



**EVALUATION OF  
THE GRB/WPS  
JOINT PROJECT**





# EVALUATION OF THE GRB/WPS JOINT PROJECT

*'Advancing implementation of UNSCRs on women, peace and security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)'*

December 2019 to June 2021 (18 months)

**LIBERIA**

EVALUATION REPORT

**Version of 19 May 2022**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This final evaluation of the UN Women, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) joint project in Liberia would not have been successfully completed without the professional support and assistance of many individuals and groups.

We express our sincere gratitude to the members of the GRB/WPS Joint Project Team, composed of Mr. Melvin Daniel Nyamway (OHCHR), Ms. Leetor Williams (OHCHR), Ms. Ernestine Ebai (OHCHR), Ms. Ghoma Karloweah (UN Women), Mr. Kofi Ireland (UN Women), Mr. Straven Willie (UN Women), Mr. Nathan Birch Jr. (UN Women) and Mr. Yawo Maglo (UN Women), for their very helpful support and professionalism during the planning and carrying out of this assessment.

Special thanks are due to the members of the Evaluation Reference Group, composed of Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Finance, Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI), Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), National Union of Organizations for the Disabled (NUOD) and representatives of the National Peace Hut Women of Liberia, the donor (PBF Secretariat), represented by Mr. John Dennis, and the UN Women Regional Office, represented by Mr. Cyuma Mbahiya and Ms. Lou Akusua De Giuli, for the very valuable technical input provided throughout this evaluation process.

## **Viviane Tassi Bela Evaluation**

Team Leader  
viviane@tassi-bela.net

## **Abraham Billy**

Evaluation Team Member  
abebilly24@gmail.com

#### EVALUATION TEAM

**Ms. Vwiviane Tassi Bela**  
Evaluation Team Leader

**Mr. Abraham Billy B.**  
Evaluation Team Member

#### EVALUATION MANAGEMENT

##### UN Women

**Mr. Cyuma Mbayiha**  
Regional Evaluation Adviser  
UN Women – WCARO Senegal

**Ms. Lou Akusua De Giuli**  
Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst  
UN Women – WCARO Senegal

**Ms. Ghoma Karloweah**  
Acting Head of Programs  
UN Women Liberia

**Mr. Nathan Birch Jr.**  
Monitoring and Evaluation  
UN Women Liberia

##### UN Peacebuilding Fund

Mr. John R. Dennis  
UN PBF Coordinator, Liberia

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ADFI</b>	Association of Disabled Females International
<b>AFL</b>	Armed Forces of Liberia
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>ERG</b>	Evaluation Reference Group
<b>FCI</b>	Foundation for Community Initiatives
<b>FLY</b>	Federation of Liberia Youth
<b>GRB</b>	gender-responsive budgeting
<b>GRPB</b>	gender-responsive planning and budgeting
<b>GOL</b>	Government of Liberia
<b>HRBA</b>	human rights-based approach
<b>IFFL</b>	Innovative Financing Fund for Liberia
<b>INHCR</b>	Independent National Commission for Human Rights
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration/United Nations Agency for Migration
<b>IREDD</b>	Institute for Research and Democratic Development
<b>LNP</b>	Liberian National Police
<b>M&amp;E</b>	monitoring and evaluation
<b>MFDP</b>	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
<b>MGCSP</b>	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
<b>MIA</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs
<b>MOJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>NAP 1325</b>	National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325
<b>NAP WPS</b>	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization



<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OHCHR</b>	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
<b>PADP</b>	Agenda for Prosperity and Development
<b>PBF</b>	United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund
<b>RBM</b>	results-based management
<b>SGBV</b>	sexual and gender-based violence
<b>ToC</b>	theory of change
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNMIL</b>	United Nations Mission in Liberia
<b>UNRCO</b>	United Nations Resident Coordination Office
<b>UNSCR 1325</b>	United Nations Resolution on women, peace and security
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>VSLA</b>	village savings and loan association
<b>WANEP</b>	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
<b>WONGOSOL</b>	Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia
<b>WROs</b>	Women Rural Organizations
<b>WPS</b>	women, peace and security
<b>YAL</b>	Youth Alive Liberia

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background to the GRB/WPS Joint Project

In 2023, Liberia will achieve the milestone of maintaining peace for two decades since its civil war ended in 2003. There have been efforts to advance gender equality in Liberia. Electing a woman to the position of president, the highest seat of the country, in 2005 and 2011 marked the beginning of the transformation of the legal framework of the country. The government also adopted several international treaties and developed national policies such as the National Gender Policy of 2009. In the same year, the Government of Liberia developed a national framework for implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 through the development of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS). The development of the NAP made Liberia the first post-conflict country with a national framework to implement UNSCR 1325 on women, peace, and security.<sup>1</sup>

The NAP WPS provided a platform for women to contribute to peacebuilding efforts, having played a cardinal role in ending Liberia's civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2003.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these efforts, there are still challenges in promoting gender equality and the advancement of the WPS agenda in the country. Traditional

and religious beliefs, as well as customary law, consider women subordinate and men superior. These beliefs have led to sustained gender inequality and the marginalization of women in Liberia. These perceptions and practices contradict the 1986 Constitution of Liberia, which promotes the realization of social justice and increased citizens' access to political and economic participation. Specifically, Article 11 lays out the principle of no discrimination in these processes. But there remain unequal gender and power relations, lack of access to basic services and property, economic disempowerment, low rates of participation in decision-making and lack of access to legal and judicial services, among others.<sup>3</sup> Over 80 per cent of Liberian women suffered violence during the civil war.<sup>4</sup> An assessment conducted in 2018 asserts that Liberia has the highest rate of sexual violence against women in the world.<sup>5</sup> Since the civil war ended, 2019 saw the highest annual rate of rape cases reported in Liberia. A total of 2,708 cases of violence were reported, of which the total cases of violence against women reported, 2,141 (79%), were rape cases. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the vulnerability of women, resulting in rising rates of sexual and gender-based violence and other forms of violence against women.

- 1 Caesar R. G., Garlo C. K., Nagarajan C. and Schoofs S. 2010. *IFP Gender Cluster Country Case Study: Liberia. Implementing Resolution 1325 in Liberia: Reflections of Women's Associations*. Initiative for Peacebuilding.
- 2 Bekoe D. and Parajon C. 2007. "Women's Role in Liberia's Reconstruction." Peace Brief. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.
- 3 USAID. 2018. "Gender Assessment Report." Prepared by Liberia Strategic Analysis. Accessed 23 August 2022. [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00WB3Z.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WB3Z.pdf).
- 4 UNFPA. 2007. "Majority of Liberian Women Suffered Sexual Violence during War, Says New Study." Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://www.unfpa.org/press/majority-liberian-women-suffered-sexual-violence-during-war-says-new-study>.
- 5 USAID. 2018. "Gender Assessment Report." Prepared by Liberia Strategic Analysis. Accessed 23 August 2022. [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00WB3Z.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WB3Z.pdf).

## Description of the GRB/WPS Joint Project

UN Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with funding from the United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) implemented the joint project 'Advancing implementation of the UNSCRs on women, peace and security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)'.

The aim of the joint project was to enhance the allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the second NAP WPS through innovative financing and GRB. Innovative approaches to enhance resource allocation for the implementation of the second NAP WPS are intended to accelerate the implementation of international commitments on WPS and to address the specific conflict drivers in a gender-responsive manner.

**This project started in January 2020 and was planned to end in November 2021. A no-cost**

**extension of six months was requested by the UN agencies and granted by the donor (PBF) to ensure the full implementation of the project.**

The budget for the entire implementation of the project was US\$1,500,000. It was implemented at national level (in Montserrado county) and in two counties, namely Nimba and Grand Bassa, in partnership with government. The GRB/WPS Joint Project was designed around two outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Targeted line ministries, government agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities.

**Outcome 2:** More women, including marginalized women, in the targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding-related activities of the NAP WPS.

## Evaluation purpose and objectives

This evaluation assessed the achievements of the project in advancing the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on WPS through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and GRB in an inclusive way and determined the overall value added to peacebuilding in Liberia. It answered questions related to the evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including

relevance, development efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, in addition to assessing the programme on gender, equity and human rights principles. The time scope of the evaluation covered all GRB/WPS Joint Project activities implemented from January 2020 to November 2021 (and extended until April 2022) at the national and sub-national levels.

## Evaluation methodology

In line with the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and UN Women and GERAAS (Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System) standards, a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach was applied throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation applied an inclusive and participatory

approach, which ensured the active participation and involvement of stakeholders at all levels of the GRB/WPS Joint Project. In addition, the disability framework provided by the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy<sup>6</sup> was applied to assess the extent to which this GRB/WPS Joint Project was inclusive and the extent

6 United Nations. 2029. "United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy." Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>.

to which women and men living with disabilities were included in the project at all stages. The evaluation also analysed the project's value for money. This value-for-money assessment examined the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the GRB/WPS Joint Project.

The evaluators used mixed research methods in data gathering and analysis (sequential implementation implying collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in phases), so that the formulated evaluation questions could be effectively answered. A total of 79

respondents (34 peace hut, 14 non-peace hut, 10 Government of Liberia staff at national level and 9 at sub-national level, 6 civil society and 6 UN agencies) were consulted using mixed methodologies (desk review and analysis of strategic frameworks, policies and project documents, field visits to Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa, observations, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews (semi-structured and face to face) with key informants, and interviews via WhatsApp and phone)

## Evaluation findings (overall score of the GRB/WPS Joint Project: B)

The GRB/WPS Joint Project was highly relevant and was fully in line with the national priorities in the area of WPS/UNSCR 1325, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other African and national policies and protocols on WPS, as well as UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020 and 2024). It also managed to involve the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled in its design to capture the general needs and priorities of women and girls with disabilities in peace- and security-related issues but failed to systematically involve them in the project's implementation in the targeted counties and communities. The evaluation also found that the GRB/WPS Joint Project was also very innovative in the context of Liberia and its main focus on

strengthening the capacity of Government of Liberia structures, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Peace Hut movement on GRB, innovative financing, and the NAP WPS was very effective. This GRB/WPS innovative project offered good value for money, despite being implemented in a very challenging context affected by COVID-19 constraints (2019–2021). However, the project was challenged by weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) coupled with some challenges in 'Delivering as One' in the communities and reported delays (up to four months) in the disbursement of funds to the implementing partners, including the peace huts involved. The results achieved must be further consolidated through the mechanisms presented in the recommendations below.

## Recommendation

CONCLUSION	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION(S)	PRIORITY
<p><b>Conclusion 1</b></p> <p>Based on findings 1, 10, 12</p>	<p>UN Women, OHCHR and the donor (PBF) should conduct a vulnerable and marginalized group assessment in the counties and communities targeted by WPS interventions. The findings should inform the design of an appropriate strategy and plan for marginalized and vulnerable groups that will inform further programming on how WPS projects will involve people with disabilities and marginalized women and men at various levels. Support the plan with appropriate indicators to track progress. Refer for further orientation to available UN guidelines including the link below:</p> <p>UN guidance on Leave No One Behind principles:  <a href="https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind">https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind</a></p> <p><b>GESI Guideline for identifying and prioritizing vulnerable and marginalized populations for humanitarian response, recovery, preparedness and disaster risk reduction in Nepal:</b></p> <p><a href="https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/09/gesi-guideline-for-identifying-and-prioritizing-vulnerable">https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/09/gesi-guideline-for-identifying-and-prioritizing-vulnerable</a></p>	<p>UN Women</p> <p>OHCHR</p> <p>Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection</p>	<p><b>Immediate</b></p>
<p><b>Conclusion 2</b></p> <p>Based on findings 4, 5 and 6</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> The PBF should ensure that each project funded has a clear communication strategy and plan in place in line with the recommendations of UN guidance on ‘Communicating as One’ (2014). In the guide, the United Nations underlines the importance of a joint communications strategy, which includes shared messaging in support of the One Programme, and the development of standard joint communication products, as well as shared crisis communications and a common established visual identity for joint UN products and communications.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Assess the knowledge and skills of the UN Women and OHCHR project in results-based management (RBM) and take action to strengthen their capacities through various actions, such as coaching, mentorship or additional training. In addition, UN Women and OHCHR should ensure that RBM is effectively applied in programming, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. All joint interventions must meet RBM requirements. This measure/action will be very helpful with regard to the observed turnover of M&amp;E staff in the two implementing UN agencies.</p>	<p>Donor (PBF)</p> <p>UN Women/ Regional Office</p> <p>OHCHR</p>	<p><b>Immediate</b></p>

CONCLUSION	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION(S)	PRIORITY
<b>Conclusion 3</b> Based on findings 6, 7 and 8	<b>3.1</b> Provide further support for the implementation of the innovative financing strategy and plan that was validated in 2021 by the Government of Liberia. Further support the capacity of government representatives and CSOs in other counties and communities on GRB/innovative financing and WPS/human-rights-based approach. Detailed recommendations on innovative financing and GRB are listed below in the recommendations section of this report.	UN Women	<b>Mid-term</b>
		OHCHR  Ministry of Finance and Development Planning  Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	
	<b>3.2</b> Ensure that all WPS materials produced are accessible to all people with disabilities in the 15 counties and communities. Further disseminate the NAP WPS in the counties and districts to ensure understanding and accountability at district and community levels.	UN Women	<b>Immediate</b>
<b>Conclusion 4</b> Based on finding 9	<b>4.1</b> In future interventions on WPS in the communities, the Peace Hut movement should be involved as partners rather than beneficiaries to implement WPS activities at community level. This will strengthen the capacity and position of the peace huts in the communities and will contribute to ensuring their economic sustainability.  Non-peace hut communities that are already organized around village savings and loan associations must be further supported to become peace huts and more structured organizations.	UN Women	<b>Mid-term</b>
		PBF	



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background on Liberia

### 1.1.1. Peace and security: Framework on Women, Peace and Security – UN-SCR 1325 – in Liberia

In 2023, Liberia will achieve the milestone of maintaining peace for two decades since its civil war ended in 2003. Although many root causes of the conflict still exist, the country has managed to maintain peace for almost 20 years. Over this period, the country has organized and conducted three successful general and presidential elections, including the 2005, 2011 and 2017 elections, which ushered in the first democratic presidential transition in almost 70 years.<sup>7</sup>

The peace that Liberia enjoys today is an outcome of many years of investment by the international community, the Government

of Liberia (GOL), civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), women and men. On the ground, the women of Liberia were highly influential in achieving the peace and in fostering recovery in post-conflict Liberia.<sup>8</sup> During the war, women established organizations engaged warring parties in negotiations for a peaceful ending of the civil war. During the war, women were seen wearing all-white clothing on the streets of Monrovia (around Fish Market) demanding an end to violence in Liberia. This pressurized Liberian men (the warlords) to pursue the peace agreement in 2003.<sup>9</sup> At both national and sub-

7 The 2018 transition from former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to President George Manneh Weah was the first transition from one democratically elected president to another in almost 70 years.

8 Masitoh D. 2020. "The Success of Women's Participation in Resolving Conflicts in Liberia." *Journal of Governance* 5(1), pp. 71–90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31506/jog.v5i1.7951>.

9 Vrisilasari K. A. 2013. "Strategi Diplomasi Organisasi Nonpemerintah Dalam Resolusi Perang Sipil: Marwopnet di Liberia 2000–2003." Program Studi S1 Hubungan Internasional. Airlangga: Universitas Airlangga, pp. 15–18.

national levels, women's organizations continue to play important roles in sustaining peace, and several of these interventions have changed the lives of many women.<sup>10</sup>

In 2009, the GOL developed a national framework for implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 through the development of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS). The development of the NAP made Liberia the first post-conflict country with a national framework to implement UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security.<sup>11</sup> The NAP provided a platform for women to contribute to peacebuilding efforts, having played a cardinal role in ending Liberia's civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2003.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the GOL adopted a number of pieces of legislation and developed strategies and plans to promote peacebuilding and make the

security sector more inclusive. It developed the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013–2030), Liberia Peacebuilding Plan (2017) and Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PADP) (2018–2023). In 2018, the GOL partnered with UN Women to develop the second NAP WPS (2019–2023). The development of the second NAP WPS coincided with the development of Liberia's first-ever policy on gender-responsive planning and budgeting. To ensure that the country's national budget responds to the specific needs of women, the GOL developed and adopted the Gender-Responsive Planning and Budget Policy (2019–2023).<sup>13</sup> **Human rights and gender equality in Liberia**

There have been efforts to advance gender equality in Liberia. Electing a woman to the position of president, the highest seat in the



10 Rashed H. 2011. "The Nobel Peace Prize 2011: Leymah Gbowee." Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2011/gbowee/biographical/>.

11 Caesar R. G., Carlo C. K., Nagarajan C. and Schoofs S. 2010. *IFP Gender Cluster Country Case Study: Liberia. Implementing Resolution 1325 in Liberia: Reflections of Women's Associations*. Initiative for Peacebuilding

12 Bekoe D. and Parajon C. 2007. "Women's Role in Liberia's Reconstruction." Peace Brief. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

13 Government of Liberia. 2019. *Beijing+25 National Review Report. 25th Anniversary of the Fourth Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). Final Report*. Monrovia: Government of Liberia.



country, in 2005 and 2011 marked the beginning of a transformation in the legal framework of the country. The government also adopted several international treaties and developed national policies such as the National Gender Policy of 2009. The National Gender Policy recognizes the traditional and religious perceptions of women and men. Traditional and religious beliefs, as well as the customary law, consider women subordinate and men superior. These beliefs have led to sustained gender inequality and marginalization of women in Liberia.<sup>14</sup>

While efforts are being made to address the situation of women and human rights, there is a huge disparity in accessing services that relates to a lack of representation of women at higher decision-making levels, even though a woman has been elected as president of the country.

The underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making at top government level has limited their voice and the attention given to their pressing issues such as limited access to sexual and reproductive health care and the continuing practice of harmful traditions.

### 1.1.2. Violence against women and girls in Liberia

Over 80 per cent of Liberian women suffered violence during the civil war.<sup>15</sup> An assessment conducted in 2018 asserts that Liberia has the highest rate of sexual violence against women in the world.<sup>16</sup> Since the civil war ended, 2019 saw the highest annual rate of rape cases reported in Liberia. A total of 2,708 cases of violence were reported, of which the total cases of violence against women reported, 2,141 (79%), were rape cases. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the vulnerability of women, resulting in rising rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and other forms of violence against women.

The Liberia 2021 Human Rights Report referenced a 2021 report by the Independent National Commission for Human Rights (INCHR), which found that the perpetrators of rape enjoyed impunity, citing bureaucratic obstacles, poverty and traditions as key factors. It pointed the finger at the institutional weakness of government to prosecute reported cases of gender-based violence.<sup>17</sup> It found that the parents of rape victims sometimes requested money from the perpetrators as a form of redress and perpetrators frequently offering money to victims' parents to prevent the cases from going to court.

### 1.1.3. Challenges faced by civil society in peacebuilding in Liberia

Civil society in Liberia has been recognized as a strong social and economic force with enormous potential to create a free, fair and just society. Civil society continues to play a transformative role in the future of Liberia. It has been instrumental in promoting peace, evidenced by sections of civil society's participation in Liberia's peace talks in Accra. CSOs have successfully promoted their agendas, in particular women's organizations and environmental groups.<sup>2</sup>

They have also played significant roles in promoting transparency, accountability and equal representation and have represented citizens' interests. Their collective actions have helped to ensure that women's young people's, the poor and other marginalized groups' interests are recognized by public institutions through policymaking and allocation of resources.

However, civil society and government actors have always had serious stand-offs while

14 Ministry of Gender and Development. 2009. *The Liberia National Gender Policy, Abridged Version*. Accessed 23 August 2022. [http://www.africanchildforum.org/clar/policy%20per%20country/liberia/liberia\\_gender\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://www.africanchildforum.org/clar/policy%20per%20country/liberia/liberia_gender_2009_en.pdf).

15 UNFPA. 2007. "Majority of Liberian Women Suffered Sexual Violence during War, Says New Study." Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://www.unfpa.org/press/majority-liberian-women-suffered-sexual-violence-during-war-says-new-study>.

16 USAID. 2018. "Gender Assessment Report." Prepared by Liberia Strategic Analysis. Accessed 23 August 2022. [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00WB3Z.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WB3Z.pdf).

17 INCHR. 2021. *August Human Rights Situation Report*. Monrovia: Independent National Commission on Human Rights.

promoting citizen's interests. The lack of trust and confidence between civil society and the government, and the fragmentation of civil society due to competition and under resourcing, largely resulting from the focus on basic service delivery and humanitarian relief and the limited

capacity to manage funds and human resources, are some of the major challenges facing civil society in Liberia. This is responsible for CSOs underperformance and lack of effectiveness in promoting good governance and lasting social benefits.

#### 1.1.4. COVID-19 and its socioeconomic effects on women

The COVID-19 pandemic struck Liberia and increased economic hardship. This outbreak, coupled with the 14 years of civil unrest and the Ebola virus disease, weakened the already struggling population of Liberia. While the pandemic affected the entire country, women were drastically affected because of their socioeconomic status. Most Liberian women have to sell basic commodities to survive. About 90 per cent of women in Liberia work in the informal sector. Approximately, 30 per cent of the owners of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are women. A large percentage of women in rural Liberia are involved in crop production. Women who are producing food crops and vegetables sell mainly in local markets and survive on their daily incomes. The shock to the global economy ravaged by the pandemic and the lockdown measures created barriers preventing women from carrying out their normal livelihood activities. The lockdown

measures instituted by the government, which included the restriction of movement, resulted in a greater negative impact on women's livelihoods. In an attempt to recover from the shock created by COVID-19 pandemic, the GOL developed a national COVID-19 pandemic response plan, with support for implementation from development partners. The government also adopted a number of social, economic and fiscal measures to alleviate both the health and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.<sup>18</sup> About US\$25 million was committed to distribute 60 days' worth of food among vulnerable populations, and the government promised free electricity and water during the lockdown. The International Labour Organization suspended charges on imported goods for six months. Despite considerable efforts by government and international partners, the socioeconomic situation in Liberia has worsened.<sup>19</sup>

## 1.2. UN system in Liberia

The United Nations in Liberia comprises 18 agencies. In August 2019, the United Nations in Liberia and the GOL signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020–2024) aimed at supporting Liberia's development agenda.

This framework guides UN development support to Liberia's Agenda for Prosperity and Development and is aligned with it, specifically on pillars that focus on 'Power to the People', 'Economy and Jobs', 'Peace and Security' and 'Governance and Transparency'.

18 UNDP Liberia. 2020. *Rapid Assessment of Covid-19 Impact and Roadmap for Recovery in Liberia*. October 2020. Monrovia: United Nations Development Programme Liberia.

19 ILO. 2020. ILO Brief, May. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

### 1.2.1. Women in Liberia

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Since 2004, UN Women has been providing strategic support to the government in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Liberia. It works to address the most pressing gender equality concerns for women and girls in Liberia, which is built around five pillars: (1) Women's Political Participation and Leadership (WPPL); (2) Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE); (3) Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS); (4) Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG); and (5) Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRP). Through these pillars, UN Women Liberia

plays a leading role in facilitating change and has worked with partners to make tremendous gains in gender equality and women's empowerment in Liberia. In collaboration with the GOL, the UN system and civil society, UN Women Liberia is engaged in implementing projects that are aligned with the government's agenda.<sup>20</sup>

It supports the integration of gender in national planning and budgeting and provides training for national officials to implement them and strengthen the abilities of women's movements to advocate for and monitor them. UN Women Liberia supported the improvement of vital services for women in post-conflict Liberia.

### 1.2.2. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) works to promote and protect human rights that are guaranteed under international law and stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Its mandate is derived from Articles 1, 13 and 55 of the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>21</sup> Since 2018, the organization has worked closely with the government to ensure that human rights are fully promoted and protected, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; to contribute to national efforts in

promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights; to observe the human rights situation and inform the authorities; and to provide capacity-building to support national institutions, CSOs and individuals regarding the promotion and protection of human rights; among other things. OHCHR has implemented projects tailored to human rights and their protection. OHCHR and UN Women are partner international organizations implementing this project to advance the interests of women, peace, and security.

### 1.2.3. Peacebuilding Fund in Liberia

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk of or affected by violent conflict.<sup>22</sup> It works through different partners, including UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or CSOs. In Liberia, the PBF supports sustained and coordinated international community support to Liberia

and supports Liberia's development agenda. The PBF has provided support to strengthen gender taskforces, operate women's peace huts as local dispute resolution platforms, and strengthen women's local leadership and the Women Situation Room mechanism, among other interventions. The PBF also contributed to the development of the second NAP WPS, and the development of the GOL's first innovative financing strategy for gender equality.

20 UN Women. 2022. "Africa." Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/africa>.

21 United Nations. 1993. General Assembly Resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993. A/Res/48/141.

22 PBF. 2021. *The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund: Liberia. June 2021*. Accessed 23 August 2022. [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/liberia\\_20210611.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/liberia_20210611.pdf).



## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE GRB/WPS JOINT PROJECT

### 2.1. GRB/WPS Joint Project overview, objectives and scope

In 2019, after the adoption of the second NAP WPS, UN Women and the OHCHR launched the project 'Advancing the implementation of UNSCR on women, peace and security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)'. The project focused on the advancement of the human rights-based implementation of peacebuilding activities from the second NAP WPS by fostering partnership with CSOs and government institutions and strengthening coordination among national structures. It also sought to enhance the allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the second NAP WPS through innovative financing and GRB. In particular, the project focused on strengthening the capacity of women's organizations and targeted GOL agencies on GRB and innovative financing. It sought to strengthen the accountability, monitoring and reporting mechanism of the NAP WPS and to facilitate learning exchanges and

knowledge sharing between Liberia and other countries within the region.

UN Women and OHCHR with funding from the PBF implemented the GRB/WPS Joint Project. The aim of the project was to enhance the allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the second NAP WPS through innovative financing and GRB. Innovative approaches to enhance resource allocation for the implementation of the second NAP WPS are intended to accelerate the implementation of international commitments on WPS and to address the specific conflict drivers in a gender-responsive manner.

The GRB/WPS Joint Project addressed some of the causes of conflict and peacebuilding gaps, including limited economic opportunities for women, high youth unemployment, land tenure and property rights, and exclusion of women, rural women, women with disabilities and

young women from peacebuilding processes, by mobilizing resources through GRB and innovative financing for the implementation of the second NAP WPS. It also aimed to further strengthen the capacity of women's organizations and vulnerable groups to hold the government accountable.

This project started in January 2020, with the first tranche that was transferred by the PBF to UN Women and OHCHR, and ended in November 2021. The budget for the entire implementation of the project was US\$1,500,000.

The project was implemented at national level and in two counties, namely Nimba and Grand Bassa, with support from government representatives (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), Ministry of Justice, Liberian National Police (LNP), INCHR, Liberian Revenue Authority). The programme involved also CSOs, namely Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Institute for Research and Democratic Development, Women, Youth, Peace and Security Working Group in West Africa and the Sahel and Liberia (1325 Network), Federation of Liberia Youth, Association of Disabled Females International, National Peace Hut Women of Liberia, Youth Alive Liberia, Human Rights Advocacy Platform and the National Rural Women Structure.

A detailed stakeholder mapping analysis is provided in Annex 8 of this evaluation report.

The GRB/WPS Joint Project was designed around two outcomes and five outputs as follows:

**Outcome 1: Targeted line ministries,<sup>23</sup> government agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities.**

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**Output 1.1:** Targeted government actors at national and local levels are aware of and have the capacity to implement the NAP WPS. Limited understanding and knowledge on the NAP WPS and the UNSCR on WPS was one of the major challenges faced during the first phase of the NAP WPS. Based on learning from the past, this intervention will therefore strengthen the capacity of targeted civil servants and decision-makers in charge of the implementation of the second phase of the NAP WPS.

**Output 1.2:** Government actors and women's organizations have strengthened their capacity on innovative financing and GRB, to ensure the increased allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the NAP WPS. The innovative financing project will generate resources for the peacebuilding activities of the second NAP WPS (2019–2023), which was considered a low priority by the government; hence, limited or no resources were allocated to its implementation in the first phase.

**Output 1.3:** Targeted government institutions have access to relevant coordination, monitoring and reporting tools and the capacity to use them. This intervention aimed to build a strong monitoring, reporting and coordination mechanism to strengthen the accountability of the NAP WPS. The NAP is a planning and monitoring tool allowing the government and its partners to assess progress in the advancement of women's issues.

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<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Liberian National Police.

Outcome 2: More women, including marginalized women, in the targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding-related activities of the NAP WPS.

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**Output 2.1:** Women’s organizations have strengthened their capacities to implement, monitor, report and promote evidence-based advocacy to ensure the implementation of the NAP WPS. Alongside the strengthening of state institutions and mechanisms for the implementation of the NAP WPS, the convening agencies will continue to strengthen their investments in the targeted communities to further develop core skills and capacities, including advocacy and monitoring for accountability to enable women’s groups, young women and women with disabilities to meaningfully participate and shape more equitable and inclusive peacebuilding and local plans.

**Output 2.2:** Men, boys and local leaders are aware of and understand the rights of women, including marginalized women, to participate in public and peacebuilding processes. To change the dominant traditional cultural perception that the right place for women is in the home and that hard security matters and peacebuilding are masculine domains, the project aimed to conduct a perception assessment and gender and power analysis to assess men’s and boys’ understanding of human rights issues and change existing gender stereotypes in peacebuilding processes.

### 2.1.1. Geographical coverage

The project was designed to be implemented at the national and sub-national levels.

The project counties were Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties. In Bassa and Nimba, the project targeted both peace hut and non-peace hut communities. In both counties, the project worked with implementing partners, government, and women’s groups.



## 2.2. Theory of change

*IF targeted line ministries, government agencies and local governments are aware of and have the capacity to implement the peacebuilding activities of the NAPWPS, IF local and national government institutions and women's organizations have strengthened capacity on innovative financing and GRB to ensure increased allocation of financial resources to the implementation of the NAPWPS, IF targeted government institutions at national and local levels have access to relevant coordination, monitoring and reporting tools and the capacity to use them, IF women's organizations have strengthened capacities to implement, monitor, report and promote evidenced-based advocacy to ensure the implementation of the NAPWPS, and IF men, boys and local leaders are aware of and understand the rights of women, including marginalized women, to participate in public and peacebuilding processes, THEN more women, including rural women, women with disabilities and young women, will participate in peacebuilding processes to sustain peace, BECAUSE targeted line ministries, government agencies and*

*local governments will implement the NAPWPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms with their enhanced capacities, and BECAUSE more women, including marginalized women, in the targeted counties will hold the government accountable for the NAPWPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding-related activities of the NAPWPS.*

- The theory of change was based on the following assumptions:
- Government commitment to implement the WPS agenda at national level
- Stakeholders able and willing to coordinate to maximize the impact of their work
- A decentralization process is in progress
- Government commitment to implement the GRB policy.

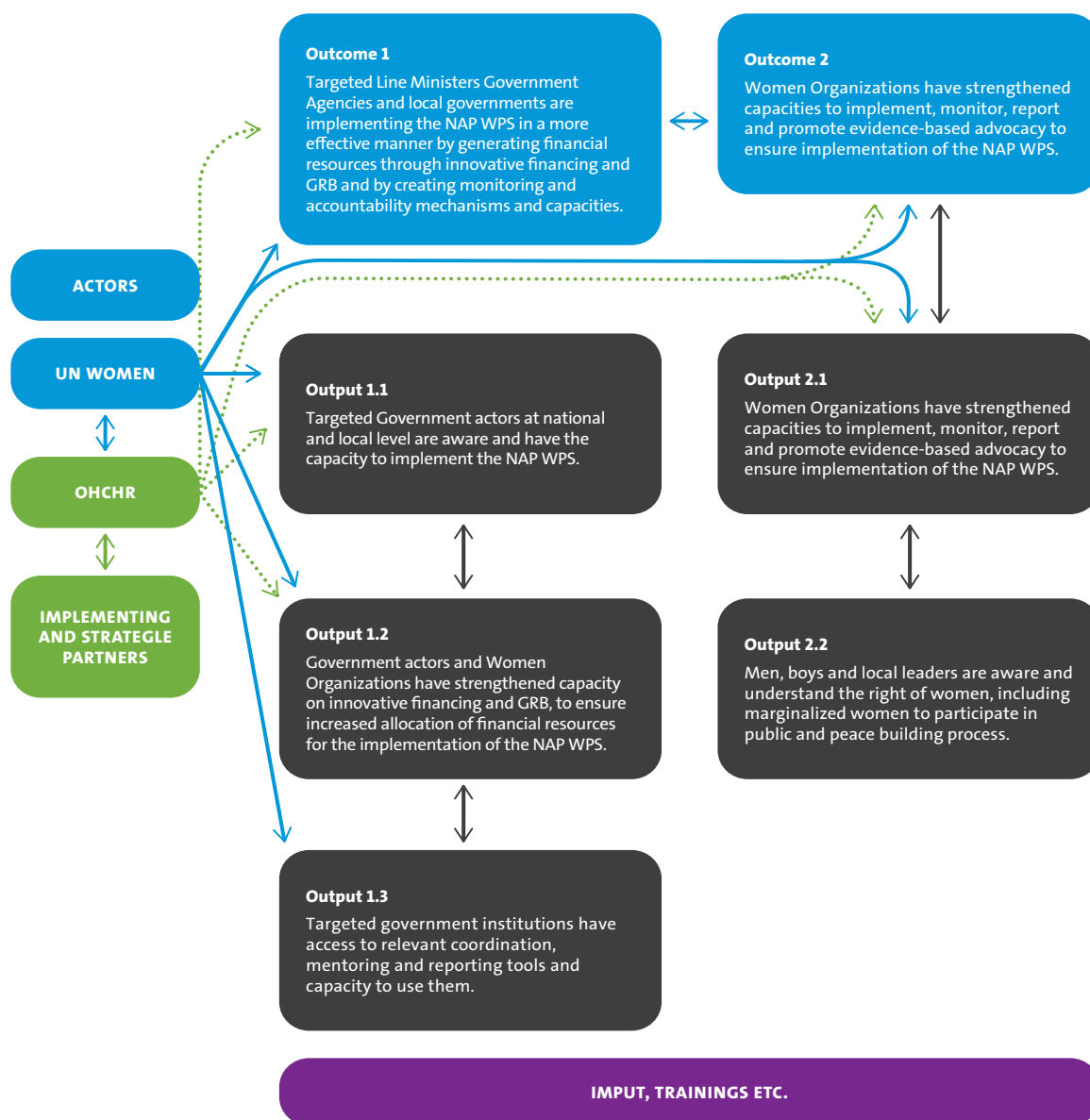


## 2.2.1. Theory of change analysis

The evaluation assessed the internal logic of this joint project, the extent to which outputs were logically connected (from cause to effect) to intended outcomes, and the extent to which intended outcomes were logically connected to expected impacts. The evaluation found that the internal logic of this project was strong and that all essential outputs and outcomes had been considered in the project design. The main reported drivers and relevant assumptions were adequately considered, and the formal

logframe of the intervention was designed in a way to ensure that the necessary adjustments could be made if certain critical assumptions proved to be invalid. The review of the available progress reports and donor reports at this stage demonstrates a good likelihood that this project will contribute to the expected impact. This was verified and confirmed based on additional evidence provided during the data collection phase of this evaluation.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE THEORY OF CHANGE ANALYSIS







## 3. EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

### 3.1. Evaluability assessment

An assessment of the availability of secondary data necessary for this evaluation was conducted. Detailed analysis and an evaluability assessment matrix are provided in Annex 1 of this evaluation report. The evaluation found very good results from assessing the quality of the results framework. All outcome and output indicators

had baseline and target values except for output 2.2.1. The indicators are strongly formulated in accordance with the SMART approach, providing specific and realistic information to support the measurement of the progress and achievements of the GRB/WPS Joint Project between January 2020 and November 2021.

## 4. FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Evaluation objectives and scope

This evaluation assessed the achievements of the GRB/WPS Joint Project in an inclusive way and determined its overall added value for peacebuilding in Liberia. As a formative evaluation, the purpose was to examine the project's progress and results. The evaluation generated substantial evidence to inform future policy choices and best practices. It identified

findings, challenges, lessons learnt and good practices and formulated recommendations to improve future joint programming and foster organizational learning and accountability.

This evaluation will inform the implementation of the government's strategic plan, new strategic documents such as the new UNSDCF, and future

programming of UN Women and OHCHR, including joint programming actions. The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the United Nations to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of the WPS agenda and to inform the development of strategic documents, including the 2020–2024 Strategic Note from the UN Women Liberia Country Office.

Furthermore, national stakeholders, such as the MGCSP, line ministries in charge of the

implementation of the NAP WPS, WONGOSOL, Foundation for Community Initiatives, Search for Common Ground, Peace Hut Network and other CSOs will also use findings of the evaluation.

Ultimately, the results of this evaluation will be publicly available through the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation User (GATE) system for global learning and the PBF website.

## 4.2. United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluation

This evaluation applied the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation. It answered questions on the evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including relevance, development efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, in addition to assessing the programme on gender, equity and human rights principles. The

evaluation matrix, including the main evaluation questions, is provided in Annex 6 of this report.

In addition, the disability framework provided by the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy<sup>24</sup> was used to assess the extent to which this GRB/ WPS Joint Project was inclusive and the extent to which women and men living with disabilities were integrated into the project at all stages.



24 United Nations. 2019. "United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy." Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>.

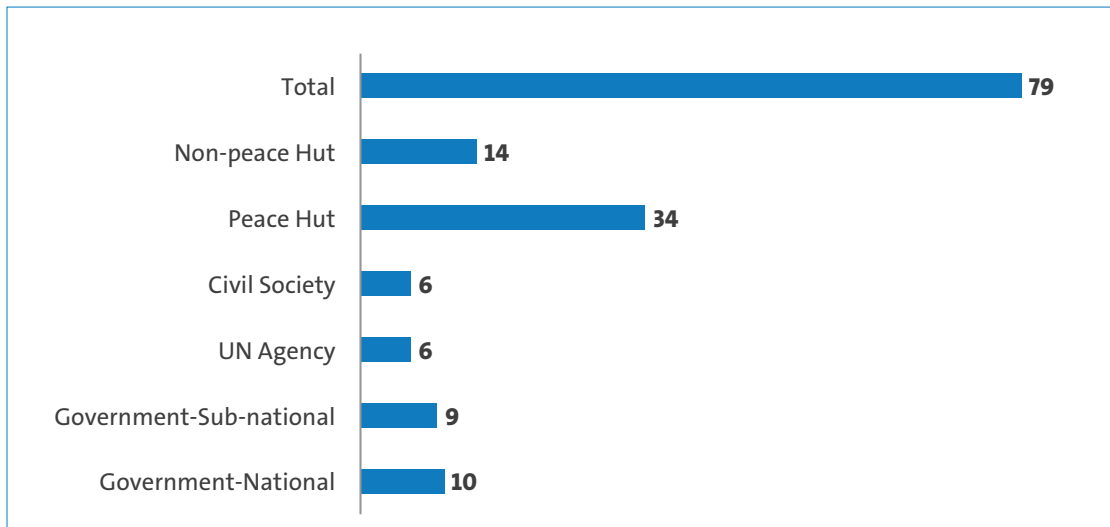
### 4.3. Evaluation methods and approach

In line with the UNEG norms and the UN Women and GERAAS (Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System) standards, a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach was applied throughout the evaluation process. The inclusive and participatory approach to the evaluation ensured the active participation

and involvement of stakeholders at all levels of the GRB/WPS Joint Project.

Out of the 79 respondents, 34 peace hut, 14 non-peace hut, 10 GOL staff at national level and 9 at sub-national level, 6 CSOs and 6 UN agencies were interviewed.

#### STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED



### 4.4. Data analysis, collection method and scoring

The evaluators used mixed research methods in data gathering and analysis (sequential implementation implying collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in phases), so that the formulated evaluation questions could be effectively answered.

The Evaluation Team adopted an inclusive gender equality and human rights-based approach (HRBA) by examining processes and the results and by designing an appropriate system-based methodology to understand the various linkages in the results chain – strategies, outcomes, and theory of change – and verifying the assumptions behind the two outcomes of the project. The use of a combination and triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data was key to the evaluation,

as this ensured that the limitations of one type of data were balanced by the strengths of another. The evaluation also analysed value for money by examining the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of this GRB/WPS Joint Project.

- The Evaluation Team used following mixed methodologies:
- Desk review and analysis of strategic frameworks, policies and project documents
- Field visits to Montserrat, Nimba and Grand Bassa
- Observations, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews (semi-structured and face to face) with key informants.

### 4.4.1. Scoring criteria

The scoring followed the logic of the United Nations Environment Programme's 2018 evaluation rating system, which is based on a six-point scale (Highly Satisfactory; Satisfactory; Moderately Satisfactory; Moderately Unsatisfactory; Unsatisfactory; and Highly Unsatisfactory). The evaluation combined these six-point scales into four main scores below to facilitate a common interpretation of the points on the scale for each evaluation criterion. A matrix is provided in Annex 2 of this evaluation report, giving more detail on the scoring and rating processes.

These ratings are 'weighted' to derive the overall project rating as follows:

**Score A:** The project performed well and no changes were required.

**Score B:** The project performed well but some changes were required.

**Score C:** The project performed but significant changes were necessary.

**Score D:** The project did not perform at all according to the criteria.

## 4.5. Ethical approach

The evaluation respected the protection and confidentiality of data as recommended by UNEG<sup>25</sup> and the related code of conduct for evaluation in the UN system, in terms of independence and impartiality; credibility;

honesty and integrity; accountability; confidentiality; respect for dignity and diversity; avoidance of harm; accuracy, completeness and reliability; and transparency.



25 United Nations Evaluation Group. 2008. "UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System." Accessed 23 August 2022. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/100>.

More concretely, the evaluators paid equal attention to all stakeholders (United Nations, CSOs and GOL, as presented in the matrix in Annex 8 of this report) consulted during this exercise and at various levels to avoid elitism and reinforcing discriminatory or unjust social relationships. The evaluators also visited remote communities to ensure that beneficiaries and marginalized groups (even the poorest and illiterate people), were equal participants in

this exercise. Finally, some meetings were organized in secure places where confidentiality during consultations could be ensured to avoid putting participants at risk of recriminations. In some cases where the evaluators observed an imbalance in the power dynamics between women and men during a meeting, they organized additional consultations with specific participants.

## 4.6. Data management plan

Various types of data were used and produced during this evaluation: numerical (databases, spreadsheets), textual (documents), images, audio and/or mixed media. The data collected through this evaluation were subject to the UN Women Information Security Policy, which sets out the basis for UN Women protecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of its data to protect these assets against

unauthorized usage, access, modification, destruction, disclosure, loss or transfer, whether accidental or intentional. Information captured was recorded in a database with links from the UN Women server and iCloud to each item. Data were stored in clouds and backed up regularly and automatically during this evaluation. The evaluation used the NVIVO software for data transcription and analysis.

## 4.7. Evaluation limitations

The Evaluation Team found the organization and logistics management of this evaluation good. The logistics, the organization of the various meetings with partners and beneficiaries, the availability of the project staff (UN Women and OHCHR), the support provided by the donor (PBF) in the event that additional data and information were needed, and the support of various stakeholders in conducting this exercise were elements that contributed to the success of the in-country data collection phase.

However, the Evaluation Team faced some constraints as follows:

- **Accessibility to some communities and availability of some beneficiaries and implementing partners.** This evaluation is gender responsive and committed to ensuring the equal participation of various categories of stakeholders and groups in this exercise. During the data collection phase, some partners and direct beneficiaries of this programme were not always available during the field visits

conducted by the evaluators. This affected the work plan agreed during the inception phase and required some flexibility from the Evaluation Team, which organized in some cases additional calls and meetings during weekends and outside working hours to ensure that the voices of some beneficiaries and partners, including marginalized groups, were also heard and considered by this evaluation.

- **Delays in the submission of means of verification.** This evaluation is evidence based. Some data were not always submitted in a timely manner to allow them to be integrated into the preliminary analysis of data. Delays in submitting some relevant means of verification challenged the validation of some reported activities and the achievements of this programme and required additional time for the work. To mitigate this, the Evaluation Team used different data sources and conducted additional research in some cases to verify information.

## 4.8. Evaluation Team and management

The evaluation was conducted by one international consultant who had the overall responsibility and accountability for the evaluation, report writing and data analyses and reported to UN Women Country Office and the Regional Office, OHCHR, PBF and to the Evaluation Reference Group and one national consultant who supported the evaluation process. The evaluators were responsible for the following evaluation phases: inception phase; data collection phase; data analysis and synthesis phase; and validation.

In addition, an Evaluation Management Group was established to oversee the evaluation process, make key decisions and quality assure the deliverables. This group is chaired by the Regional Evaluation Specialist, who is ultimately responsible for the validation of deliverables.

More information on the Evaluation Team and the management of this evaluation are presented in Annex 11 of this report.

### PICTURES OF THE EVALUATION TEAM, DRIVER AND THE TEAM IN THE FIELD





## 5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### A. RELEVANCE

*The extent to which the GRB/WPS Joint Project's objectives are responsive to the needs and priorities of women, GOL, partners and stakeholders as well as its alignment with government, African and international priorities, policies and strategies on the WPS agenda.*

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SCORE A. The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well and no changes were required.

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**FINDING 1: The GRB/WPS Joint Project design was informed by the findings and recommendations of previous funded interventions on WPS. In addition, the evaluation found good involvement from various stakeholders and partners, including the National Commission on Disability in Liberia at national level. More involvement of organizations working with people with disabilities would have further strengthened the project design.**

The evaluation found that the joint project was informed by the lessons from the first NAP WPS of Liberia, which did not achieve its intended objectives for various reasons such as lack of adequate government financing, inadequate awareness among implementers, a lack of inclusion of women in peace and

security processes, and inadequate capacity among implementers to monitor and evaluate the impact. In addition, the design of this joint project was also informed by the previous PBF-funded project on WPS 'Nothing for Us and without Us',<sup>26</sup> which was implemented by UN Women, the International Organization

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<sup>26</sup> A review matrix and the linkages between the previous WPS project led by UN Women in Liberia and this GRB/WPS Joint Project is provided in Annex 6 of this report.

for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (10 January 2018 to 8 July 2019) with a budget of US\$2 million. The evaluation conclusions 2, 3, 5 and 7 and recommendation 2.1 on budget allocation to the implementation of the NAP 1325, recommendation 3.1 on further capacity-building on WPS and recommendation 5.1 on enhancing village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) were fully considered in the design of this project.

The project conducted a baseline survey at an early stage (2019) and consulted a total of 21 strategic stakeholders and implementing partners at national and county levels. Involving such a large number of partners and stakeholders in an 18-month project ensured that the UN 'Leave No One Behind' principles were considered at the design stage.

The development of the theory of change was also participative, and joint meetings were organized in the course of 2019 in the three targeted counties, namely Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa.

This GRB/WPS Joint Project also managed

to actively involve the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled in its design phase to capture the needs and priorities of women and girls living with disabilities in peace- and security-related issues in Liberia. Their perspectives were to a good extent integrated into the project design. Interviews conducted with a representative of the National Commission on Disability during the data collection for this evaluation revealed his active participation at the design stage and attendance at various consultative meetings held in the course of 2019 at Mamba Point Hotel, Monrovia, and at the MGCSF.

However, the estimated number of organizations working with people with disabilities is 46. Involving the umbrella organization (the union) was not sufficient to understand the specific needs of people with disabilities in security- and justice-related issues and to effectively address them in the targeted counties and communities. The specific needs of people with disabilities were not therefore fully integrated into and addressed by this project. There was no evidence of a vulnerability assessment for the most at-risk group in Liberia and the targeted counties and communities.

## **FINDING 2: The GRB/WPS Joint Project is very strongly aligned with global policies and protocols on WPS.**

### **● At international level**

The joint project's goal and objectives are fully aligned to Sustainable Development Goals 5, 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', and 16, 'Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies'.

They are also aligned with other UN resolutions as follows:

- UNSCR 1960 (adopted in 2010) and UN Resolution 2106 (adopted in 2013) respectively reiterate the importance of ending sexual violence in conflict and provide the operational details for combating sexual violence.
- Reinforcing the role and relevance of women in peace and security, UNSCR 2122 (adopted in 2013) focuses on stronger implementation measures and monitoring mechanisms to enable women to engage in conflict resolution and recovery.

### **● At national level**

The evaluation found a very strong alignment of this project with the Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting Policy (Mainstreaming gender into public financial management) 2019–2023. Through this policy the government committed to use GRPB as a tool to mainstream gender issues in the public financial management system, with the main purpose of ensuring that the benefits of plans and budgets reach the vulnerable groups characterized by their various gender-related needs and priorities. There is also good alignment with the national development plan (Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development), and the project contributes to the following outcomes:

**Pillar 1, outcome 4:** Entrenched as a cross-cutting issue leading to more empowered women and girls and a clearer understanding among men and boys of the need to act as champions.



**Pillar 3, outcome 3:** A society where justice, the rule of law and equitable human rights prevail.

**Pillar 4, outcome 4:** Improved nationwide delivery of gender-responsive security services.

With the active involvement of the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled at the design phase, this joint project was aligned with SI 6, Access to Justice and Social Protection, of the National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities (2018–2022), which contributed to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

- **At African Union Level**<sup>27</sup>

The active involvement of marginalized groups in this joint project contributed to its alignment with the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, which places gender equality at the centre of Africa’s development and commits to ending all forms of oppression and gender-based discrimination.

This joint project is also fully aligned with the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, which calls for the need to ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace processes. At regional and country levels, the regional economic communities and AU Member States have developed gender policies and adopted gender declarations and UNSCR 1325 action plans that guide their gender mainstreaming in peace processes. The evaluation also found a strong alignment with the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2017–2027), which calls for the equal participation of women in peace processes. The joint project is also aligned with the 2006 Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, which incorporates the principles of inclusiveness, equity and non-discrimination in addressing conflict. The policy commits to undertaking initiatives that promote participation and address the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups such as women and girls.



27 African Union Commission. 2019. “Continental Results Framework: Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa (2018–2028).” Accessed 23 August 2022. [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental\\_result\\_framework\\_on\\_wps\\_agenda\\_in\\_africa.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental_result_framework_on_wps_agenda_in_africa.pdf).

The review of the results framework revealed that the project indicators were aligned with some of the set of indicators of the Continental Results Framework (CRF) for Monitoring and Reporting on the WPS Agenda in Africa (2018–2028), adopted by the AU. The CRF provides 28 indicators agreed upon by Member States for tracking and reporting on the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa. The indicators are structured around the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security (prevention; participation; protection; relief and recovery), with an additional theme, ‘WPS in the context of emerging security threats’, incorporated. There is a particular alignment of this joint project with indicator 2 of the CRF under the pillar on prevention that focuses on “the proportion of national budget allocated to government departments that address the WPS Agenda”, indicator 11 of the CRF under the pillar on participation that focuses on “the number of women’s CSOs participating in government-led peacebuilding processes (c) dialogues”, and indicator 1 on “the existence of legal and policy frameworks that protect the rights of women, including protection from sexual and gender-based violence” under the pillar on protection. The joint project is also aligned with indicator 2 of the CRF on “the proportion of post-conflict recovery budget set aside for gender equality and women’s empowerment” under the pillar on relief and recovery.

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2020–2024)**

The United Nations in Liberia<sup>28</sup> is represented by 18 agencies, funds and programmes, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, comprising the UN Country Team. Under the ‘Delivering as One’ concept, they work together through the UNSDCF 2020–2024 supporting the government’s Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development. The UNSDCF is aligned with the Pro-Poor Agenda, which has four pillars: Power

to the People; Economy and Jobs; Peace and Security; and Governance and Transparency. This guides the UN’s programmatic government interventions over the next five years. The new UNSDCF (2020–2024) was signed by the GOL and the United Nations in August 2019, and implementation started on 1 January 2020. The UNSDCF is informed by recommendations and lessons learned from the previous United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Common Country Assessment, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also guided by the UN Vision 2030.

The goal, objectives and content of the GRD/WPS Joint Project is fully aligned with the UNSCDF. The evaluation found that this joint project contributed to UNSDCF goal 5, which sets 2024 as the deadline by which “women, girls, men and boys in Liberia experience more sustained peace, inclusive and sustainable growth and development through strengthened formal and informal institutions, providing access to effective and equitable justice and security services; promoting and protecting human rights; and strengthening social cohesion and reconciliation”. Under outcome 1 of this WPS/GRB Joint Project, outputs 1.1 and 1.3 are strongly aligned with outcome 3 of the UNSDCF: “By 2021, Liberia consolidates, sustains peace and enhances social cohesion, has strengthened formal and informal institutions capable of providing access to inclusive, effective, equitable justice and security services, capable of promoting and protecting human rights of all.” There is also strong alignment with outcome 4: “By 2024 people in Liberia especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged benefit from strengthened institutions that are more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive and gender responsive in the delivery of essential services at the national and sub-national levels.”

28 United Nations Sustainable Development Group. 2022. “Liberia: Leveraging UN Investments to Advance the Sustainable Development Goals.” Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/liberia>.

**FINDING 3: The project design was very relevant to addressing the needs and priorities of the GOL in providing strategic support to improve the funding mechanisms for the NAP WPS and in responding to the priorities and needs of women in the targeted communities. The design also attempted to address most gaps challenging the implementation of the NAP WPS in Liberia.**

Consultations conducted in the early stages of this project to inform its design revealed major challenges that were likely to manifest in the implementation of the second phase of the NAP WPS in Liberia.

**In the communities**, the most vulnerable women have limited access to equitable and affordable land dispute resolution mechanisms or lack adequate understanding of the legal frameworks governing property rights. They face constraints in accessing justice regardless of the channels used (court system, semi-formal and informal). Because of their poverty, illiteracy, family care responsibilities and limited economic opportunities, women, including young women and women with disabilities, are excluded from peacebuilding processes in their communities. As a result, men dominate and take control over peacebuilding and security mechanisms, including the peace committees.

**At national level**, during the design phase, the project identified limited gender responsiveness in the existing peacebuilding infrastructure and a lack of funding dedicated to the implementation of the NAP WPS by the GOL. International funds were committed to support the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) and coordination, but not to support WPS activities or implementers. CSOs lacked the capacity to monitor and evaluate the results of the plan's implementation, which resulted in a lack of evidence for the NAP's impacts and led to a decrease in the overall commitment to advancing its mission and a lack of good-quality data to inform decisions and strategies on WPS.

**At both national and community levels**, consultations found a high prevalence of violence against women due to harmful traditional practices, a lack of accountability for human rights abuses and insufficient access to justice for survivors.

The project design planned to address these gaps at community and national levels through various approaches and strategies.

**Regarding harmful traditional practices affecting women at national and community levels**, the project planned to work with men, including male traditional leaders, in the communities to address the toxic masculinity and traditional norms hindering the effective participation of women in peacebuilding processes. At national level, the project put a particular focus on strengthening gender equality and WPS-related issues in the security services.

**Regarding the lack of funding dedicated to the implementation of the NAP WPS by the GOL at national level**, the project designed an ambitious innovative approach to financing the NAP WPS through the establishment of innovative financing mechanisms coupled with capacity-building on GRB and developing relevant ministries, CSOs and CBOs.

**At community level**, where women face economic constraints causing conflicts in the household, the project intended to support VSLA activities and enhance the capacity of both peace hut and non-peace hut women on GRB. Through this capacity-building, the project expected to provide the women with tools to mobilize funds for their peacebuilding activities.

**Regarding the specific needs of women with disabilities**, the project intended to use prohibited grounds of discrimination to identify individuals left behind. UN Women, the OHCHR and their implementing partners committed to developing selection criteria and engaging in advance with the communities to inform them of their selection. The planned implementing partners were those with good expertise and experience in mobilizing the most marginalized groups, including rural women, young people, and women with disabilities.

By involving the MGCSP in the project design, the intention was to address some of the challenges women face in accessing justice.

## B. EFFICIENCY

*The extent to which the GRB/WPS Joint Project delivered maximum results for the resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.).*

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SCORE C: The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed but significant changes were necessary.

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**FINDING 4: The complex organization of the GRB/WPS Joint Project, the large number of stakeholders involved and the synergies built at national level by this intervention contributed to the project's very good delivery of outputs and the good results achieved in terms of outcomes.**

The GRB/WPS Joint Project had an organizational structure that was complex with regard to the number of stakeholders involved but also regarding their roles and responsibilities in this innovative project requiring technical staff with good practice and experience of results-based project management.

According to the project documents<sup>29</sup> reviewed and the progress reports available, this GRB/WPS Joint Project was led by UN Women and jointly coordinated with OHCHR and the GOL. UN Women assigned a national project officer to coordinate and manage the project and report to the project board (composed of the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance and Development, representatives of the CSOs involved, UN Women and OHCHR representatives) on the implementation of the project's activities and its achievements, results and finance-related issues. The project officer was also in charge of coordinating activities

between the UN agencies, the 1325 Taskforce<sup>30</sup> and the implementing partners to ensure complementarity and the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. The OHCHR recruited an international UN volunteer partially funded by the PBF for the oversight and implementation of the activities under OHCHR's responsibility.

At national level, both the UN Women project officer (WPS project specialist) and the OHCHR human rights officer (UN volunteer) were responsible for providing technical support to the government and the CSOs for quality assurance and capacity-building purposes. A GRB officer recruited by UN Women (partially funded by the PBF) provided technical support for the implementation of the GRB-related activities and innovative financing. At community or sub-national level, the GRB/WPS Joint Project collaborated with national partners to carry out capacity-building activities, awareness-raising campaigns and events.

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29 pp. 19–20.

30 1325 Taskforce is a multi-stakeholders platform for promoting Women Peace and Security Issues in Liberia.

The following matrix shows the joint project team according to the project document:

UN WOMEN	OHCHR
1. Deputy Country Representative – not funded by PBF	1. Deputy Country Representative – not funded by PBF
2. WPS project specialist – partially funded by PBF	2. Human rights officer – partially funded by PBF (IUNV, 42%)
3. GRB project specialist – partially funded by PBF	3. Human rights officer – not funded by PBF
4. Finance associate – not funded by PBF	4. Finance/administrative officer – not funded by PBF
5. Logistics and Supply Team – not funded by PBF	5. M&E officer – not funded by PBF*
6. M&E specialist – not funded by PBF*	6. Driver – not funded by PBF
7. Driver – not funded by PBF	

*\*M&E specialists of both organizations either resigned (UN Women) or left (OHCHR) during the project's implementation. More information is provided in the finding on M&E below.*

The evaluation found that the structure of this GRB/WPS Joint Project contributed to a good extent to the appropriate implementation of the project and the success of its achievements. The selection processes for the staff assigned to this specific project could not be determined by

this evaluation but UN Women and the OHCHR assigned functional unit staff to the project on a part-time basis. Overlaps between the functional unit and the project were observed and the resources (time) allocated to this project challenged. The joint project therefore



recruited external experts (national and international) to support project management or to facilitate some training (UN Women). Some project components were outsourced by signing a memorandum of understanding with an organization (UN Women, Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI) and Search for Common Ground/Talking Drum Studio) to implement activities in the communities. UN Women and OHCHR staff and personnel in charge of managing the GRB/WPS Joint Project had senior-level expertise on WPS and the HRBA, which was an important factor in the success of the project and its achievements. The fact that UN Women and the OHCHR already collaborated with the PBF and operate in a very sensitive environment helped to identify and mitigate the high risks associated with the innovative dimensions of an intervention being implemented under COVID-19 measures. The risk analysis conducted as part of this project is provided in Annex 7 of this evaluation report.

The evaluation revealed that the functional structures of UN Women and the OHCHR did not create a platform to support consistent interaction, communication and coordination among the project team members and between the project structure and the functional units of

the two organizations. This would have helped to strengthen internal and external communication during the GRB/WPS Joint Project. There were also some important gaps and weaknesses in the project communication strategy, which was not aligned with the UN's 'Deliver as One' principles. In its *Guide to Communicating as One* (2014)<sup>31</sup> the United Nations underlines the importance of a joint communications strategy that includes shared messaging in support of the One Programme and the development of standard joint communication products, as well as shared crisis communications and an established common visual identity for joint UN products and communications.

The evaluation found that the communication materials produced by this joint intervention did not highlight the joint efforts of the UN entities involved.

In most of the project materials found in the communities during field visits, only one logo of the two UN entities involved was visible.

In the interviews, this project was often identified by the direct beneficiaries as an 'OHCHR' or a 'UN Women' intervention and not as a UN joint project (UN Women and OHCHR with PBF funding).

### **FINDING 5: The evaluation found concerning gaps in M&E that negatively affected the project's delivery in the communities and within the targeted peace hut and non-peace hut communities.**

The signed project document for this intervention indicated that UN Women and the OHCHR had overall responsibility for the management and monitoring mechanisms established at various levels by the joint project. UN Women had the lead on the coordination and M&E responsibilities to ensure the project's implementation. The project also had an M&E plan covering the year 2020–2021. The M&E plan was elaborated at the level of the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund and, for each PBF-supported project, it determines the extent to

which the indicators are expected to be tracked to measure results.

The project also initially planned that the Women, Youth, Peace and Security Working Group in West Africa and the Sahel and the working group in Liberia, a multi-stakeholder platform established in April 2009 by the MGCSP, would be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the NAP WPS and for supporting learning exchanges between Liberia and other countries to ensure the implementation of NAP WPS and this innovative initiative.

31 United Nations Development Group. 2014. *Guide to Communicating as One*. Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/Guide-to-Communicating-as-One-edited-1.pdf>.

Monitoring activities were also expected to be supported by WONGOSOL, an organization established in 1998 for coordinating the activities of women's organizations in Liberia, and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, an umbrella organization that works closely with grassroots organizations on peacebuilding-related issues.

Five per cent of the total budget was allocated by the donor (PBF) to the implementation of the M&E framework and plan developed by this project. However, the evaluation found that M&E activities suffered from the turnover of M&E staff in the two UN agencies involved.

**At the UN Women level,** the international UNV in charge of M&E within the agency resigned in 2020. An M&E assistant joined in 2021 to support the agency's work on M&E but he was not recruited for or by this specific joint project.

So, this project was implemented without an M&E staff member, and the project management staff supported some M&E activities to a limited extent to fill the gaps until someone was recruited by UN Women in May 2022, during this evaluation. The evaluation found that the efforts of the project management staff were not sufficient to achieve the expected good quality of M&E work, particularly in relation to the complexity of fulfilling M&E requirements during a time of COVID-19 measures and in a dynamic situation, when access to some communities and counties was limited, and given the large number of stakeholders involved (21 strategic implementing partners and beneficiaries).

**At the OHCHR level,** the evaluation also noted a lack of M&E staff. The acting OHCHR M&E officer

left during the project's implementation because her contract ended in July 2020 and was replaced by an OHCHR human rights officer who served as the acting M&E focal person. At the time of this evaluation, the OHCHR was seeking funding to hire a full-time M&E officer to replace the former M&E officer.

The turnover of M&E staff within the two UN agencies affected the quality of the monitoring of project activities. In this regard, the evaluation noted that a limited number of joint monitoring activities, particularly joint field visits to the communities, were only organized at the end of the project's implementation. The OHCHR conducted two monitoring visits in Nimba and one in Bassa during the entire duration of the project. There is no evidence of monitoring visits by UN Women staff to the communities during the project's implementation. A joint monitoring mission comprising all project implementing partners, including UN Women, OHCHR, FCI, and Talking Drum Studio, was conducted in the two counties and two visits had been made by the end of the project. Because of the fragile and inconsistent monitoring of this GRB/WPS Joint Project, some planned activities in the peace huts were not implemented. With the limited M&E activities, the evaluation found, for example, that funds allocated to peace huts in Little Bassa and Edina for economic empowerment and VSLA activities (US\$3,000 each) were used to build new peace huts instead of being invested in socioeconomic activities for women badly affected by the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 restrictions and constraints.

**FINDING 6: This evaluation included an assessment of value for money that examined the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of this PBF-funded intervention. The evaluation found that this GRB/WPS Joint Project was very innovative in the context of Liberia and that its main focus on strengthening the capacity of GOL structures, CSOs and the peace huts in GRB, innovative financing, and the NAP WPS was effective.**

This evaluation conducted a value-for-money assessment that examined the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of this intervention. The economy, effectiveness and efficiency (3Es) and cost-effectiveness framework were applied.

The PBF funded this intervention on GRB and innovative financing to support the implementation of the NAP WPS (2019–2023). The evaluation found that this joint project was very innovative in the context of Liberia and that its main focus was on strengthening the capacity

of GOL structures, CSOs and the peace huts on GRB, innovative financing, and the NAP WPS.

Evidence shows that this intervention was also very effective in supporting the innovative activities and approaches of this GRB/WPS Joint Project, which would not have been feasible with regular budget funding for the advancement of the WPS agenda alone.

The use of innovative methods in this project and the main results achieved on the use of GRB and innovative financing has helped the PBF to fulfil its mandate for funding catalytic programmes.

There were no delays in the disbursements of funds from the PBF to the implementing agencies (UN Women and OHCHR), but some delays of up to four months in the disbursement of funds from UN Women to the implementing partner in the communities, including the peace huts involved were reported. The main reasons given were linked to UN Women internal procedures and the COVID-19 restrictions, which limited some operations. As a consequence, there were some delays in implementing some activities in the communities according to plan and in a timely manner. Some activities of peace huts involved in agriculture were delayed and women reported some loss of goods that had been produced late and then not sold (wasted).

This coupled with some COVID-19 restrictions was a challenge for the timeliness of the project's delivery. A no-cost extension was requested by the implementing agencies and granted by the donor to ensure the full implementation of the planned activities.

**Economy:** The evaluation reviewed all the various components and the costs of the project's implementation. The total project expenditure was US\$1,500,000.00. The cost data were based on project accounting records provided by UN Women. When data were not clear, the evaluation team liaised with the finance manager to obtain more detail. The intervention put a high level of focus on capacity-building and developing GOL structures and representatives of the CSOs and peace huts. The cost of training included the component costs of training manuals, venues, equipment and travel for national and international facilitators. The most cost-intensive part of the expenditure (from UN Women's budget) was costs relating to transfers and grants to counterparts at US\$600,000.00 (UN Women signed a memorandum of understanding with FCI and Common Ground to implement awareness-raising activities in the targeted counties and communities). This represents 40 per cent of the total budget. It was followed by staff and contractual services (staff, national and international facilitators and





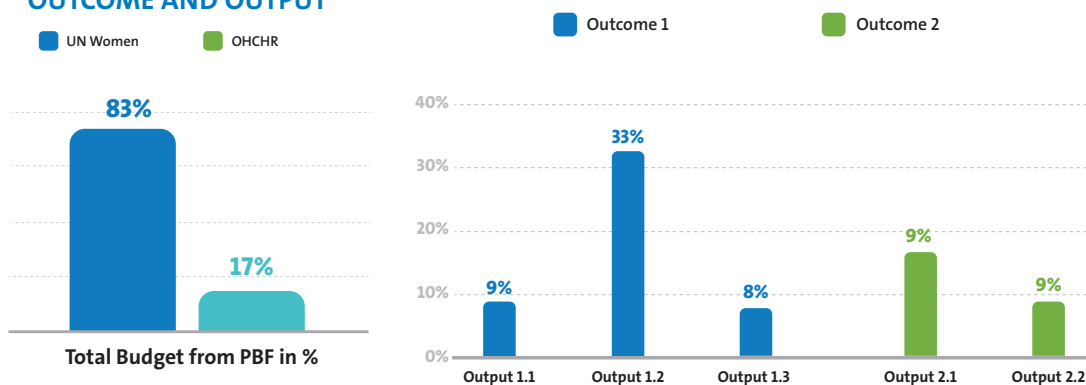
experts to support the project's implementation) US\$598,677.50, which represents 39.9 per cent of the total budget.

**Efficiency:** The project met its target of training and capacitating 640 civil servants identified as focal points from line ministries and agencies, members of women's organizations, the 1325 Taskforce and peace huts, and direct beneficiaries on GRB and innovative financing, WPS, HRBA, and monitoring and reporting (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UNCRPD) by the end of the implementation. Training costs, including manuals, capacity assessment, learning exchanges, tools and strategies developed, venues, equipment and travel for national and international facilitators, were US\$873,477. Each participant was trained and capacitated for approximately US\$76 per month or US\$1,365 per participant for the 18-month project. This is good given the innovative approaches and methods on GRB and innovative financing used by this project and the costs of recruiting national and international facilitators to support the project's implementation. The evaluation also found that working closely with the targeted line ministries at national and county levels ensured that the appropriate staff from the GOL were capacitated and that efforts and resources were not duplicated.

**Effectiveness:** A cost-effectiveness analysis was used to compare costs and benefits at baseline and follow-up. The overall value-for-money assessment revealed that the training was conducted in two counties that served as pilot areas for the implementation of GRB and

innovative financing to localize and implement the NAP 1325 in Liberia. The selected counties (Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa) and communities are areas with the greatest need for implementing WPS measures compared with other counties. Montserrado is the smallest at 737 square miles (1,909 km<sup>2</sup>) but is by far the most populous county in Liberia (population 1,118,241, or 32.2% of the national total), followed by Nimba (462,026), and Grand Bassa (221,693), which is ranked the fifth the most populous county after Bong and Lofa. The counties targeted in this project (Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa) are among the six most populous counties (Montserrado, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Bong, Lofa and Margibi), that comprises 44 per cent of Liberia's land area but contain 75.4 per cent of the total national population. The three most populous counties (Montserrado, Nimba and Bong) are home to 55 per cent of the national population affected by socioeconomic challenges such as a high rate of youth unemployment, insecurity, land conflicts and challenges in accessing justice. Moreover, harmful traditional practices such as early marriage are still carried out in Nimba and Grand Bassa. All these factors put these counties at risk of conflict. Therefore, implementing the project's activities on WPS and HRBA in these communities and actively strengthening the capacity of local government on GRB and innovative financing for the localization and implementation of the NAP 1325 was very meaningful. The evaluation also found that the innovative approach of this joint project on GRB and innovative financing contributed to preventing duplication.

**BUDGET DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN UN WOMEN AND THE OHCHR: PROJECT BUDGET PER OUTCOME AND OUTPUT**



## C. EFFECTIVENESS

*The extent to which the GRB/WPS Joint Project objectives were achieved and the interventions' success in producing the expected outputs and achieving milestones.*

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SCORE A. The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well and no changes were required.

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**FINDING 7: The evaluation found a very high satisfaction level among the stakeholders and implementing partners involved and a good satisfaction level among the direct beneficiaries regarding the project's achievement of the expected results.**

The aim of this GRB/WPS Joint Project was to enhance the allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the second NAP WPS (NAP 1325) through innovative financing and GRB. It also aimed to further strengthen the capacity of women's organizations and vulnerable groups to hold the government accountable.

The joint project was built around 2 outcomes, 5 outputs and 21 activities. Its implementation fully began in the third quarter following the ending of the state of emergency that had been imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 in July 2020.<sup>32</sup>

A six-month delay in the project's implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and some internal issues linked to the project procedures were noted. A no-cost extension was requested by UN Women and the OHCHR and granted by the donor (PBF) to ensure the full implementation of the project's activities.

**The evaluation found that outcome 1 (Targeted line ministries,<sup>33</sup> government agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities) was partially achieved. The three outputs under outcome 1 were fully achieved. The delivery rate was 100 per cent.**

**Outcome 1** intended to ensure that at least two-line ministries and government agencies (Ministry of Justice, MFDP, MGCSP, Ministry of Internal Affairs, LNP, government agencies and local government) allocate financial resources to implement the NAP WPS in a more effective manner through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities. Out of the line ministries targeted by this joint project, the evaluation found that only the Ministry of Internal Affairs under its Gender Unit allocated US\$20,000 to gender-related activities for the year 2021/2022. It was reported that the gender-related activities also cover NAP 1325-related activities. **Outcome 1** also planned to ensure that at least US\$50,000 was allocated in the 2021/2022 budget cycle by the government for the implementation of the NAP 1325. In this regard, the GRB/WPS Joint Project, through capacity-building and development on the implementation of the NAP 1325 and innovative financing, developed in April 2021 a toolkit on GRPB to support CSOs and government agencies to influence the budget cycle and to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the implementation of the second NAP WPS, which contributed to the observed increase in the allocation of gender budget/resources by the GOL from US\$200,000.00 to US\$300,000.00 in the 2021 and 2022 national fiscal budgets. This budget was reported to contribute to a certain extent to the implementation of some NAP WPS activities. Under **outcome 1**, the GRB/

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32 Final report of the GRB/WPS Joint Project (27 May 2021).

33 Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Liberian National Police.

WPS Joint Project also committed to support the development of at least two innovative financing mechanisms at national level to support the mobilizing of financial resources by 2021. The evaluation found that the joint project successfully developed an innovative financing strategy, including an implementation plan and Innovative Financing Fund for Liberia (IFFL), that was validated by the government in August 2021.

The joint project managed to develop a resource mobilization framework through five instruments: Diaspora Bonds (DBL); Innovative Matching Funds (IFMF); Air Ticket Levy (ATL); Extractive Industries Solidarity Contribution (EISC); and Crowdfunding for Liberia (CFL). These instruments are not yet being effectively used to secure the mobilization of resources needed to support the implementation of the WPS agenda and the NAP 1325 in Liberia.

Various project documents on GRB that were reviewed and the report on capacity-building on innovative financing and GRB<sup>34</sup> demonstrated that an estimated US\$54 million (discounted value) is planned to be mobilized from 2022 over a 10-year period to finance NAP projects and activities. The NAP WPS was costed at US\$28 million. The revenues mobilized through the innovative financing strategy are expected to finance the full costs of the NAP WPS, providing a revolving fund to ensure the sustainability of the NAP and new projects.

The financial instruments included in the innovative financing strategy portfolio were contextualized for Liberia and selected based on two criteria (potential for sustainable resource mobilization and feasibility in the current legal, socioeconomic and political context).

As far as the potential for sustainable resource mobilization is concerned, the total cost of the NAP WPS (2019–2023) was estimated at US\$28,215,000. In the context of tight fiscal conditions and the growing need for finance, aggravated by the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, the portfolio was designed in such a

way that it could be enriched with financial instruments with high potential in terms of the volume of resources to be mobilized.

Regarding the feasibility in the current legal, socioeconomic and political context, the innovative financing strategy involves several stakeholders. For some instruments, a new law is needed to create a secure framework for investors. A very strong political will is therefore required to support this process. Without this, the innovative financing strategy and IFFL cannot be implemented, as the validated innovative financing strategy and its implementation must now go through the legislature before it can take effect.

**At output level, output 1.1 under outcome 1 (Targeted government actors at national and local levels are aware of and have the capacity to implement the NAP WPS) was fully achieved.**

The project successfully implemented various capacity-building and development activities, which are highlighted in the results framework assessment matrix in Annex 13 of this report. The activities implemented directly contributed to enhancing the capacity of the targeted women's organizations and networks (WONGOSOL) for monitoring the implementation of the NAP WPS at national level. An assessment of the knowledge gap on gender, masculinities, human rights standards, HRBA and the NAP WPS was conducted, and the findings discussed and validated on 12 March 2021 in Monrovia. A capacity-building plan was then designed to address the gaps identified, and 1325 Taskforce members<sup>35</sup> (officials, private sector and peace hut women) were trained on the NAP WPS and HRBA.

In addition, the GRB/WPS Joint Project also effectively addressed the toxic masculinity in the targeted communities that was identified in the baseline study conducted in 2019 as a factor hindering the advancement of the WPS agenda at national and county levels. The project successfully involved men at community level and undertook specific activities with them

34 2021, p. 11

35 The evaluation found that the 1325 Taskforce members comprise about 15 members in Nimba and 14 in Grand Bassa (based on the interview with coordination members).

on toxic masculinity and how masculinity can be transformed to achieve peace. In Tiapa, for example, some men joined the peace huts and are providing them with support when needed. They are also the ones raising awareness in male-dominated gatherings and traditional networks for women's rights and prevention of SGBV.

Finally, this project also successfully managed under **output 1.1** to conduct at national level a capacity assessment to support the targeted ministries, agencies and women's rights organizations in developing the innovative financing strategy for the implementation of the NAP WPS.

**Output 1.2 (Government actors and women's organizations have strengthened capacity on innovative financing and GRB, to ensure increased allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the NAP WPS) was fully achieved.**

This project planned to support integrating the design of additional interventions on the economic empowerment of women into the resource's mobilization strategy for involved stakeholders (GOL and CSOs). The evaluation found in line with this point that some relevant partners (FCI for community-based intervention) and the MGCSP (at national level) were both actively supported in designing interventions to mobilize further resources planned for the peacebuilding activities of the second NAP WPS (2019–2023) namely 'Women's economic empowerment and Campaign to end violence against women and girls to be promoted by Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI)' and 'Women's Entrepreneurship and Financial Inclusion in Liberia (WEFIL) to be promoted by Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MGCSP)'.

The designed interventions that are under the responsibilities of FCI and the MGCSP are not only documents but important tools to support their efforts in mobilizing additional funds for further interventions to support the implementation of the WPS agenda in Liberia.

**Output 1.3 (Targeted government institutions have access to relevant coordination, monitoring and reporting tools and the capacity to use them) was fully achieved.**

This GRB/WPS Joint Project managed to build good monitoring, reporting and coordination mechanisms to strengthen the accountability of the NAP WPS. The evaluation found, for example, that this joint project developed on 8 March 2021 a monitoring, evaluation and learning system, an M&E Framework and a capacity-building plan for the implementation and coordination of Liberia's NAP WPS (2019–2023). Reporting templates on performance and indicators were also developed by the project on 20 January 2021. Various training sessions on results-based management (NAP WPS) and gender-responsive monitoring and reporting (NAP WPS) were also organized, as well as a CEDAW shadow report writing training workshop (NAP WPS) organized in Ganta, Nimba County, on 20 August 2021.

As for results, the evaluation found that the shadow report of Liberia's CSO platform for the ninth periodic report of the Liberia Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women was produced to support evidence-based advocacy and periodic reporting on CEDAW at international level. The shadow report was validated by members of CSOs, representatives from government ministries including Ministry of Justice, MGCSP, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, INCHR and the Legislative Human Rights Association of the national legislature. The validation was held on 27 May 2021 in Ganta, Nimba County.

**The evaluation found that outcome 2 (More women, including marginalized women, in targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding-related activities of the NAP WPS) was partially achieved. The two outputs under this outcome were fully achieved. The delivery rate was 100 per cent.**

The GRB/WPS Joint Project planned to support 2 out of the 15 counties in Liberia (Grand Bassa and Nimba) in integrating peacebuilding activities from the NAP WPS into local plans and budgets. The evaluation found that capacity-building



activities on WPS and GRB were effectively conducted with the officials in the targeted counties. The evaluation noted some progress in this regard. It was reported that the 1325 Taskforce established in February 2022 in Grand Bassa is actively implementing awareness-raising activities on WPS in Buchanan.<sup>36</sup> The development of a costed local plan has not yet been initiated. This was also the case in Nimba, where the 1325 Taskforce established in August 2021 was facing challenges in localizing the costed NAP 1325.

The GRB/WPS Joint Project also planned to ensure the active participation of at least 25 (marginalized) women from the targeted counties (Grand Bassa and Nimba) in local sittings/meetings. The evaluation found in this regard that both peace hut and non-peace hut women were capacitated through various activities on WPS and HRBA. As a result, some changes in their perception and roles and responsibilities in implementing the national agenda on UNSCR 1325 at community level were observed. The evaluation also observed a good level of confidence among women in speaking up about SGBV in the presence of men without fear or feeling intimidated. The GRB/WPS Joint Project hired a consultant who conducted training in Grand Bassa and Nimba on GRB with the peace hut women. The training was conducted for three days in July and September

2021 and provided women with the skills to mobilize additional resources for their own activities on peacebuilding in the community. FCI worked directly with peace hut and non-peace hut women on WPS-related issues and economic empowerment in line with the pillar on relief and recovery of UNSCR 1325.

In the two targeted counties, some peace hut women were invited to join some local sittings organized by the 1325 Taskforce aiming to discuss WPS-related issues at county and community levels, but this was not consistent enough to influence any peace- and security processes in the county or communities. In Nimba, for example, it was reported that peace hut women had attended a total of two 1325 Taskforce coordination meetings since its establishment in 2021. In Grand Bassa, the evaluation noted the absence of the peace hut women in meetings but included their membership in the 1325 Taskforce.

Non-peace hut women in Nimba did not attend local sittings/meetings on WPS and HRBA as initially planned. The 1325 Taskforces in both counties lack the resources to involve members in communities far from the county capitals where the meetings are hosted.

In the national fiscal budget, the government allocates US\$200,000 to every county of Liberia for development. In addition, the counties

36 Buchanan, also previously shown as Grand Bassa on some maps, is the third largest city in Liberia.

generate resources from private sector operations. To manage these funds and promote development in the counties, each county has an established county development committee responsible for driving development in the county. It organizes an annual county sitting for stakeholders to discuss and develop their county agenda. In both counties (Nimba and Bassa), it was reported that women are participating in the county sittings. However, women's participation has been mostly in attending the meetings, but their voices are not being considered in decision-making processes.

**At output level, output 2.1 (Women's organizations have strengthened their capacities to implement, monitor, report and promote evidence-based advocacy to ensure implementation of the NAP WPS) was fully achieved.**

The GRB/WPS Joint Project managed to strengthen the targeted state institutions and women's organizations to implement the NAP WPS in Grand Bassa and Nimba.

The evaluation found that various training sessions on M&E and reporting were conducted at county level. A few meaningful examples are the five-day mobile data collection training course (NAP WPS) conducted from 19 to 23 July 2021 in Buchanan City Hall (Grand Bassa County) with a total of 22 participants (6 women and 16 men), the CEDAW shadow report writing training workshop (NAP WPS) in Ganta (Nimba County) held on 20 August 2021, the training of trainers on GRB conducted for women's organizations and CSOs the peace huts in Nimba and Grand Bassa, and the training sessions on advocacy, WPS and HRBA with local authorities. As a result, the evaluation observed positive transformations in monitoring, reporting and evidence-based advocacy for implementing the NAP 1325. An advocacy tool, 'Effective and

Efficient Advocacy. A tool for engagement with partners on ensuring the implementation of the WPS NAP', was also produced to support further evidence-based advocacy on implementing the NAP 1325 in Liberia as well as a manual on training of trainers in GRPB to address the capacity deficit in mainstreaming GRPB into national budget processes. However, at district level, the evaluation found a concerning gap in strengthening the capacity for monitoring the implementation of the NAP 1325. The GRB/WPS Joint Project did not implement capacity-building activities in districts, and the government representatives in the districts (in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties) interviewed during the data collection phase of the evaluation were not at all informed about the NAP 1325, its monitoring mechanisms or this project.

**Output 2.2 (Men, boys and local leaders are aware of and understand the rights of women, including marginalized women, to participate in public and peacebuilding processes) was fully achieved.**

The GRB/WPS Joint Project successfully managed to address in only a limited audience prevailing sociocultural and traditional norms and perceptions preventing women from participating in peace- and security-related activities, interventions and discussions. The project conducted a perception assessment and a gender and power analysis as planned to identify the main challenges, which were addressed by various awareness-raising activities involving men. In addition, awareness-raising activities and a performing art with the title 'Drama MenEngaged', written and produced by Talking Drum Studio, were implemented to support women's rights and shift perceptions around gender stereotypes in Grand Bassa and Nimba Counties in September and October 2021.

## REVIEW OF OUTCOME INDICATORS FOR THE GRB/WPS JOINT PROJECT ORGANIZED BY UN WOMEN AND THE OHCHR

**OUTCOME 1: Targeted line ministries (Ministry of Justice, MFDP, MGCSP, Ministry of Internal Affairs, LNP), government agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities.**

**Outcome indicator 1a.** Number of line ministries and government agencies that allocate resources to the implementation of the NAP WPS.

Baseline: One ministry – Ministry of Justice (2019)

Target 2021: At least two additional ministries

### **FINDINGS:**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs under its Gender Unit allocated US\$20,000 to gender-related activities for the year 2021/2022. This is the very first time. The gender-related activities also cover NAP 1325-related activities.

**Target partially achieved (50%):** One additional line ministry allocated resources through its gender budget for the implementation of NAP WPS activities.

**Outcome indicator 1b.** Amount of resources allocated by the government for the implementation of the NAP WPS.

Baseline: US\$16,000 (2019)

Target: At least US\$50,000 (2021/2022 budget cycle)

### **FINDINGS:**

The evaluation found an increased in the gender budget/resources from US\$200,000.00 to US\$300,000.00 in the 2021 and 2022 national fiscal budgets. This is planned be used to implement some NAP WPS activities.

**Target achieved (100%)**

**Outcome indicator 1c.** Number of innovative financing mechanisms developed nationally and starting to mobilize resources.

Baseline 2019: None

Target 2021: At least two

### **FINDINGS:**

The evaluation found that this joint project developed an innovative financing strategy, including an implementation plan and IFFL, that was validated by the GOL in August 2021. Now this must go through the legislature in order to become operational and effective.

**Target partially achieved (50%)**

**OUTCOME 2: More women, including marginalized women, in targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding-related activities of the NAP WPS**

**Outcome indicator 2a.** Number of targeted counties (Grand Bassa and Nimba) that integrate peacebuilding activities from the NAP WPS into local plans and budgets.

Baseline: None

Target: At least two counties

**FINDINGS:**

Capacity-building activities on the NAP WPS and GRB were conducted with officials in the targeted counties. The evaluation noted some transformation in this regard, and it was further reported that the 1325 Taskforce in Grand Bassa is now implementing awareness-raising activities in Buchanan. In Nimba, the 1325 Taskforce is in the process of beginning to work on their local plans. However, the NAP 1325 and budgets were not localized in this joint project.

**Target partially achieved. Process initiated is still ongoing**

**Outcome indicator 2b.** Number of women, including marginalized women, in targeted counties (Grand Bassa and Nimba), that participate in local sittings.

Baseline: None

Target: At least 25 by the end of the project

**FINDINGS:**

Peace hut and non-peace hut women were capacitated through various activities on WPS and HRBA. In the targeted counties, some peace hut women were invited to join some sittings, but this was not consistent. At 1325 Taskforce level, women are actively participating in meetings. In Nimba County, it was reported that peace hut women had attended a total of two 1325 Taskforce coordination meetings since its establishment. In Grand Bassa County, the evaluation noted the absence of peace hut women in 1325 Taskforce meetings but included their participation as members. It was reported that women are attending county meetings but have no voice to influence decision-making, particularly in relation to addressing gender issues.

**Target partially achieved as follows:**

- Regarding the active participation of women as 1325 Taskforce members in the meetings/sittings: **100% achieved.**
- Regarding the active participation of marginalized women and peace hut women in the sittings/meetings: in Nimba out of the three 1325 Taskforce meetings, women joined two meetings: **67% achieved.**
- Regarding women's participation (in Nimba and Bassa) at county sittings to discuss and develop the county development agendas: **50% achieved.**
- In Buchanan, marginalized women and peace hut women did not take an active part in the sittings/meetings: **0%.**



**FINDING 8: The evaluation observed limited coordination among stakeholders at government level. Some ministries and stakeholders were unaware of their specific roles and responsibilities in the coordination mechanisms established by this GRB/WPS Joint Project. At county level, some weaknesses and gaps were also observed.**

The GRB/WPS Joint Project had a project management board composed of the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, representatives of the CSOs involved, and UN Women and OHCHR representatives, to represent the project on the Peacebuilding Fund Steering Committee.

**At government level**, according to the project document, the MGCSP should have been in charge of ensuring the overall coordination, monitoring and implementation of the second NAP WPS and was expected to be responsible for the management and coordination of innovative financing initiatives in the country. The MFDP was expected to take the lead in promoting GRB and in coordinating innovative finance-related activities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was expected to have responsibility for the oversight of county administration. The evaluation found that the roles and responsibilities stipulated in the project document were not clear to all the stakeholders involved in the GRB/WPS Joint Project. While the MGCSP confirmed its joint coordination role on GRB and WPS with the MFDP, the MFDP mentioned that its role within this joint project was limited to consultation and attending some activities on GRB as a beneficiary. Moreover, the evaluation found that the GRB Unit of the MFDP is implementing GRB activities under the Spotlight Programme and was not actively part of the coordination and implementation of this joint project that focused on GRB and innovative financing.

Regarding innovative financing, the MFDP and other targeted stakeholders were actively involved in various consultative activities that led to the development of an innovative financing strategy and IFFL. Throughout the process of designing an innovative financing strategy on WPS, the Ministry provided insight and guidance on the process, which was led/facilitated by a senior international consultant hired by UN Women, who worked in Liberia and remotely in 2020–2021. However, regarding GRB activities,

the evaluation found that the MFDP played a very limited role in this joint project. While the MGCSP confirmed its joint coordination role on GRB and WPS with the MFDP, the MFDP mentioned that its role within this joint project was limited to consultations and attending some activities on GRB as a beneficiary. During the in-depth interviews with the stakeholders involved, the evaluation noted that the MFDP, which was expected to be the main lead partner for the implementation of GRB and innovative finance activities, as well as the advocate for the validated innovative financing strategy and plan, was not at all aware of its roles and responsibilities within this GRB/WPS Joint Project. The MFDP sees the MGCSP as leading on GRB, while the MGCSP sees it the other way around. In addition, within the MFDP, the departments responsible for GRPB and revenue and taxes are unfamiliar with each other's roles. These misunderstandings were identified as limiting the efforts of stakeholders in promoting GRB and innovative financing within the framework of this joint project.

The evaluation also found that the GRB Unit of the MFDP is implementing activities in GRB under the Spotlight Programme led by UN Women in Liberia and was not at all part of the coordination of this joint project. Finally, there were no synergies built between the coordination mechanisms established by this GRB/WPS Joint Project and the existing GRB Coordination Technical Group hosted at the MFDP with line/targeted ministries acting as members.

**At county level**, the establishment of the 1325 Taskforce at the end of this project in the targeted counties (Nimba in August 2021 and Grand Bassa in February 2022) following various training sessions for its members on WPS, HRBA and GRB enabled the 1325 Taskforce members to attend both Nimba and Grand Bassa coordination meetings on a monthly basis.

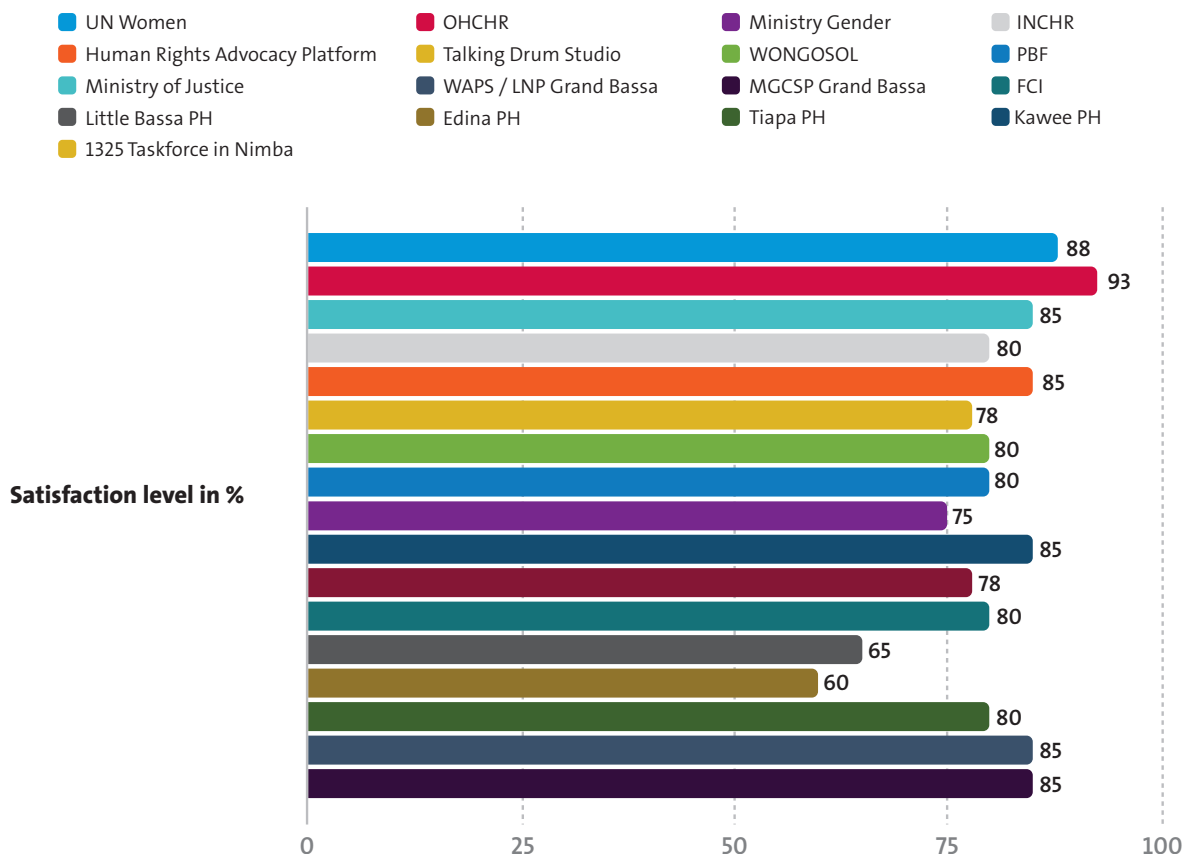
In Nimba, the 1325 Taskforce comprises county rural women, peace hut women, and representatives of the MGCSP, Ministry of Youth

and Sports, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, MFDP, Ministry of Justice and the Security Council (due to the absence of the Ministry of Defense in the county) and the LNP. The 1325 Taskforce also includes representatives of the private sector, comprising Acelor Mittal and Nimba Rubber Corporation. They meet once a month. During the monthly meetings, members of the taskforce bring their reports for review and discussion. Each member provides an update on activities implemented under the NAP 1325 and challenges to be addressed. In Grand Bassa and Nimba, training on the WPS agenda in December 2021 and January 2022 included CSO, CBOs, and community leaders. The training focused on the development of a structure at the county level for coordinating the implementation of the NAP. In February 2022, the 1325 Taskforce was set up. The

Taskforce is chaired by the MGCS and co-chaired by the Bassa Women’s Development Association and LNP. Other members include the Office of the Development Superintendent, a project coordinator from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and a marketing association.

**At UN level,** the evaluation found that monthly coordination and technical meetings (in-person and then online because of COVID-19 mobility restrictions) were organized with UN Women, the OHCHR and the donor (PBF). These meetings aimed to discuss the project’s progress and any mitigation strategies required. These meetings supported the coordination of the GRB/WPS Joint Project and contributed to the observed good delivery rate of this intervention.

### STAKEHOLDERS’ AND BENEFICIARIES’ SATISFACTION LEVELS WITH THE GRB/WPS JOINT PROJECT IN LIBERIA



Note: PH, peace hut.

## D. SUSTAINABILITY

*The likelihood of the project's results continuing after the project is completed.*

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SCORE B. The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well but some changes were required.

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### **FINDING 9: The evaluation found good elements of sustainability in this GRB/WPS Joint Project that must be further enhanced.**

At a normative level, the evaluation found that the GRB/WPS Joint Project collaborated closely with the government to allocate budget to addressing gender issues. This has led to a reported increase in the gender budget from US\$200,000.00 to US\$300,000.00 in the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 national fiscal budgets. Moreover, the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs allocated for the first time US\$20,000 for gender-related activities for the budget year 2021/2022. The gender-related activities are also reportedly planned to cover some of the NAP 1325-related activities.

Within a short period of time (18 months), this GRB/WPS Joint Project successfully developed an innovative financing strategy and implementation plan as well as an IFFL, which were validated on 29 June 2021 by the GOL. The strategy and plan must now go through the legislature in order to become operational and effective.

At capacity-building and development level, the project focused its main activities, namely enhancing the skills and knowledge of the targeted line ministries, CSOs, peace huts and 640 direct beneficiaries on WPS, HRBA, women's human rights commitments, GRB and innovative financing.

This strategy was to a certain extent successful, as the evaluation found evidence demonstrating the GOL's commitment to implementing GRB and innovative financing to a certain extent in Liberia for the advancement of the WPS agenda. In addition, the GOL is also making some efforts to implement the NAP 1325. According to some national 1325 Taskforce members, the government has shown some

level of commitment. In some public security institutions, women were given priority during recruitment processes. It was also reported that, during the recent Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) recruitment process, the Ministry of Defense organized a pre-recruitment exercise for women willing to enrol in the AFL. It was reported that the LNP gives women and men equal chances to enrol in the police force.

At the socioeconomic level, economic empowerment activities around VSLAs in Tiapa (Nimba) were successful. The evaluation found that, in Tiapa, women successfully managed to invest the funds allocated by this project to VSLA activities and these performed very well. The evaluation found, for example, that the peace hut managed to establish identity cards for its members with the interest generated from the funds allocated by this joint project. The peace hut also invested in a protection system for women and SGBV survivors from the communities. This contributed to enhancing their reporting system to local authorities. The women also generated income from their economic activities that is now helping to diversify their income-generating activities.

Non-peace hut activities in Nimba and peace hut activities in Grand Bassa (Little Bassa and Edina) did not perform well at the socioeconomic level. The evaluation identified a few weaknesses that challenged the economic sustainability of efforts made under this GRB/WPS Joint Project.

In Little Bassa, the US\$3,000 allocated to VSLAs was used as planned and generated interest that was invested by women in the construction of a new peace hut instead of being used for further activities within the peace hut to help women

were affected by the socioeconomic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. But the leadership of the peace hut decided without prior consultation with the project to use the interest generated to build a new peace hut, as the one built in 2011 is no longer functional. Consequently, the women now need additional funds to finalize the construction of their new peace hut. In Edina, the peace hut women invested all the funds allocated by the GRB/WPS Joint Project to VSLAs to build a new peace hut because the peace hut built in 2010 is no longer functional. Therefore,

there was no support for the economic activities of this peace hut, which has more than 200 members. This created frustration among some peace hut members, as their economic needs were not addressed by the project.

In Nimba, non-peace hut women combined their efforts in setting up a VSLA and invested the funds allocated by this project (US\$3,000) in farming. However, the lack of access to local markets adversely affected their economic activities and some goods were not sold and subsequently wasted.

## E. GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

*The extent to which the GRB/WPS Joint Project's activities were designed, implemented and monitored to promote human rights, gender equality, inclusion of disability and the meaningful political participation of women and to minimize the negative effects of social exclusion.*

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SCORE B. The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well but some changes were required.

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**FINDING 10: The evaluation found very good involvement of government institutions and women-led CSOs in the project's design and implementation. Young people also participated in some of the project's awareness-raising activities addressing gender stereotypes, power dynamics and toxic masculinity. However, at district levels, GOL structures and other relevant CSOs for the implementation of WPS initiatives were excluded.**

This GRB/WPS Joint Project applied a participatory approach that ensured the active involvement of relevant government institutions and women-led CSOs and CBOs, including peace hut women in Nimba and Grand Bassa. They were actively consulted at the design phase of this project in 2019 and provided insightful and meaningful input to the project's objectives and content.

**At the community level,** efforts were made to promote women's participation in local leadership. The evaluation found that some women are now serving as paramount, clan, sessional and town chiefs, which are positions traditionally reserved for men. They are now demanding shares and participating in discussions about land. Although these cannot be entirely credited to this project, it

provided training and raised awareness among women in the communities on women's participation in leadership.

As far as the involvement of **young people** is concerned, the evaluation noted that this project planned to collaborate with the Federation of Liberian Youth and expected to mobilize young people at community level. However, there is no evidence of their involvement in the project as planned. According to participants in focus group discussions, young people, particularly young men, and some elders were trained by Talking Drum Studio and participated only in awareness-raising activities on 'positive masculinity and gender awareness'. It is important to note that young people in Liberia are faced with numerous challenges, including limited education opportunities, unemployment and violence.

The youth employment rate is estimated at 35.1 per cent, which is of particular concern.<sup>37</sup> Because young people are mostly unemployed and involved in drug abuse, they are often used as vehicles for conflict. Actively involving them in WPS interventions would contribute to making significant progress in changing their attitudes.

**At district level**, the evaluation found concerning gaps. This GRB/WPS Joint Project failed to involve government officials and CSOs. District officials and CBOs proved to have no knowledge of the NAP 1325 and were not at all informed about the project and its objectives on GRB and innovative financing and accountability for the implementation of the WPS agenda. Some declared that they were not at all informed about the NAP 1325 and its structures at either national or county level and demonstrated very weak understanding and knowledge of the WPS agenda during the interviews.

**FINDING 11: The GRB/WPS Joint Project successfully addressed issues related to SGBV and harmful traditional practices in its activities, although this was not the main aim of the intervention.**

Although SGBV was not a focus of this GRB/WPS Joint Project, it was effectively considered and addressed during its implementation.

SGBV remains a serious challenge in Liberia and in the counties where this project was implemented. A UN Women Liberia evaluation report on SGBV (2020)<sup>38</sup> found that SGBV, especially rape, remains one of the most concerning human rights violations in the country. According to statistics provided by the MGCSP, the high prevalence of impunity in SGBV cases and the lack of access to initial services for SGBV, including medical and psychological services, and lack of access to adequate information on effectively reporting and handling cases are the main challenges in addressing SGBV and harmful traditional practices in the country. By addressing SGBV in its awareness-raising activities and some training sessions on WPS and the NAP 1325, in which SGBV referral pathways were presented to participants, the GRB/WPS Joint Project implemented some recommendations from the previous evaluation of the UN Joint Programme on preventing harmful traditional practices and SGBV in Liberia (2020) and contributed to the UN Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) and its Article 4-I, which calls upon the State to take measures to ensure that law enforcement officers and public officials responsible for implementing policies to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women and girls receive training to sensitize them to the needs of women.

Regarding harmful traditional practices, it was found that, in Grand Bassa and Nimba, women are now actively participating in community development but that some communities still face resistance from men who remain in control of decision-making at family and community levels. There is still an unequal power relationship between men and women in the communities visited, and interviews conducted with men who support the peace huts demonstrated, for example, the urgent need to further address gender stereotypes and unequal power relations that cause some household conflicts.

It was also observed that harmful traditional practices are still being carried out in Nimba and Grand Bassa. This and other factors, including poverty, early marriage and single parenting, affect women and limit girls' education in the project communities, especially in Grand Bassa.

37 Agency Social Protection Assessment Initiative. 2014. "Liberia Youth, Employment, Skills (YES) Project and Liberia Youth Employment Program (LYEP)." Country Pilot Report. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms\\_504717.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms_504717.pdf)

38 UN Women. 2022. "Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use – GATE System." Accessed 23 August 2022. <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?EvaluationId=11459>.

**FINDING 12: The GRB/WPS Joint Project failed to consistently involve people with disabilities at county and community levels. The evaluation did not find evidence of the active participation of women or men with disabilities in the various GRB, WPS and HRBA activities implemented by this joint project in the targeted counties and communities. Some training and information materials on the WPS agenda remain too complicated for people with disabilities and not relevant to their specific needs.**

The evaluation found that the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled in Liberia was involved in the project design, as recommended by the GOL in its efforts to improve the rights of people with disabilities through the implementation of the UNCRPD, which was signed and ratified by the government in 2012. The umbrella organization (National Union of Organizations of the Disabled) for people with disabilities was consulted during the project design and had input into the project document. Its representative participated in a training of trainers' event organized by this project. At the end of the training session, participants received certificates for participating and were certified to replicate the training for their respective members. After the training, according to key informants, the representative of the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled conducted three training sessions for some people with disabilities using the contents of the training of trainers.

The MGCSP was also very involved in the project's design and implementation. Involving the MGCSP means that the social protection of marginalized groups is considered. In 2016, the GOL added a social protection component to the MGCSP, tasking it with handling issues of disability along with the National Commission on Disability. Both institutions have received

financial support from the government to deal with the issues experienced by people with disabilities. However, even though the government is supporting people with disabilities through existing structures such as MGCSP and the National Commission on Disability, most of their challenges remain unaddressed, and some respondents to this evaluation had expected that this GRB/WPS Joint Project's interventions would improve the situation.

**This GRB/WPS Joint Project did not develop useful materials for people with disabilities.**

In interviews, it was stated that people with disabilities were unable to fully participate or contribute to the implementation of this joint project and felt excluded from its implementation. Despite efforts made to simplify the NAP WPS for ordinary citizens and some marginalized groups in the communities, so that they could understand and contribute to its implementation, it was reported that these materials were too 'sophisticated' for people with disabilities. Further documents reviewed also revealed that this GBR/WPS Joint Project did not conduct a vulnerability assessment for the most vulnerable group at risk of violence, discrimination and exclusion, namely people with disabilities. There was also no systematic plan involving this group at the national, sub-national or community level.

## Performance rating of the GRB/WPS Joint Project

CRITERIA AND KEY PARAMETERS	RATING	JUSTIFICATION
<b>Relevance</b>	<b>A</b>	<p><b>Design:</b> The joint project was informed by the lessons from the first NAP 1325 of Liberia, the recommendations from the previous PBF-funded project on WPS and the findings of various consultations with relevant stakeholders conducted in 2019 in the targeted counties. The project also actively involved the National Commission on Disability at the design stage to capture the needs and priorities of women and girls with disabilities in peace- and security-related issues. The design of the theory of change was also participative.</p> <p><b>Alignment</b> with global, African and national policies and protocols on the WPS agenda and the UNSDCF is strong.</p>
Project design	A	
Alignment with global, African and national policies and protocols on the WPS agenda	A	
Alignment with the UNSDCF 2020–2024)	A	
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>C</b>	<p>General <b>good value for money</b> for an innovative project implemented in a very challenging context that was also affected by COVID-19 constraints (2019–2021). However, <b>weak M&amp;E</b> coupled by some delays of up to four months in the disbursement of fund to the implementing partners in the communities, including the peace huts involved, was a challenge for the project's efficiency.</p>
Value for money	B	
Management efficiency	C	
M&E efficiency	C	
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>A</b>	<p>Very good <b>project delivery rate</b> at output level and good delivery rate at outcome level contributed to the very good results in terms of the project's effectiveness.</p>
Delivery rate	A	
Achieving stated outputs	A	
Achieving stated outcomes	B	
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>B</b>	<p><b>Development and validation of the innovative financing strategy and plan</b> by the GOL as well as observed <b>acquired skills and knowledge</b> of government officials and CSOs on WPS, HRBA and GRB and innovative financing contributed to the good results achieved on sustainability.</p>
GRB and innovative financing	B	
Capacity-building and development on WPS, HRBA and GRB and innovative financing	B	
<b>Gender equality and human rights</b>	<b>B</b>	<p><b>Relevant government institutions and women-led CSOs and communities</b> in Nimba and Grand Bassa relevant to implementing the NAP 1325 in Liberia were actively consulted and involved in the project cycle. <b>SGBV</b> was not the focus of this project but was successfully addressed during the implementation. However, <b>people with disabilities</b> were involved in the project design through consultations with an umbrella organization but were not systematically integrated into the project's implementation. The project failed to involve the relevant structures at district levels.</p>
Project inclusiveness	B	
People with disabilities' involvement in the project's design and implementation	B	



## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall GRB/WPS Score: B

### CONCLUSION 1 (based on findings 1, 3, 9, 11)

The GRB/WPS Joint Project was highly relevant and was fully in line with the national priorities in the areas of the WPS agenda/UNSCR 1325, CEDAW and other African and national policies and protocols on WPS, as well as UNSDCF (2020 and 2024).

It was informed by the lessons learned from Liberia's first NAP 1325 and by conclusions 2, 3, 5 and 7, as well as recommendation 2.1 on budget allocation for the implementation of the NAP 1325; recommendation 3.1 on further capacity-building on WPS; and recommendation 5.1 on enhancing VSLAs, provided by the evaluation of a previous PBF-funded project on WPS, 'Nothing for Us and Without Us', that was implemented by UN Women, IOM and UNDP (10 January 2018 to 8 July 2019). The evaluation also found that this joint project conducted a

baseline survey at an early design stage (2019) and that various consultations with 21 strategic stakeholders and implementing partners were conducted. The joint project also involved the National Commission on Disability in its design to capture the general needs and priorities of women and girls with disabilities in peace- and security-related issues. However, the estimated number of organizations working with people with disabilities is 46. Involving the umbrella organization (the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled) was not sufficient to understand the specific needs of people with disabilities in security- and justice-related issues and in effectively addressing them in the targeted counties and communities. The specific needs of people with disabilities were therefore not fully integrated or addressed by this project. There was no evidence of a vulnerability



assessment for the most at-risk group in Liberia and the targeted counties and communities.

## **CONCLUSION 2 (based on findings 4, 5 and 6)**

This GRB/WPS Joint Project was very innovative in the context of Liberia, and its main focus on strengthening the capacity of GOL structures, CSOs and the peace huts on GRB, innovative financing, WPS and the NAP 1325 was very effective. This innovative project generally gave good value for money, considering that it was implemented in a very challenging context

affected by COVID-19 constraints (2019–2021). However, the weak M&E, coupled by some challenges in ‘Delivering as One’ in the communities, and the reported delays (up to four months) in the disbursement of funds to the implementing partner in the communities, including to the peace huts involved, was a challenge for the project’s efficiency.

## **CONCLUSION 3 (based on findings 6, 7 and 8)**

The GRB/WPS Joint Project was built around 2 outcomes, 5 outputs and 21 activities. Its implementation began fully in the third quarter following the ending of the state of emergency that had been imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 in July 2020. Nevertheless, the evaluation found a very good satisfaction level in the parties and beneficiaries involved due to the very good delivery rate of the project at output level (100% of five outputs were achieved) and a good delivery rate at outcome level (50% of outcomes 1 and 2 achieved; one target in progress; one target 100% achieved and another 67% achieved).

The project also successfully developed an innovative financing strategy, including an implementation plan and IFFL, that

was validated by the GOL in August 2021. Prevailing sociocultural and traditional norms and perceptions preventing women from participating in peace- and security-related activities were also addressed. As a result, some changes in their perception and roles and responsibilities in implementing the national agenda on UNSCR1325 at community level were observed. The evaluation also observed a good level of confidence among women in speaking up about SGBV in the presence of men without fear or feeling intimidated.

This contributed to the very good results in terms of the project’s effectiveness. However, some challenges and gaps in coordination mechanisms at government and county levels were observed.

## **CONCLUSION 4 (based on finding 9)**

This GRB/WPS Joint Project achieved good sustainable results. At a normative level, the project closely collaborated with the government to allocate budget to address gender- and WPS-related issues. There was an increase in the gender budget from US\$200,000.00 to US\$300,000.00 in the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 national fiscal budgets, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs under its Gender Unit allocated for the first time US\$20,000 for gender and WPS activities for the budget year 2021/2022. This GRB/WPS Joint Project also successfully developed an innovative financing strategy and

implementation plan, as well as an IFFL, all of which were validated on 29 June 2021 by the GOL. The strategy and plan must now go through the legislative process in order to become operational and effective. There were also good results in capacity-building and development on WPS, HRBA, women’s human rights commitments, and GRB and innovative financing. However, there were some weaknesses observed at the economic level, and activities around VSLAs did not fully achieve the expected results in the communities.

## CONCLUSION 5 (based on findings 1, 3, 10, 11, 12)

Although SGBV was not the primary focus of this GRB/WPS Joint Project it was successfully addressed during the implementation phase. Young people and men were also included in some awareness-raising activities addressing the gender stereotypes, unfair power relation dynamics and toxic masculinity in the communities that are hindering the advancement of the WPS agenda in Liberia.

However, people with disabilities were not systematically involved in the implementation of the project's activities. At district level, relevant stakeholders and structures were excluded from the project's design and implementation. The evaluation found that they were not at all aware of the activities, content and objectives of the project. This challenged to some extent the inclusiveness and gender equality and human rights results of this project.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are formulated to address the issues and constraints identified in this assessment and to directly respond to key findings that emerged from the qualitative and quantitative analyses conducted during this evaluation. They were discussed during consultations with programme staff and partners and presented in the preliminary workshop held on 5 May 2022 in Monrovia.

CONCLUSION	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION(S)	PRIORITY
<p><b>Conclusion 1</b></p> <p><i>Based on findings 1, 10, 12</i></p>	<p><b>1.1</b> UN Women, OHCHR and the donor (PBF) should conduct a vulnerable and marginalized group assessment in the counties and communities targeted by WPS interventions. The findings should inform the design of an appropriate strategy and plan for marginalized and vulnerable groups that will inform further programming on how WPS projects will involve people with disabilities and marginalized women and men at various levels. Refer to available UN guidelines and examples at the following links:</p> <p><b>Vulnerable and Marginalized Group Framework guideline led by UN Women for inspiration:</b> <a href="https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2020/03/ap-COVID-19_Community-Engagement_130320.pdf">https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2020/03/ap-COVID-19_Community-Engagement_130320.pdf</a></p> <p><b>UN guidance on Leave No One Behind principles:</b> <a href="https://unsdg.un.org/resources/leaving-no-one-behind-unsdg-operational-guide-un-country-teams">https://unsdg.un.org/resources/leaving-no-one-behind-unsdg-operational-guide-un-country-teams</a></p>	<p>UN Women</p> <p>OHCHR</p> <p>MGCSP</p>	<p><b>Immediate</b></p>

CONCLUSION	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION(S)	PRIORITY
<b>Conclusion 2</b>  <i>Based on findings 4, 5 and 6</i>	<b>2.1</b> The PBF should ensure that each project funded has a clear communication strategy and plan in place in line with the recommendations of UN guidance on 'Communicating as One' (2014). In the guide, The United Nations underlines the importance of a joint communications strategy, which includes shared messaging in support of the One Programme and the development of standard joint communication products, as well as shared crisis communications and a common, established visual identity for joint UN products and communications.	Donor (PBF)	<b>Immediate</b>
	<b>2.2</b> Assess the knowledge and skills of the UN Women and OHCHR project in RBM and take action to strengthen their capacities through various actions, such as coaching, mentorship or additional training. In addition, UN Women and OHCHR should ensure that RBM is effectively applied in programming, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. All joint interventions must meet RBM requirements. This measure/action will be very helpful with regard to the observed turnover of M&E staff in the two implementing UN agencies.	UN Women / Regional Office  OHCHR	<b>Immediate</b>
<b>Conclusion 3</b>  <i>Based on findings 6, 7 and 8</i>	<b>3.1</b> Provide further support for the implementation of the innovative financing strategy and plan that was validated in 2021 by the GOL. Further support the capacity of GOL representatives and CSOs in other counties and communities on GRB/innovative financing and WPS/HRBA. Detailed recommendations on innovative financing and GRB are listed below.	UN Women  OHCHR  MFDP  MGCSP	<b>Mid-term</b>
	<b>3.2</b> Ensure that all WPS materials produced are accessible to all people with disabilities in the 15 counties and communities. Further disseminate the NAP 1325 in the counties and districts to ensure understanding and accountability at district and community levels.	UN Women	<b>Immediate</b>
<b>Conclusion 4</b>  <i>based on finding 9</i>	<b>4.1</b> In future intervention on WPS in the communities Peace Hut movement should be involved as partners rather than beneficiaries to implement WPS activities at community level. This will strengthen the capacity and position of the peace huts in the communities and will contribute to ensuring their economic sustainability.  Non-peace hut communities that are already organized around VSLAs must be further supported to become peace huts and more structured organizations.	UN Women  Donor (PBF)	<b>Mid-term</b>

## Detailed recommendations on innovative financing and GRB (conclusion 3)

### *Innovative financing*

**3.1.1** Advocate, mobilize and sensitize GOL and State agencies to implement the innovative financing strategy and its IFFL component. In particular, it will be essential to mobilize, sensitize, popularize and advocate the buy-in of the innovative financing strategy's target population, State agencies, Women Rural Organizations (WROs) and CSOs. An advocacy tool has been developed and should help to achieve this goal.

**3.1.2** Implement the main recommendations provided by the international expert after completion of its assignment on the implementation of the innovative financing strategy, IFFL, IFMF and CFL as indicated in the innovative financing strategy validated in June 2021 by the GOL.

### *Gender-responsive budgeting*

**3.1.3** UN Women, the OHCHR, the MGCSP and the MFDP must further strengthen the existing GRB coordination structure at the MFDP. At county level, a GRB technical group must be established to oversee GRB activities at county level.

**3.1.4** UN Women and the OHCHR must support the localization of the NAP 1325 in the targeted counties. At least 30 per cent of additional counties must be supported in designing their local action plan on UNSCR 1325, which will directly contribute to the NAP 1325. The local action plan on UNSCR 1325 must reflect the realities of, challenges for and to the WPS agenda in the counties, districts and communities

that differ from each other. Communities and districts must play a critical role in this process to ensure local ownership of the local action plans. A **bottom-up approach** is key here. The implementation of the WPS agenda must come from the community, district and county level up to national level.

**3.1.5** Further technical support must be provided to the targeted and pilot counties (30% of the counties are at high risk of conflict in Liberia). Ensure that the targeted counties have a costed local plan on UNSCR 1325 by 2023 and allocate at least 2 per cent of county budget to its implementation.

### *Capacity-building on innovative financing and gender-responsive budgeting*

**3.1.6** Innovative financing and GRB are new topics in Liberia. There is a need to further strengthen additional new CSOs, partners and GOL representatives.



## 7. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

### Elements of innovation and best practice of this GRB/WPS Joint Project

#### INNOVATION AND BEST PRACTICE

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##### **Linkages between WPS and HRBA in all capacity-building and development activities of the project**

The WPS agenda is often seen as a stand-alone instrument for women in peacebuilding with limited linkages to other human rights agendas and instruments such as CEDAW. This intervention successfully integrated an approach based on coherence between political and security measures, and development and human rights agendas, including gender equality and the rule of law. This is aligned to UNSCR 2122, which recognizes the importance of CEDAW and its optional protocol to the WPS agenda.

##### **Enhanced accountability mechanisms in the communities in localizing and implementing the NAP 1325**

Civil society and other relevant stakeholders play an important role in strengthening the accountability process on implementing the WPS agenda, including by increasing women's participation in peace dialogues and peacebuilding efforts and by allocating funds to support the implementation of the local and national actions plans on UNSCR 1325. By strengthening the capacity of key line ministries and the private sector (in Nimba, for example), as well as community-based structures such as peace huts, this project equipped them with the knowledge and tools to understand the accountability mechanisms to be adopted in ensuring the full implementation of the NAP 1325 in Liberia.

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## INNOVATION AND BEST PRACTICE

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### **GRB and innovative financing for the WPS agenda in Liberia**

Various NAP 1325 developed and adopted by UN Member States fail to mobilize and secure funds for full implementation. This was also the case of the previous first NAP WPS in Liberia.

The baseline survey on the GRP/WPS Joint Project found that, following the review and analysis of the national budgets for 2019/2020, it was established that there was no budget line related to the NAP WPS and that key output areas of the NAP WPS were also not funded under other activities. The national budget 2020/2021 also did not include a budget line for the implementation of the NAP WPS. Additionally, the objectives of the 2020/2021 budget does not include the NAP WPS as a policy instrument to be implemented but makes mention of other policy instruments such as the national social policy frameworks.

By strengthening the skills of line ministries on GRB and inclusive innovative financing and by developing an innovative financing strategy and plan that was validated by the GOL in 2021, this joint project provided a framework of the implementation of the national action plan on the WPS agenda.

Involving counties and communities in the process is very important and is linked to accountability efforts on advancing the WPS agenda made by this joint project.

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### **Involvement of private sector in the 1325 Taskforces in the counties: example of Nimba**

Under the relief and recovery pillar of the WPS agenda, socioeconomic empowerment is very critical. The joint project addressed this by providing funds to VSLAs in peace hut and non-peace hut communities to boost their economic activities that were affected by the COVID-19 constraints. Some challenges were raised by the beneficiaries, such as access to the labour market and diversification of their activities. In Nimba, the newly established 1325 Taskforce involved the private sector to address these issues. This is innovative and very relevant.

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