



**PEACEBUILDING FUND (PBF)
FINALPROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT**

REPORTING PERIOD: FROM OCTOBER 2010 TO DECEMBER 2013

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <p>Programme Title: Promoting non-violent, free and credible elections through enhanced participation of non-state actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Number: not applicable • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p>Country/Region: Sierra Leone</p> <hr/> <p>Priority area/ strategic results</p> <p>.....</p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme: UNDP 	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <p>National counterparts (government, private, NGOs & others) and other International Organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political Parties Registration Commission - National Commission for Democracy - Independent Media Commission - Mano River Union - Justice and Peace Commission - Centre for the Coordination of Youth Activities - Search for Common Ground - West African Peacebuilding Network - African Foundation for Development - Campaign for Good Governance - University of Makeni - Hope Sierra Leone - Help Sierra Leone - Fambul Tok - Action Aid Sierra Leone
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Performance Management Plan (PMP) for the PBF, Priority Plan or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

Total approved budget as per project document:

MPTF /JP Contribution⁴: 5,000,000 US\$

by Agency: not applicable

Government Contribution: not applicable

Other Contributions: not applicable

TOTAL: 5,000,000 US\$

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Evaluation Completed

Yes No Date:

Evaluation Report - Attached

Yes No Date: not applicable

Overall Duration (*months*)

Start Date⁵ (*dd.mm.yyyy*)|....

Original End Date⁶ 31 December 2012

Actual End date⁷ 15 November 2013

Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system? Yes

Expected Financial Closure date⁸: April 2014

Report Submitted By

- o Name: Patrick Buse
- o Title: Project Coordinator
- o Participating Organization (Lead): UNIPSIL
- o Email address: buse@un.org

⁴ The MPTF/JP Contribution is the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations – see [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities. Please see [MPTF Office Closure Guidelines](#).

⁸ Financial Closure requires the return of unspent balances and submission of the [Certified Final Financial Statement and Report](#).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Faced with increasing polarization of the political environment, a history of conflict and recent instances of political violence in anticipation of the Parliamentary, Presidential, and local elections in 2012, the project “Promoting non-violent, free and credible elections through enhanced participation of non-state actors” offered an innovative approach in conflict prevention and in addressing political violence.

Working with Non State Actors from a multitude of backgrounds and representing the breadth of Sierra Leonean society, the project opened a window of public space in which actors felt encouraged to advocate for issues of peaceful political competition, national unity and cohesion. Partners, which included religious and traditional leaders, women and youth groups, the political parties and their women and youth groups, media and artists, and others, have responded vigorously to take up the opportunities provided by the project, and have engaged local, regional, and national politicians and stakeholders. Throughout these encounters, the public has echoed the call for tolerance, underscoring the popular demand for peace and a rejection of mobilization by the political elite for partisan interests.

Starting to work together, the project has created avenues for the political parties to dialogue, defuse tensions and address issues of concern. This has resulted in the adoption of the landmark Declaration on the Elections, as well as code of conducts by the National Council of Paramount Chiefs, the Guild of Editors, and others. Also as part of this momentum, in a number of hotspots, in particular mining areas, local conflicts could be defused or resolved.

Following this massive and multi- pronged sensitization, throughout the electoral period, including on election day, no significant instances of political violence were recorded. After the elections, in 2013, the project continued working with selected partners in order to secure the gains of peace.

Through the support of the project, including the provision of auxiliary logistical support, the project also helped to consolidate the status of some key national stakeholders, in particular the National Council of Paramount Chiefs, the Political Parties Registration Commission, the National Commission for Democracy, and others. The All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women Association have emerged as well- recognized national interlocutors promoting the political participation by youth and women, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

While a gender perspective has been applied as a cross- cutting issue from planning to implementation and monitoring, the project has also specifically supported advocacy for female political participation. As a result, while not all political parties honoured their pledges to promote female candidates, the overall number of registered female voters as well as female candidates has increased. The 30% gender bill is ready for enactment by Parliament, and female Parliamentarians and councilors have created networks of mutual support.

All in all, using an innovative approach of support to electoral processes and consolidation of peace, supplementing additional international technical and capacity building work, the project contributed significantly to make the 2012 elections the most peaceful and participatory in Sierra Leone’s history.

I. Purpose

Introduction:

The 2012 Presidential, Parliamentary and local elections in Sierra Leone were the third major electoral process taking place in Sierra Leone since the end of the civil war. Previous Presidential elections took place in 2002 and 2007. Despite allegations of electoral malpractice, the 2007 elections saw the incumbent being replaced and the results accepted. However, the main opposition party, the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) continued to challenge the results through the legal system. Since 2007, relations between the governing party, the All Peoples Congress (APC) with its base in the North and West, and the SLPP with its base in the South and East had become increasingly strained. In March 2009, increasing tensions led to the worst eruption of politically motivated violence since the end of the conflict in 2002, and resulted in severe injuries, allegations of sexual assault and damage to the SLPP office in Freetown.

With facilitation by the UN, in April 2009, the APC and the SLPP signed a Joint Communiqué, in which they pledged to work together to prevent the recurrence of political violence. However, incidents of violence and intolerance such as witnessed during by- elections continued to underscore the serious challenges as well as fragility of the situation as the country prepared for the 2012 elections. The ‘winner takes all’ electoral system in place in Sierra Leone raised the stakes for contestants to find ways and means to win the elections, particularly the Presidential election.

Objective:

These challenges called for a multi- pronged approach in conflict prevention and in addressing political violence. Building on the UN’s existing outreach with civil society, Non- Governmental Organizations, traditional leaders, grassroots organizations, religious authorities and other Non- State Actors, the project aimed at harnessing the important role played by these organizations to deal with potential electoral conflict and serve as a voice of moderation and reason in a polarized political environment, and at stimulating a conducive socio- political environment characterized by non- violence and political tolerance. Working not only with political parties, but reaching out and engaging with youth, women and marginalized groups, media, academia, and artists, religious and traditional leaders, the project aimed at strengthening communities’ resilience to being drawn into politically motivated violence, and at encouraging voters to choose the best elected officials for Sierra Leone on the basis of programmes and achievements rather than original party affiliation.

Capitalizing on the respect and loyalty enjoyed by Sierra Leonean leaders from all backgrounds, including paramount chiefs and traditional societies, the project provided a platform for leaders to commit to and to advocate in their communities and with their peers for political tolerance and a culture of non violence. Activating the traditional mediation capacities that exist and have proven to be effective in managing tensions and conflicts in Sierra Leone, the project also sought to further build the capacity of these institutions by providing logistic and training support, thus ensuring the sustainability of the project activities.

Working with the political parties as the key actors on the political dispensation, the project supported the parties, their youth as well as their women’s wings to become more effective in managing conflicts and improve party governance. On this foundation, it sought to promote

peaceful political discourse and to stimulate inter and intra- party communication, with a view to encourage a focus on issues and the implementation of policies and manifestos.

Capacitating and engaging with Sierra Leone's key national stakeholders provided a platform for dialogue between and within actors that was expected to be mutually reinforcing, creating a momentum and satisfying a popular demand for peace across different strata of society.

II. Assessment of Programme Results

At the time of project submission, no results framework had been requested. Instead of outputs and outcomes, expected achievements had been used as reference. To allow comparability with the project document, the following assessment of programme results will thus refer to the expected achievements as benchmarks, and to the extent possible will attempt to refer to indicators, which had not been defined specifically at the time of submission.

Following a brief outline of activities undertaken and outputs realized, a qualitative assessment on outcomes and impact will be proffered.

i. Realization of Expected Achievements:

Expected Achievements “Project 1: Facilitating political dialogue, participation and non-violence “

Facilitating political dialogue between political parties

- *Reduction in incidents of political intolerance and violence Improved dialogue and communication between the political parties Political parties will receive support to generate a programmatic manifesto*
- *Improved degree of internal democracy (accountability of party leadership, procedures for consultation with party members and the electorate as a whole, local and regional presence and transparent candidate selection)*

Enhanced capacity of Youth Wings, Women Wings

- *Facilitation in the implementation of APPYA Strategic plan 2010-2013*
- *Adoption of gender policies and women's empowerment within the political parties*
- *Strengthen the local outreach and mediation activities of APPYA*
- *Strengthen the Internal decision making processes within political parties and the formal structure*
- *Strengthen communication between women wings*
- *APPYA conducts sensitization efforts prior to upcoming elections and by- elections*

Activities and outputs in support of Expected Achievements Project 1:

Supporting their capacity to reach out to the electorate and to promote internal democracy and accountability, the political parties held intra- party retreats as well as dialogue meetings and workshops on governance at the national and regional level. In addition, a delegation consisting of the 10 political parties met with peers in Ghana in order to share best practices. A joint cross party team consisting of the 10 political parties subsequently shared the findings and experiences with party members in joint workshops on the regional level. The trip and the workshops were organized by the Political Parties Registration Commission, which is also mandated to ensure further follow- up of the outputs and their mainstreaming into political party governance.

In addition, a series of inter- party dialogue meetings were supported by the project, which climaxed into a major Inter- party Conference in May 2012. At the Conference, a Declaration on the Elections was adopted not only by the political parties, but by all major national stakeholders and Electoral Management Bodies. In the Declaration, all national stakeholders agreed on their roles and commitments towards peaceful elections. 10,000 copies were distributed nationwide at regional dialogue meetings organized by the National Commission for Democracy (NCD). All these efforts were accompanied by intensive media outreach on TV and radio. In addition, a video with peace messages by major presidential candidates was launched, and jointly disseminated by the parties in a national tour, culminating in a joint appearance at the National Stadium on the eve of the elections. These dialogue and outreach efforts ensured that the commitments for peace and non- violence made at these encounters were disseminated nationwide, reaching all segments of society.

In all 14 districts, District Code of Conduct Monitoring Committees (DCMCs) were resuscitated to address emerging tensions and act as early warning mechanisms. Membership of the DCMCs included the political parties as well as respected district stakeholders and civil society. At their regular meetings, the Committees effectively addressed instances of local tensions. In addition, and in cooperation with the DCMCs, interparty dialogue meetings were also held at specific hotspots, in order to respond to emerging tensions. One important such meeting was held in Bo, Southern Region, also in response to the alleged attack on the SLPP flagbearer and the vandalization of the house of the APC district chairman in April 2012.

Apart from this incident in Bo, and acting as an important indicator, no significant other instances of politically motivated violence were recorded during and after the project period.

In the post- electoral period, through a series of dialogue meetings conducted by PPRC, activities focused on consolidating the gains of peace. In Kono district, a three day dialogue event helped to bring about reconciliation between political and traditional leaders aligned to different factions. Organized in collaboration with all district stakeholders, the reconciliation resulted in significant donor pledges to economically support the reconciliation agreement in the district, which has long been known for its volatility and propensity for politically motivated violence.

Underpinning the dialogue activities and the engagement with the political parties, through PPRC, the project also supported the political parties with logistical and infrastructure support, including the provision of communication equipment, with a view to contribute to a level playing field between the 10 political parties and to support their long- term capacity.

Following the political disturbances in March 2009, UNIPSIL's engagement with the youth wings of the political parties lead to the resuscitation of the All Political Parties Youth Association (APPYA), which was formally launched, with support by the UN, by President Koroma in December 2010. As part of APPYA's strategic plan, nearly 2000 APPYA members countrywide participated in trainings on advocacy, mediation, leadership and project management, reinforcing the Association's sense of unity and purpose. Drawing on these skills, the Association subsequently conducted monitoring of by- elections and media outreach, and contributed meaningfully to contain electoral tensions.

Bridging the political divide and promoting the interests of youth by APPYA also triggered the establishment, with facilitation by UNIPSIL, of the All Political Parties Women Association (APPWA) by the political parties' women's wings.

Capitalizing on the broad and cross- partisan appeal of both associations, UNIPSIL supported both associations to conduct media outreach, strategic planning and training workshops, and to meet

counterparts across the country. In townhall meetings in all 112 constituencies, both associations have met members and established linkages with other youth- and women serving organizations. In their respective national delegate conventions, both associations have reached out to all newly registered 10 political parties, have adopted or revised their constitutions and strategic plans, and set up membership structures on the national, regional, and district level, reflecting the political and national diversity of the country.

The associations lobbied for the participation of women and youth in politics and government, in line with recommendations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. At their respective national offices, members of the 10 political parties convene regularly to strategize, discuss pertinent national issues, and hold press conferences. In the run-up and after the 2012 elections, both associations proved instrumental in promoting cooperation across party lines and maintaining peace.

As a result of APPWA's lobbying with the political parties and mainstreaming gender issues within and across political parties, five of the political parties, including the APC and SLPP, have drafted and adopted gender policies, which the Association helped to disseminate amongst the party rank and file. Regrettably, pledges made by the political parties, in joint consultative meetings with APPWA, to provide space for women to be awarded symbols to compete in the 2012 elections, were however not fully realized. Addressing this persistent challenge and to continue promoting women empowerment, with funding from the project, UNIPSIL in cooperation with APPWA and other women organizations, supported countrywide workshops on advocacy and networking for newly elected female Members of Parliament and councilors.

Frequently on radio or conducting outreach, the associations have evolved to become active interlocutors on youth, women, and other national issues, and have started to shape the setting and context in which gender and youth issues are being discussed in the country. In recognition of their growing stature and relevance, international partners have started engaging with and supporting both associations. APPYA has been invited to participate at an interparty dialogue forum in Ghana, and to monitor elections in Liberia and elsewhere. Also securing external funding, in a high-profile event and in collaboration with government and other women organizations, APPWA has presented national awards to women of outstanding contributions to the country, thus promoting female participation and stimulating collaboration across political parties and civil society. Galvanizing women around a common cause, APPWA continues to advocate for the adoption of the gender bill by Parliament.

Cognizant of the regional interdependence of peace, UNIPSIL also supported the Mano River Union to set in motion cross border confidence building initiatives at key locations along Sierra Leone's borders, and brought together the Electoral Commissions of Guinea, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana for an experience sharing session.

Expected Achievements "Project 2: Provision of institutional support to Traditional and the Inter-faith Groups"

Enhanced capacity building of the Interreligious Council

- *Enable to anticipate conflicts and acts of political intolerance and undertake sensitization campaigns on non violence, civic and voter education and others during religious ceremonies*
- *Promote national unity and cohesion and prevent conflicts based on ethnic and regional differences*
- *Further consolidate existing harmony among various religions as a force for peace and progress and unity of the country,*

- *Build and strengthen institutional capacities to respond to emerging threats to peace and national cohesion*

Enhanced Interaction with Traditional Authorities and Associations

- *Intensified use of local / traditional approaches to conflict prevention, mediation and resolution, through collaboration with traditional leaders and associations and groups.*
- *Reduce conflicts between traditional approaches and formal institutions*
- *Enhancing collaboration and coordination between various professional associations, national and local governance and security arrangements on strategies to prevent, mediate and resolve conflict. Dialogue with traditional associations who have greater influence and authority in the hinterland to play a positive role in political discourse*

Activities and outputs in support of Expected Achievement 2:

With support from the project, the Interreligious Council conducted a series of cascading events promoting national unity and cohesion. On the occasion of the 50 Year Independence Anniversary celebrations, the Council conducted a nationwide peace campaign. Culminating in an event in the National Stadium, runners from all ethnic background carried a peace torch throughout the country, during which community representatives, women, youth, police and political parties committed to overcome partisanship and regional divisions. At a National Delegate Convention, religious leaders from all denominations issued a joint statement calling for national unity. In cooperation with the National Council of Paramount Chiefs, the Council convened a Conference with all partners involved in the electoral process, including national commissions, security agencies, civil society organizations, and others. A communique adopted at the Conference called for, inter alia, neutrality of the police and strengthening of the regulation and oversight of political parties.

In the weeks leading to the elections, priests and imams throughout the country engaged their communities transmitting the message of tolerance and non- violence, climaxing in interfaith community meetings in all 112 constituencies on the eve of the elections, in which local religious leaders jointly called for political tolerance and acceptance of the election results.

These activities, drawing on the national prestige enjoyed by religious leaders, contributed considerably to amplify the message of peace and non- violence, and helped to create networks and understanding between national stakeholders involved in the election process.

Apart from the visibility generated through these activities, the Interreligious Council also benefited from logistical and infrastructure support, as well as trainings in conflict resolution. These initiatives helped to build the Council's capacity and to consolidate the Interreligious Council as a key national interlocutor and mediator to respond to threats to national unity and cohesion.

Working with traditional leaders, a National Council of Paramount Chiefs (NCPC) convention was held in April 2011. Seen as a landmark event since independence, Paramount Chiefs reactivated the Council, elected a national executive, emphasized the need for political neutrality, committed to principles of gender equality, and adopted a Code of Conduct. Through a series of meetings in the regional capitals, the Code was shared and discussed with regional stakeholders. All 149 Chiefs also participated in regional retreats, which also included trainings in conflict resolution. Responding to allegations of partisanship by a minority of Paramount Chiefs, in September 2012, the Council convened an executive meeting to reaffirm the Council's commitment to neutrality. Building on this momentum, in October 2012, Chiefs held townhall meetings in all 149 chiefdoms

and concurrent radio discussions, in which they committed themselves to neutrality and non-violence. In selected hotspots, additional conflict resolution activities were undertaken.

Mindful of the need to also reach out to rural women, who may otherwise be overlooked as important local opinion leaders, the project also worked with leaders of traditional female secret societies (commonly referred to as 'sowies'). To galvanize their support, a national meeting with sowies was held, and sowies have conducted training sessions in the regional capitals. In hundreds of encounters, the sowies met and engaged predominantly rural women encouraging them to exercise their political rights, and use their voice to contribute to peace in their communities and beyond, while desisting from harmful traditional practices.

Drawing on the prestige enjoyed by female and male traditional leaders, these activities entrenched the message of peace, political tolerance and non-violence on the level of local communities. In addition to that, through joint events and conferences on the national level, the activities helped to establish understanding and bridge a perceived gap between traditional and non-traditional governance institutions, agree on common positions, and reinforce the momentum for peace and tolerance. As a lasting achievement, the National Council of Paramount Chiefs has been reinvigorated as a key actor of governance, and has gained internal and external acceptance, enabling it to internally and externally promote non-partisanship and tolerance. To assist the Council's long term sustainability, auxiliary infrastructural support was provided.

Expected Achievements “Project 3: Provision of institutional support to Media, Academia, Sports & Arts”

Enhanced dialogue with Media Practitioners

- *Increase the level, visibility and independence of the Independent Media Commission in managing and regulating the media*
- *Ensuring the “Editors Guild” play its objective of promoting professional reporting, accountability, especially in electoral reporting.*
- *Minimize influence of special interest in the electoral process*
- *Increased level of SLAJ professionalism through logistical and technical support*
- *Strengthen their capacity building*
- *Responsible journalism/ reporting advanced*

Enhanced Interaction with Artists – Sports teams, Amputees

- *Intensified collaboration with / use of Artists, bands, dancing national group, street theatre to disseminate the message of non-violence throughout the country as agents peaceful political discourse, national unity and cohesion.*
- *Increased visibility to amputees and marginalized communities through participation to national and international events.*
- *Enhanced voter education and civic responsibility through the use of arts and sports*

Activities and outputs in support of Expected Achievements Project 3:

Activities under this cluster saw not only a significant expansion during programming and project implementation, but were also subject to a partial reprioritization. Faced with capacity constraints experienced by the Independent Media Commission and lack of responsiveness by some media partners, stronger emphasis was laid on working with civil society organizations and artists. Equally, the National Commission for Democracy, building on its credentials in the transition to Democracy, was brought on board as a competent outreach partner.

Promoting responsible journalism was a main objective of the project. Towards this end, UNIPSIL partnered with the Independent Radio Network, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, the Independent Media Commission, and supported the Guild of Editors. A national meeting organized by the Independent Radio Network served as a platform for community radio stations countrywide to strategize and commit to jointly accepted journalistic standards. In a similar vein, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists held its 2011 Annual Conference and reaffirmed a media Code of Conduct. The Guild of Editors, building on the successful establishment of the organization in 2010, held background talks with key stakeholders such as the Inspector General of Police, the NEC Commissioner, and others to promote mutual understand and gain impartial insight into procedures and policies. In addition, the Guild organized a tour to the regional capitals meeting with editors, radio station operators, journalists and other media practitioners, and conducted additional training on journalistic standards. While the media landscape in Sierra Leone is notoriously fractured, the initiatives built the long- term capacity of these key media institutions in the country. As opposed to previous elections, no major violations of the Code of Conduct adopted by the Guild of Editors and media practitioners were observed before, during, and after the elections.

Tapping into the prestige and expertise of academic institutions, a nation-wide debate series on the theme “Party Politics, Ethnicity, and Regionalism” was launched by the Peace and Conflict Studies Department of Fourah Bay College (FBC), Sierra Leone’s foremost learning institution. On eight campuses throughout the country, participating institutes brought together students, academia, and political representatives. At a high- profile event in Freetown, senior university representatives engaged the public and government on the root causes and manifestations of perceived regional divisions afflicting the country. In addition, the organization “Young Women in University Politics” in association with the FBC Peace Society launched an outreach programme promoting participation of young women in politics and reducing political tensions on campus. Shortly before the elections, peace marches were held at selected campuses. These activities contributed to maintain a peaceful environment at tertiary institutions, which had always been perceived as an arena of political radicalization and recruiting ground for youths to be mobilized.

Deepening collaboration with academia, as a post- electoral activity meant to reflect on achievements and continuing challenges, UNIPSIL also support a comparative study on the management of diversity. Building on field research conducted in all 14 districts, as well as presenting international best practices on the management of diversity, the study was publicly launched by the Deputy Minister of Public and Political Affairs and copies distributed to academia, commissions, political parties, and other key national stakeholders. Also providing important inputs for Sierra Leone’s constitutional reform, participants called for consideration of the report’s recommendations by the Constitutional Review Committee set up by President Koroma in July 2013.

Partnering with the Civil Society Platform on Non Violent Election, an umbrella group bringing together civil society organizations from across the country, films featuring ex- combatants denouncing violence and setting examples for youths to emulate, were aired on national TV as well as community radio stations. Soccer matches, peace carnivals and community work by ex- combatants provided platforms for community leaders and ex- combatants to commit to non- violence. The War Amputees Football Club also performed competitions in a number of locations, which provided visible opportunities for the public and political and other leaders to commit to refrain from violence. Using yet another channel, drama series on themes contained in the April 2009 Joint Communiqué between the SLPP and APC were aired and screened in particular hotspot locations throughout the country.

Moving towards the elections, the Civil Society Platform on Non Violent Elections conducted community meetings in Sierra Leone's 112 constituencies. These outreach efforts were complemented by the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), which in two national tours also took the message of peace and political tolerance to the 112 constituencies, accompanied by massive TV and radio outreach. During the campaign period, through specific outreach events, NCD also targeted bike riders, a group often associated with violent conduct and prone to political mobilization. Throughout these encounters, the public eagerly seized the opportunities to interact with political, security, and other actors, who used these platforms to publicly commit to peace and tolerance.

Capitalizing on the popularity of artists and their power of persuasion amidst high illiteracy, UNIPSIL also partnered with the "Artists for Peace", a group of renowned national artists coming together to contribute, on a voluntary basis, to the consolidation of peace. In a national tour, which attracted significant crowds and public attention, the Artists called upon Sierra Leoneans to celebrate violence free elections, and elicited the commitment of political party leaders and other key partners for peace. In the days before the elections, the Artists performed mobile concerts at key hotspot locations in Freetown.

In addition, the UN has also assisted the production of a musical video in which the presidential candidates gave out peace messages. At the occasion, Sierra Leone's major rap artists, who appeared to command violent- prone youths, were appointed as peace ambassadors by President Koroma. The event sparked the establishment of the "White Flag Movement", a group comprising political party members and artists of all stripes, who took the message around the country in a nationwide tour. The Anti Violence Movement, another partner to this project, set up Peace Clubs and held peace and tolerance debate competitions in secondary schools, and engaged vulnerable youths in deprived areas. Commemorating the International Day of Peace, in September 2012, a final selection out of 300 drama and song groups came together from throughout the country for a peace performance in Freetown.

In addition to these activities, the UN also assisted Non State Actors from across the country to participate and contribute to the National Conference on Transformation and Development, convoked by President Koroma as a national deliberation forum to assess and agree on international best practices to stimulate Sierra Leone's long term development.

ii. Qualitative Assessment on the realization of outcomes

These hundreds and indeed thousands of events and encounters, spanning over nearly two years ahead of the elections and massively accelerating in the period directly before the elections, on the local, district, regional, and national level, by opinion leaders from all walks of life generated statements, declarations, and papers in which individuals and institutions committed to the principles of political tolerance and non- violence. The project opened a window of public space in which actors felt encouraged to advocate for issues of peaceful political competitions, national unity and cohesion. Vigorously, the public has echoed the call for tolerance, underscoring the popular demand for peace and a rejection of mobilization by the political elite for partisan interests. Starting to work together, the project has created avenues for the political parties to dialogue, defuse tensions and address issues of concern.

Collectively, coupled with a media campaign that saturated the airwaves and filled newspaper pages, it generated a momentum of expectations of peace, expectations that the old ways of

political mobilization are now longer applicable, and expectations that the 2012 elections would be different. As this momentum gained traction, it developed a dynamic of its own which ultimately proved instrumental in bringing about a paradigm shift of political expectations. It contributed, in a significant and profound manner, to a change in narrative, from a narrative of post- conflict tensions and discord, of political and other cleavages that are bound to escalate, to a narrative of increased tolerance, reliance on institutions to resolve conflicts, and the durability of peace.

Crucially, the changes in expectations also triggered changes in behavior, as actors, out of own interest and genuine commitment, or out of calculation, before, during, and after the elections refrained from resorting to political mobilization which traditionally included elements of violence and intimidation. While attributing a peacebuilding project's contribution to qualitative change is notoriously difficult, the conduct demonstrated on election day appears to indicate that a critical mass was reached.

Arguably, the 2012 elections were the most peaceful and participatory in Sierra Leone's history. Supporting and amplifying this aspiration and commitment expressed and manifested by the people of Sierra Leone, the project has achieved its most important objective, and indeed surpassed beliefs that were trapped in notions of post- conflict fragility and violence.

Apart from contributing to peaceful elections, the building of capacity of some of Sierra Leone's main stakeholders can also be expected to continue impacting positively on the evolution of Sierra Leone's political landscape. Many, though not all of the actors that the UN supported and cooperated with seized the opportunities offered by the project.

Among these are the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD). As key government bodies with the statutory responsibility to maintain and promote democratic standards, enhance the governance of political parties, and encourage tolerance and pluralism, both commissions benefited greatly from the exposure and visibility generated by the activities conducted by the commissions as part of this project. Strengthening of PPRC's oversight function was a repeated demand expressed by civil society, political parties, and other numerous stakeholders. Seized on this momentum, Parliament started discussing a new PPRC Act. As another legacy, in the form of the DCMCs, PPRC inherited an established architecture for the peaceful resolution of conflicts that the Commission would be well placed to maintain and further develop. For this, the Commission will have to adopt a pro- active approach to ensure sustainability of the Councils.

The political parties, on their part, gained trust to cooperate with each other. While changes in party governance are not yet observable, the project provided important building blocks for PPRC and other partners to solidify and entrench good governance standards within political parties, as would also be supported by a new PPRC Act.

As a lasting achievement, the National Council of Paramount Chiefs has been reinvigorated as a key actor of governance, and has gained internal and external acceptance. A Code of Conduct adopted by the Council provides a reference on which to further promote independence and to focus on development. This enables the Council to internally and externally promote non-partisanship and tolerance. Other partners have since taken to further elaborate the Code with the Chiefs, to embed it into local governance. To assist the Council's long term sustainability, auxiliary infrastructural support was provided.

Another contribution to Sierra Leone's political dispensation and social dynamic, which over time may prove to have catalytic effects, is the resuscitation and establishment, respectively, of the All Political Parties Youth Association (APPYA) and the All Political Parties Women Association (APPWA). First of their kind in West Africa, both associations provide unique fora where political parties started to cooperate in a regular manner. Frequently on radio or conducting outreach, the associations have evolved to become active interlocutors on youth, women, and other national issues. In recognition of their growing stature and relevance, international partners have started engaging with and supporting both associations. APPYA has been invited to participate at an interparty dialogue forum in Ghana, and to monitor elections in Liberia and elsewhere. Also securing external funding, in a high-profile event and in collaboration with government and other women organizations, APPWA has presented national awards to women of outstanding contributions to the country, thus promoting female participation and stimulating collaboration across political parties and civil society. Galvanizing women around a common cause, APPWA continues to advocate for the adoption of the gender bill by Parliament.

While sustainability and sourcing of funds will remain a challenge, and will require the continued commitment by the political parties as well as support including from the Political Parties Registration Commission, the associations are well placed to continue promoting political tolerance and national unity. Also advocating for issue-based politics, the associations have the potential to become viable agents of change in Sierra Leone's political environment.

Apart from support to APPWA, in actualization of UN Resolutions 1325 and 1820, a gender perspective was applied throughout the project cycle. While the Gender Bill providing for a 30% share of women in public service has yet to be approved by Parliament, advocacy for female participation has become stronger, as was also exemplified by the number of registered female voters as well as female candidates. Further supporting this momentum, the project facilitated an experience-sharing and capacity building exercise for all female parliamentarians and councilors elected in 2012.

Also, the project put in motion experiences of cross-border cooperation, both on the community level through cross-border confidence building at specific hotspots, as well as for the Electoral Commissions of the Mano River Union member countries coming together in Freetown for a first-ever exchange of information and sharing of electoral best practices. As a direct result, the commissions have established communication channels and started providing logistical assistance to each other, such as the Liberian Commission providing ballot boxes to its Sierra Leonean counterpart.

As yet another very specific catalytic effect, triggered by UNIPSIL's reconciliation activities in Kono district as part of the project's post-electoral activities, UN agencies have come together preparing an integrated development project for the district. The project is planned to address the underlying drivers of exclusion and deprivation in Kono and to consolidate the resolution of political tensions which for so long have devastated this resource-rich district.

On the national level, the remarkable success of the 2012 elections, significantly supported by this project, as well as the subsequent drawdown and exit of UNIPSIL appear to mark Sierra Leone's transition from post-conflict to a maturing democracy with a focus on development.

iii. Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The vast majority of activities have been implemented as planned, resulting in a 98% delivery rate of programme activities. Challenges encountered during implementation were often due to delays

in reporting by Implementing Partners and clearance of the reports. This triggered suspensions in the disbursement of subsequent tranches, which in turn led to the postponement of some activities. The issue was compounded by the clearing process as reports were cleared by both UNIPSIL and UNDP, which at times had different organizational priorities, which did not help to accelerate the disbursement of funds.

As a consequence, in some cases, activities had to be reprogrammed, or reallocated to other clusters. A case in point are activities carried out by the Independent Media Commission, where a low implementation rate by the Commission led to the refocusing of activities from the media sector to civil society and other partners. Challenges were also encountered with the Political Parties Registration Commission, which was grappling with internal management issues before the appointment of a new Chair. These challenges also created a lot of additional administrative work arranging contract extensions and contract modifications, binding management capacity needed for other priorities.

This reemphasizes the fact that the planning and management of activities of these kind bind significant management and organizational resources on the part of the United Nations as well as on the part of the Implementing Partner. While all partners to this programme passed the standard UN HACT capacity assessment, selection of implementing partners may benefit from drawing more on the institutional memory held within the UN of working with partners. As a positive example, the joint development of standardization guidelines relating to project elements such as accommodation, transport and other costs by UNIPSIL together with UNDP simplified the programming and budgeting process.

Spread over 15 Implementing Partners and more than 30 beneficiary partner organizations, the planning and implementing of all the activities stretched the UN's internal resources. Committed to take local ownership serious, the planning of activities involved lengthy deliberations with possible partners and detailed attention to planning, to be reflected in the budgets of activities, in order to avoid reprogramming and emergency responses. In the case where multiple and diverse partners were concerned, such as with civil society, planning and preparation of activities also involved prolonged consensus building to avoid accentuating possible frictions between national partners. In dimensioning the UN support to these type of activities, it needs to be born in mind that there is a trade-off between speed and efficiency versus local ownership, which is more sustainable and thus effective, but does require more financial and human resources.

In this regard, a more stringent focus, and concurrent reduction in the number of implementing partners and beneficiaries could have freed resources. Ideally, the focus and strategic scope of partnerships would be informed by a broad and possibly participatory conflict analysis, which would also help identifying and agreeing on theories of change between outputs and outcomes.

These resources could have been used to conduct more systematic monitoring of activities by core UN staff. In particular in the regions, moving towards the elections and facing time and logistical constraints, UN monitoring capacity was often thinly stretched. In this regards, a mid term evaluation, possibly to be conducted by a local consultant, could also have been helpful. Another option to be considered is the outsourcing of monitoring, even though this increases demands on the preparation and management of contracts with yet another partner. For monitoring and evaluation and assessment of impact throughout the project cycle to be effective, the project underlined the usefulness of spending time during the early planning stages on clear definitions of outputs, outcomes, and indicators.

A more comprehensive monitoring system could have helped strengthening the feedback loop informing the planning of and coordination with other activities. Nevertheless, the prudent

monitoring by UNIPSIL and discovery of allegations of financial misuse of funds by a PPRC regional office testifies that monitoring systems in place were operative and effective. Follow up of these allegations lead to the subsequent involvement of the Anti Corruption Commission.

The project put emphasis on maintaining close contact with all Implementing Partners and beneficiaries, in addition to creating information sharing mechanisms with internal UN focal points, as well as development partners. To further improve coordination, exchange of information, and the ongoing review and programming of activities, a regular schedule of coordination workshops with Implementing Partners and beneficiaries could have been put in place, also with a view to continue promoting local ownership. However, such efforts would again have required financial and management resources. In lieu of this, showcasing highlights and informing about past and upcoming activities, a regular project newsletter produced and circulated by UNIPSIL proved to be very useful and widely accepted by national and international stakeholders.

iv. A Specific Story – Overcoming divisions in a Troubled District

Kono district in the East of Sierra Leone has long had a troubled history. The district is the centre of the country’s notorious diamond extraction. Other precious stones and minerals are also being mined, often under backbreaking artisanal conditions. Despite the wealth in natural resources, however, the district has always lagged behind in infrastructural development. Because of its resources, and compounded by an ethnic mix of people from all over Sierra Leones drawn by the hope of wealth, the district has long been a political hotbed, with the SLPP and ACP keenly contesting the eight swing constituencies of the district. During the civil war, Kono was one of the hotspots of the conflict, its diamonds purportedly fuelling the war economy.

The civil war had left the district devastated, systems for supply of water and electricity remain defunct, and youth unemployment is high. Despite efforts by government to rehabilitate the road network, there is a sentiment of neglect, and many youths try to make a living by scraping out residual precious stones out of a massive heap of sand left behind by a long- abandoned industrial mining company. Many of those youths are attached to former ex- combatants, who are in turn aligned to different political factions, shadowing rifts not only between the governing party and the opposition, but also within the ruling party. The Paramount Chiefs, supposed to be custodians of the land and of traditions, find themselves caught in a melee of promises of wealth and political patronage.

Throughout the period before the elections, underlying tensions remained palpable, and occasionally surfaced as during a visit by high- ranking APC officials alleged to be out of tune with powerful local stakeholders. For this reason, Kono was a priority area during the pre- electoral non- violence sensitization. The Artists for Peace staged shows in the district, bringing together Paramount Chiefs, youth, women, political leaders, and other stakeholders to publicly commit to violence; and civil society groups engaged politicians and communities. These efforts, by all accounts, contributed to maintain a non- violent atmosphere. On election day, as in other areas in Sierra Leone, no incidents were witnessed, and voter turnout was high.

Following the elections, trying to secure the gains of peace, with support of the project, UNIPSIL assisted the local “Kono Youth for Peace and Development” organization to hold a three day peace and reconciliation event. The event, implemented by the Centre for the Coordination of Youth Activities, brought together youths from all 14 chiefdoms of the district, and comprised discussion meetings, street parades, a peace conference, sport competitions, a social evening, and other high-

profile activities. Throughout the events, youth in Kono District sought to rebrand themselves and work together to contribute to peace and development in their communities. At the peace conference, more than 600 youths witnessed how two notorious ex- combatants and youth leaders, affiliated to political parties and mining interests, vowed to work together and leave past differences aside. Senior district officers, Members of Parliament, Paramount Chiefs, the District Council Chair, and others all echoed the message of tolerance and committed to collaborate for the benefit of the district. Also at the occasion, which coincided with the closure of the UNIPSIL office in Kono, the district youth centre was inaugurated.

Impressed with this unfolding momentum, members of the UN Country Team, in close collaboration with government, decided to contribute to address the root causes of social marginalization and economic deprivation. Working together, a holistic project proposal is being prepared, intending to make the peace in Kono self- sustaining and serving as a model for post- conflict empowerment.

Attachments

1. Project Newsletters
2. Sierra Leone Stakeholders Declaration on the Elections
3. Posters by the National Commission for Democracy
4. Monitoring Report on the All Political Parties Women Association National Delegate Conference
5. Monitoring Report on the Mano River Union Electoral Commissions Meeting
6. Report on the Sierra Leone National Conference on Development and Transformation
7. Other items, selected newspaper clippings