%
	National	0	5	2	Not Achieved	40%
	Sub-national	0	15	13	achieved	86%
<b>Output Indicator 2.1.3: Number of engagement forums organized by CSO coalitions to discuss</b>	Total	0	20	33	Achieved	165
	National	0	10	8	Achieved	80%
	Sub-national	0	10	32	Achieved	320%

women's participation in election processes						
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Annex 9: Table 4.6: Accomplishment of Output 2.2 Indicators

Indicators	Disaggr.	Baseline Value	Target	Indicator Progress	Status	% achieved
<b>Output Indicator 2.2.1:</b> Number of female candidates supported by the project to develop their manifestos and carry out effective campaigns at the national and district level (disaggregated by type, age, disability)	Total	0	50	573	Achieved	195%
	Parliamentarian	0	20	98	Achieved	125%
	Local council	0	30	475	Achieved	340%
	18 - 35	0	14	38	Achieved	500%
	36 - above	0	36	535	Achieved	187%
	Disabled	0	2	3	Achieved	204%
<b>Output Indicator 2.2.2:</b> Number of female candidates & aspirants trained and mentored at the national and local level	Total	0	84	573	Achieved	682%
	Parliamentarian	0	20	98	Achieved	490%
	Local Councils	0	30	475	Achieved	1,583%
	18 - 35	0	14	38	Achieved	271%
	36 - above	0	36	535	Achieved	1,486%
	Disabled	0	2	3	Achieved	150%
<b>Output Indicator 2.2.3:</b> Number of people reached through wider awareness and Civic education materials to promote women's participation as voters and peaceful electioneering (disaggregated by sex)	Total	0	7,700	221,142	Achieved	2128%
	Women	0	7,350,000	96,795	Not achieved	1.3%
	Men	0	350,000	124,342	Not achieved	35%
<b>Output Indicator 2.2.4:</b> Number of opinion leaders, peace ambassadors, mothers' groups, youth leaders mobilized by the project to sensitize citizens on peaceful coexistence before, during, and after the elections. (disaggregated by sex, Disabled)	Total	0	100	1,670	Achieved	1670%
	Women	0	50	1,039	Achieved	2078%
	Men	0	50	631	Achieved	1262%
	Disabled	0	2	17	Achieved	850%
	18 - 35	0	68	943	Achieved	1386%
	36 - above	0	32	727	Achieved	2271%
<b>Output Indicator 2.2.5:</b> Number of election-related violence cases reported before, during, and after the elections (disaggregated by cases)	Total	0	NA	162		
<b>Output Indicator 2.2.6:</b> Number of women trained in the use of media equipment	Total	0	120	160	Achieved	133%
	18 - 35	0	80	98	Achieved	122%
	36 - above	0	40	62	Achieved	155%
	Disabled	0	2	3	Achieved	150%
<b>Output Indicator 2.2.7:</b> Number of engagement	Total	0	15	40	Achieved	226%
	National	0	5	8	Achieved	1600%



meetings held to promote peaceful coexistence (Dissaggregated by level)	District	0	10	32	Achieved	320%
Output Indicator 2.2.8: Number of newly elected (successful) women candidates supported to settle into office through training and mentorship	Total	0	84	170	Achieved	202%
	Parliamentarians	0	16	42	Achieved	262%
	Local Council	0	68	128	Achieved	188%

Annex 10: Table 4.7: Accomplishment of Output 2.3 Indicators

Indicators	Disagg.	Baseline Value	End of Project Indicator Target	Indicator Progress to Date	Status	% achieved
Output Indicator 2.3.1: Number of One Stop center service providers equipped with skills and knowledge on how to provide counselling, psychosocial and medical support to victims of abuse						
	All	0	6	6	Achieved	100%
Output Indicator 2.3.2: Number of actions undertaken to address post-election violence and peace building	All	0	10	10	Achieved	100%
Output Indicator 2.3.3: Number of aggrieved parties supported by coalition members to seek redress and peaceful cohesion through legal processes and alternative conflict resolution mechanisms	All	0	5	6	Achieved	120%
Output Indicator 2.3.4: Number of actions taken to support women candidates to address their petition election cases	All	0	10	12	Achieved	120%
Output Indicator 2.3.5: Number of actions taken to promote reconciliation and linkages to alternative dispute resolution mechanism	All	0	10	21	Achieved	210%
Output Indicator 2.3.6: Number of evaluation and learning sessions conducted on the outcome of the elections	Total	0	2	7	achieved	350%
	National	0	1	1	Achieved	100%
	District level	0	1	6	Achieved	6000%

and document lessons learnt						
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### Risks and Assumptions

Assignment execution risks	Impact on objective	Likelihood of occurrence	Owner (managed by)	Risk contingencies in place or to be put in place
Access and availability of key stakeholders and secondary data: Poor and Limited access to implementing partners and stakeholders.	High	Medium	UN Women, UNDP, WV and Evaluation team.	Consistent communication with the UN Women, UNDP, and WV teams to have access to missing information. In addition, the evaluation team will engage with stakeholders/participants who are available.
Changes in government personnel in the ministries due to frequent transfer of Officers	High	Low-Medium	UN Women, UNDP, WV, and Evaluation team.	The evaluation team will liaise with the project team to ensure that all relevant stakeholders of the project with adequate knowledge of the project are available during the field mission including government officers that may have been transferred.
Busy schedules of the project team	High	Medium	UN Women, UNDP, WV and Evaluation team.	The evaluation team will utilize both physical and virtual approach in reaching the project team and other stakeholders
The large spatial coverage of interventions	High	Medium	Evaluation Team	Increase the number of days of data collection and conduct some data collection remotely

## Annex 7: Work Plan and Deliverables

No.	Planned Activities	Deliverables	Roles Responsibilities and	Starting date	Deadline
<b>Task 1: Desk Review and development of a consultancy Work Plan and an Inception Report that describes the methodology to be used for the Evaluation</b>					
1.1	Inception meeting with Evaluation Manager (EM), Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and conduct a desk review of all relevant project documents.	Orientation meeting held	EMG, ERG and Evaluators	15 <sup>th</sup> May -21 <sup>st</sup> May	22 <sup>nd</sup> May
1.2	Development and submission of a draft detailed Inception Report	Desk review and preliminary consultation were held.	EM, EMG, ERG and online	21 <sup>st</sup> May-22 <sup>nd</sup> May	22 <sup>nd</sup> May
1.3	Address feedback from EMG, ERG and submit the final inception report	The inception report was finalized and submitted	Evaluators	26 <sup>th</sup> May	26 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Task 2: Data collection both in-country, face-to-face, and/or virtual (telephone, video conferencing) interviews</b>					
2.2	Data collection in field and virtual (telephone, video conferencing) interviews	Data gathered on women's participation and leadership in politics and peacebuilding	Evaluators	27 <sup>th</sup> May-10 <sup>th</sup> June	10 <sup>th</sup> June
<b>Task 3: Analysis and presentation of preliminary findings and draft report</b>					
3.2	Development of interim Evaluation Report	Interim report developed	Consultant	16 <sup>th</sup> June	16 <sup>th</sup> June
3.3	PowerPoint Presentation of preliminary findings to the Reference Group	PowerPoint developed and presented	Evaluators	19 <sup>th</sup> June	19 <sup>th</sup> June
<b>Task 4: Development and submission of final Evaluation report</b>					
4.1	Development of Final Evaluation report - Addressing comments from the Evaluation Reference Group	final evaluation report developed	Evaluators		23 <sup>rd</sup> June
4.2	Submission of Final Evaluation Report	Evaluation report submitted	Evaluators		23 <sup>rd</sup> June