

# STRATEGIC NOTE REVIEW

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2014 – 2019



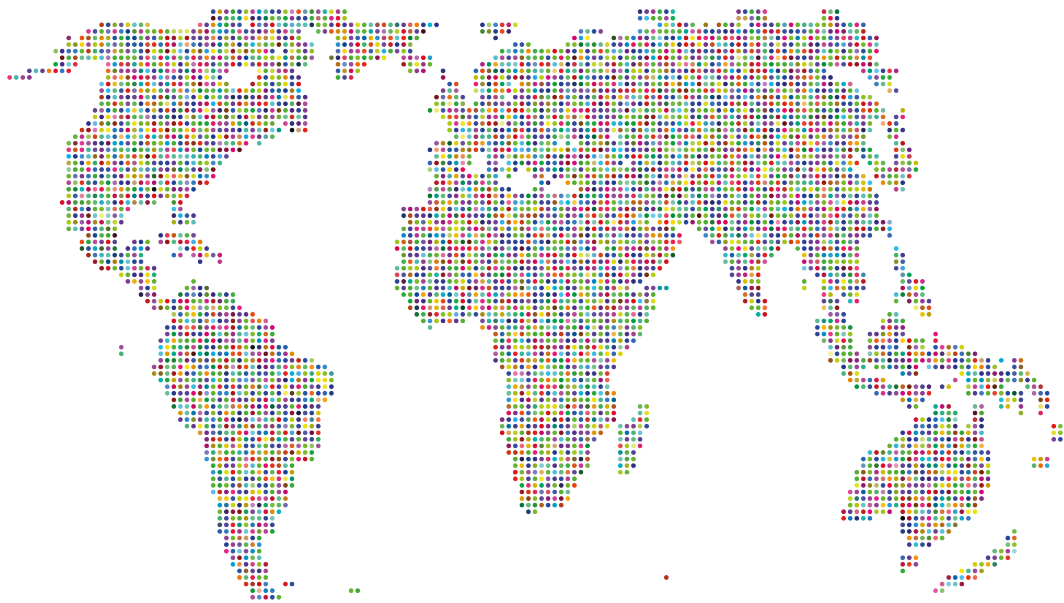
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2014 – 2019

## UN Women Sierra Leone

15 October 2019

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## Acronyms/abbreviations

AGR	Annual Growth Rate
APC	All Peoples Congress
AU	African Union
CCPD	Common Country Programme Document
CD	Country Director
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Profile
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
CSOs	Civil Society organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DG	Director General
DHMT	District Health Management Team
DOC	Document
EOC	Ebola Operations Centre
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FGM/C Female	Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GNI	Gross national income
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
iNGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IWD	International Women's Day
MCOs	Multi-Country Offices
MDAs	Ministries Department and Agencies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoSWCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term Review
MWG	Macroeconomic Working Group
MWSGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
NERC	National Ebola Response Commission
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's
OEER	Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Results
OIC	Officer in Charge
ONS	Office of National Security
PHC	Population and Housing Census
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
Q&A	Question and Answer

RAIC	Rapid Assessment of Interventions and Commodities
ROs	Regional Offices
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Gender-Based Violence
SLE	Sierra Leone
SLE OIC	Sierra Leone Organization of Islamic Cooperation
SLE-SNR.	Sierra Leone - Strategic note review
SLPP	Sierra Leonean Peoples Party
SN	Strategic Note
SNR	Strategic note review
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	National Children's Fund
UNIPSIL	United Nations Peace Mission in the country
UNMEER	United Nations Ebola Emergency Response
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNW	United Nations Women
UNW SLE	United Nations Women Sierra Leone
UNW/CO	United Nations Women's Country Office in
UNW/SNR	United Nations Women Strategic note review
UNWFP	United Nations World Food Programme United
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Purpose of the strategic note review

This evaluation is aimed at assessing the contribution of UN Women Sierra Leone to development effectiveness as regards gender equality and women empowerment between 2014 and 2019. It was commissioned as a forward-looking evaluation to support learning and decision-making for the country office strategic and national stakeholders.

## Key conclusions

### Relevance:

UN Women Sierra Leone's dynamic relevance is well established in the face of contextual instability. There is scope for leveraging the coordination role to improve coverage of CEDAW-related work areas.

### Effectiveness:

The CO has largely shown its capacity to attain and sometimes exceed output targets towards intended outcomes. However, its result monitoring system does not always feature output progress as correlated with reported expenses.

### Efficiency:

The deployment of UN Women's convening capacity in gender was effective in mobilizing resources for disaster and epidemics management. However, synergies established between thematic areas did not compensate investment gaps.

### Sustainability:

While concrete links have been established between thematic areas, prioritisation of result areas at the expense of other thematic results is potentially detrimental to sustained impact.

### Gender and Human Rights:

The emergence of a vibrant women movement is evidence that women have a greater social and political influence in Sierra Leone. However, the Country Office's perceived neutrality regarding individual political affiliations would be at risk without concerted efforts to make new gender coalitions inclusive of everyone.

## Recommendations

1. The Country Office can afford to take full advantage of the UNSD Reform to include, in the next multi-year portfolio, some of the thematic areas called for by CEDAW: human trafficking (IOM), girls' access to education (UNICEF), decent working conditions of women (ILO), discrimination against rural women (FAO, WFP), Government plans/policies on women's production and use of energy (UNIDO).
2. The Country Office can consider strengthening its human resource base through recruitment of an M&E Officer for enhanced RBM capacity;  
engaging with strong implementing partners at local levels to build a dynamic monitoring network aimed at showing progress related to actual results through regular collaboration with the CO's M&E unit;  
reformulating output indicators in RMS in order to reflect progress achieved in the country.



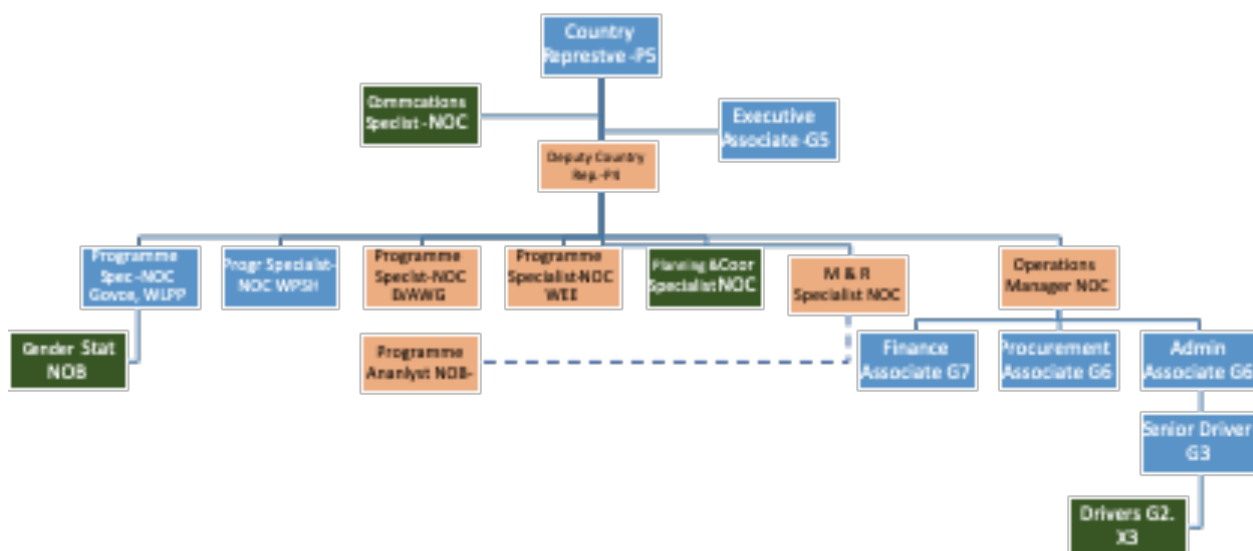
3. The Country Office can mobilize resources for Women Political Participation in a sustained manner to maintain momentum over time in this important area.
4. The Country Office can leverage the Resident Coordinator Office's reinvigorated coordination role to secure higher gender capacities across UN agencies and meet increased demand for gender expertise from different development actors and sectors.
5. For gender policy implementation, the Country Office can expand the development of UN Women's bridging role through support to high quality processes that contribute to the emergence of functional women's machinery and platforms facilitated by a new generation of women leaders at the national and local levels.

# OVERVIEW of the Sierra Leone Country Office

## Office size:

UN Women Sierra Leone’s personnel is made of 7 professional programme staff (1 P5, 1 P3, 4 NOC, 1 NOB) out of the total 17.

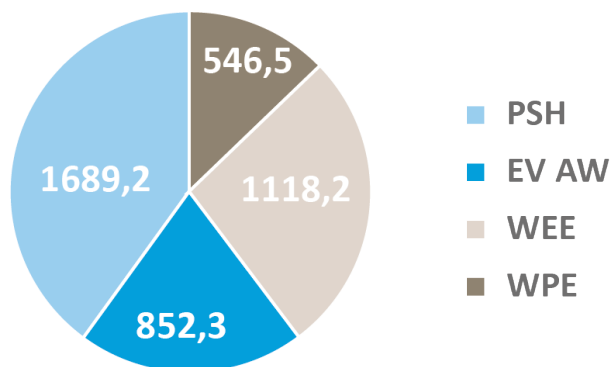
## Field office structure:



## Budgets per Impact Area

UN Women Strategic Note Development Results Framework 2014-2018 was extended to 2019. This follows the Country’s UNDAF extension by one year to subsequently finish on 31 December 2019 along with relevant national development plans.

SHARE OF BUDGET 2014-18  
(in Thousands of USD)



Distribution of funds by Impact Area 2014-2018

(Source: ATLAS)

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
<b>Relevance</b>		
<p><b>Finding 1</b></p> <p>UNWomen Sierra Leone (henceforth, “the CO”) is clearly positioned to serve gender equality objectives, however, due to limited resources, several areas of interest for women rights are (only) indirectly covered by UN Women’s work.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 1</b></p> <p>The CO’s dynamic relevance is well established in the face of contextual instability. There is scope for leveraging the coordination role to improve coverage of CEDAW-related work areas and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>The CO can afford to take full advantage of the UNSD Reform to include, in the next multi-year portfolio, some of the thematic areas called for by CEDAW</p>
<p><b>Finding 2</b></p> <p>The CO responsiveness to changes or additional requests from national counterparts, and (ii) unforeseen situations was demonstrated</p>		
<b>Effectiveness</b>		
<p><b>Finding 3</b></p> <p>The CO has made concrete achievements in all impact areas and has largely shown its capacity to attain and sometimes exceed output targets towards the intended outcomes</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 2</b></p> <p>The CO has largely shown its capacity to attain and sometimes exceed output targets towards intended outcomes. However, continuous information on result progress is rendered difficult by observed inconsistencies between reported expenses and indications of change at output level.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen the CO human resource base through recruitment of an M&amp;E Officer for enhanced RBM capacity;</li> <li>2. Engage with strong implementing partners at local levels to build a dynamic monitoring network aimed at showing progress related to actual results through regular collaboration with the CO’s M&amp;E unit;</li> <li>3. Revise the wording of output indicators in RMS in order to reflect progress achieved in the country.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Finding 4</b></p> <p>The CO result monitoring system does not constantly reflect progress on outputs in relation with expenditures. Observed inconsistencies are attributable to the relatively slow responsiveness of RMS output indicators to CO interventions.</p>		
<b>Efficiency</b>		
<p><b>Finding 5</b></p> <p>The CO leveraged its convening capacity in gender to transcend its limited resources and staffing by tapping into UN agencies expertise and resources to support the Government’s engendered response to disasters and epidemics.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 3</b></p> <p>While the deployment of the CO’s convening capacity was effective in mobilizing resources for disaster and epidemics management, the impact area of WPP was the most deprived of funds.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>Invest resources for Women Leadership and Political Participation in a sustained manner to maintain momentum over time in this important area.</p>
<b>Sustainability</b>		
<p><b>Finding 6</b></p> <p>Synergies established between the thematic areas of EAVW, PSH and WEE may not be sufficient to compensate for investment gaps in the Women Political Environment result area. This is potentially detrimental to sustained impact in the area of WPE.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 4</b></p> <p>There has been an increased demand for staff expertise as a result of the CO’s significant visibility and successful interventions and campaigns. This could, ultimately, saturate the capacity of the CO due to its limited resources</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>Leverage the Resident Coordinator Office’s reinigorated coordination role to secure higher gender capacities across UN agencies and meet increased demand for gender expertise from different development actors and sectors</p>
<p><b>Finding 7</b></p> <p>The CO’s catalytic role supersedes its funding constraints. However, the visibility afforded from successful interventions has increased demand on an already financially constrained CO, with limited personnel in comparison to the scope of issues being addressed as part of the mandate and ambition of the entity.</p>		
<b>Gender Equality and Human Rights</b>		
<p><b>Finding 8</b></p> <p>The design and implementation of the strategic note has been consistent with human rights principles to the extent allowed by the national context. Full domestication of CEDAW Convention is required for clear advances in terms of women’s rights and gender equality.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 5</b></p> <p>The emergence of an assertive women movement is evidence of women’s greater social and political influence. However, the CO’s perceived neutrality regarding individual political affiliations would be at risk without concerted efforts to make emerging gender coalitions inclusive of everyone. The perception of neutrality, in the eyes of the government, would facilitate the CO’s support to major processes for integration of civil society perspectives in intergovernmental processes such as CSW, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and CEDAW shadow reporting.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>For gender policy implementation, expand the development of the CO’s bridging role through support to high quality processes that contribute to the emergence of functional women’s machinery and platforms facilitated by a new generation of women leaders at the national and local levels.</p>
<p><b>Finding 9</b></p> <p>The CO has been effective in supporting gender mainstreaming in electoral management bodies; more consistent application of an electoral cycle approach would further strengthen and sustain results to support inclusive electoral systems.</p>		

# INTRODUCTION

This report has three chapters and annexes. Chapter 1 describes the Strategic note review (SNR) of the UN Women Country Office of Sierra Leone 2014-2019 Strategic Note (SN): its purpose, criteria and process. Chapter 2 presents UN Women office and its country context as far as gender and women rights are concerned. Chapter 3 presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the assessment. main findings of the assessment in relation to each performance area. It is the result of the work of the international and national consultants who conducted, in collaboration with the Regional Evaluation Specialist, extensive consultations with stakeholders, staff, donors, and Government officials.

## CHAPTER 1 – DESCRIPTION OF THIS EVALUATION

### 1.1 Background and Purpose

Evaluation in UN Women is guided by normative agreements to be gender-responsive and utilize the entity's Strategic Plan as a starting point for identifying the expected outcomes and impacts of its work and for measuring progress towards the achievement of results. The UN Women Evaluation Policy and the UN Women Evaluation Strategic Plan 2014-2019 are the main guiding documents that set forth the principles and organizational framework for evaluation planning, conduct, and follow-up in UN Women CO. These principles are aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, Standards for Evaluation in the UN System and Ethical Guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

This Strategic note review (SNR) was commissioned by the Sierra Leone UN Women CO with funding from the Independent Evaluation Services as a formative (forward-looking) evaluation to support the UN Women CO and national stakeholders' strategic learning and decision-making. The evaluation was expected to have a secondary summative (backward-looking) perspective, to support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experience. Ensuring the gender-responsiveness of the SNR was important as the evaluation was expected to support the achievement of GEWE.

- The primary intended users of these evaluations are:
  - Relevant staff in target ministries, targeted government institutions, and participating CSOs;
  - Target beneficiary communities/groups;
  - Relevant staff in participating UN agencies;
  - UN agencies;
  - Technical units and heads of Units in the participating UN agencies;
  - UN Women CO, Regional Office, and Headquarters;
  - Development partners; and Private Entities
- The primary intended uses of these evaluations are:
  - Learning and improved decision-making to support the development of new programmes;
  - Accountability for the development effectiveness of the UN Women CO Strategic Note;

Capacity development and mobilization of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women

1 UNEG, "Ethical guidelines", 2008, available online at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>.

## 1.2 Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation was to carry out, an assessment of the contributions made by UN Women CO to develop results with respect to gender equality at the country level.

1. The key objectives of the evaluation are further elaborated in the methodology section below and include:
2. Determine level and relevance of UN Women CO's contribution to gender equality and women empowerment intervention at the national level, and alignment with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment
3. Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results
4. Support the UN Women CO to improve its strategic positioning to better support the achievement of sustained gender equality and women's empowerment in Sierra Leone
5. Analyse how human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note
6. Identify and validate lessons learned and good practice
7. Highlight examples of innovation that supports gender equality and human rights
8. Provide insights into the extent to which the UN Women CO has realized synergies between its three mandates (normative, coordination, and programme)
9. Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the development of UN Women CO, SN, and new programmes.

## 1.3 Scope

The SNR focuses on all activities undertaken by the UN Women CO under their SN 2014-2019, including general support for normative policy and UN coordination. Programme work is considered based on the thematic areas established by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014.

As it is too early to consider measuring the impact of the SN 2014-2019, the focus of the evaluation will be on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the interventions. The evaluation is expected to consider the main cultural, religious, social, and economic conditions when analysing the contributions of UN Women CO.

UN Women regional architecture and other aspects of organisational systems and structures outside of the CO were not within the scope of this evaluation of the CO Strategic Note. General support to normative policy and UN coordination, joint programmes and programming are within the scope of this evaluation. Where joint programmes are included in the analysis, the evaluation considers both the specific contribution of UN Women, and the additional benefits and costs from working through a joint modality.

The evaluation considered the particular cultural, religious, social and economic characteristics of the communities covered by the evaluation when analysing the contributions of UN Women. Its discussion<sup>2</sup> of suitable priority areas applied the Women's Empowerment Framework (developed by Sara Hlupekile Longwe) as an argument for the most effective process of women empowerment. The five "levels of equality" in the Women's Empowerment Framework include:

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2 Sarah Longwe's description of the different empowerment levels is used at Finding #6 to make a case for a different prioritisation of UN Women impact areas.

1. Welfare, meaning improvement in socioeconomic status, such as income, better nutrition, etc. This level produces nothing to empower women.
2. Access, meaning increased access to resources. This is the first step in empowerment as women increase their access relative to men.
3. Conscientisation, involving the recognition of structural forces that disadvantage and discriminate against women coupled with the collective aim to address these discriminations.
4. Mobilization, implementing actions related to the conscientisation of women.
5. Control, involving the level of access reached and control of resources that have shifted as a result of collective claim making and action

Prior to commencing the evaluation, a basic evaluability assessment was undertaken. We noted that baseline indicators were fully available in the RMS platform for Women Political Environment, but they were less available for WEE and EAW and limited for WPS. While FGM prevalence is known (approximately less than 90%<sup>3</sup>), there was no reliable data available on domestic violence, sexual harassment and other forms of VAW.

## 1.4 Evaluation criteria and priority questions

The evaluation applied four OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness (including normative, and coordination mandates of UN Women CO), efficiency, and sustainability, and Human Rights and Gender Equality as an additional criterion. A session with staff and the ERG helped prioritise evaluation questions<sup>4</sup> that were subsequently used to develop interview instruments. Under the criterion of relevance, the evaluation explored, the country office's alignment with international conventions on gender equality such as CEDAW and national gender policy. It sought to make sense of the CO positioning in order to serve gender equality objectives that the government and national gender machineries had set themselves. Then followed the issue of result achievement and the extent to which the CO collected and kept records of progress. Beyond effectiveness, the evaluation enquired about strategies used by the CO to make the best use of resources (efficiency) and to maintain results over time (sustainability). Compliance of CO interventions with gender equality and human rights principles was examined across the above criteria and also through a stand alone set of questions.

## 1.5. Evaluation Methods

### 1.5.1 Methods of data collection

After an exhaustive review and desk-analysis of documentation related to the country programme, the evaluation (See Annex 2: SNR Design) carried out in-depth interviews with a sample of key stakeholders and program contributors to the Country Office strategy. Additionally, triangulations were carried out using contribution analysis<sup>5</sup> and consultations at validation meetings at the end of the mission.

3 FGM prevalence was 86.1% in 2017 (MICS,2017). In 2013, it was 90%.

4 See ANNEX 7: *Prioritized Evaluation Questions*

5 See ANNEX 12: *Contribution Analysis*

Preparatory work was done prior to data collection, through a discussion with stakeholders on the purpose of the SNR. An emphasis was placed on prioritizing the evaluation questions and making sure they are intelligible and adapted to the context. Openness and flexibility in reviewing the design were key in securing the support of partners for the evaluation throughout implementation and ultimately increasing the likelihood that the recommendations will be used. This step also allowed for any adjustments to be made in the data collection plan, particularly at the community site level, to ensure the availability of respondents.

Analysis of the policy documentation is an important step in this evaluation in order to understand the guiding strategies of UN Women implemented programmes. Additional sources were sought, apart from reviewing the documentation: a variety of participants at the national and community levels were targeted for participation to assess the strategic position of UN Women, using an interview and survey-based approach (see below and Annex 10). All of the topics covered in the interviews were informed by the questions reformulated from their original form in the Terms of Reference.

A total of 41 interviews<sup>6</sup>, including 11 men and 30 women, were conducted during the consultations over eight days in the following categories:

National Ministries and Agencies – Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs; Ministry of Education; Ministry Health and Sanitation; National Bureau of Statistics--(Statistics Sierra)

UN agencies – FAO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP;

Members of Parliament;

CSOs.

A survey was also conducted, targeting 44 respondents. The response rate was relatively low. Invited stakeholders responded with the following proportions:



Figure 1.5.1 – Survey responses

Internet connectivity has probably affected the outcome of the survey: the number of completed responses by non-UN Women respondents was 38% relative to the total number of opened questionnaires. In the other group of respondents (UN Women staff), the completion rate was relatively higher (55%). This difference can probably be explained by the difference in accessing stable internet. UN Women staff are better positioned in that regard as compared with the group of UN Women stakeholders.

6 Out of the 63 informants that were contacted, only 41 effectively participated in interviews and group discussions.

## 1.5.2 Sampling

Selection of participants from these groups was determined based on participation in and knowledge of the UN Women CO interventions in the country. To facilitate sampling of districts visited, UN Women CO recommended which districts and partners to visit. The identified districts had a cross-section of activities implemented at the local level. To determine the two districts (Port Loko and Freetown), distance, coverage of a cross-section of activities, and logistical considerations were considered as sampling criteria.

To understand the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the programme activities from the perspective of primary beneficiaries (rights holders), the evaluation team conducted individual interviews, Focus Group Discussions with groups of women and men who have been involved with the programme. A workshop planned for TOC discussions did not take place due to unforeseen circumstances.

Purposive sampling was used to select specific participants based on the nature of their involvement with UN Women, using the initial key stakeholder map (Annex 4). Participants had taken part in various types of interventions: capacity development; gender mainstreaming in disaster and humanitarian response; policy advocacy in peace and security, political participation, women economic empowerment and prevention of gender related violence. The variety of involvement types allowed purposive selection of participants for interviews – making sure to balance gender. Equally purposive was the sampling for high-level officials for in-depth interviews – depending on availability.

The sample of respondents included a good majority of female respondents. We had participants who are professionals or decision makers in administrative or entrepreneurship functions. As much as possible, efforts were made to minimize the use of jargons and accommodate users of the Krio language. We did not necessarily interact in English with respondents from economically modest backgrounds. Data collection instruments were also revised and tested according to respondents' proficiency in English.

Group discussions were arranged to include participants with equal power relations. At the beginning of each interview, participants were informed of their rights (including the right to abstain from responding), the purpose of the evaluation and the use of shared information.

## 1.5.3 Limitations and mitigation actions

Overall, as it can be anticipated for any study based on qualitative tools, this evaluation had methodological limitations that are typical of secondary and primary sources. Progress reports from which most of the narratives were drawn are authored by non-independent sources: in this case, internal staff engaged in the execution of the program, can unwittingly or deliberately develop favorable bias. This is particularly perceptible as regards their narratives on effectiveness. Primary sources are not randomly selected,



even when sampled carefully and inclusively. This implies the possibility that ensuing representations are always open for skepticism and questioning. In other words, one can always question the extent to which cited opinions or empirical observations are objective or significantly representative of the entire program.

To mitigate these challenges, documents were firstly examined for coherence and reliability. Then, secondary data were compared with information from different sources to identify discrepancies. Thirdly, interviews were in turn convened and their claims compared to what was reported in writing. Conclusions articulated in this report are based on the agreement between reported facts, stakeholders' opinions and various sources, including observations made in the field.

Additional constraints were encountered in this evaluation:

Limitations	Mitigation
Desk review of portfolio documents was restricted by the short delays between inception and field work.	Document review was therefore pursued at later stages
Reliance on country office reports (periodic reports, reports to donors, ...) and participant interviews was useful to identify key strengths but was insufficient to establishing with rigor UNW's contribution to impact level results	No measure was taken, as it would take a different evaluation design in order to achieve that
While RMS was a valid source of information, projects / programmes information was more readily available to make sense of CO work.	A focused session with staff resulted in more elaborate information from the broadly reported narratives
Inception workshop with stakeholders was suspended after it had briefly started and eventually cancelled.	This incident implied a shift in the mode of engagement with stakeholders: the team organized more focused group discussions with stakeholders. A Theory of Change session was also organised with staff only

# CHAPTER 2 – THE COUNTRY OFFICE AND ITS CONTEXT

## 2.1 Context of gender equality and women's human rights

### Women in the national socio-economic context

Sierra Leone is a small, ethnically diverse and largely rural, country. The country is characterized by a low-income economy with a poverty rate reaching up to 60 percent, and literacy rate is 59% for adult males and only 44% for adult females, according to the Sierra Leone Census 2015 Report.

According to UN Women analysis<sup>7</sup>:

- Poverty is also a gendered phenomenon. 55% of the country's economically active population are in regular cash-earning jobs, with only 5% in the paid formal sector;
- Women's labour force participation in crop farming and in trade and repairs stand at 65.8% and 21.9% respectively;
- Female-headed households are more likely to be poor and are disproportionately represented in the lowest quartile of income distribution. Female-headed households are represented disproportionately in the lowest quarter of income distribution. In addition, female-headed households have more dependents, lower income earning capacity and fewer assets and other resources.

Although there is fertile soil, Sierra Leone suffers from persistent poverty, inequality and gender discrimination. The country has the highest maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in the world, with 1,360 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, while one in every 17 women bear the risk of dying during labour.

It is difficult for women to economically fend for themselves and their households. The potential of women in Sierra Leone to pull themselves and their families out of poverty and contribute to national development is severely constrained by inequality and discrimination. Access to economic resources is a serious challenge for Sierra Leonean women. Customary laws do not allow female inheritance and land ownership rights due to social norms and customs.

This gender disparity is echoed in lower earnings for work of the same calibre, more time spent in unpaid labour, lower labour force participation rates, and limited access to assets. Women remain more unemployed and underemployed. Women are more concentrated among unpaid family and own-account workers; and an 'invisible' workforce within the informal sector of economy with vulnerable legal situation, limited economic abilities. The dominance of women in the self-employed/informal sector with poor working conditions, low salaries and no social protection leaves them open to exploitation and increases their vulnerability to poverty.

In this context, women face multiple forms of discrimination. One of the salient features among poor women in Sierra Leone is their limited ability to effectively participate as actors in their communities. Women are underrepresented in political and economic decision-making (on average women constitute around 12 percent in Parliament). Women

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7 UN Women Sierra Leone Strategic Note, pp 2-5

lack knowledge about their rights and this diminishes their potential to become effective agents for change at the personal, household, and community levels.

## Recovery from disaster and war

Sierra Leone suffered several weather-related hazards and disasters, including flood and mudslides. After years of deforestation in the hills surrounding Freetown, mudslides mixed with floods claimed the lives of hundreds of people living around a 6-km long area in the Western part of Freetown and affected a total of 5,951 people, including one thousand children and 400 pregnant and nursing women. Torrential rain falls worsened the floods for several communities in the capital city of Sierra Leone and caused significant damage to infrastructure and agriculture.

This happened after the country had started emerging from an Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak that tragically hit the population (3,955 deaths, more than 13,000 survivors and orphans) and crippled the economy. Hundreds of thousands (230,000) people were impacted by Ebola<sup>8</sup>.

Multi-dimensional aspects of the Ebola crisis called for a united response across the UN agencies. There was increased food insecurity and reverse of upward trends in health and nutrition indicators (WFP) that had just started recovering from the years of conflict. In 2014, prior to the outbreak, stunting levels in children under 5 exceeded 30 percent in at least seven districts (UNICEF).

Prevalence of teenage pregnancies – already ranked among the highest in the region – spiked during the outbreak (UNFPA). This further burdened fragile household incomes and disrupted the education cycle of the young girls, increasing the already high school dropout rate, including for such reasons as early and forced marriage.

When recent Ebola and weather induced disasters hit Sierra Leone, the country had established its peace accord in 2000 and was recovering from over ten years of war that had disrupted all sectors and seriously depleted both human resources and institutional infrastructure. No part of the country had been spared, and almost two thirds of the population were uprooted and forced to leave their homes, some of them repeatedly. There is reason to hope for a second wave of rehabilitation and reconstruction for Sierra Leone, particularly with the election of the new President in 2017 and the new national development plan named “New Orientation” or PRSP IV which dedicates an entire cluster<sup>9</sup> to gender issues.

## National law and policy context

Sierra Leone has ratified International policies, treaties and instruments for gender equality, non-discrimination and the protection of women, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the African Union Gender policy, Solemn declaration and the Dakar Declaration on Gender Parity, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2005. These constitute the legal and policy framework within which efforts for a women inclusive development are possible.

8 Report of the multisector impact assessment of gender dimensions of the ebola virus disease (EVD) in Sierra Leone. The report relied on a compilation of the WHO Daily Situation Report (Sitrep, 2014)

9 Policy Cluster 5 – Empowering women, children, adolescents, and persons with disability IN “*Sierra Leone’s Medium-term National Development Plan 2018–2023*”

Sierra Leone has a National Policy on the Advancement of Women and a Gender Mainstreaming Policy (2000). These were reinforced by the National Gender Strategic Plan (2009-2012), and the SiLNAP<sup>10</sup> on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and UNSCR 1820 on Sexual Violence (2010-2014). Both the 2008 Poverty Reduction Strategy "Agenda for Change", and the progressive poverty reduction strategy paper of 2012 "Agenda for Prosperity" contain strong political commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment that are aligned with the SiLNAP. The Local Government Act of 2004 established a 50 per cent quota for women on Ward Development Committees in districts and towns. Strong advocacy from women's organizations such as the 50/50 Group and the Women's Forum, have led to the Four Gender Laws<sup>11</sup>:

- ® the 2007 Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Offences Act,
- ® the Registration of Customary Marriage/Divorce Act,
- ® the Devolution of Estates Act. (intestate succession),
- ® Sexual Offence Act (2012)

The country has also adopted and ratified a number of regional, sub-regional and international conventions and legal frameworks that promote gender equality and non-discrimination. However, there is still a long way before these laws are fully enforced and policies effectively implemented nationwide. CEDAW concluding comments point to the fact that the Convention has yet to be domesticated as part of Sierra Leonean law. It notes with concern that, unless there is full domestication, the relevance of the Convention will remain to be established in Sierra Leone. CEDAW comments also acknowledged efforts at legislative reform in several fields such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and domestic but other legislation and customary laws that discriminate against women remain in force.

In addition, an evaluation conducted in 2015, noted that the national gender architecture and operating context is fragmented, and poorly resourced<sup>12</sup>.

## 2.2 UN Women Country Office

UNIFEM was already present in Sierra Leone for almost a decade when the new entity was established by the General Assembly in 2010 as a result of the combined legacy of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) and UNIFEM.

The CO has a Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) approved by the Government of Sierra Leone in 2015 and a full delegation of authority since 2014 which includes issuing an annual procurement plan in full adherence to UN Women's Programme Operations Manual. The office occupies a shared space with UNAIDS in Freetown and has no liaison office in the counties. The UNDAF is the main operational document on the basis of which UN Women deploys its contribution to the coordination of gender in the country since the closure of UNIPSIL<sup>13</sup> after a decade of Security Council engagement with Sierra Leone.

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10 National Action Plan for advancing women's participation in decision-making around peace and security

11 These laws are yet to be enacted by Parliament. It is hoped that The Constitutional Review will address this. UN Women supported the engendering of the Constitution Review Process.

12 SILNAP Evaluation Report, 2015

13 UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

The management profile<sup>14</sup> of the CO had the following values between 2016 and 2018:

INDICATOR	2016	2018
Management ratio (MRT)	38%	16%
Use of core staffing (USC)	27%	23%
Operational ratio (OPR)	41%	19%

Table 2.2: Management Profile Of Un Women Sierra Leone, 2016 - 2018

UN Women Sierra Leone's personnel is made of 7 professional programme staff (1 P5, 1 P3, 4 NOC, 1 NOB) out of the total 17. The CO personnel increased since 2015 when it was composed of 1 Service Contract; 5 FTAs, 2 TAs international, 2 national SSAs, 1 GENCAP and 1 NORCAP secondments



Figure 2.2 – UN Women Sierra Leone staffing

In 2015, the CO requested the funding and recruitment of a Deputy Representative, Communications Officer, Operations Manager, M&E officer and an additional programme staff on FTA modality. This request has yet to be considered.

## Description and background of the Strategic Note

The UN Women Country Office (CO) was set up in 2011 (following the move from the previous UNIFEM) to help the Government of Sierra Leone and ongoing efforts by the United Nations system and other stakeholders to address key issues around gender inequality and discriminatory practices and to ensure that women and girls are empowered and able to live their lives free from violence and discrimination.

<sup>14</sup> Ratios above are formulated as follows, using [ATLAS](#) values:  
MRT = Expenditure IB / Expenditure;

USC = Staff Expenses Core / Expenditure Core;

OPR = (IB Staff Expenses + Core Staff Expenses) / Budget (Total)

The Country Office (CO) Strategic Note (SN) is the main instrument guiding UN Women’s support to normative, coordination and operational work in Sierra Leone. The SN 2014-2019 features four impact areas<sup>15</sup> that are well aligned to the UN Women Global Strategic Plan 2014-2017:

SG1: Women’s leadership and political participation

SG2: Women’s economic empowerment

SG3: Ending violence against women

SG4: Women’s leadership in peace and security

The Strategic Note Development Results Framework 2014-2019 corresponds to the UN-DAF 2015-2018, later extended to 2019 outcomes and relevant national development plans (see also table below: Correspondence with national frameworks).

Table 2.2.1: Correspondence between UN Women SN and national frameworks

UN WOMEN RESULT AREA	Related UNDAF OUTCOME	Sierra Leone PRSP II
WEE, PSH	A- Households’ productive capacities and access to markets for agriculture, manufacturing, fisheries and tourism have increased; B- Low income and food insecure households have improved access to sustainable income generating opportunities (on-farm and off-farm)	Pillar 1. Economic Diversification to Promote Inclusive Growth  Pillar 8 : Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment [specifically dedicated to EAW and WEE issues]
	A- By 2018, vulnerable populations including adolescent girls have increased access to livelihoods, education and improved nutritional status. B- By 2018, 20% of extremely poor households have access to social safety nets.	Pillar 6. Strengthen Social Protection Systems
EAW, WPE	A- UN support to public sector reforms promotes quality, transparent, and increasingly accountable services. B- Justice and security sector delivery systems improved in compliance with international human rights principles. C- Capacity of democratic institutions strengthened to enable good governance	Pillar 7. Governance and Public Sector Reform  [specifically dedicated to EAW and WEE issues]

## Budget

The SN total budget between 2014 and 2018 was \$ 7.27 millions. Of this, \$ 3, 45 millions were budgeted for Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Results (OEEF) while the balance was budgeted for implementation of the Development Result Framework (DRF) project activities. The largest thematic area by budget was *Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action* (PSH) accounting 40% of the total budget between 2014 and 2018. Women Economic Empowerment is second, with 27% for the same period.

<sup>15</sup> While SG5: *Mainstreaming gender in national governance systems* is not formally part of the scope of UN Women’s contribution in Sierra Leone, the CO did Planning and Budgeting work during the period of the SN 2014-2018.

## SHARE OF BUDGET 2014-18 (in Thousands of USD)

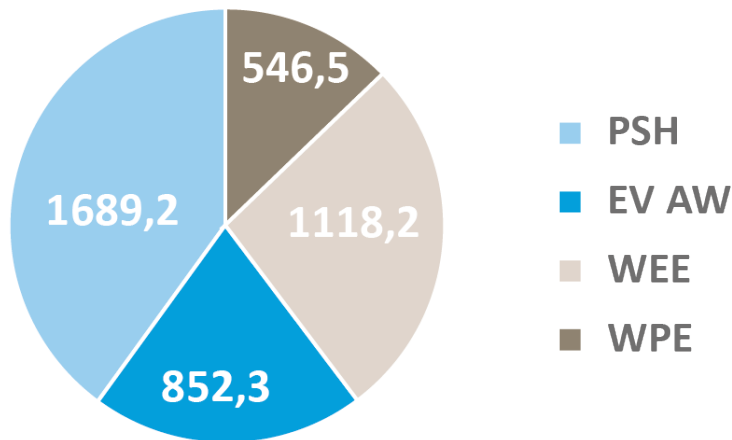


FIGURE 2.2.2a: Distribution of funds by Impact Area 2014-2018

Source: ATLAS

Until 2016, the *Elimination of Violence against Women* (EVAW) impact area had the highest level of investments. A sharp decrease (by 94%) in terms of budget allocation was observed in 2017: such great variation is essentially attributable to the non-Core component of the EVAW budget. Non-Core contributions to EVAW went from \$ 557 080 in 2015 to \$ 22 590 in 2016. In 2017 and 2018, no donor funds were dedicated to EVAW.

## IMPACT AREA BUDGETS 2014-2018

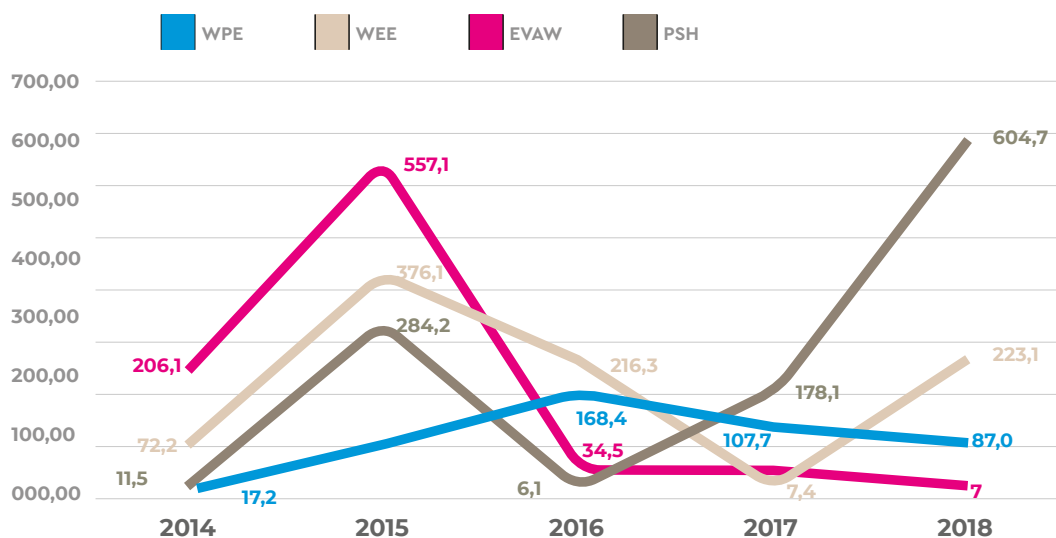


FIGURE 2.2.2b: Distribution of funds by Impact Area 2014-2018

Source: ATLAS

This is in keeping with a corporate wide reality: funding has been a constant challenge for UN Women. The entity's regular budget is a very small proportion of projected resource. Yet, at the time of its establishment UN Women was promised 500 million USD in annual voluntary contributions required for securing its minimum critical mass<sup>16</sup>. The figure below illustrates the proportion of regular resources to the total resources utilized by the UN Women Sierra Leone Country Office.

<sup>16</sup> Integrated budget estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the biennium 2018-2019, UN WOMEN/2017/7

## BUDGET 2014-2018

(in \$ millions)

0,07

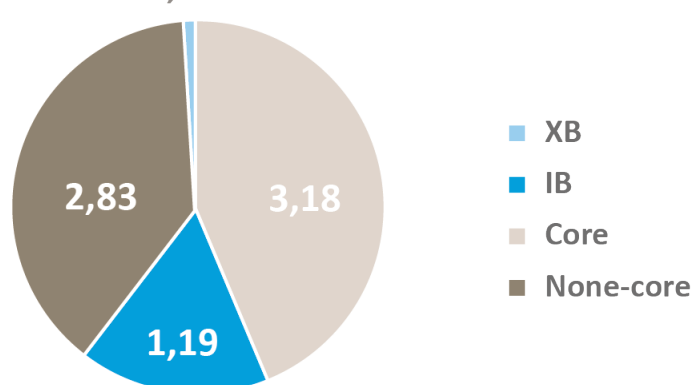


FIGURE 2.2.2c: Distribution of funds by Impact Area 2014-2018

Source: ATLAS

Resource mobilization remains a priority for the Country Office. It also makes UN Women Sierra Leone vulnerable to underfunding, in the event donor commitments are discontinued or do not materialize.

## 2.3 Technical design of the Strategic Note 2014-2015

The SN 2014-2019 aims to improve the lives of women in Sierra Leone through three core mandates:

- i. **Normative work:** to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the General Assembly, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- ii. **Coordination work:** entails both work to promote the accountability of the United Nations System on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), and more broadly mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the UN.
- iii. **Programme work:** to help Member States implement international standards and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.

The integrated triple mandate is aimed at improving the lives of women -with a focus on the poorest- in Sierra Leone, through four impact /thematic areas of the UN Women Global Strategic Plan. These include (1) women's increased leadership and participation in the decisions that affect their lives; (2) increased economic empowerment of women, especially of those who are most excluded; (3) ending violence against women; (4) women's peace and security issues and (5) to a lesser extent, Planning and Gender Budgeting as part of normative work.

The design of the SN 2014-2019 is supported by a results framework aimed at ensuring that project objectives are linked to organizational mandates. The SN 2014-2019 comprises the Development Results Framework (DRF) with its four thematic areas, and the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework (OEEF). The latter has four output areas, which support the programmatic framework and enhance the quality of its implementation. Through the OEEF, UN Women aims to achieve efficient UN coordination and strategic partnerships, institutionalize a culture of result-based management as well



as robust capacity and efficiency at country level so that gender equality and women's empowerment are not only achieved within the CO support activities, but also leveraged through a large group of stakeholders and mainstreamed throughout.

Table 2.3a: Impact Areas of UN Women in Sierra Leone

Development for Result (DRF)	
Impact 1	Women of Sierra Leone lead and participate in decision making at all levels
Impact 2	Women and Girls in Sierra Leone, especially the poor and marginalized are economically empowered
Impact 3	Women and girls of Sierra Leone live in an environment free from violence
Impact 4	Women and girls contribute and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action

Table 2.3b: Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Results (OEE)

Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Results (OEE)	
OEE Output Cluster 1	To drive more effective and efficient United Nations system coordination and strategic partnerships on gender equality and women's empowerment
OEE Output Cluster 2	To institutionalize a strong culture of results-based management, reporting, knowledge management and evaluation
OEE Output Cluster 3	To enhance organizational effectiveness, with a focus on robust capacity and efficiency at the country level
OEE Output Cluster 4	Mobilization and effectively management of resources

In its introductory note, UN Women Sierra Leone's strategic note clearly spells out its intention to apply lessons drawn from previous work, in particular the following:

**1. Evidence based programming must be factored into all and any kind of humanitarian emergency**

Using its multi-sectoral gender impact assessment of Ebola Response, UN Women had been able to provide the required evidence for gender-responsive policy decisions on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

**2. Forging new strategic partnerships and alliances is pivotal to achieving UN Women and common results in programming:**

The challenges posed by EVD created opportunities for UN Women Sierra Leone in forging partnership with multiple stakeholders, including six UN EVD Frontline agencies (WHO, UNFPA, WFP, IOM, FAO, UNDP), Government agencies, the INGOs (OXFAM, ACTION AID, PLAN International, World -Vision).

**3. Effective Coordination is an important principle in programme implementation and resource mobilisation**

UN Women saw its coordination role on gender and women's empowerment strengthened and yielding results.

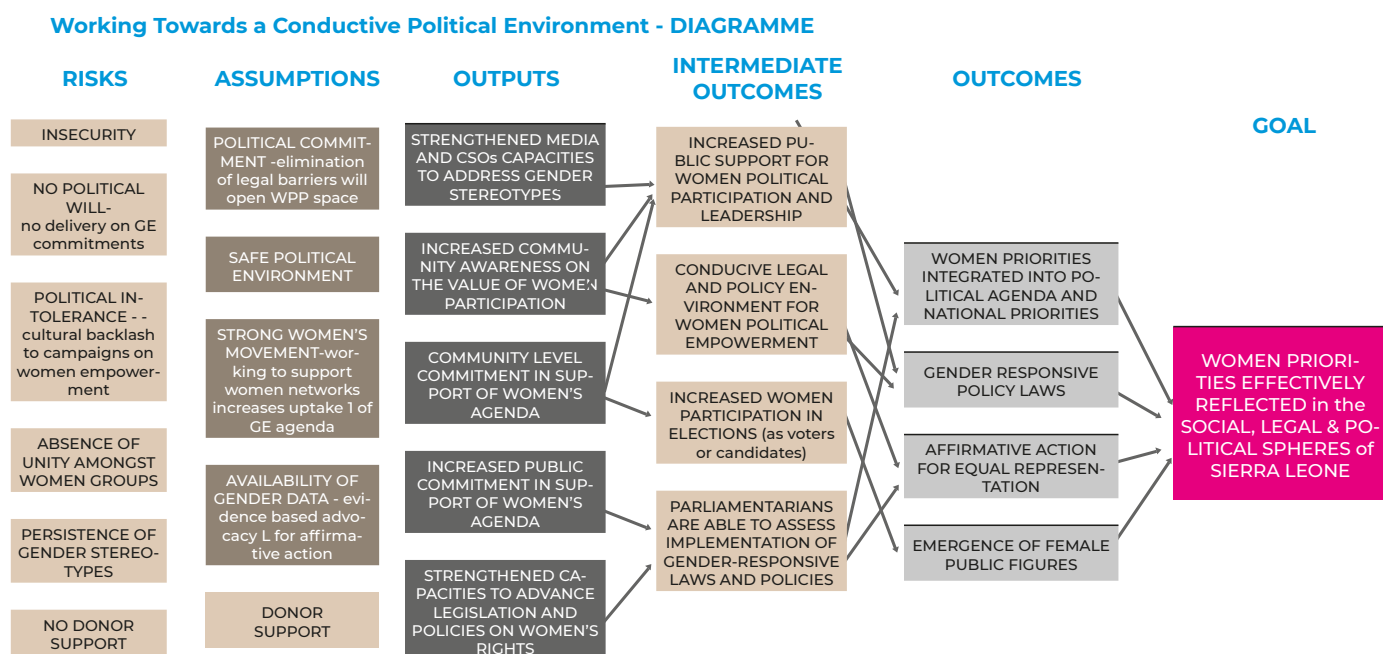
#### 4. Resource mobilisation:

Despite altered operational context from development to humanitarian emergency, the agency mobilised resources and managed to stay afloat while continuing its integrated 3-fold mandate.

### Underlying theories of change

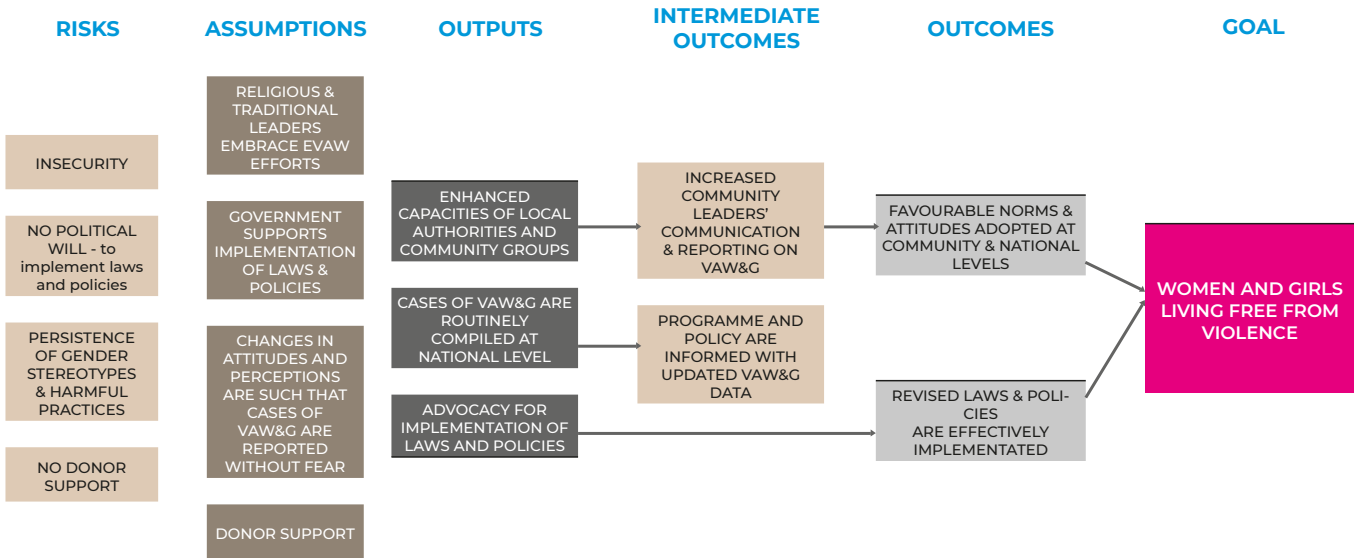
In a participatory session<sup>17</sup> facilitated by the evaluation team, the staff members of the CO reflected on the theories of change that underpin UN Women – Sierra Leone’s interventions. Participants broke into teams to discuss “*what success would look like*” for each impact area. Using the language of existing outputs and outcomes, they made diagrams of “*what it would take to get there*”. These consisted in colourful squares with arrows representing linkages, interdependency and logical flows between various results. Stakeholders were unfortunately not part of the session due to unforeseen circumstances.

Figures 2.3.1 Theories of Change

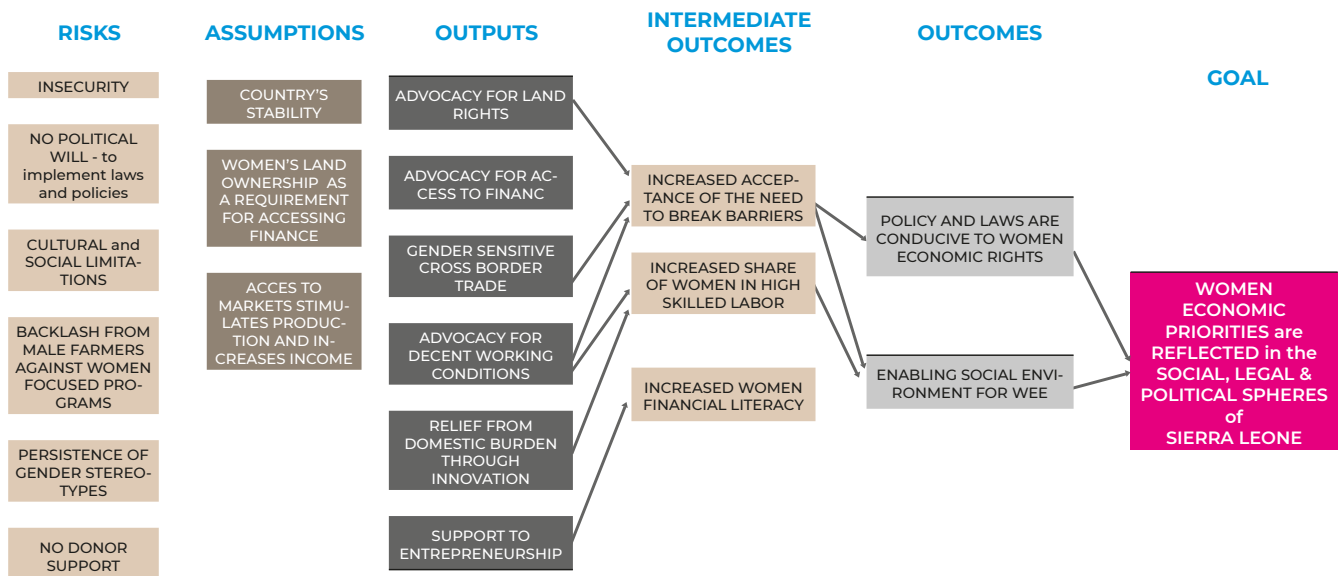


17 See ANNEX 8: photos of the TOC session

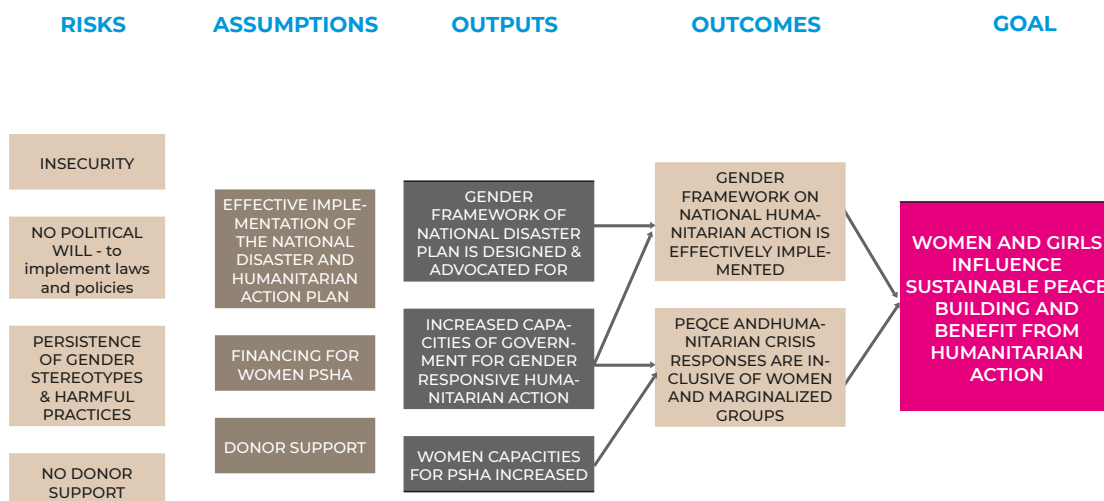
### Working towards a Sierra Leone that is free from VAW - (DIAGRAMME)



### Women Economic Empowerment - DIAGRAMME



### Women Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action - (DIAGRAMME)



## Key partners

The CO worked at various levels with the government and its organs and also civil society organizations including both the INGOs and women’s organizations. The CO stakeholders were mapped according to their respective contributions. The mapping exercise<sup>18</sup> helped identify sources of information and discuss, during working sessions with staff, which partners were perceived as critical for achieving DRF results.

The CO distinguishes between two broad categories of partners: Implementing partners and Strategic partners. While the Implementing partners are part and parcel of UN Women programs, the strategic partners are engaged to take part in the common advocacy work.

*Table 2.3.2a: Target groups by action framework as identified by participants*

ACTION FRAMEWORK	TARGET GROUPS
UN COORDINATION : GE & SDGs	NGOs, civil society
BEIJING +20	(Groups of) vulnerable women and girls
WPE	Women in appointed and elected positions, He-4She, women voters
CEDAW + UPR	NGOs, civil society, Government
EVAW	Victims of child marriage, violence & FGM, He4She
PSH	EVD survivors, disaster affected women & girls
WEE	Vulnerable women and girls

Apart from the enduring partnership with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MSWGCA) since 2011, UN Women partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone now includes direct partnership with: the Ministries of Planning and Economic Development, Youth Affairs; Agriculture and Forestry, Trade and Industry, Justice, Water Resources, Energy, Health and Sanitation, Local Government and Rural Development, as well as the devolved tiers of government such as the national Bureau of Statistics (Statistics Sierra Leone).

UN Women is a member of the UN Country Team. The entity has ongoing MoUs with UNFPA, WFP, UNDP and IOM that articulate collaboration modalities between agencies. There are talks with UNICEF and FAO towards the same. Most importantly, beyond bilateral collaborations between agencies, the UN System’s coherence is made possible by the UNDAF. All agencies’ contributions to the national development are encapsulated by the UNDAF 2014-2018 (extended to 2019, to align with the Government Development Plan). And UN Women is the convener of Pillar 8 (achieving Gender Equality and Women Empowerment) to which UNFPA, WFP, UNICEF and UNDP participate.

Partnerships with INGOs/CSOs include, OXFAM GB, Plan International, Action Aid, World Vision while at the national level, existing and new partnership with women’s umbrella organizations as part of the engagement with the women’s movement.

Also worth noting, UN Women Sierra Leone is in touch with private sector organizations<sup>19</sup>, such as Coca-Cola and WATCO water and Orange telephone companies.

19 For more details, see relevant boxes under 6.2 - Progress towards WEE results

Table 2.3.2b: Key Partners

Result area	Key Partners	Main Donors	Geographical Coverage
Women leadership & political Participation	Political Parties UNDP Parliamentarians	UNDP	North, Central, South
Women economic empowerment	Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Gender Green Africa Sierra Development Initiative Project Market Women Association Girl to Girl Empowerment Advocacy Mvmt Network Women's Forum	UNFPA OXFAM GB FAO WFP Coca-Cola WATCO Orange Telephone Company	North Central
Elimination of violence against women	Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Gender MOVE Sierra Green Africa Sierra Development Initiative Project Market Women Association Sierra Association of Journalists Girl to Girl Empowerment Advocacy Movement Network Women's Forum UNFPA	UNFPA UNICEF IOM	
Peace & Humanitarian Assistance	Irish Aid Action Aid Sierra	PBF	

# CHAPTER 3 – FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 3.1 Findings

### Relevance

#### Key Questions:

Is the portfolio aligned with national policies? To what extent has UNW-Sierra Leone strategic choices met the priority concerns of Sierra Leone development policymakers, key national stakeholders and right holders? Is UNW-Sierra Leone portfolio aligned with international gender equality and human rights norms?

Has UNW-Sierra Leone adapted its strategic focus (including work areas prioritised and weight given to each area) operations and results framework to the changing environment (national or regional)?

What are the factors determining UNW-Sierra Leone's programme choices and scale-ups?

#### *Finding #1:*

UN Women Sierra Leone is clearly positioned to serve gender equality objectives set by the government and national gender machineries. However, due to limited resources, several areas of interest for women rights are (only) indirectly covered by UN Women's work.

All stakeholders, regardless of their take about the merit of the CO's work, held the opinion that UN Women has a strong mandate and a significant value, unmatched by any other organisation. This perception is echoed by donors who think the work of UN Women on women's rights is important. They admit hearing other UN agencies mentioning gender but their message is often dominated by other priorities than gender. Other organisations might include gender in their work and even clearly express a gender focus.

What is unique about UN Women is that, while all UN organizations address gender from international framework perspectives, the entity is the only one mandated with the coordination of various contributions to the GEWE agenda as per international conventions and norms. To put it differently, without UN Women presence in Sierra Leone, the vacuum would seriously affect civil society's work on women's rights, and UN interventions would be significantly less oriented on GEWE and human rights and the UN's work with the government would only cover agencies' respective mandates. The Government would also feel UN Women absence in relation with gender responsive policy making and substantive contributions to international conventions.

As a matter of fact, UN Women Sierra Leone is well positioned to coordinate the gender agenda in the country: several sources indicated that, in recognition of UN Women CO's coordination role on gender, the Government of Sierra Leone has granted UN Women, the leading role for an entire cluster<sup>20</sup> of the country's Development Plan (2018-2023).

UN Women Sierra Leone formulated its strategic note in line with national, regional and international policies, development plans, strategies and legislation. These normative and programmatic orientations are also reflected in the Sierra Leone UNDAF 2015-2018 (recently extended to 2019). Beyond its programme documents, Sierra Leone's alignment with national priorities is clearly evident in practice.

20 Policy Cluster 5 – Empowering women, children, adolescents, and persons with disability IN “Sierra Leone's Medium-term National Development Plan 2018–2023”

Most significantly, an analysis of alignment between UN Women’s Strategic Note and the most recent CEDAW concluding observations shows that the latter are either directly or indirectly reflected in the CO interventions aimed at achieving women’s human rights norms and standards.

Table 3.1.1

<b>Topic of the Concluding remarks (in CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6)</b>	<b>Reference (Par.#)</b>
<b>directly reflected in the UN Women Sierra Leone Strategic Note</b>	
<b>Eliminating gender stereotypes</b>	19
<b>Sexual and domestic violence</b>	21
<b>Women positions (elected, political, and in the judiciary)</b>	25
<b>Discrimination against rural women</b>	35
<b>indirectly reflected in the UN Women Sierra Leone Strategic Note</b>	
<b>Human trafficking</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Access to education</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Working conditions of women</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Access to health care</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Data on the situation of widows and former women combatants</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Addressing the particular needs of elderly women, and girls and women with disabilities</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Data disaggregated by sex, age and geography</b>	<b>43</b>

This positions UN Women most favourably to support CEDAW implementation. In fact, UN Women has had a central position in the national gender machinery network since its inception in 2012. And during the course of the Strategic Note, UN Women has been the main partner involved in the country’s international reporting mechanisms (CEDAW, UPR) related to gender norms and legislation such as the Constitutional review or the Three Gender Laws. According to respondents consulted at the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, UN Women’s comparative advantage is derived from its women movement origins: besides working with gender machineries, UN Women works directly with CSOs. While the line Ministry appreciates the special connexion between UN Women and grassroots organizations, the needs of the Ministry should also be acknowledged in their views.

The relevance of direct support to CSOs is nevertheless felt when Sierra Leone issues shadow reports to the UN Committee on CEDAW. CSOs are empowered to monitor and hold governments accountable for the rights of women and girls and even exert pressure where UN Women’s lobbying and advocacy is insufficient. Working directly with women-led CSOs has strengthened women’s movement in Sierra Leone thereby advancing the cause of GEWE. Also, consistent with UN Women’s close relationships with civil society, several interview participants noted that UNW’s grant application procedures are comparably flexible in reaching communities and non-state actors without rigid bureaucracies.

UN Women strength was visible in relation to supporting women representation in elected and appointed positions, national policy analysis, work on land ownership and awareness raising, including in rural areas. There is potential to some extent in the areas of gender statistics particularly in disaster and humanitarian contexts and less track record in supporting production and use of data on the extent and magnitude of VAW, trafficking, prostitution, the situation of widows and former women combatants. Also worth exploring is the area of energy plans/policies on women's production and use of energy.

Across interviewed stakeholders, the CO work to support economic empowerment of most vulnerable women, is viewed as a significant contribution to demonstrating interventions that work and sharing the learning at the national level amongst government and non government institutions.

### Finding #2:

The CO responsiveness<sup>21</sup> to (i) changes and/or additional requests from national counterparts, and (ii) unforeseen situations was demonstrated in an evolving country context, including EVD outbreak and natural disasters

Consulted participants observed without exception the importance of UN Women's contribution to EVD and natural disasters responses<sup>22</sup>. UN Women played a lead role in engendering the humanitarian response in Western Area after the flash flood and mudslide in Sierra Leone. Interviews with staff revealed that the visible influence of UN Women during that period was a consequence:

- ® of **the CO's agility and flexibility** in the face of national emergencies as evidenced by its rapid readjustment of plans and budgets. Since the start of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in Sierra Leone in May 2014, UN Women Sierra Leone was propelled to divert most of its resources towards addressing the gender dimension of the disease and curtailing its spread;
- ® of the **CO's capacity to leverage its coordination mandate**. As established by previous evaluations<sup>23</sup> UN Women-Sierra Leone's participation in joint programming has been highly relevant to the country's recovery priorities and Ebola Response and was supportive of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1, 2, 5, 8 and 10. The mid-term review<sup>24</sup> also acknowledged the relevance of UN Women programmes to the development context of Sierra Leone. We elaborate further on intervention successes in the next paragraph<sup>25</sup>. This is most visible in the area of WEE where in the only year of 2018, over 250 Women<sup>26</sup> have directly benefitted from UN Women support. From the 250 women supported economically in one year, the benefits are likely to have trickled down<sup>27</sup> to at least 1,000 women or dependants.

## Effectiveness

### Key Questions:

Are interventions contributing to the expected outcomes? What unexpected outcomes (positive and negative) have been achieved?

To what extent have planned results been achieved on time?

21 or "dynamic relevance"

22 UN Women received a **Presidential Award** (2016) for its role in Ending Ebola in Sierra Leone. The only other UN agency to receive the same award was UNICEF. In addition, UN Women received the **Best Agency Award** (2016) given by the Consortium for Health and Gender Equality.

23 This is recognized by the Final evaluation of the Social Rehabilitation and Payment to EVD Survivors project

24 UN Women Sierra Leone. Report of the Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Note.

25 See in particular, our charts on *Indicator Progress* and *Contribution Analysis (Annex 12)*

26 53 Women Trained on Shea Butter Value Chain processes; 71 Young Women trained on Entrepreneurship and Business Development; 180 youth to secure jobs and income from Business Grants provided to 18 Enterprises

27 From the 2018 beneficiary numbers, the categories are as follows; Youth: 62%; Older Women: 15%; EVD Survivors: 5%



Which activities are yielding desired results, which are not and what are the reasons for differences in performance?

What are the main enabling and hindering factors to achieving planned outcomes?

What changes might UNW-Sierra Leone undertake to enhance its impact in the future?

### Finding # 3

The CO has made concrete achievements in all impact areas and has largely shown its capacity to attain and sometimes exceed output targets towards intended outcomes. In addition, between 2015 and 2018, the general trend of outcome and output results has the shape of an upward slope. This suggests that initial investments were necessary for at least two years for tangible results to be observed later in 2018.

**The UN Women CO's Programme** has focused on supporting the country in implementing international standards on GEWE through technical assistance and direct funding to programmes of the government and civil society organizations. A comprehensive mapping and analysis of the Strategic Note results indicates that most of UN Women's DRF (and OEEF) targets were likely to be individually achieved by the end of Strategic Note period.

Based on the Country Office's result tracking system, all indicators of the key results were reported to be either "completed" or "on track" (See Annex 3). This demonstrates the CO's ability to deliver on, or even exceed, intended results (See *Contribution Analysis* at Annex 12).

**There are several operational examples illustrating that UN Women Sierra Leone is overall on track towards achieving singular results.**

#### Progress towards results in the programming area

WPE Result Area (Gender responsive electoral frameworks)

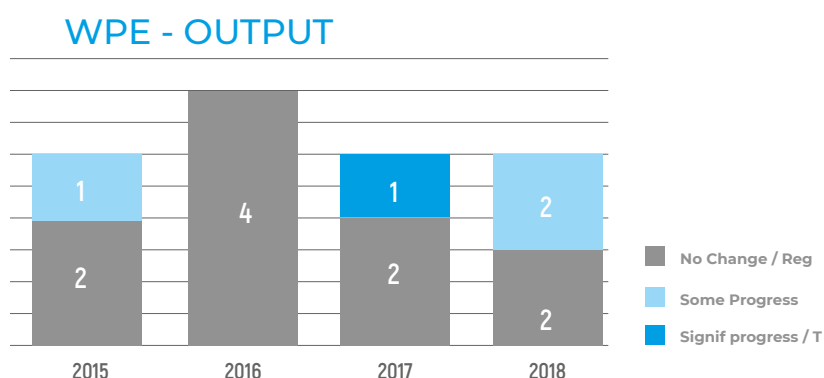


Figure 3.1.2a – WPE Output Indicator 2015-2018<sup>28</sup>; Source: Result Management System ([RMS](#))

The online [Result Management System](#) features data related to at least 3 WPE indicators per year between 2015 and 2018.

No change was observed in 2015 for two WPE output indicators out of 3 and no change was noted on any of the four output indicators in 2016;

While two WPE output indicators showed no change in 2017, a significant change occurred according to one WPE output indicator;

Lastly in 2018, 50% of the WPE output indicators signaled some progress.

While the picture is slightly different at outcome level (see below), the overall trend of indicator values suggests that in the area of women leadership, continuous efforts were required in order to start achieving solid results. It might take 2 or 3 years for initial investments in advocacy and capacity building to translate into tangible results.

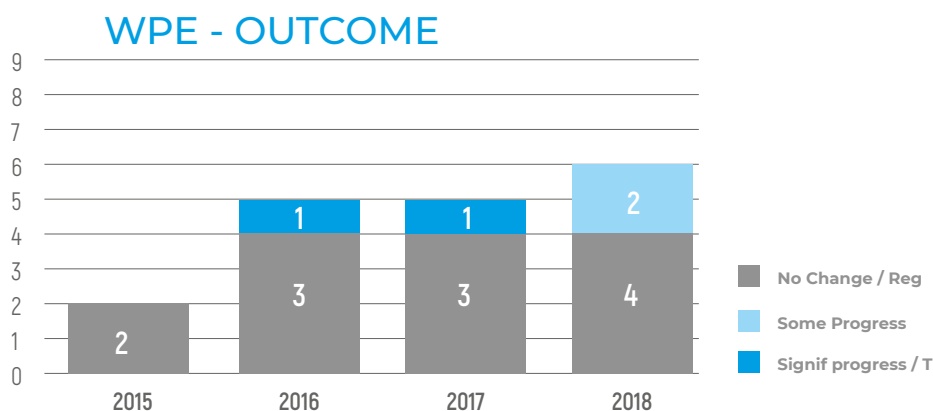


Figure 3.1.2b – WPE Outcome Indicator 2015-2018<sup>29</sup> Source: Result Management System ([RMS](#))

In this graph of WPE outcome indicators, we observe once again, from the overall trend of the result indicators that the first two years of UN Women Sierra Leone interventions did not produce immediate results. This is probably attributable to the social and political resistance facing the work of gender advocates. This implies a relatively slow pace of change in the area of Women Political Environment.

No change was observed in 2015 for two WPE outcome indicators out of 3 and significant progress was noted consecutively in 2016 and 2017 for one outcome indicator out of 3. Lastly in 2018, 30% of the WPE outcome indicators signaled some progress. Interestingly enough, significant progress was signaled in 2017 for one indicator *both at output and outcome levels*. The same level of consistency between output and outcome indicators was reported in 2018. In other words, some progress was noted in 2018 for 2 output indicators and 2 outcome indicators.

### **An account of Country Office Work in the impact area of WPE:**

The year of 2018 was also the time when Presidential election campaigns were organized. The four previous years were dedicated to the mobilization of women groups and CSOs for increased female participation and representation in the elections. UN Women jointly implemented, with UNDP and UNESCO, an initiative aimed at *Improving Women’s Participation in political Processes as Peace building Ambassadors*. As we learned from document reviews<sup>30</sup> and confirmed during interviews, this made possible the drafting of both the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 II and the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy.

29 “Regr” = “Regression”; “Signif Progr/T” = “Significant Progress or Target Reached »  
 30 UN Women Sierra Leone Annual reports, from 2015 to 2018.

A clearer connection of the programme with women representation consisted in enabling a peacefully conducive context of elections: through engagement and training of security forces, training on early warning systems and other engagement, the elections were relatively peaceful as evident in the voter turnout as well as reports published in National and International Observer Reports although there were isolated incidents of Violence Against Women in Elections.

In spite of WPE under-investment<sup>31</sup>, with advocacy from UN Women and civil society, more women leaders emerged from all sectors and levels. The Government of Sierra Leone secured one third<sup>32</sup> of women representation (2016) in appointed positions. There were visible nominations of women in top positions in the judiciary, at Road Safety Authority, Accountant General, Auditor General, etc. This was the discreet result of UN Women lobbying. Another fortunate outcome is the establishment of the Sierra Leone Women's Shadow Parliament and the Rural Women's Network (RWN). As rural areas concentrate most of the issues faced by women, the RWN becomes particularly important in relation with advocacy for increased representation of women at local authority level. In 2018, there was a major breakthrough with the election of the first two female paramount chiefs.

In addition, after the 2018 elections, 18.6% women were appointed in the Cabinet and 12.9% elected to Parliament. Studies and reports by various organizations record increased positive change in the perception of the population on the need to increase women's participation in leadership and decision making; and removal of barriers like Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE). According to a staff member, *"The Women Peace Ambassadors in various communities identified and trained by this project has produced a mechanism for solving existing electoral disputes at community level and raising early warning systems of potential conflicts"*.

That being said, a longer process is required before there exists full parity. While women participated at all levels of leadership in parliament, local council, traditional leadership, the number of seats in Parliament remains below the 30% quota called for by the Beijing Platform for Action and the number of female local councillors is only 18%.

The TOC session with staff showed that the CO is persuaded that by working closely with the women groups and civil society, by enhancing leadership skills amongst potential candidates, women groups will contribute to the reduction of current barriers to women's participation in the elections. The plan should have increased chances of yielding results if the CO supportive role for inclusive representation was extended to the national security apparatus, traditional authorities, electoral management bodies, and in particular the main political parties.

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31 See Figure 2.2.2a

32 One third, including female ministers and female deputy ministers

## WEE Result Area (Women Economic Empowerment)

### WEE - OUTPUT

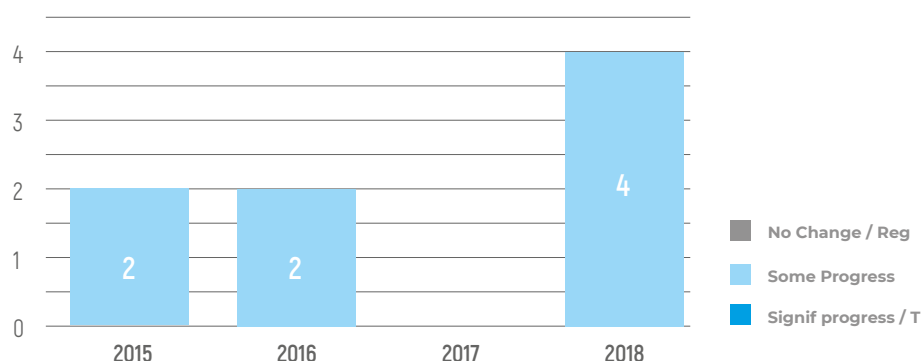


Figure 3.1.2c – WEE Output Indicator 2015-2018<sup>33</sup>; Source: Result Management System (RMS)

UN Women Sierra Leone’s online [Result Management System](#) indicates some progress for all Women Economic Empowerment output indicators between 2015 and 2018, except for the year 2017. Outcome indicators (see below) were less sensitive to output level changes during the same period. However, there was a clear coherence between progress indications in 2018: the country office reporting system shows four (4) outcome indicators with the rating “*some progress*” and three (3) outcome indicators with the mention “*significant progress*”.

### WEE - OUTCOME

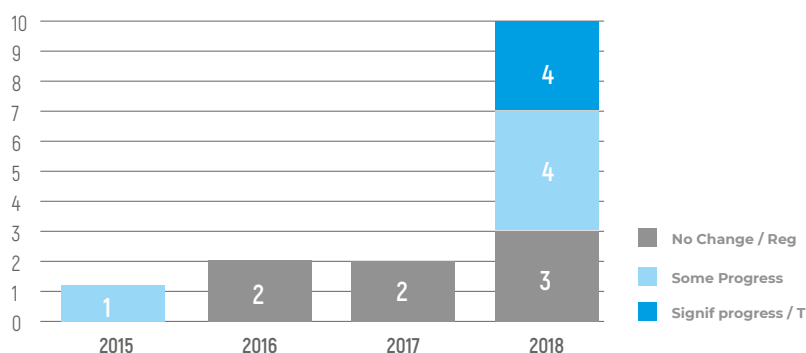


Figure 3.1.2d –WEE Outcome Indicator 2015-2018<sup>34</sup>; Source:Result Management System (RMS)

### An account of Country Office Work in the impact area of WEE:

Overall progress reported by result indicators in the WEE impact area is echoed by numerous stories of life change afforded by the CO’s women economic empowerment initiatives for rural and fragilised women. This includes the Kono Women Water Company Initiative. CO quarterly reports give an account of the level of coordination it took for the Water Company to exist as reported below.

33 “Regr” = “Regression”; “Signif Progr/T” = “Significant Progress or Target Reached »

34 “Regr” = “Regression”; “Signif Progr/T” = “Significant Progress or Target Reached »

## BOX-1 Kono Women water Company

Jeneba Tawarally is a widow who sells at Benseh Market in Kono. She is living at 68 Mashembe Road Kono, together with her four children. Her four children, Fatmata- 18 yrs. is now in University, Alimatu who is now 15yrs, Hawa 12 yrs and Aminata Tawarally who is now 8yrs old are all going to school. It has never been easy as a single mother to take care of these children especially when they all must go to school she stated. "I was doing Gara-Tye Dying and was getting paid two hundred thousand Leones a month by a woman called Titi Mansaray", Jeneba said. she has been doing business in Koidu Town Kono for over 15 years but lost the husband Abubaker Jalloh during the Ebola surge. She is now the operator of the filling and sealing water machine. She reports for work at 7:30 AM until 6:00 PM from Mondays to Saturdays. "I'm very happy for the water company because before it was only men who were doing the work in production but I thank God for UN Women who has empowered me" she went on to say. Today with enough training I can operate the machines and produce bundles and bottles of water Jeneba says. UN Women through Sierra Leone Market Women provided a comprehensive package that included Training by WATCO Water Company, Equipment including water filters Start-up kits, Mentorship and Coordination that later led to the launched the Diamond Spring Water Company in Kono District. The women were now ready to practicalize the training they had had to professionally filter unsafe water to crystal clean and produce in plastic containers. The Kono Women water Company which is made of 30 women branded the name for the water as "Diamond Spring Water". The facility has a four-building structure, one for the Water a Quick Production, Water Pumps, the Administration Block, and Packaging and Distribution room. A generator plant was provided to the Kono market women water company on loan from UN Women to assist them in power supply as the town is out of power most of the time and the machines only work with power. Through these women a large amount of people can now access pure drinking water in Kono.

The Water Company initiative is not the only example of successful interventions that are worth replicating elsewhere. UN Women Sierra Leone enthusiastically supported women business growth through the *Shea Butter Value Chain* initiative. 53 women entrepreneurs were trained for value addition to the natural product of Shea butter and marketing. Women from various districts were trained for 8 days and followed up for an extended period by a specialist in Shea Butter production identified by the Regional Office. Local authorities were invited to facilitate the establishment of a cooperative that will serve as the parent body in coordinating Shea butter entrepreneurs and create a conducive market for women.

## BOX-2 The Shea Butter Initiative

Haja Adama Conteh, 56 years old lives at 30 Rokimaya Road in Kabala, capital of Koinadugu District in the Northern Provinces of Sierra Leone. She explains how her life has changed since she entered into contact with UN Women.

*"I have been dealing with Shea Butter for over 30 years but the sale did not gainfully impact my life. Travelling to the Guinea to buy large quantity of Shea Butter, the journey by road was long and bumpy. It's only available at specific times from May to September. I would buy large amount and sell it to my fellow market women who would in turn sell to their customers.*

*Selling Shea butter was not profitable we sold it for 2 thousand Leones which is lesser than a dollar. I was approached by UN Women in my market in Kabala and invited to attend the first consultative meeting of market women in Free-town. At the workshop we discussed ways to locate, plant and produce Shea Butter, the consultant Mame Khary Diene showed us how to make Shea butter in to various products. After the training we formed the Sierra Shea Cooperative, a company that will produce Shea Butter. I am grateful to UN Women for the income generated opportunity which we can utilize for economic empowerment."*

## Box-3 – Coca-Cola / UN Women partnership for economic empowerment

(Source: [June 14, 2016](#) by [oneunsierraleone](#), posted on [sl.one.un.org](#))

The Coca Cola Company and UN Women entered into a partnership to economically empower the first one hundred women. The initiative offered women access to business skills training courses, financial services and connections with peers or mentors. "A journey to a thousand miles starts with the first step", said Jeneba Kamara one of many beneficiaries of the 5by20 campaign.

The Sierra Leone Bottling Company have been working assiduously starting with identifying vulnerable women in the various communities that are prepared to benefit from the project. A sum of two hundred thousand dollars was used in total spending six hundred dollars per head to make the project a success.

UN Women saw the journey of the first one hundred women entrepreneurs as a step in the right direction to women's economic empowerment, ensuring that women and girls live a life free from violence and also foster peace and security and humanitarian action which are shaped by women's leadership and participation. The program was meant to be later expanded to benefit other women in the provinces in Makeni and Kenema in the second phase.

This cooperation at country level therefore is responding to both UN Women's Strategic Plan and The Coca Cola Company's (TCCC) global "5 by 20 Initiative", building on the strengths of each organization system-wide operations and network.

Evidently, the CO does not assume that three or four successful WEE projects can affect significantly the plight of women living in poverty at national level. UN Women counts on demonstrating to the Government of Sierra Leone that the lives of women and communities can improve if successful experiences are used as models and are put to scale at national level.

## EVAW Result Area (Elimination of Violence Against Women)

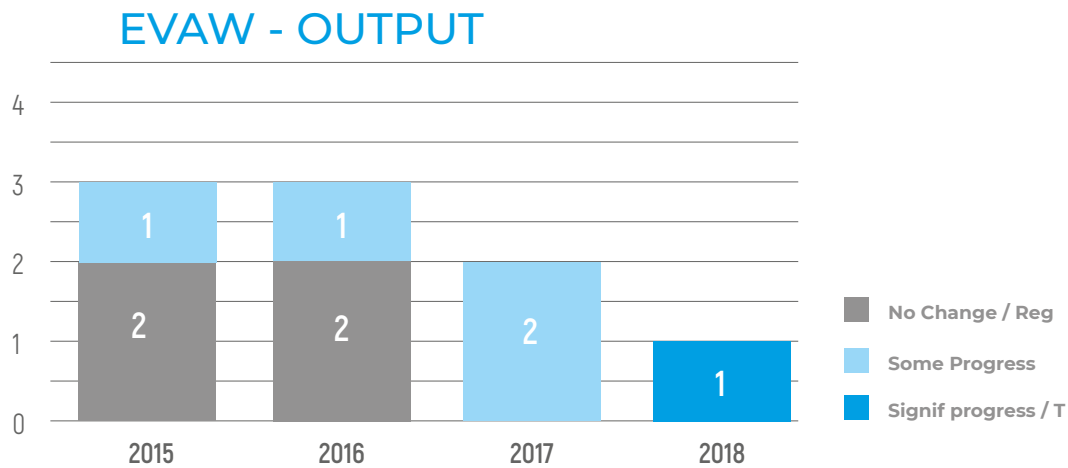


Figure 3.1.2e – EVAW Output Indicator 2015-2018<sup>35</sup>; Source: Result Management System ([RMS](#))

EVAW is the only impact area where the online [Result Management System](#) showed the highest rating, namely “*target reached*” for a number of indicators. This was observed in 2018 at output level after 3 years of “*no change*”. In 2015 and 2016, there was “*no change*” for 3 output indicators and a “*regression*” rating was ascribed to 1 output indicator. “*Some progress*” was noted for 2 output indicators.

Consistently enough, more than a quarter of outcome indicators showed positive ratings, either “*significant progress*” or “*some progress*”. However, apart from 2018, all the other outcome indicators remained unaffected by changes observed at output level. This development in the EVAW Impact Area suggests, once again, that for clear changes to take place in terms of women empowerment, initial investments (advocacy, capacity building, lobbying, awareness raising, ...) may be required for at least two years without necessarily observing any immediate effect.

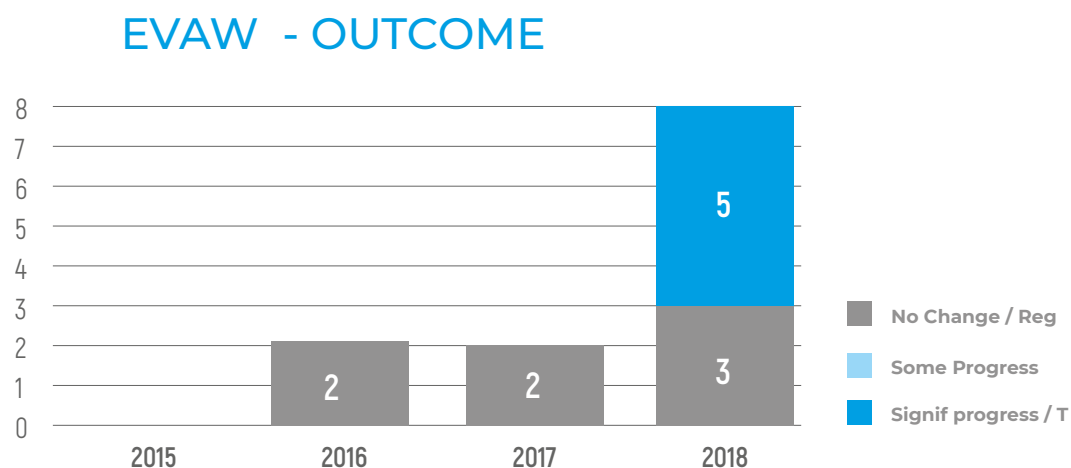


Figure 3.1.2f – EVAW Outcome Indicator 2015-2018<sup>36</sup> Source: Result Management System ([RMS](#))

For instance, it would take more than 3 years for awareness raising interventions such as the *HeForShe Campaign* to have some effects on the national prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence experienced by women and girls.

35 “Regr” = “Regression”; “Signif Progr/T” = “Significant Progress or Target Reached »

36 “Regr” = “Regression”; “Signif Progr/T” = “Significant Progress or Target Reached »

## An account of Country Office Work in the impact area of EVAW:

Awareness raising and engagement with men have indeed been the main feature of UN Women's programmatic work in a context of high prevalence rate of sexual and gender based violence. In this impact area, joint efforts with UNFPA and UNICEF were combined to conduct *Ending Child Marriage* advocacy.

### BOX-3 UN Women Sierra Leone's work on SGBV

UN Women in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense/Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Irish Aid and the Community of Practice on Gender Based Violence launched the HeForShe Campaign as well as 16 Days of Activism on Gender Based Violence on 25th November with 500 men and women doing a 15km walking engaging over 10,000 commuters and residents in the central business districts and west end of Freetown on various messages to end violence against women and girls. In addition, 300 school boys and girls and 20 male and female teachers from 3 schools in Freetown were engaged on speaking out against GBV and also reporting issues of GBV. Issues of Teenage pregnancy, child marriage, FGM, domestic violence amongst others were discussed. 30 Members of UNCT Country Team in Sierra Leone pledged to galvanize efforts to end violence against women and girls. The strategic partnership with the Ministry of Defence has led in an increased awareness of the impact of gender based violence among the military personnel.

As a result of HeForShe advocacy campaign, 300 Rural women pledged to stop FGM in Sierra Leone. Nine villages from the Yoni chiefdom converged in Rokfulla village for a dialogue with Rural Women in celebration of International Day for Rural Women. The dialogue with the women in Rokfulla created a big break through and inspiration for the rural women. By the end of the sensitization FGM initiators openly pledged to stop initiation

10,000 listeners all over the country participated in radio discussions (with call in sessions) held with a cross section the UN Gender Technical Team in Sierra Leone led by UN Women discussing issues of the Effect of GBV on National Development, Teenage Pregnancy and Child marriage and Violence against women in Elections. Participating Agencies included, UN Women, WFP and UNDP. The EU also joined one of the radio discussions. This activity also built on existing private sector partnership with AFRICEL a mobile company owns the radio station

In 2017, 1,435 women and girls were raped, according to Rainbo Centre<sup>37</sup>. More than half of the victims were between 11-15-years and 24 % of the victims ranged from 16 to 20 years. For the following year, Rainbo Centre reported a significantly higher number: 2,900 sexual assault cases were recorded in total.

It is not clear whether the higher figures are attributable to an increase in prevalence or simply reflect reduced restrictions to reporting: there has been a higher number of reported cases as compared to a time when sexual assaults were swept under the carpet. Several respondents believe that advocacy campaigns for elimination of GBV are likely to have contributed to less acceptance of violence against women, thus making it possible for GBV survivors to report cases without fearing reprisals.

### **PSH Result Area** (Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action)

<sup>37</sup> Rainbo Initiative was set up in 2003 after a recommendation of the 2002 United Nations [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (TRC) following the 11-year Civil War. For more, please consult: <http://rainboinitiative.sl/rainbodata/>



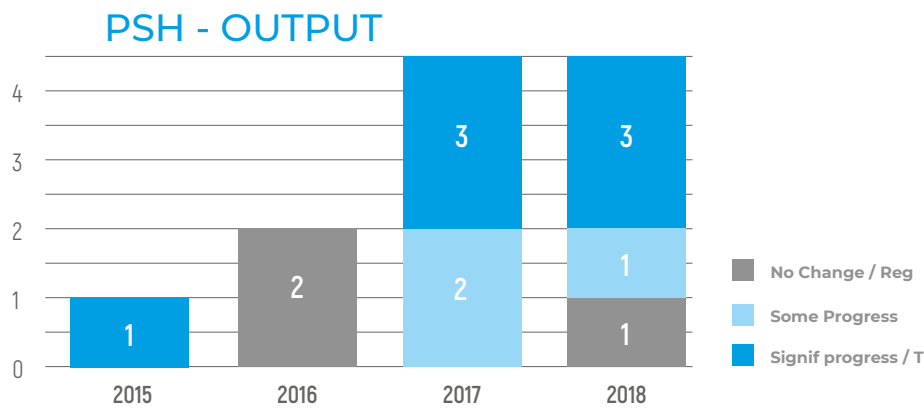


Figure 3.1.2g – PSH Outcome Indicator 2015-2018<sup>38</sup> Source: Result Management System (RMS)

The PSH impact area featured the rating “*significant progress*” during the entire strategic note duration, except for 2016 where there was little spending made by the Country Office for PSH (\$ 6,110). Apart from 2016, the PSH Impact Area responded to CO efforts with “some progress” rating for 27 % of output indicators and “significant progress” rating for 64 % of output indicators.

While the *Peace, Security and Humanitarian* (PSH) impact area responded positively at output level to Country Office investments, this was not the case at outcome level as shown in the graph below.

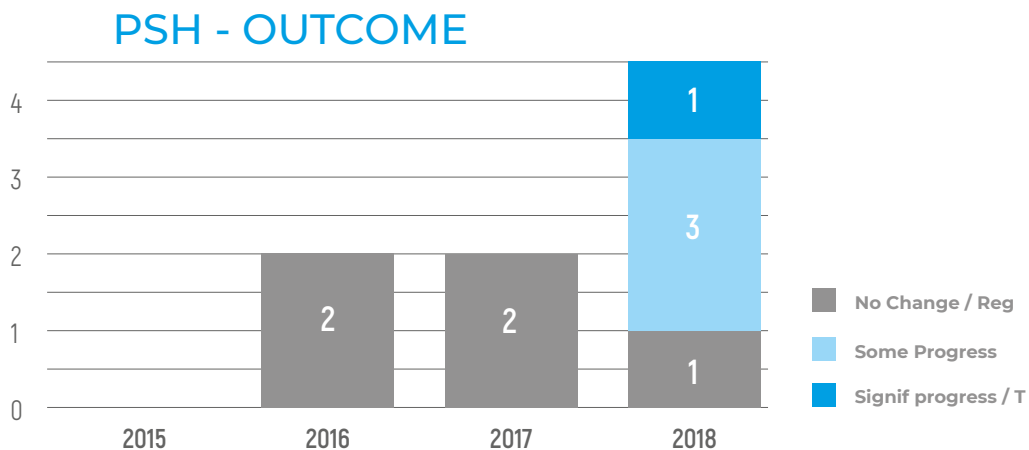


Figure 3.1.2h – PSH Outcome Indicator 2015-2018<sup>39</sup> Source: Result Management System (RMS)

Apart from the 2015-2016 period where there was no reporting and little investment, respectively, the PSH had a “no change” rating for 43 % of outcome indicators, “some progress” rating for 43% of outcome indicators and “significant progress” rating for 14% of outcome indicators. Clearly the level of response to country office efforts was much lower at PSH outcome level as compared to the same at output level.

38 “Regr” = “Regression”; “Signif Progr/T” = “Significant Progress or Target Reached »  
 39 “Regr” = “Regression”; “Signif Progr/T” = “Significant Progress or Target Reached »

## An account of Country Office Work in the impact area of PSH:

It is fair to say that UN Women had a tangible influence in this area. In general terms, the Country Office emphasised with clear evidence<sup>40</sup>, during EVD Response Emergency meetings, the importance of integrating gender into preparations and responses to disease outbreaks. Women survivors of EVD were likely to suffer more as they are invariably expected to be at the forefront of outbreak responses.

UN Women technical support within the Government led Psycho-Social, Gender and Protection Pillar resulted in improved coordination of psycho-social, gender and protection services in the field. Immediate response and post emergency services are now streamlined and implemented in a way that is inclusive of gender dimensions.

UN Women was already well positioned, alongside<sup>41</sup> the Government, UNICEF, WHO, the Red Cross to provide much needed support for emergency responses required during the Ebola outbreak. When natural disasters such as mudslides happened subsequently, women priorities were considered. This is mainly attributable to advocacy and technical support provided by UN Women. It had resulted, since 2015, in the prioritizing of gender and women by all major stakeholders in the emergency response, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. In particular, the Country Office advocated<sup>42</sup> successfully for clear emphasis on responding to special needs of the most vulnerable while delivering humanitarian assistance and protection response. This involved:

1. GBV<sup>43</sup> survivor service provision because violence against women and girls is the main threat to women's and girls' safety within humanitarian situations especially those living under temporary shelters; in host families or communities;
2. making special provisions, as part of the protection response, targeted at coping mechanisms during crises such transactional sex and harmful traditional practices, especially child, early and forced marriage;
3. preventing family separation, including through the provision of alternative care arrangements to preserve as much as possible family unity (e.g. keeping mother and children, or siblings together);
4. gender responsive humanitarian response involved also distributing kits specially fitted for women and young girls (also called "dignity kits") affected by the flash flood and mudslide. The dignity kits comprised sanitary napkins, toiletries, wrappers and underwear.

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40 [Report of the multisector impact assessment of the gender dimensions of the Ebola virus disease \(EVD\)](#)

41 different actors were involved in EVD Response: Ministries of Health and Sanitation (MOHS), Social Welfare, Gender, and Child Affairs (MSWGCA), and Education, Science and Technology (MEST) as well as key international actors such as Médecins Sans Frontière (MSF) and International Red Cross (IRC)

42 See IASC's [Gender Alert](#), August 2017

43 The 2015 Evaluation Report of the SiLNAP noted that *"There is now an increased capacity of the Family Support Units of the Sierra Leone Police to respond to the needs of GBV survivors in terms of better case management and counselling and legal assistance, as well as enhancing the technical capacity of implementing staff."* (p.52)

The UN Women CO has worked with the National Assembly and various commissions, ministries, and related agencies in their formulation of the National Action Plan on UNS-CR 1325 II and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment policy. This has been critical in ensuring that a strong legal and policy environment is created.

There remains however some resistance amongst legislators since a White Paper, dated 10th November 2017, showed unwillingness to consider the Constitutional Review Committee's recommendations to:

- (i) ensure equality of women and men in political, economic, cultural and social spheres;
- (ii) abolish the death penalty and
- (iii) include a right to the environment, the rights of the aged, the rights of persons with disability or the rights of children in the constitution.

UN Women CO supported the Government of Sierra Leone during the process of CEDAW reporting. Similarly and worked to provide technical and financial support for data collection and analysis to the government in relation with its 7th CEDAW Report.

The review of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone has been a major feature of the 2014-2019 strategic period. Position papers favorable to GE were submitted to the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) with the objective of stripping the 1991 Constitution of the sections which encourage gender bias or limit the scope of the legal protection and prevention. It had gathered momentum as members of different communities, political parties and CSOs felt it important to reformulate the constitution, particularly the bill of rights to take into account the full range of the country's international human rights obligations.

However, a reviewed constitution has yet to materialize, hence there remains a lot of work in order to revise provisions that are adverse to gender equality.

UN Women provided Technical and financial Support to MPs, Law Reform Commission and Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's affairs in order to harmonise the Child Rights Act and the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act 2009 in order to protect girl and end child marriage.

During the period 2016-2018, the CO registered 10,000 *HeForShe* male advocates. This is crucial to increasing male engagement in achieving protection of rights of women and girls, men and boys. UN Women's *HeForShe* approach has been an effective way of engaging with Parliament<sup>44</sup>, traditional leaders<sup>45</sup>, military personnel and young men on supporting gender equality issues such as land inheritance, women in leadership positions, stopping FGM, eliminating violence against women and ending child marriage.

The He4She Campaign has also been relevant across all thematic areas. As mentioned

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44 Through the Committee on Social Welfare, gender and Children

45 Sierra Leone has been significantly involved in building capacity of traditional leaders and religious leaders to gain community support in protecting and advancing women's rights. For instance, *HeForShe Engagement* with male Paramount Chiefs has resulted in them nominating three female paramount chiefs to vie for Parliamentary seats, eventually two of the female chiefs were voted as members of Parliament in the recently concluded elections.

by a respondent, “regarding the need to change the traditionally accepted exclusion of women from inheritance [“women cannot inherit property”], advocacy and consultation with traditional chiefs can potentially yield results that have an impact on WEE”. For instance, there were efforts to convince paramount chiefs: 50% were FOR change but 50% were AGAINST change... In a context when you have only 15 female chiefs out of more than 100 male chiefs, it makes sense to engage with men. Hence the relevance of the He4She approach”

### Progress towards results in the area of coordination

Gender coordination work has consisted in UN Women Country Office’s leading role in gender interagency mechanisms for supporting the country’s efforts towards gender equality and women empowerment. Gender coordination work involved the development of joint programmes on SGBV, reporting to the government on the status of national development plan in the areas of gender, reporting on the UNDAF and other UNCT mechanisms including Joint Tracking and Alignment Database (JTAD), preparing and communicating UN positions on violence against women and various human right issues. The UN Gender Technical team is coordinated by UN Women and has periodically supported Government and CSOs in organising the International Women’s Day and preparation for CSW and in capturing the views and positions of women to the constitutional review process.

UN Women Sierra Leone has shown capacity to convene different parties around a common goal or initiative. UN Women has just completed an integrated, multisectoral programme<sup>46</sup> on Addressing Sexual and related Gender-Based-Violence against women and girls bringing together other UN Agencies (UNAIDS/UNESCO/UNICEF/UNDP/UNFPA/WHO) in addition to the government Gender Machinery.

UN Women is the UNCT lead for ending FGM and Ending Child marriage and is the chair secretariat for the UNCT- GTT. UN Women is the UNCT lead for the UN-SWAP and a member of the UN H6 Partners and has mainstreamed gender into the H6 Programme. The CO works bilaterally and multilaterally with other UN agencies through a wide array of joint initiatives, including the Constitutional Review Program and the programme on Ending Child Marriage. UN Women has been the Chair of the UN Communications Group (UNCG) for the past 4 years.

UN Women’s contribution to policy development extends to Development Partners (DP). The DP Gender Working Group brings together 14 Development Partners<sup>47</sup>. UN Women is the Co-chair with Irish Aid of the Development Partners Gender Working Group which addresses Gender responsive Policy coherence at all levels.

UN Women CO’s coordination work has consisted in promoting the accountability of the UN system on GEWE, including mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the UN programmes. One of such mobilizations has been the launch of the **African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage**: beyond organising advocacy events with significant involvement of young women/girls on various district and provincial level consultations, the campaign brought out a well-articulated position paper urging the authorities to take strong commitment and action in ending child marriage in the country. **The campaign against FGM** has also been part of UN Women coordination agenda: UN Agencies, media and CSOs gathered

46 The Joint programme on improving maternal health/newborn/neonatal/adolescent health and on ending HIV is also known as the UN Flagship Programme because it is the first of its kind in Sierra Leone.

47 Irish AID/AfDB/WB/EU/DFiD/USAID/GIZ + 7 UN Agencies

to support the development of the National Strategy on Ending FGM.

Other examples of UN Coordination work are as follows:

- ® The Constitutional Review Program was supported by UN Women and UNDP;
- ® UN Women has joint programmes on SGBV with UNICEF/UNFPA/UNDP as well as on ending child marriage with the same agencies. Beyond joint programming with UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF, the working committee on ECM (chaired by UN Women) is also an instance of coordination work where several national stakeholders and development sectors are involved: media, religious and traditional leaders, Government, CSOS, Health personnel, police work collaboratively towards ending child marriage. It is therefore not surprising that, in recognition of UN Women CO's coordination role on gender, the Government of Sierra Leone has granted UN Women the leading role for an entire standalone pillar/outcome ("CLUSTER 5") of the country's new Development Plan;
- ® The FAO & UNW joint initiative on SMART AGRICULTURE. Its success is premised on eliminating barriers about women land ownership.

The CO has been most visible for its evidence-based advocacy<sup>48</sup> for integration of gender aspects in Ebola response (December 2014). The *Report On Multi-Sectoral Gender Impact Assessment Of Ebola* has been the most striking example of the CO coordination capacity: UN Women Sierra Leone facilitated the productive collaboration of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the United Nations Entity for Gender (UN Women), Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) and Oxfam for the conduct of the study.

It demonstrated that Ebola transmission has a gender dimension, based on the socio-culturally constructed gender roles. It called for special attention to the particular needs of women as they were widely expected to provide care for the sick and bury the deceased. Its launching event (February 2015) attended by the government and key international organisations was compelling on the need to engender the Ebola response through special protective measures for women and girls. More importantly, the multi-sectoral Ebola impact study had an enduring result with the main national institution for humanitarian response: the Office of National Security decided to systematically reflect gender specific considerations in future humanitarian actions in Sierra Leone.

#### *Finding # 4*

UN Women CO result monitoring system would function better if progress on the outputs and the level of expenditures were correlated. The inconsistency is attributable to the relatively slow responsiveness of RMS output indicators to CO interventions.

In 2016, UN Women Headquarters rolled out a web-based platform called Results Monitoring System (or RMS). This provided country offices with a sound monitoring and reporting system. The CO maintains regular records of activity and enters output reports into the system on a quarterly basis. These are also often supported by communication products. The system made it possible for anyone with access to the intranet to track output progress, the extent to which outcomes are fully funded and the rate of expenditures.

UN Women internal financial records are supported by a robust financial management system, called ATLAS. Financial records were also available. Regular field visits by staff members also ensured monitoring of progress on results. However, current efforts aimed at linking the financial and the result monitoring systems do not always capture results expected from interventions. In particular, as shown in the table below, the CO outputs listed below, all indicators were reported to be either "completed" or "in progress". Yet,

48 See "[Report on multi-sectoral gender impact assessment of Ebola](#)"

corresponding expense variations were equal to zero.

RESULT	# of indicators	# of IPT* (A)	% Spent (B)	Consistency btw A&B ?
Output 1.2.1 National Syst. capacities	2	2	0	No
Outcome 2.2 Opportunities for female small holders				
Output 2.2.1 Access to Markets & Finance	1	1	0	No
Outcome 3.1 Enabling environment for EAW				
Output 3.1.1 Laws and policies are reviewed	1	1	0	No
Outcome 4.2 Engendered Humanitarian/crisis response				
Output 4.2.1 Increased capacity for engendered response	2	2	0%	No

\*PIT= indicators in progress towards their target

Table 3.1.2 – Source: [RMS](#)

The apparent contradiction might lead to suspect that the mapping exercise of all AWP outputs into ATLAS did not translate into a coherent integrated system. However, this is not the case: with a closer look at the kind of indicators used for monitoring output results, it is clear that RMS indicators, in their current wording, cannot easily<sup>49</sup> capture related changes within a year or a quarter of a year. In other words, changes observed on the ground, insofar as they are attributable to UN Women interventions, do not necessarily exhibit, as soon as expected, the properties outlined in relevant RMS output indicators. The latter are probably “felt” at CO level as outcome indicators. Thus, we have a plausible explanation of the frequent <no change> reports, as previously observed at the section dedicated to Country Office progress towards results<sup>50</sup>.

## Efficiency

### Key questions

To what extent is the governance structure and functioning enabling UN Women -Sierra Leone to deliver efficiently on results?

Are the interventions achieving synergies within the UN Women portfolio and the work of the UN Country Team?

Is the balance and coherence between programming-operational, coordination and policy-normative work optimal?

How can the workload across mandates be prioritised most effectively?

#### *Finding # 5*

UN Women Sierra Leone leveraged its convening capacity in gender to transcend its limited resources and staffing through an exemplary combination of UN agencies expertise and pooling of resources to support the Government’s engendered response to disasters

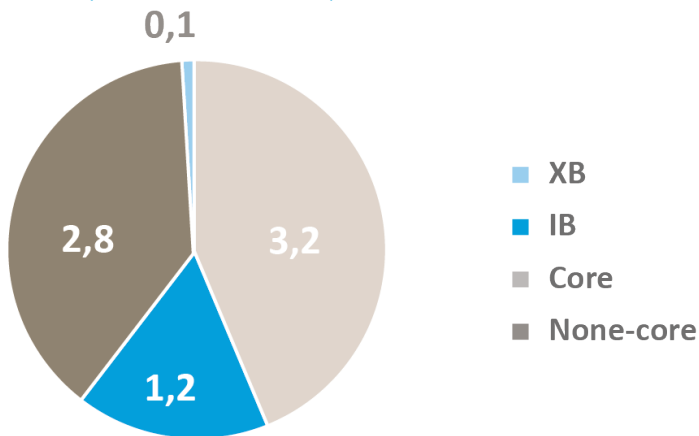
49 See Finding #3: result indicators evolve over time with the shape of an upward slope  
50 See Figures 6.2.1-8.

and epidemics.

The Country Office used almost all of its own resources and funds available by donors: from 2014 to 2018, the office used 6 775 471.3 USD, that is 93% of delivery. Interview participants acknowledge that the CO applied flexible processes for grant qualifications. However, all respondents (including staff) admitted that there were delayed contractings and delayed disbursements. This affected the implementation of various interventions due to fixed durations as per agreements with donors.

### BUDGET 2014-2018

(in \$ millions)



Budget and Delivery by SP Framework

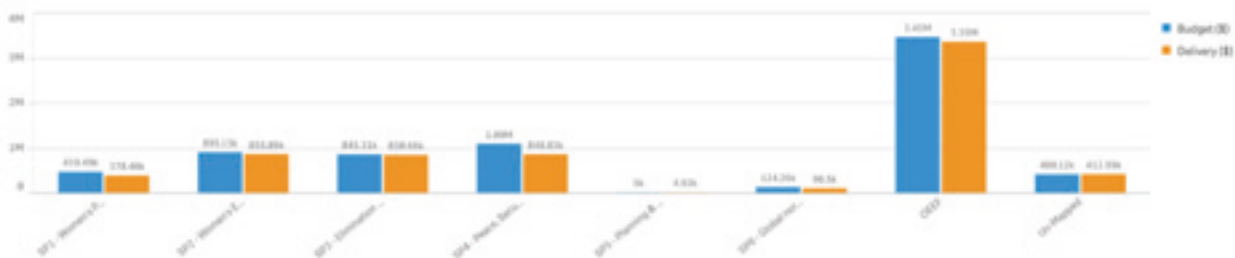


Figure 3.1.3 – Budget distribution and delivery 2014-2018

Source: [ATLAS](#)

The same respondents indicated that funds received were too limited to achieve expected results: the needs required for significant contribution on the ground were much higher than could be afforded by the agency alone.

However, UN Women Sierra Leone compensated its lack of resources by using its strong convening capacity. The Country Office developed the UN Gender Responsive Strategy for Ebola and mobilised technical and financial resources from other agencies through the UNCT coordination mechanisms to deliver on engendered response targets to EVD response and to mainstream the early recovery strategy. UN Women’s own financial and human resources could certainly not match the considerable needs required to engender national humanitarian interventions. By pooling together their resources, UN agencies were able to significantly help the country respond to the massive and sudden humanitarian requirements.

UN Women was also able to contribute seed money to elicit interest from other agencies.

An initiative meant to engage men to fight FGM was funded by UNICEF to the tune of 30,000 \$. UNFPA also contributed 100,000 \$ to UN Women's efforts prior to the Ebola crisis in 2013.

In spite of WPE under-investment<sup>51</sup>, with advocacy from UN Women and civil society, more women leaders emerged from all sectors and levels. The Government of Sierra Leone secured one third<sup>52</sup> of women representation (2016) in appointed positions (See more details about WPP results under 6.2 *Effectiveness*).

Additionally, an important strategy has consisted in establishing synergies across UN Women Sierra Leone's impact areas. Post-Ebola recovery of affected communities was made possible with an economic empowerment approach. Ebola survivors and destitute women were given a start on their self-reliance journey through UN Women's cash transfer programme totaling about \$113,000 and a mobile phone each to facilitate communication and to ease mobile money transfers. These funds were expected to support women's business and farming for female survivors and destitute women in different rural districts<sup>53</sup>.

There is no better example of synergetic approaches than the *HeforShe* initiative: it has proven to be versatile across all thematic areas in humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts. It has been instrumental for both the support of women leadership during the elections campaign and advocacy for ending child marriage (For more details on how the *HeforShe* versatility has been relevant across all thematic areas, cfr. 6.2 *Effectiveness*).

## Sustainability

### Key questions

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Is there national ownership and are there strong (institutional or CSO-based) supporters for different parts of the portfolio?

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To what extent does Sierra Leone pay sufficient attention to strengthening the enabling environment for sustainability, including sufficient capacity-building activities so that national stakeholders can continue their activities without Sierra Leone support?

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What local accountability and oversight systems have been established to enhance local knowledge development and support sustainability of results?

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What are the major factors that have influenced (or can influence) the achievement or non-achievement of Sierra Leone programme sustainability (link to the Country Office organisational theory of change, if available)?

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There is no doubt that UN Women has contributed to enduring results in Sierra Leone. As mentioned before, the the multisectoral Ebola impact study had a long term effect on the Office of National Security (ONS), the main national institution for humanitarian response. The ONS decided to systematically reflect gender specific considerations in future humanitarian actions in Sierra Leone.

In general terms, the transfer of knowledge amongst non-state actors and a number of normative milestones<sup>54</sup> guarantee sustained national efforts towards policy change in favor of women human rights and gender equality. A policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was developed and the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) further approached the Law Officers Department to fast-track the enactment of the Gender Equality and Women's Empower-

51 See Figure 1.1

52 One third, including female ministers and female deputy ministers

53 Kailahun (Daru and Koindu), Kenema, Port Loko Kambia and Karene Districts

54 Entrenchment of Equality as a Principle of State in the Sierra Leone draft constitution; efforts towards CEDAW domestication and the unanimous adoption of the Maputo Protocol; the national validation of the GEWE Policy and the adoption and localization of the SDGs (including SDG 5) and its alignment with the national Development Plan; This clause will inform all the Chapters of the new constitution.



ment Bill, including the minimum 30% quota for women in governance at all levels and eventually the creation of the Women's Commission.

There is clear political will as recently demonstrated by the President's First Address to the House of Parliament. It demonstrated the Government's seriousness on women empowerment. An additional positive indication of the government's commitment is the new National Development Plan<sup>55</sup> which reflects gender equality in its planned results.

Moreover, the MSWGCA has integrated UN Women outputs into the Ministry's workplan and is likely to exert its oversight role as already demonstrated during joint monitoring of intervention activities through field visits. Most importantly, this is significant as the MSWGCA advises the government on matters relating to the full integration of gender in national development at all levels. The MSWGCA serves as the official national body for coordinating and liaising with national and international organisations on gender equality and the status of women.

That being said, a more balanced distribution of funds across UN Women Sierra Leone's impact areas is required for sustainable results. The resources are quite needed as MSWGCA is faced with several challenges including limited financial resources and staff capacity.

#### *Finding #6*

Synergies established between the thematic areas of EAW, PSH and WEE may not be sufficient to compensate for investment gaps in the Women Political Environment result area. This is potentially detrimental to sustained impact in the area of WPE.

As already discussed<sup>56</sup>, expenses made since 2014 per impact area were relatively high in the Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action (PSH) impact area and lowest in the area of Women Political Environment (WPE). EAW and PSH alternated in receiving the highest investment.

### BUDGET SHARE 2014-18

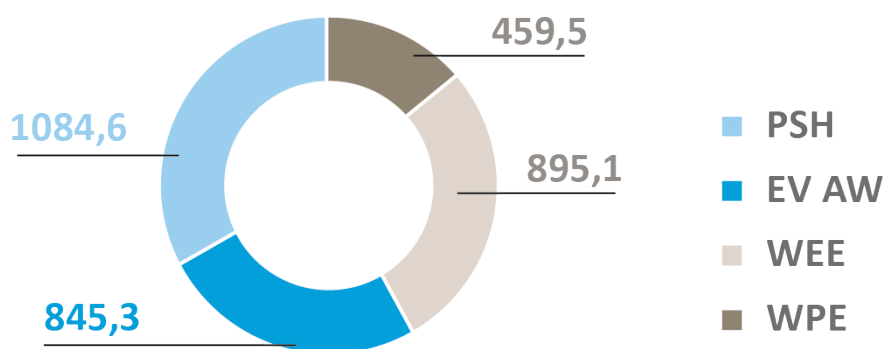


Figure 3.1.4a – Budget share 2014-2018; Source: [ATLAS](#)

Investment in WPE has been quite low, in particular during non-electoral periods. PSH had the greatest budget variation between its lowest and highest levels (2016 and 2018, respectively) while EAW had the highest relative variation (between 2015 and 2018, respectively) when considered in terms of proportion of the total 2014-2018 budget.

55 <https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/CR/2019/1SLEEA2019002.ashx>

56 See figures (1.1) and (1.2)

## IMPACT AREA BUDGETS 2014-2018

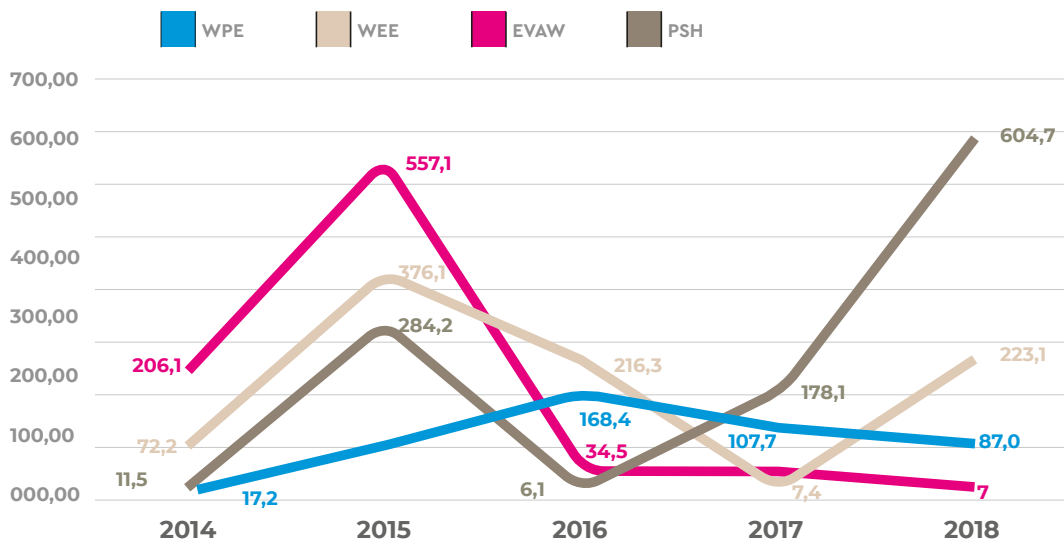


Figure 3.1.4b – Impact Area budgets 2014-2018; Source: [ATLAS](#)

The above distribution of funds implies over time a potential loss of momentum which in turn can hamper efforts to address the root causes of gender inequality and frustrate many stakeholders involved in less fortunate impact areas.

There has been a steady increase of funds for *Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action* since 2016 [from 6.1 K to 605 K (2018)]. The *Women Economic Empowerment* budget went from 7.4 K (2017) to 223 K (2018). Disproportionately high budget allocations to PSH are certainly connected to Sierra Leone’s Ebola outbreaks and natural disasters. And there is no doubt that economic empowerment is one of the most important ingredients and prerequisites for empowerment.

As a matter of fact, the mid-term review identified the area of economic empowerment as one of potential synergetic interactions with the other impact areas. It called for intensified connections with development funders, notably the World Bank and the African Development Bank with a view to mobilize funds for women economic empowerment.. But to follow Sara Longwe’s *Empowerment Framework*, women’s access to factors of production, land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities, and all publicly available services and benefits is only a step towards one of the highest levels of empowerment, namely *redefined and significant participation* in decision making. With this perspective in mind, significant investment in Women Political Environment and support to changing related legislation and policy are the most important drivers for changing the dynamics of power relations and social norms that are detrimental to women.

Working on Political Participation is not necessarily isolated from other impact areas. For instance, the impact of Elimination of Violence against Women: the CO worked with the West African Network for Peace (WANEP) to develop tools to monitor incidents of violence against women in elections. This tool helped document instances of hate speech, domestic violence, and physical violence by the public and it provided substance while notifying electoral management bodies and relevant security institutions.

### Finding #7

UN Women catalytic role supersedes its funding constraints. However, the visibility afforded from successful interventions has increased demand on an already financially constrained CO, with limited personnel in comparison to the scope of issues being addressed as part of the mandate and ambition of the entity.

Most stakeholders found that the momentum gained from the country's recognized contribution to engendered Ebola response has been maintained with regards to integration of GEWE and women's rights in the overall development process of Sierra Leone. They also shared that even though the staff is small in number, their competence and knowledge in this area are very good and relevant. Significant results were indeed achieved in all impact areas with a relatively small number of staff. As previously noted, requested funds for recruiting a Deputy Representative, Communications Officer, Operations Manager, M&E officer and an additional programme staff on FTA modality are yet to be approved by UN Women - HQ. The Country Office relieved its small Operations team by asking UNDP to partially administer HR function (payroll, recruitment of SC and FTA) and paycycle on behalf UN Women. But as long as the M&E Officer position is not filled, the function of monitoring and reporting will put additional workload on the shoulders of programme workers.

Increased demand from state and non-state structures for UN Women's guidance in gender is likely to take a toll on the performance of the already overstretched staff. If the trend continues, the CO will struggle to satisfy demand and maintain velocity on various areas of interest. In the long run, these limitations in terms of staff availability and logistics are likely to cause doubts amongst strategic partners about Sierra Leone's reliability.

Interview participants revealed that:

*"UN Women is regarded as a major player in the development of the Girl-child as a consequence of its support to end child marriage, teenage pregnancy, supply of sanitary kits to schools and Female Genital Mutilation. We are now recording a lot of requests for support from communities and some agencies";*

*"With a relatively small number of staff, the office achieves significant results in many areas. However, with few staff members being in high demand for their gender expertise and high expectations among partners for more guidance from UN Women, the Office's human resources are below the demand for capacities.";*

*"The Ministry of Finance issued a circular requiring that all MDAs (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) indicate clearly in their funding application processes the number of women and girls targeted by their projects. This has triggered demands for gender expertise and training from District Chiefs from Kenema, Poploko, etc...;*

Furthermore, an entity-wide workforce survey conducted in 2016 and largely discussed during a Town Hall meeting<sup>57</sup> revealed that UN Women staff was stretched too thinly. When they were asked about "what could change to make UN Women a better place to work", participants to the staff survey felt that their workload is excessive; that they often take work home and have concerns on understaffing.

UN Women Sierra Leone is no exception to that. As previously shown, the CO staff size has increased over the years but the staffing mix of the CO is not sufficient for organisational efficiency.

57 [Presentation from HR Director on 2016 Staff Survey findings](#) at the Town Hall Meeting of August 2017

“We need to have work-life balance as we are asked to walk the extra mile quite often”, said one member of the personnel. For instance, it is frequent to see Programme Managers embracing monitoring, reporting and evaluation responsibilities at the expense of their own respective responsibilities.

## Human Rights and Gender Equality

### Key questions

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Has the portfolio been implemented according to human rights and development effectiveness principles: Participation/empowerment; Inclusion/non-discrimination; National accountability/transparency

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To what extent is the portfolio changing the dynamics of power in relationships between different groups?

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What contribution is UN Women making to implementing global norms and standards for women’s empowerment and gender equality ?

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### Finding #8

The design and implementation of the strategic note has been consistent with human rights principles to the degree allowed by the national context. Full domestication of CEDAW Convention is required for clear advances in terms of women’s rights and gender equality.

We noted earlier<sup>58</sup> that four topics of CEDAW Concluding Remarks for Sierra Leone are directly reflected in the Country Office interventions, as articulated in its Strategic Note: these are “*Eliminating gender stereotypes*”, “*Sexual and domestic violence*”, “*Women positions*” (elected, political, and in the judiciary), “*Discrimination against rural women*”. Five topics of the said Concluding Remarks were indirectly reflected in the Strategic Note: “*Human trafficking*”, “*Access to education*”, “*Working conditions of women*”, “*Access to health care*”, “*Data on the situation of widows and former women combatants*”, “*Addressing the particular needs of elderly women, and girls and women with disabilities*”, “*Data disaggregated by sex, age and geography*”. We also noted that UN Women works within the legal and policy framework of international and regional legal frameworks already ratified by the Sierra Leone Country. Several aspects of the strategic portfolio demonstrate efforts made by the CO to address discriminatory cultural and gender related norms. In particular, norms related to decision-making, political participation, negotiation and access to resources were implicitly tackled by various interventions. For instance, UN Women’s interventions addressed political participation concerns in its engagement with community leaders: last year, 14 female Paramount Chiefs engaged 50 male paramount chiefs to discuss the importance of gender equality & stressed on the importance of having women paramount chiefs represented in parliament. Additionally, the All Parties Political Parties Women’s Association (APPWA) was engaged on issues of violence against women in elections (VAWE).

Most importantly, UN Women has kept a strong focus on human rights by supporting the Constitutional Review Process. The current Constitution of Sierra Leone (1991) provides for equal rights for men and women in Article 27, but the principle of non-discrimination does not apply in all areas and could therefore be best described as ambiguous and restrictive on gender equality. Indeed, one of the major constraints faced by the United Nations in Sierra Leone, in particular UN Women and UNICEF, is the entrenched nature of discriminatory beliefs. The Government admitted in 2016 that “*female genital mutilation is a cultural practice in Sierra Leone*”<sup>59</sup>.

Another cause of concern is the observed delay regarding the enactment of the Sierra Leone Affirmative Action Bill which stresses the 30% quota for women in all selective governance positions. As long as relevant laws and policies are not fully in force and imple-

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58 See Table 3.1.1

59 Universal Periodic Review, A/HRC/32/16, p.6

mented nationwide, UN Women efforts for addressing the root causes of gender inequality and changing the dynamics of power relations will be constrained and limited in this area.

#### *Finding #9*

There is clear evidence of women having greater social and political influence, as a result of UN Women support to a nation-wide Women Movement. The deliberate inclusion of vulnerable women living in rural areas alongside other groups in the Women Movement is a clear indication of the priority given to those who were left behind. Continued support from the Government is required for the success of this strategy.

The evaluation found that an important feature of the CO effective contribution to strengthening National Gender Machinery is its support to different women groups. The first effort in this area started with the formation of the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG). The CSAG convened once in 2014, just before the outbreak of Ebola. And then, there was significantly less engagement since then.

However, after recovery from the disastrous epidemic, a *Rural Women Network* was formed with UN Women support as part of the Strategic Note's special attention to vulnerable social groups, including Ebola survivors. This choice to focus efforts away from urban areas was in line with the SDG spirit and with one of the work areas called for by CEDAW's Concluding Observations to Sierra Leone: *discrimination against rural women*. As mentioned by a respondent, "we had spent decades taking an elitist approach towards gender equality and women empowerment, now UN Women supports a different approach. This time, we are moving away from elites in urban settings and the Rural Women will be in the driving seat for change".

This describes clearly the emergence of a new *Women Movement* meant to start from the grassroots and hold the Government accountable as it picks momentum and "moves upwards". Indeed, Sierra Leone's *Women Shadow Parliament*, was initiated in the later years of the Strategic note to play the role of a new pressure group aimed at influencing gender policies in government.

Various sources interviewed have mentioned that key active members of the *Rural Women Network* and the *Shadow Parliament* could easily be associated with the government in place or its opposition. The perceived partisanship has the potential of hampering the *Women Movement's* agency. It follows that an important factor of success for both initiatives is positive engagement with the Government, regardless of the outcome of elections.

In a context of polarised competition for power, UN Women understood the risk of being identified with members of the previous Government. The pursuit of UN Women's non-partisan support to the diverse spectrum of women organizations should fortify the perception that the United Nations is politically neutral while remaining committed to the achievement of women human rights and gender equality. For instance, support could be extended to a strong multi-stakeholder national platform for the women's movement, inclusive of women from all political parties living in urban/rural areas. This would enlarge the space for CSOs' ability to influence gender responsive policy making and representation in decision making positions in light of the low number of political seats that resulted from the March 2018 elections. The network would advocate for policies informed with women rights principles and for the appointment of women from a politically diverse spectrum

## 3.2 Conclusions

### Conclusion #1 (Relevance)

UN Women Sierra Leone's dynamic relevance is well established in the face of contextual instability. There is scope for leveraging the coordination role to improve coverage of CEDAW-related work areas.

UN Women is the only entity which is explicitly mandated with GEWE from the perspective of international conventions and norms. All stakeholders, regardless of their take about the merit of the CO's work, held the opinion that UN Women has a strong mandate and a significant value, unmatched by any other organisation.

An analysis of alignment between UN Women's Strategic Note and the most recent CEDAW concluding observations shows that the latter are either directly or indirectly reflected in the CO interventions related to women's rights, norms and standards.

UN Women work is quite visible regarding women representation in elected and appointed positions, national policy analysis, work on land ownership and awareness raising, including in rural areas. There is potential to some extent in the areas of gender statistics particularly in disaster and humanitarian contexts and less track record in supporting production and use of data on the extent and magnitude of VAW, trafficking, prostitution, the situation of widows and former women combatants. Also worth exploring is the area of Government plans/policies on women's production and use of energy.

The CEDAW Concluding Observations for Sierra Leone made recommendations on various topics identified as "Principal areas of concern and recommendations"<sup>60</sup>: human trafficking, girls' access to education, decent working conditions of women, discrimination against rural women, Government plans/policies on women's production and use of energy, etc. Given its current constraints in terms of human and financial resources, UN Women Sierra Leone may use its convening power in gender to mobilise other UN entities in these areas. The UNSD Reform represents an important opportunity for that to happen.

### Conclusion #2 (Effectiveness)

The CO has largely shown its capacity to attain and sometimes exceed output targets towards intended outcomes. However, the CO result monitoring system does not always feature output progress as correlated with reported expenses.

As witnessed in various work areas, UN Women Sierra Leone is overall on track towards achieving singular results. What is in need of improvement is the wording of RMS indicators. Changes observable through current RMS indicators are slower than those related to Country Office outputs. RMS indicators meant to measure output results are in substance better suited to monitor outcomes. As a result, within a year or a quarter of a year, the CO RMS dashboard indicates <no change> for a given output while corresponding expenses have been recorded.

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<sup>60</sup> Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Sierra Leone, UN, CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6 Principal areas of concern and recommendations

## Conclusion #3 (Efficiency)

The deployment of UN Women's convening capacity in gender was effective in mobilizing resources for disaster and epidemics management. However, synergies established between thematic areas did not compensate investment gaps.

Through an exemplary combination of UN agencies' expertise and pooling of resources, the CO leveraged its convening capacity in gender to transcend its limited resources and staffing, and support the Government's engendered response to disasters and epidemics. For instance, UN Women developed the UN Gender Responsive Strategy for Ebola and mobilised technical and financial resources from other agencies through the UNCT coordination mechanisms to deliver on engendered response targets to EVD response and to mainstream the early recovery strategy. UN Women's own financial and human resources could certainly not match the considerable needs required to engender national humanitarian interventions. By pooling together their resources, UN agencies were able to significantly help the country respond to the massive and sudden humanitarian requirements. As already observed, while the deployment of UN Women's convening capacity was effective in mobilizing resources for disaster and epidemics management, the impact area of WPP was the most deprived of funds (See Figure 2.2.2a).

While concrete links have been established between thematic areas, prioritisation of result areas at the expense of other thematic results is potentially detrimental to sustained impact.

As previously noted, UN Women applied an economic empowerment approach to her humanitarian work while supporting female survivors to Ebola. The *HeforShe* advocacy approach has proven to be quite versatile across all thematic areas. It is not clear whether such multi pronged approaches would compensate the uneven budget allocations by impact areas.

The trend of the share of expenses per result area is not conducive over time to sustainability of results. This is particularly evident in *peace, security and humanitarian action* where the budget was multiplied several times at two instances: in 2015, the budget for PSH was 25 times higher than the budget amount of the previous year; in 2018, it was multiplied 99 times as compared to its level in 2016. On the other hand, funds dedicated to EAW in 2016 were 16 times lower than their value in 2015. In 2018, EAW had the lowest level of funding as compared to other impact areas: EAW budget was 80 times lower than its value in 2015.

Unequal distribution of funds across result areas implies a potential loss of momentum over time which in turn can frustrate many stakeholders involved in less fortunate impact areas and thus could hamper efforts to address the root causes of gender inequality.

There has been an increased demand for the CO staff expertise as a result of UN Women's visibility and successful interventions and campaigns. This could, ultimately, saturate the capacity of the CO due to its limited resources.

Over the last four years, Sierra Leone's notable results in various thematic areas aroused expectations from different sectors of government and new stakeholders. However, increased demand from state and non-state structures for UN Women's guidance in gender is likely to take a toll on the performance of the already overstretched staff. If the trend continues, the CO will struggle to satisfy demand and maintain momentum on various areas of interest. In the long run, these limitations in terms of staff availability and logistics are likely to cause doubts amongst strategic partners about the CO's reliability.

## **Conclusion #6 (Gender Equality and Human Rights)**

The emergence of an assertive women movement is evidence of women's greater social and political influence. However, UN Women Sierra Leone's perceived neutrality regarding individual political affiliations would be at risk without concerted efforts to make new gender coalitions inclusive of everyone.

The evaluation found that an important feature of the CO effective contribution to strengthening National Gender Machinery is its support to different women groups. The first effort in this area started with the formation of the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG). As the experience became inconclusive, Sierra Leone turned its attention to emerging *Rural Women Network* and the *Shadow Parliament*. After the 2018 elections, key active members of the *Rural Women Network* and the *Shadow Parliament* were perceived either as supportive or opposed to the government in place. UN Women understood the risk of being identified with any political interest, beyond the agenda of gender equality and women empowerment. Hence, it became important, for UN Women, to pursue non-partisan support by embracing a resolutely diverse composition to reflect the entire spectrum of women organizations. This will affirm the perception that the United Nations is politically neutral while always committed to the achievement of women rights and gender equality.



### 3.3 Recommendations

Recommendations were broadly discussed during the first session with the Reference Group (see Annex 12) a few days after data collection stage. Follow-up consultations with staff allowed to refine our suggestions for improvement.

#### Recommendation #1

Urgency

★★★★☆

Potential Impact

★★★★☆

Complexity

★☆☆☆☆

The CO can afford to take full advantage of the UNSD Reform to include, in the next multi-year portfolio, some of the thematic areas called for by CEDAW<sup>61</sup>: human trafficking (IOM), girls' access to education (UNICEF), decent working conditions of women (ILO), discrimination against rural women (FAO,WFP), Government plans/policies on women's production and use of energy (UNIDO).

With the anticipated expansion of the Resident Coordinator's Office as part of the UNSD Reform and concomitantly, the increased coordination role of UN Women SLE, the agenda for GEWE is bound to expand. Indeed, UN Women's prominent coordination role in gender is clear considering that UN Women chairs the Gender Task Team, the H6 Partners Group and also co-chairs the Development Partners Gender Working Group which addresses Gender responsive Policy coherence at all levels. UN Women could therefore engage with the above mentioned key players to adopt, on the basis of their respective comparative advantage, gender impact areas as identified by CEDAW's Concluding Observations for Sierra Leone.

#### Recommendation #2

Urgency

★★★★☆

Potential Impact

★★★★★

Complexity

★★★★☆

1. Strengthen the CO human resource base through recruitment of an M&E Officer for enhanced RBM capacity;
2. Engage with strong implementing partners at local levels to build a dynamic monitoring network aimed at showing progress related to actual results through regular collaboration with the CO's M&E unit;
3. Revise the wording of output indicators in RMS in order to reflect progress achieved in the country.

#### Recommendation #3

Urgency

★★★☆☆

Potential Impact

★★★★★

Complexity

★★★★☆☆

Mobilize and invest resources for Women Political Participation<sup>62</sup> in a sustained manner to maintain momentum over time in this important area.

61 See: "Principal areas of concern and recommendations" in the "Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Sierra Leone", UN, CEDAW/C/SLE/CO/6

62 As previously shown in the budget distribution charts, WPP is the Impact Area with the lowest investment

## Recommendation #4

Urgency	Potential Impact	Complexity
★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆

Leverage the Resident Coordinator Office's reinvigorated coordination role to secure higher gender capacities across UN agencies and meet increased demand for gender expertise from different development actors and sectors

## Recommendation #5

Urgency	Potential Impact	Complexity
★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆

For gender policy<sup>63</sup> implementation, expand the development of UN Women's bridging role through support to high quality processes that contribute to the emergence of functional women's machinery and platforms facilitated by a new generation of women leaders at the national and local levels.

## Annexes (See VOL 2)

63 SIERRA LEONE National Policy on the Advancement of Women (2009)  
SIERRA LEONE National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming (2009)  
SIERRA LEONE National Gender Strategic Plan 2009-2012



UN Women Sierra Leone  
2014 – 2019

