



LIBERIA

PROJECT HALF YEARLY PROGRESS UPDATE

PERIOD COVERED: JANUARY – JUNE 2014

Project No & Title:	PBF/LBR/A-13: Women’s Economic Empowerment (Project ID 88042)		
Recipient Organization(s)¹:	UN Women		
Implementing Partners (Government, UN agencies, NGOs etc):	UN Women, Ministry of Gender and Development - MoGD; National Association for Adult Literacy in Liberia - NAEAL; EduCARE and Foundation for Community Initiative - FCI		
Location:	Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh Grand Cape Mount and Sinoe Counties		
Total Approved Budget :²	USD 2,000,0000		
Preliminary data on funds committed :³	USD 1,022,217.60	% of funds committed / total approved budget:	51.1%
Expenditure⁴:	USD 272,821.34	% of expenditure / total budget: (Delivery rate)	13.6%
Project Approval Date:	4 October 2013	Possible delay in operational closure date (Number of months)	6 months
Project Start Date:	4 October 2013		
Expected Operational Project Closure Date:	31 March 2015		
Project Outcomes:	Youth, women and other marginalized members of conflict affected communities to act as a catalyst to prompt the peace process and early economic recovery		
PBF Focus Area⁵	Sustainable Livelihoods		

¹ Please note that where there are multiple agencies, only one consolidated project report should be submitted.

² Approved budget is the amount transferred to Recipient Organisations.

³ Funds committed are defined as the commitments made through legal contracts for services and works according to the financial regulations and procedures of the Recipient Organisations. Provide preliminary data only.

⁴ Actual payments (contracts, services, works) made on commitments.

⁵ PBF focus areas are:

1: Support the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue (Priority Area 1):

(1.1) SSR, (1.2) RoL; (1.3) DDR; (1.4) Political Dialogue;

2: Promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Priority Area 2):

(2.1) National reconciliation; (2.1) Democratic Governance; (2.3) Management of natural resources;

3: Revitalise the economy and generate immediate peace dividends (Priority Area 3);

(3.1) Short-term employment generation; (3.2) Sustainable livelihoods

4) (Re)-establish essential administrative services (Priority Area 4)

(4.1) Public administration; (4.2) Public service delivery (including infrastructure).

Qualitative assessment of progress

For each intended outcome, provide evidence of progress during the reporting period.

In addition, for each outcome include the outputs achieved. (500 words max.)

Outcome 1:

UN Women and the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) are working out the modalities to ensure the rollout of all project activities to promote women economic security and independence in the targeted communities. In order to measure project impact at the end of the project, baseline information is necessary. Therefore, an international firm, InDevelop, has been identified and contracted for conducting a baseline survey for the Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) projects. The firm's contract is currently with UN WOMEN's Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal awaiting approval. Work will start remotely once the contract is signed which will be followed by actual field work by late July. UN WOMEN Program Officer and the Coordinator of the MoGD Peacebuilding Project Management Unit (PBF/PMU) are expected to provide significant guidance to InDevelop during the development of questionnaires and the facilitation of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). These will clearly align with the PBF project documents, as well as indicators in UN WOMEN's strategic plan. Data collected through this baseline and the eventual endline will show convincing evidence of the impact of the interventions under the PBF projects.

Output 1.1: A total of 2,965 women have been mobilized and recruited for accessing and utilizing financial services in Savings and Loans Associations in the 6 targeted counties under the project.

Additionally, one local Nongovernmental Organization (NGO), EduCARE Liberia, has been identified

and contracted to develop the training curricula for implementing the Business Development Skills (BDS) and the Savings and Loan Association (SLA) component of the project. The BDS/SLA training curricula are being finalized for the Training of Trainers (ToT) which will be followed by the roll out of classes in the targeted communities. Forty Six (46) community facilitators have been identified and selected to be trained to teach BDS classes within the targeted communities.

Output 1.2: UN Women has also identified and contracted another local NGO, National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL) as an implementing partner to develop literacy and numeracy training curriculum and provide training for women to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in targeted communities. The training curriculum has been drafted, reviewed, and is currently being finalized. Revision of the draft curriculum was done in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and other strategic partners and/or stakeholders. As mentioned above, Educare will be responsible for the BDS/SLA training while DEN-L Will be charged with implementing the Women in Cross Border Trade (WICBT) activities of the project.

Outcome 2:

MoGD and UN WOMEN have coordinated with the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade (AWICBT) to support their 2014 Leadership Retreat planned and scheduled to be held from July 30 - 31 2014. About 80 women leaders from the association - representing national and county leaderships are expected to attend this retreat at which time detailed plans for the roll out of PBF

activities linked to AWICBT will be developed in collaboration with the association.

Output 2.1:

During the retreat, a work plan will be developed to rollout all activities related to WICBT including setting up of a reporting mechanism.

Output 2.2:

At the leadership training scheduled for end of July, a key item on the agenda will be initiating discussions on setting up reporting mechanisms to deal with regulations relating to border procedures. Effective reporting mechanisms will be in place as project implementation rolls out.

Outcome 3:

In May 2014, an international consultant was hired to conduct a study on Gender and Natural Resource Management in PBF focused counties. The research consultant visited two of the targeted counties (Sinoe and Grand Gedeh) and held FGDs with diverse groups of women, men and other stakeholders.

At the debriefing meeting held with partners and stakeholders, the consultant presented the following as preliminary findings from the study:

A. Gender roles limit women's participation in non-profitable and often dangerous areas: digging of mines, providing construction material etc. while the lucrative aspects which could be commercialized were for the men.

B. Pro-poor policies that invest in public services such as health, education (intended to create a social safety net) need to go hand in hand with the natural environment protection policies which is the base of social security.

C. Natural entry points that women prioritize include food production, energy, fuel sources, Water management, Non-timber forest products, mangroves and natural landscapes. Thus, programs need to leverage these aspects of women natural resources management and agency to prepare them to negotiate in the globalized market of natural resources.

Output 3.1:

The report from the study is being finalized. Additionally, a training module on Gender and Natural Resource Management will be developed by the consultant for incorporation into the PBF training curricula (i.e. literacy and numeracy, BDS/SLA and Peacebuilding). This module will be used to educate women on their rights and natural resource management issues that affect them.

Output 3.2:

A Gender and Land Desk has been established within the PBF Project Management Unit at the Ministry of Gender and Development. One Gender and Land Expert has been recruited to provide gender technical inputs into land reform processes and support the development and dissemination of women's land rights in project communities. A training manual on women's land rights has been drafted by the Land Desk and is being finalized.

<p><i>Do you see evidence that the project is having a positive impact on peacebuilding? (250 words max.)</i></p>	<p>The project will definitely have a positive impact as community members are very excited and hopeful it will improve their situation. However, it is a bit early to provide concrete evidence.</p>
<p><i>Were there catalytic effects from the project in the period reported, including additional funding commitments or unleashing/unblocking of any peace relevant processes? (250 words max.)</i></p>	<p>It is still too early to identify such effects. However, demands and enthusiasm is very high for the project. The women are particularly excited about the SLA component and foresee its effects to be huge.</p>
<p><i>If progress has been slow or inadequate, provide main reasons and what is being done to address them. (250 words max.)</i></p>	<p>Progress towards implementing the project has been slow due to the absence of a Country Representative for UN Women, which delayed the process of contracting implementing partners and consultants. This is because all authorization had to be done at the Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal. Additionally, the process of establishing the Peacebuilding Fund Project Management Unit (PBF/PMU) was a challenge due to difficulties in identifying suitable candidates for various positions. The limited quality and capacity of applicants led to two rounds of recruitment.</p> <p>The PBF/PMU is now established—the Director, Finance Officer and Driver have been recruited and discussions are ongoing regarding the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist position. Additionally, UN Women now has a Deputy Country Representative and the process of contracting consultants and implementing partners is almost completed.</p>
<p><i>What are the main activities/expected results for</i></p>	<p>The following activities are targeted for the next quarter:</p>

<p><i>the rest of the year? (250 words max.)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct baseline survey 2. Finalize curricula development (BDS, SLA, NRM & Literacy) 3. Conduct ToT for BDS and literacy trainers 4. Conduct leadership retreat for WICBT 5. Finalize training manual on women's land rights
<p><i>Is there any need to adjust project strategies/ duration/budget etc.? (500 words max.)</i></p>	<p>Due to the challenge posed by the leadership gap at UN Women and the difficulties in setting up the Project Management Unit at the Ministry of Gender and Development, project implementation started very late (March 2014) instead of October 2013. Therefore, there is a need for a non-cost extension of six months.</p>
<p><i>Are there any lessons learned from the project in the period reported? (500 words max.)</i></p>	<p>It is very important for project staff to have skills and the ability to manage men's expectations and perceptions about the rationale of the project approach. Otherwise, men may feel left out or marginalized. During the recruitment of project beneficiaries in some communities, men were always eager to understand why they could not be SLA members, peace huts leaders or attend BDS classes.</p>
<p><i>What is the project budget expenditure to date (percentage of allocated project budget expended by the date of the report) – preliminary figures only? (250 words max.)</i></p>	<p>The total amount of two hundred seventy-two thousand eight hundred twenty-one dollars thirty-four cents (USD 272,821.34), amounting to 13.6% has been spent.</p>

<p><i>Any other information that the project needs to convey to PBSO (and JSC) at this stage? (250 words max.)</i></p>	<p>The Ministry of Gender and Development and UN WOMEN Liberia have requested the approval by the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) Co-Chairs to amend the signed Project Document and Budget respectively - particularly in reclassifying some of the budget components to accelerate the delivery of the project. As part of this amendment, the MoGD and UN WOMEN had a series of discussions and agreed that the M&E Specialist budget line be broken down to facilitate the recruitment of:</p> <p>M&E Officer (National): To ensure accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the project;</p> <p>Communication Officer (National): To foster increased visibility and awareness of the project in Liberia, as well as share best practices of the project; and</p> <p>Office Assistant: To provide operational support (i.e. filing, data entry, etc.) to the Peace Building Fund Project Management Unit at MoGD as identified by both the Ministry and UN Women</p>
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INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: *Using the Project Results Framework as per the approved project document- provide an update on the achievement of key indicators at both the outcome and output level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, state this and provide any explanation in the qualitative text above.*

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baseline	End of project Indicator Target	Current indicator progress	Reasons for Variance/ Delay (if any)	Adjustment of target (if any)
Outcome 1: <i>Women experience increased economic security, (defined by their ability to generate and manage their own income) in twenty targeted communities.</i>	Indicator 1.1 <i>Degree of women's economic security and independence in conflict prone areas, including border regions and communities affected by large concession agreements</i>	Baseline (Oct 2013): <i>Data to be collected through a baseline survey in October 2013</i>	By April 2015: 50% increase vis-à-vis baseline (to be confirmed after conducting baseline survey in Oct 2013)	An International consulting firm has been identified and the contract is still pending approval at UN women Regional office	Difficulties in identifying local firm to conduct the baseline survey. Hence, UN Women had to advertise internationally which led to the identification of one potential partner following a rigorous and competitive process	
Output 1.1 Increased access to and utilization of sustainable financial services for rural women and cross border traders	Indicator 1.1.1 Number of women actively accessing and utilizing financial services in savings and loan associations	Baseline (Oct 2013): 5,121 women utilizing financial services through savings and loan associations nationwide.	At least 9,121 women accessing and utilizing financial services through savings at loan associations nationwide, by April 2015.	2,965 women mobilized and recruited for accessing and utilizing financial services in Savings and Loans Associations Finalization of training curriculum on the Business Skills and Savings and Loans Association is in progress 46 BDS and SLA	Delay in recruitment of staff from Ministry of Gender and Development and delay in identification and selection of qualified implementing partners	1,035 women to be mobilized and recruited by August 2014

				trainers identified in 23 targeted project communities		
Output 1.2 Improved business practices for women, young women , and WICBT	Indicator 1.2.1 Number of targeted women with functional literacy, numeracy and business skills to effectively manage their businesses in thirty communities	<i>Baseline(Oct 2013): tbd in assessment of project participants</i>	<i>By April 2015, 4,000 women have functional literacy, numeracy, and business skills to effectively manage their businesses</i>	2,965 women mobilized and recruited for accessing and utilizing financial services in Savings and Loans Associations 46 literacy and numeracy trainers identified in 23 targeted project communities	Delay in identification and selection of qualified implementing partners. Delay in approval of contract at UN Women’s Regional Office	Curriculum to be finalized by August 2014 ToT will be conducted for identified by August 2014
Outcome 2 <i>Women in cross border trade have increased confidence in the security sector and understanding of proper security and regional trade procedures and protocols.</i>	Indicator 2.1 <i>Change in perception of the security sector by women involved in cross border trade</i>	<i>Baseline (Oct 2013): tbd in assessment of project participants</i>	<i>Target (April 2015): 50% of members report reduction in harassment and increased confidence in the ability of border security to carry out their correct duties.</i>	Not yet possible to collect data on this indicator		
Output 2.1 Reporting mechanisms accessible to	Indicator 2.1.1 Women involved in cross border trade from targeted border counties exhibit	<i>Baseline (Oct 13): No to limited understanding</i>	<i>Target (April 2015): 50% of targeted traders are aware and willing to utilize the mechanism in the case of complaint.</i>	Not yet possible to collect data on this indicator		

<p>WICBT to report incidence of harassment, corruption or abuse by security sector</p>	<p>awareness and capacities to utilize the “complaint mechanism” established within the regional security hubs.</p>					
<p>Output 2.2 Members of the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade have an increased understanding of border procedures and regulations governing trade in the Mano River Union</p>	<p>Indicator 2.2.1 AWICBT members’ across knowledge of basic border procedures, customs regulations, and the roles of various security institutions all 15 county chapters.</p>	<p><i>Baseline (Oct 2013): to be determined through survey</i></p>	<p><i>Target (April 2015): 50% of members show increased knowledge of basic border procedures, customs regulations, and the roles of various security institutions</i></p>	<p>Leadership retreat planned and scheduled to be held from July 30-31 with 80 women leaders from the Association of Women in Cross Border Trade—representing national and county leaders.</p>		
<p>Outcome 3 <i>Women in targeted communities have knowledge and capacity to</i></p>	<p>Indicator 3.1 Women’s participation in community management of natural resources, the environment and land.</p>	<p><i>Baseline (Oct 2013): tbd in assessment of project participants</i></p>	<p><i>Target (April 2015): women in five targeted communities are participating in all community meetings regarding land and</i></p>	<p>A study on Gender and Natural Resources Management was conducted in May 2014 and the report is being</p>		

<i>demand respect of their rights in community management of land, natural resources and the environment.</i>			<i>natural resources.</i>	finalized A training module is being developed by the Gender & NRM Research Consultant		
Output 3.1 Increased awareness amongst community women on natural resource management and concession agreements that affects their communities	Indicator 3.1.1 Project participants' level of knowledge of their rights and the natural resource management issues that affect them.	<i>Baseline (Oct 2013): tbd in assessment of project participants</i>	<i>Target (April 2015): 80% of project participants demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding of their rights and the natural resource management issues that affect them.</i>	Not yet possible to collect data on this indicator		
Output 3.2 Women and women's civil society have increased access to information on their land	Indicator 3.2.1 Project participants' level of knowledge of their land rights and mechanisms for redress.	<i>Baseline: tbd in assessment of project participants</i>	<i>Target: 80% of project participants demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding of their land rights.</i>	Training manual on women's land rights drafted.		

rights and land reform process						
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