



## PBF PROJECT DOCUMENT

<b>Country:</b> Guinea-Bissau	
<b>Project Title:</b> Strengthening social cohesion in Guinea-Bissau by aligning and integrating religious schools with the national education system	
<b>Project Number from MPTF-O Gateway (if existing project):</b>	
<b>PBF project modality:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IRF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRF	<b>If funding is disbursed into a national or regional trust fund (instead of into individual recipient agency accounts):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Country Trust Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Trust Fund
<b>Name of Recipient Fund:</b>	
<b>List all direct project recipient organizations (starting with Convening Agency), followed by type of organization (UN, CSO etc.):</b> UNICEF, UNESCO	
<b>List additional implementing partners, specify the type of organization (Government, INGO, local CSO):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Investigation (MENESIC) (<i>Government</i>)</li> <li>Ministry of Women, Family and Social Solidarity (Institute of Women and Children (IMC)) (<i>Government</i>)</li> <li>Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (<i>Government</i>)</li> <li>The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) (<i>International Organization</i>)</li> <li>Association of Parents and Caregivers (APEE) (<i>National CSO</i>)</li> <li>Associação dos Amigos da Criança (AMIC) (<i>National CSO</i>)</li> <li>National Association of <i>Qur'anic</i> teachers</li> <li>InterPeace (<i>International NGO</i>)</li> <li>Voz di Paz (<i>National CSO</i>)</li> <li>ALANSAR (<i>National CSO</i>)</li> <li>Catholic Relief Services (<i>International NGO</i>)</li> </ul>	
<b>Project duration in months<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>:</b> 36 months	
<b>Geographic zones (within the country) for project implementation:</b> National, with a focus in SAB, Gabu and Bafata regions	
<b>Does the project fall under one or more of the specific PBF priority windows below:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Gender promotion initiative <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Youth promotion initiative <sup>4</sup> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transition from UN or regional peacekeeping or special political missions <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-border or regional project	

<sup>1</sup> Maximum project duration for IRF projects is 18 months, for PRF projects – 36 months.

<sup>2</sup> The official project start date will be the date of the first project budget transfer by MPTFO to the recipient organization(s), as per the MPTFO Gateway page.

<sup>3</sup> Check this box only if the project was approved under PBF's special call for proposals, the Gender Promotion Initiative

<sup>4</sup> Check this box only if the project was approved under PBF's special call for proposals, the Youth Promotion Initiative

**Total PBF approved project budget\* (by recipient organization):****UNICEF:** \$ 1,951,063**UNESCO:** \$ 548,937**Total:** \$ 2,500,000

*\*The overall approved budget and the release of the second and any subsequent tranche are conditional and subject to PBSO's approval and subject to availability of funds in the PBF account. For payment of second and subsequent tranches the Coordinating agency needs to demonstrate expenditure/commitment of at least 75% of the previous tranche and provision of any PBF reports due in the period elapsed.*

**Any other existing funding for the project (amount and source):****PBF 1<sup>st</sup> tranche (35%):**

UNICEF: \$ 682,872

UNESCO: \$ 192,128

**Total:** \$ 875,000**PBF 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche\* (35%):**

UNICEF: \$ 682,872

UNESCO: \$ 192,128

**Total:** \$ 875,000**PBF 3<sup>rd</sup> tranche\* (30%):**

UNICEF: \$ 585,319

UNESCO: \$ 164,681

**Total:** \$ 750,000**Provide a brief project description (describe the main project goal; do not list outcomes and outputs):**

This project will strengthen the Government of Guinea-Bissau's capacity to integrate private religious schools and informal Qur'anic centres into the formal education system, strengthening oversight of these learning spaces and providing children enrolled in religious education institutions with a common set of values, knowledge, and skills and promote their wellbeing and security.

The project aims to reduce the exclusion and “auto-exclusion” of religious groups from public education resources. While historically the horizontal social cohesion between different ethnic and religious communities in Guinea-Bissau has been remarkably strong, evidence suggests two trends threaten this cohesion. First, increasingly influential conservative religious practices are emerging in several communities; and second, the social contract between the state and the population with regards to the provision of quality education services, may be fraying. It is estimated that 109,000 children, or over 16% of the total, study in formal religious schools and/or informal religious learning spaces. Guinea-Bissau's educational system is poorly prepared to defend and strengthen the country's traditional multi- and inter-ethnic social cohesion. Due to a combination of cultural beliefs, Guinea-Bissau's weak institutional capacity, and the continued application of exclusionary colonial-era policies, many Bissau-Guineans choose – or are forced to choose – private and/or religious and confessional education for their children. Thus, in a context where the trend is towards more conservative, dogmatic, and monocultural religious practices, there is a risk that formal and non-formal religious education could mirror this conservative shift, depriving children and youth of the shared values and cross-cultural skills needed to consolidate peace and protect and strengthen horizontal social cohesion.

Therefore, the project goal is that the intervention will lead to increased social cohesion, a strengthened social contract, and increased positive peace.

**Summarize the in-country project consultation process prior to submission to PBSO, including with the PBF Steering Committee, civil society (including any women and youth organizations) and stakeholder communities (including women, youth and marginalized groups):**

The project document was developed through a comprehensive, multi-phased consultation process with participation and engagement from a wide range of stakeholders. In 2023 and 2024, consultations were held with the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Scientific Investigation (MENESIC) team, particularly with the National Institute for the Development of Education (INDE), the General Inspectorate for Education (IGE) and the General Directorate of Study, Planification and Evaluation of the Education System (DGEPASE). The aim was to gauge the government's interest in working to strengthen the integration of religious schools into the national system and to better align and articulate with existing

policies, priorities, and interventions, such as the Education Sector Plan 2017-2025 and the Basic Education Law (LBSE). The consultation has allowed us to better understand the Ministry of Education's links with the different type of religious schools and the extent to which supervision was possible in such schools.

Following these consultations and the government's endorsement of the concept, an initial round of bilateral meetings and focus-group discussions were held with other key government and civil society partners to develop the initial concept note. Two focus group discussions in September 2023 analysed the conflict and peacebuilding issues surrounding religious and confessional schools. The first discussions, with MENESIC, the National Association of Qur'anic teachers, the National Union of Imams, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IESCO), the Islamic non-governmental organization Al Ansar, noted that exclusion and auto-exclusion from education opportunities was creating social tension and many children studying in religious institutions were discriminated against and seen as illiterate, without the necessary skills that enable their access to resources for entrepreneurial initiatives and/or access to labor market. Additional discussions with the Institute of Women and Children (IMC), SINAPROF (the oldest and largest teacher's union in Guinea-Bissau), the National Association of Parents and Caregivers (ANPEE), the National Students Association (CONEGUIB) and the National Network of Youth Associations (RENAJ) noted that polarization has increased, and the lack of dialogue and engagement has reduced the effectiveness of previous attempts to adequately align religious and confessional schools with the national education architectures.

A follow-up project design workshop, organized in 2024 with the above partners and other organizations working on conflict and peacebuilding, such as Interpeace, *Voz di Paz*, the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations as well as the National Union of Imams, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and representatives from Islamic, Christian and confessional schools, endorsed the analysis that the exclusion of religious schools was a conflict trigger and a threat to peace and social cohesion and agreed on three appropriate, achievable outcome level objectives: better integration of private religious educational institutions into the formal national education system; strengthening education for peace and social cohesion; and improving the safety and quality of learning environments in Qur'anic centres.

All the organizations approached agreed that it is crucial to promote an inclusive dialogue, engaging different stakeholders in a comprehensive process of development of a national strategy to outline and guide the implementation of the integration process of the religious schools into the formal education system, including the important step of developing a risk assessment analysis. There is also a need to carefully cultivate confidence; the process of working with religious communities and educators to integrate the education system is not only a "technical" exercise, but also a "political" one. For example, in previous initiatives, there were no consultations or reflections on the role of Islamic and Arab schools in Guinea-Bissau, their history in the country and their role and relationship vis-a-vis Bissau-Guinean society. The limited dialogue between the state and stakeholders in Arab-Islamic education, particularly teachers' organizations in Qur'anic centres, hampered efforts to overcome prevailing prejudices and reservations on both sides. This national inclusive dialogue is needed to define the national strategy and to create an enabling environment to develop shared views and common understanding of the goals of integration process. The process should be therefore expanded to include all religious and confessional schools to ensure that all communities are consulted and feel heard.

UNICEF and UNESCO will continue to work with these stakeholders in the implementation of the project to ensure that it contributes to sustaining peace in Guinea-Bissau. The organization InterPeace has already expressed interest in collaborating in the implementation phase. The organization has experience in working in this thematic area, particularly with Islamic Education Structures. In Ivory Coast, the organization collaborated with UNICEF and EU, supporting participatory research on traditional *Qur'anic* schools and *talibé* children. Interpeace's experience in Ivory Coast provides a clear example of how participatory research can serve as both an intervention and a foundation for collaborative action. The research supported by UNICEF and the EU, not only illuminated the specificities of Quranic schools compared to other Islamic education structures but also influenced the Ivory Coast Ministry of Education's strategic approach to integrating students from these schools into the formal education system. This process transitioned from research to action, as Interpeace provided technical support to shape the National Strategy on Integration, an essential tool for implementing Ivory Coast's compulsory education law for children

aged 6 to 16. The organization continues to scale up its support, demonstrating the potential of participatory research to drive meaningful policy and systemic change<sup>5</sup>.

**Project Gender Marker score<sup>6</sup>: 2**

Specify % and \$ of total project budget allocated to activities in pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment:

35.44%, or USD 886,021, is allocated to activities in pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment.

**Briefly explain through which major intervention(s) the project will contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>7</sup>:**

The project aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by addressing barriers for religious schools to provide equal access to quality education and safe learning environments for girls and boys through a gender-sensitive situation analysis. The analysis will include: (i) the content of the curriculum; (ii) teaching and learning methodologies; (iii) teacher profile such as gender, background, education and training level, (iv) extra-curricular activities including those for girls and women; (v) school life and the participation of students, with particular attention to the equal involvement of girls and boys; and (vi) safety measures for both girls and boys within learning spaces and school infrastructure. These elements will provide a holistic understanding of the challenges and guide targeted interventions to promote inclusivity and equity.

The national dialogue process will include girls' and women's voices, ensuring that gender concerns are addressed in the framework for the integration of religious schools into the formal education system. It will also reflect on how working with boys in religious schools can improve girls' participation and inclusion. Minimum standards and a code of conduct will be developed with gender-sensitive provisions to ensure equal access for girls to quality formal education in *Qur'anic* centres. The construction of safe, accessible learning spaces will consider girls' needs, such as gender-based WASH facilities. Equipment, materials, and meals provided will support both boys and girls equitably.

**Project Risk Marker score<sup>8</sup>: 1**

Select PBF Focus Areas which best summarizes the focus of the project (*select ONLY one*)<sup>9</sup>: 3.2 Equitable

<sup>5</sup> For more details, see Helping re-shape national policy on Islamic Education Structures – Interpeace.

<sup>6</sup> Score 3 for projects that have gender equality as a principal objective and allocate at least 80% of the total project budget to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)

Score 2 for projects that have gender equality as a significant objective and allocate between 30 and 79% of the total project budget to GEWE

Score 1 for projects that contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly (less than 30% of the total budget for GEWE)

<sup>7</sup> Please consult the **PBF Guidance Note on Gender Marker Calculations and Gender-responsive Peacebuilding**

<sup>8</sup> Risk marker 0 = low risk to achieving outcomes

Risk marker 1 = medium risk to achieving outcomes

Risk marker 2 = high risk to achieving outcomes

<sup>9</sup> PBF Focus Areas are:

(1.1) SSR, (1.2) Rule of Law; (1.3) DDR; (1.4) Political Dialogue;

(2.1) National reconciliation; (2.2) Democratic Governance; (2.3) Conflict prevention/management;

(3.1) Employment; (3.2) Equitable access to social services

(4.1) Strengthening of essential national state capacity; (4.2) extension of state authority/local administration; (4.3) Governance of peacebuilding resources (including PBF Secretariats)

access to social services<sup>10</sup>

If applicable, **UNSDCF outcome(s)** to which the project contributes:

- Outcome 1: By 2026, people in Guinea Bissau enjoy improved democratic governance, peace and the rule of law and their basic needs are met;
- Outcome 3: By 2026, the population of Guinea Bissau, especially the most vulnerable, will have greater and equitable access to and use of essential quality social services, including in emergencies.

**Sustainable Development Goal(s) and Target(s)** to which the project contributes:

4 (education, including 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7)

5 (gender equality, including 5.3, 5.5)

10 (reduced inequalities)

16 (peace, justice and strong institutions, including 16.2 and 16.c)

<b>Type of submission:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>New project</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Project amendment</b>	<b>If it is a project amendment, select all changes that apply and provide a brief justification:</b>  <b>Extension of duration:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional duration in months (number of months and new end date): <b>Change of project outcome/ scope:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Change of budget allocation between outcomes or budget categories of more than 15%:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Additional PBF budget:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional amount by recipient organization: USD XXXXX  <b>Brief justification for amendment:</b>  <i>Note: If this is an amendment, show any changes to the project document in RED colour or in TRACKED CHANGES, ensuring a new result framework and budget tables are included with clearly visible changes. Any parts of the document which are not affected, should remain the same. New project signatures are required.</i>
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<sup>10</sup> **PBF Focus Areas** are:

(1.1) SSR, (1.2) Rule of Law; (1.3) DDR; (1.4) Political Dialogue;

(2.1) National reconciliation; (2.2) Democratic Governance; (2.3) Conflict prevention/management;

(3.1) Employment; (3.2) Equitable access to social services

(4.1) Strengthening of essential national state capacity; (4.2) extension of state authority/local administration; (4.3) Governance of peacebuilding resources (including PBF Secretariats)

## PROJECT SIGNATURES:

<p><b>Recipient Organization(s)<sup>11</sup></b></p> <p>Name of Representative: Moussa Kabore Signature: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Name of Agency: UNICEF Date &amp; Seal: 24-03-2025</p> <p><b>Recipient Organization(s)<sup>12</sup></b></p> <p>Name of Representative: Dimitri Sanga Signature: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Name of Agency: UNESCO Date &amp; Seal: 24-03-2025</p>	<p><b>Representative of National Authorities</b></p> <p>Herry Mané Signature: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Investigation</p> <p>Date &amp; Seal: 07.04.2025</p>
<p><b>Head of UN Country Team</b></p> <p>Genevieve Boutin Signature: [REDACTED]</p> <p>UN Resident Coordinator Date &amp; Seal: 24-03-2025</p>	<p><b>Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)</b></p> <p>Elizabeth Spehar Signature: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support Date &amp; Seal: 25 April 2025</p>

<sup>11</sup> Please include a separate signature block for each direct recipient organization under this project.

<sup>12</sup> Please include a separate signature block for each direct recipient organization under this project.

## **I. Peacebuilding Context and Rationale for PBF support (4 pages max)**

### **Peacebuilding Context**

Guinea-Bissau has a small but rapidly growing population, estimated at 2.2 million people in September 2024<sup>11</sup>. Over half (49 per cent) of the population are under 18 years of age and the proportion of population in the age between 0-34 years is 77 per cent<sup>12</sup>. In 2023, the country's human development index (HDI) was 0.483, a low score, ranking it 179<sup>th</sup> out of 191 countries assessed (UNDP, 2023-2024). Progress in the social sectors suffers from a constrained fiscal environment (World Bank Public Expenditure Review for Guinea-Bissau – 2022). Other analyses on national budgets conducted in 2023 reveal deficiencies in budgeting processes, impeding the functioning of institutions and service provision.

The education sector in Guinea-Bissau is beset by several challenges. In 2019, according to the most recent Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS-6), an estimated 27.7 percent of children (159,000 in total, including 81,530 girls) were out-of-school (UNICEF, 2021). Due to late entry, high rates of repetition, inadequate school infrastructure and shortages in the allocation of teachers to rural areas, Guinea-Bissau has a primary school completion rate of only 27 percent (25.1 per cent of girls). Put differently, almost 75 percent of girls in Guinea-Bissau will not complete grade 6; this is linked with high rates of forced marriage and teenage pregnancy, at 25.7 percent and 27 percent of girls respectively. The MICS data shows that due to cultural and socio-economic factors, girls have less access to education and drop out from school more frequently than boys. A report from the Global Partnership for Education in 2023 found that Guinea-Bissau has the lowest primary school completion rate in the world (GPE, 2023).

The country has been characterized by political instability since independence, negatively affecting the living conditions of its population. The political system's lack of accountability has contributed to failing and ineffective state institutions and social services, including in critical areas of health, education, and poverty reduction. This has accentuated multidimensional poverty, eroded social cohesion, increasing societal tensions and grievances with the government; in January and February 2024 several contentious student protests erupted in lower secondary and secondary schools in Bissau, Bafata, Tombali and Oio over school fees and what was seen as the replacement of school directors due to political violence. Given the challenges that characterize the Guinea-Bissau education sector it is not surprising that the social contract between the state of Guinea-Bissau and its citizens regarding the provision of education is fraying. Evidence suggests that confidence in the public education system is low and rapidly declining, leading to an influx of children attending secular and religious private and community schools. According to the 2014-2015 statistical yearbook, which is the most recent official data available for Guinea-Bissau, there were 804 private and community schools in the country, serving about 108,000 students. In contrast, provisional school mapping data collected by UNICEF for the 2023-2024 school year estimates that the number of private and community schools has increased to 1,582, catering to approximately 266,000 students. In 2014-2015, 30 per cent of children attended private or community schools. By the 2023-2024 school year, this percentage has nearly doubled to 50 per cent, indicating a significant rise in enrollment in both secular and religious private and community schools.

Despite the political and institutional instability in Guinea Bissau in 2024, the Ministry of Education has maintained organizational stability and consistent executive appointments. Unlike other ministries, its technical leadership remained unchanged after the National Assembly's dissolution on December 4, 2023, and the new government's installation on December 21, 2023. This continuity may reflect political consensus on the importance and challenges of the education sector.

Schools are important social institutions given their role in providing instruction and socialization, in the framework of a culturally diverse society. Indeed, Guinea-Bissau consists of a unique cultural mosaic of at least

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<sup>11</sup> Estimated population data access on September 29 from the UNFPA World Population Dashboard - Guinea-Bissau: <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/GW>.

<sup>12</sup> National Institute for Statistics (INE), population projection for 2023

20 ethnic groups, 17 languages, and considerable religious diversity. Of the total population, an estimated 46.1 per cent are Muslim, while 18.9 per cent and 30.6 per cent identify as Christians and animists, respectively and 4.4 per cent other/none.<sup>13</sup> Despite this ethnic and religious diversity, unlike other countries in the West Africa Region, interethnic relations between different tribal and religious communities have typically been harmonious and peaceful. There has been little historical support for political mobilization via ethnic-based rhetoric; scholars suggest that Guinea-Bissau's unique traditional multicultural cohesion may be explained by traditional indigenous institutions, languages and cultures (Hawthorne & Nafafé, 2016) or the emergence of the creole language and culture as a unifying force in the post-colonial state (Kohl, 2010; Kohl, 2012; Kohl & Shroven, 2014). In addition, religious practices in Guinea-Bissau are often rooted in indigenous beliefs, where conceptions of Islam, Christianity, and animism are fused with, and inseparable from, the cultural characteristics of Bissau-Guinea communities. This has resulted in relatively pluralistic and accepting religious practices that contribute to relatively strong horizontal linkages between different religious and tribal communities (Voz di Paz and Interpeace, 2010). For example, a 2024 survey found that 78 per cent of respondents noted no tensions between religions in Guinea-Bissau (Hamadou, 2024). Despite repeated political instability and conflict, resulting in nine attempted or successful violent overthrows of governments since 1980 (or roughly one every five years on average), making it "one of the most coup-prone and politically unstable countries in the world" (World Bank, 2023), interethnic violence is mostly absent. As Kohl (2010) notes, "Bissau-Guineans distinguish clearly between state and nationhood. While they are critical of their state's performance, they nevertheless identify as one nation...This feeling unites Bissau-Guineans across ethnic and religious boundaries" (p. 103). A strong horizontal social contract exists in Guinea-Bissau, which has contributed to mostly positive social relations between groups, despite chronic instability and political violence.

Education is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for peace, tolerance, and sustainable development. It equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours needed to navigate in an increasingly interconnected world while fostering inclusive social and economic participation (Education 2030 Framework, 2015). However, education's relationship with conflict and peacebuilding is complex. While it can reduce violent conflict and promote social cohesion (Pigozzi, 1999; UNESCO, 2013, 2016), it may also exacerbate divisions and grievances (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Schools can either strengthen social cohesion or reinforce exclusion and conflict, depending on how education is made accessible and how values and norms are shaped through curricula and practices. This dual potential highlights the critical need for education systems to address structural inequalities and promote inclusive and peaceful societies.

Education in Guinea-Bissau, like elsewhere, is inseparable from the country's political economy. During most of the colonial period, responsibility for the provision of basic education was delegated to the Catholic church. In 1961, 207 missionary schools accounted for 94 per cent of the country's schools and 91 per cent of the 13,256 students in primary education (Carr-Hill & Rosengarts, 1983). The education system was highly centralized, with the aim of preserving Portuguese hegemony through cultural reproduction and the production of functionaries needed to maintain the colonial state. Educational provision was extremely concentrated in urban areas, like Bissau and Bafata, and required assimilation into Portuguese culture. For example, Portuguese was the language of instruction even though it was spoken by less than 10 per cent of the population and, to enroll in colonial schools, children had to adopt Western (i.e. Christian) names to be admitted.<sup>14</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the lack of state schools, and the assimilationist character of the colonial system where schools did exist, led to many communities seeking out educational alternatives more aligned with their cultural and religious values. This was particularly true in rural areas in the east and the south of the country, where Islamic education flourished (Carr-Hill & Rosengarts, 1983). Therefore, since colonial times Catholic schools were recognized as formal, and because they were largely seen as within the structure of the state, they received preferential treatment. Islamic schools, on the other hand, were seen as informal and not recognized. While Catholic schools were brought under the remit of the state after independence, an agreement between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Diocese of Bissau in November 1993 returned former Catholic schools

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<sup>13</sup> "Guinea-Bissau no CIA World Factbook". Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Consulted on 22 de February 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Consultations with religious and qur'anic leaders on September 21, 2023.

to the management of the church, albeit with teachers funded by the state.<sup>15</sup> In addition, article five of the agreement notes that “schools belonging to the state may, on an experimental basis, be granted to dioceses, usually on a **self-management** [*auto-gestão*] basis” (emphasis added).<sup>16</sup> This provision meant that while Catholic schools were publicly funded, they would be relatively autonomous and could also charge school fees. This marked a turning point in the role of non-state actors in the provision of education in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

### ***Public, private, or somewhere in between? Unpacking religious and confessional schools in Guinea -Bissau***

The civil war in 1998 and subsequent sustained political violence and instability severely weakened the capacity of state institutions, including the Ministry of Education. By the 2010s, inadequate infrastructures and investment, recurrent teacher strikes, weak management and oversight and poor teaching contributed to a flight from public schools to private and confessional schools. The most recent data from the school mapping survey (80 per cent complete as of September 2024) highlights this.<sup>17</sup> Of the estimated total of 641,451 children attending school (preschool to grade 12), just over 50 per cent were enrolled in public schools. Another 145,000 children (22.7 per cent) are listed as enrolled in private schools, many of which are evangelical and Catholic schools. Furthermore, over 70,000 children (~ 11 per cent of students) are enrolled in Islamic schools (madrassas and qur’anic centres), and another 32,500 (5 per cent) are enrolled in private Catholic schools or “*autogestão*.” Therefore, almost half of Bissau-Guinean children are studying in non-state schools – the majority of which are religious schools or managed by religious institutions and actors, and which have very little government oversight. As will be shown below, this represents a threat to social cohesion.

Unfortunately, what constitutes a public, private, community or religious schools is not always clear. The 2010 Basic Education Law (LBSE) does not define these different categories of schools; it merely stipulates that in addition to public schools, “private and cooperative” schools may exist.<sup>18</sup> Subsequent regulations governing the operation of private schools established in 2021 note that “A private educational establishment is one that does not operate under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education and is financed and equipped by individuals, groups, non-governmental, national or foreign and religious organizations to provide private collective education.”<sup>19</sup> The LBSE notes that “Confessional schools and non-denominational madrassas can be recognized by the state, under the law governing private and cooperative schools, as special forms of formal education.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, under this definition, all formal schools managed by religious authorities can be broadly defined as “private.” However, the private school regulations also note that “religious education” is excluded. Unfortunately, what regulations define “religious education” is not clear. This seems to suggest that schools run by religious entities are only seen as private schools if their education is not “religious education.” While “religious education” is not defined, in practice it is interpreted as wholly religious instruction, such as catechism, Sunday school or rote memorization of the *Qur'an*.

In theory, therefore, all formal religious schools are private schools and subject to regulations that guarantee compliance with the general rules of the Guinean education system. According to existing regulations, the Ministry should grant permission to operate and ensure that these schools receive regular inspection visits and the necessary support for their normal development. However, oversight of private schools is extremely weak, and the state exerts little oversight over these institutions.

Furthermore, the divide between public and private religious and confessional schools is much less clear than it first seems. As previously noted, many Catholic schools operate as “*autogestão*” or self-managed schools. While there is no provision for this modality in the LBSE or the regulations governing private schools, several

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<sup>15</sup> *Protocolo de acordo entre o Ministério de Educação Nacional da Guiné-Bissau e a Diocese da Bissau*, Novembro 4, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> These schools are known as “*auto-gestão*” in Portuguese. However, there is no clear legal definition of this term,

<sup>17</sup> The school mapping dashboard can be found here: [mWater-GB\\_School\\_Mapping\\_Dashboard](https://mwater-geospatial.com/GB_School_Mapping_Dashboard)

<sup>18</sup> Chapter , article 59 of the LBSE. In Portuguese, “Ensino particular e cooperativo”

<sup>19</sup> Regulations governing the operation of private schools, 2021. Article 1, clause one. In Portuguese “Regulamento de Funcionamento das Escolas Privadas”

<sup>20</sup> Article 30, clause 2.

Catholic and evangelical schools operate under this modality. Recent school mapping data indicates that more than 15,000 children are enrolled in *autogestão* schools, but the actual number is likely higher. Despite the usefulness of these findings, the Ministry of Education does not have detailed information on the number of confessional and religious schools because these categories are not well-defined, and data collection is inconsistent. As a result, there is also a lack of information on the curricular offerings of these schools and the factors that motivate parents to enroll their children in these institutions or informal learning spaces.

### ***Christian and Islamic schools in the education provision in Guinea Bissau***

Two main religious faiths play an important role in educational provision in Guinea-Bissau – Christianity and Islam.

#### ***1. Christian education/schools***

Confessional Catholic and evangelical Christian schools are commonplace in Guinea-Bissau. Data from 2010 from the Commission of Catholic Schools in Guinea-Bissau, from the Inter-Diocesan Commission for Education, found that there were 133 schools at this time. These were divided into two types: self-managed schools, which operate within the structures of the state and have been entrusted to the catholic missions, and private schools that have been set up by the missions as part of the privatization of education, but which need a license to operate fully. The preliminary school mapping identified 93 private Catholic schools and a further 36 *autogestão* schools serving approximately 31,500 children; however, there are likely more catholic schools classified as secular private schools or community schools.

Data on evangelical schools is much more difficult to find. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that over the last 15 years there has been a considerable increase in the number of evangelical schools in Guinea-Bissau. The Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) of WASH services at school level, conducted in 2021 by the General Directorate for Studies, Planning, and Evaluation of the Education System and with UNICEF support, registered the presence of 147 evangelical schools nationwide, accommodating a total student population of 49,031. Among these establishments, 139 operate as private institutions, while the remaining 8 are self-managed entities. The school mapping, led by the Directorate of Planning and Statistics (DGEPASE), does not categorize school by “evangelical” so it is difficult to extract data. However, many of the over 660 community schools belong to evangelical Christian organizations.

Catholic and evangelical Christian schools are currently governed by the Basic Law of the Education System (LBSE), as well as a Manual of Procedures, with the aim of standardizing didactic-educational practice in those educational institutions. They are considered as private schools, and their diplomas are recognized by the National Ministry of Education. The schools of the Catholic Church in Guinea-Bissau receive support from the Portuguese Cooperation through the NGO “Fundacao Fé e Cooperação” (FEC), which operates across much of the country and offers teacher qualification programmes and other types of assistance. However, processes to harmonize the curriculum and ensure the consistent application of content have not been implemented.

#### ***2. Islamic education/schools***

Like elsewhere in the West African region, Islamic education in Guinea-Bissau can be broadly categorized into two types: *Qur'anic* centres and madrassas. Traditional *Qur'anic* centres are informal institutions where teaching methods are traditional and focus on the child's personal progression, primarily through reciting and memorizing the *Qur'an*. These schools are not formally recognized by the government, and children attending them are considered out-of-school. Indeed, in neighbouring countries like Burkina-Faso they are not referred to as schools, rather *foyers coraniques*. Currently, there is no standardized curriculum or examination for *Qur'anic* centres, which means that students – colloquially known as *talibés* (the Arabic word for students) do not have access to other formal schools in Guinea-Bissau if and when they conclude their studies.

Madrassas, on the other hand, are formal institutions like other formal schools. They are organized by age groups (classes) and the teaching content is divided into modules. In madrassa schools, girls and boys are not separated. Madrassas apply the same operandum as the formal classical schools. The language of instruction is Arabic,

with Portuguese often taught as a second language. The curriculum includes Islamic sciences (excluding *Qur'an* memorization) as well as secular subjects such as history, geography, and natural sciences. One concern regarding this matter is the discrepancy in teaching hours allocated to each subject compared to formal schools. Additionally, within the broad category of *Qur'anic* education, there are schools known as “*misto*” or mixed. These could be termed “*Qur'anic-Madrassas*” – they combine traditional *Qur'anic* education methods with some limited national and formal curricula. The primary language of instruction in these schools is Arabic; Portuguese is taught as a subject. Typically, *misto* *Qur'anic* centres/ *Qur'anic-Madrassas* operate only at the primary level and are not yet recognized by the Ministry of Education (Qualé, 2017).

While Madrassas charge school fees, *talibé* students attend *Qur'anic* centres free of charge. However, traditionally *talibés* are expected to contribute to their studies through begging or by performing unpaid work for their *Qur'anic* master, such as domestic chores or farming.

Data suggests that a very large percentage of Bissau-Guinean children - over 11 per cent - study in *Qur'anic* centres and madrassas (2024 school mapping data). Evidence collected from focus group discussions and bilateral meetings held with Islamic religious and community leaders, *Qur'anic* centres' representatives, and religious educators in October 2023 suggested that 1,992 Islamic schools in Guinea-Bissau were teaching to approximately 41,259 students. School mapping data collected from May – August 2024 identified 1,002 *Qur'anic* centres and 162 madrassas teaching 51,438 and 18,889 students respectively. The number is likely much higher, as traditional *Qur'anic* centres are typically located seasonally in *ad hoc* spaces and have no permanent physical structure.

The governance systems of Islamic schools and *Qur'anic* centres remain quite distinct from those of Catholic or evangelical institutions, which benefit from more direct links to structured educational networks. Islamic schools in Guinea-Bissau are typically more autonomous, community-focused, and driven by religious and local priorities. The governance of these schools is generally informal and community driven. They are usually funded by local communities, religious charities, and, at times, by international Islamic organizations. Unlike Catholic or evangelical schools, which often have established governance structures connected to their respective dioceses or missions and the Ministry of Education, Islamic schools may have looser, decentralized governance.

Key characteristics of the governance of Islamic and *Qur'anic* centres includes:

- a) **Governance:** Local imams and religious leaders often oversee both the curriculum and administrative decisions, ensuring that teachings align with Islamic principles and values.
- b) **Community Involvement:** Local communities play a significant role in funding, managing, and maintaining these schools. Parents may contribute through donations or voluntary services, and traditional or religious community councils sometimes handle administrative needs.
- c) **External Support:** Some schools receive aid from foreign Islamic foundations or NGOs, which may provide financial assistance, materials, or training for instructors. This support can influence governance by introducing certain administrative practices or educational standards.
- d) **Government Oversight:** The Ministry of Education has limited oversight over Islamic schools compared to other religious institutions, as most madrassas operate independently of the formal education system. However, there is interest from both the government and international partners in integrating these schools into the national education framework to improve literacy and standardize basic education. Furthermore, representatives of associations of madrassas and *Qur'anic* centres have

### Typology of Islamic education

*Madrassas*: Formal educational institutions, organized by aged groups (grades) with teaching content divided into different disciplines/modules. The language of instruction is Arabic, with Portuguese often taught as a second language. There is some oversight by the Ministry of Education

*Qur'anic centres*: informal learning spaces based on traditional techniques of memorizing passages of the *Qur'an*. These learning spaces are not recognized by the Ministry of Education. *Qur'anic* centres can be divided into two types, “traditional” and “modern/misto.” Modern/misto *Qur'anic* centres include some instruction on the Portuguese language and basic numeracy

expressed interest in strengthening government oversight and integration to access further public investment and to facilitate certification of students.

### **Parental decision to send their children to religious schools over public schools**

There are structural, cultural and economic factors that affect parental decisions to send their children to religious schools rather than public schools. Families and communities in the main Islamicized Mandiga, Fula and Nalu ethnic groups are influenced by both structural and cultural factors. First, many *tabankas* (villages), particularly in the east and south regions of the country, inhabited by ethnic groups that are predominantly Muslims, do not have public schools, or schools that run the complete 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycles of basic education (grades 1-6). There is considerable evidence that when public education provision is not available children drop out-of-school, creating a market for non-formal *Qur'anic* instruction (Fialho et al, 2023; UNICEF, 2018). Second, many parents view public schools as opposed to traditional Islamic values; teachers are often from outside of the communities and cultural groups, and schools may be seen as dangerous spaces where foreign, incompatible values may be instilled, particularly for girls<sup>21</sup>. Community *Qur'anic* centres, on the other hand, are often taught by Islamic masters who come from the community and many parents value *Qur'anic* education as the best source of education in rural communities. Some parents, for example from the Fula and Mandinka communities who are descendants of poorly educated families, send their children to *Qur'anic* centres in Senegal to raise their social status with the hope that their sons will “become somebody important” (Einarsdóttir & Boiro, 2016).

With regards to preferences for Catholic schools, household survey data in Africa shows that while Catholic and other faith-based schools reach many children in poverty, proportionally more children from better off households attend these schools (Wodon, 2019). Catholic schools charge fees, which simultaneously exclude the most disadvantaged children from attending and yet also provide important investments in infrastructure and teaching and learning materials, that lead to perceptions of higher quality education compared to public schools. They have been traditionally seen as an avenue for the lusophone elite, particularly the secondary schools in Bissau.

### **Peacebuilding issues related to non-regulated religious education**

The increasing influence of **conservative foreign religious ideologies** presents a potential risk to Guinea-Bissau's indigenous religious practices and consequently, **social cohesion more broadly**. In the east and south of the country, there is a growing tension created by the growing influence of conservative *Sufi Islam*, practiced in Senegal and Guinea-Conakry. While demographic and population data are scarce, anecdotal evidence from community and religious leaders, as well as government officials, suggests that immigrants from neighbouring countries are altering relationships in and between communities due to their adherence to more conservative forms of Islam. The Guinea-Bissau 2021 International Religious Freedom Report published by the US State Department stated that a small, but growing, percentage of fundamentalist mosques and schools led by *Qur'anic* teachers financed by Islamists operating outside the country were potential incubators of radicalism, promoting ideas conflicting with the more moderate beliefs and traditions commonly found in most mosques in the country (US State Department, 2022). In the 2023 International Religious Freedom Report religious leaders also stated that religious extremism was spreading in the east of the country due to “the country's porous borders and endemic poverty” (US State Department, 2024).

In addition, the growing presence of evangelical Christian movements seeking to proselytize Bissau-Guineans has been noted by academics and government officials<sup>22</sup>. There are a growing number of evangelical churches and missionaries, with substantial funding and support from foreign countries, including a strong influence from Brazil. The Guinea-Bissau 2021 Religious Freedom Report noted that a case of an independent church that fomented division, discord and discontent toward other religions was accounted by some religious leaders.

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<sup>21</sup> Consultations and focus groups with parents and Islamic leaders on September 21, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> The General Directorate for Studies, Planning and Evaluation of the Education System of the Ministry of Education estimates that there are 147 evangelical schools in the country with 49,031 students.

When asked how to best limit the spread of religious extremism, religious leaders consistently identified better education as “the most important factor” (p. 1). It also cited the statement of a religious leader who emphasized the need to educate youth in modern schools, with a focus on teaching values and promote social and religious peace; it also highlights the remark of another religious leader saying that Islamic schools offered only Arabic and *Qur’anic* studies, and left students “isolated from the rest of society” (p. 5).

Academics and policy makers are increasingly concerned that there is decreasing social cohesion and increasing discontent, division, and intolerance among the population, threatening the existing peaceful coexistence of Bissau-Guinean communities, and possibly creating the conditions for instability and inter-community violence (Voz di Paz and Interpeace, 2010; United States Department of State, 2022). This may be due to both “sociostructural” factors (the organisation of society, grievances and incentives for conflict) and “psychocultural” factors (shared cultural and psychological assumptions, narratives and [dis]trust), both of which can generate social divisiveness that can lead to systemic harm and violent confrontation (Ross, 1993). Although violent conflict is usually motivated by concrete problems and grievances (rooted in social structures), the ways these problems are interpreted at individual and community levels (that is, culturally) influences how conflict emerges and how it will be handled over time. Thus “a conflict is less one-time event than an evolving phenomenon” (Ross, 1993, p. 65) involving not only real grievances but also the constantly changing social interpretation of these grievances. Perceptions of violence and marginalization (grievance) both influence and are influenced by social actors. In Guinea-Bissau, there is some evidence (Jalo, 2023) that elites and political leaders have been increasingly trying to mobilize ethnic and religious communities for political gain, which exploit real grievances and inequalities in society that are becoming more and more acute due to increased numbers of unskilled, underemployed youth.

Against this backdrop of increasingly influential conservative religious practices, Guinea-Bissau’s educational system is poorly prepared to defend and strengthen the country’s traditional multi- and inter-ethnic social cohesion. As previously mentioned, confessional and religious schools play an important role in Guinea-Bissau’s education sector, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Due to a combination of cultural beliefs, Guinea-Bissau’s weak institutional capacity, and the continued application of exclusionary colonial-era policies, many Bissau-Guineans choose – or are forced to choose – private and/or religious and confessional education for their children. Thus, in a context where the trend is towards more conservative, dogmatic, and monocultural religious practices, there is a risk that formal and non-formal religious education could mirror this conservative shift, depriving children and youth of the shared values and cross-cultural skills needed to consolidate peace and protect and strengthen horizontal social cohesion. Furthermore, many religious schools, both formal and non-formal, do not follow the official curriculum, making it likely that some children and youth are not developing the knowledge, skills and values they will need to build a prosperous, peaceful, and productive future for themselves and their communities.

Take, for example, non-formal *Qur’anic* centres. The intersection of a fragile, underperforming education system with household poverty and the belief in some communities that *Qur’anic* education is the best opportunity for a better future, persuade many parents and caregivers to enroll their children in these schools. However, this limited educational approach often leaves students linguistically and culturally isolated from the rest of society. Rote memorization of the *Qur’an* ordinarily fails to equip learners with basic literacy and numeracy competencies and employable skills, limiting subsequent economic opportunities for these children and youth, making it more difficult for them to access resources and impeding peaceful and harmonious cohabitation with groups accessing formal education.

The 2024 school mapping data suggests that girls constitute a large percentage of students enrolled in *Qur’anic* centres at over 45 percent, or approximately 26,000 students. Girls in *Qur’anic* centres face numerous challenges; many *Qur’anic* centres reproduce extremely conservative gender norms, teaching that girls should be obedient, submissive wives. Consultations with traditional leaders found that girls are often not given the same educational materials as boys and are often forced to sit in the back of learning spaces. Specific rules exist for girls – they should not speak louder than boys or show that they are more intelligent than boys, and some *Qur’anic* scriptures are not deemed necessary for them.

Compounding this challenge is that *Qur'anic* centre students, called *talibés*, cannot enter the formal education system to continue their learning, severely limiting their socio-professional opportunities. Thousands of adolescents and youth –are at risk of being permanently marginalized from socio-economic opportunities because they lack the skills and competencies needed in a modern economy. This threatens social cohesion by creating a large segment of the Muslim population who, due to these cultural and educational structures, are almost certain to be unemployed, increasing stigma, marginalization and exclusion.

In addition, there are often inadequate measures in place to protect vulnerable children and students in *Qur'anic* centres. The lack of government-supervised Islamic education schooling has contributed to the phenomenon of children being sent by their families to attend distant *Qur'anic* centres far from their communities, either in Guinea-Bissau or in Senegal. The combination of the lack of quality schools in Guinea-Bissau with household poverty and the belief in some communities that *Qur'anic* education is the best opportunity for a better future persuade many parents and caregivers to send their girls and boys away. Although evidence is scarce, this includes girls (United States Department of Labor, 2016). *Talibés* are extremely vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, child labour, and radicalization (Hamadou, 2024)<sup>23</sup>. While girls only make up a small minority of *talibés* children (and are not seen begging), some cases were reported and followed by national civil society organizations, where girls were victims of gender-based violence (including sexual violence) and were forced to carry out heavy domestic work.

The above example of *Qur'anic* centres and *talibés* clearly shows the short-, medium-, and long-term risks to children and society if religious and confessional schools remain outside of the education system, continuing to provide a limited range of curricular contents in learning environments that do not align with the national safety and quality standards, and that are not able to provide certification. This is doubly so in a context like Guinea-Bissau, where long-standing cultural and religious traditions are being challenged.

The ongoing absence of a clear and consistent legal framework for integrating religious schools in the education system is problematic. Currently, religious and confessional schools are not consistently and comprehensively integrated into the national education system. By integrated, we mean that there is not a consistent set of policies, regulations and guidelines that protect children's right to quality education, nor is there a system to ensure compliance with the state. For example, state financial support for private religious and confessional schools, such as the preferential allocation of resources, is inconsistent and unclear. Why are more publicly paid teachers allocated to Catholic schools compared to evangelical or Muslim ones? Secondly, the absence of clear curricular standards and certification processes, and, as well the total lack of oversight in formal confessional schools can lead to grievances and problematic education. Furthermore, the lack of harmonized content, minimum quality standards codes of conduct, and basic skills teaching in confessional schools is highly inconsistent. These problems are much more acute in non-formal *Qur'anic* centres. These policy and regulatory gaps create several threats to peace and stability:

- **Segregation and social division:** The non-inclusion of religious schools in the formal education system can contribute to social and religious segregation. It may also limit access to integrated services, particularly for girls and vulnerable children, such as improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), school feeding, and child protection among others. Because of the trust that families place in religious schools, it is assumed that a girl is more likely to be educated there than in a general basic school. As per MICS6 data, literacy levels are low especially among women (young adults 15-24: males-70% females-51%). Learners educated in religious schools may also have limited exposure to people from different religious or cultural backgrounds. This segregation may foster a sense of division, potentially fueling religious or sectarian tensions. Also, when schools are left on their own to teach what they wish their learners to learn, some may not provide them with opportunities to teach democratic values, human

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<sup>23</sup>Hamadou, Boiro 2024. Comprehensive Study on Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Guinea-Bissau. IMVF and LGDH. <https://www.imvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/estudo-compreensivo-extremismo-observatorio-da-paz-guine-bissau.pdf>

rights, and the importance of peaceful coexistence, which are included in the national curricula. This can result in a generation of learners with limited understanding of these broader societal values and a diminished commitment to pluralism and tolerance, contributing to an environment where intergroup tensions could escalate.

- **Instability due to limited opportunities for skills development and economic participation:** Religious schools often focus their teaching and learning on a narrow set of domains, such as repetitive memorization and religious teaching. When schools do not provide a comprehensive education that includes a wide range of knowledge and skills such as those incorporated in the national education curricula, learners may face difficulties navigating and integrating successfully into society. In addition, the lack of opportunities to nurture cognitive and non-cognitive skills and to become proficient in Portuguese will likely limit employment opportunities, creating disadvantages for the graduates of religious schools in their pursuit of social and economic wellbeing.
- **Potential for radicalization and insecurity:** When religious schools operate independently, there is a risk of teaching that deviates from common societal values. This can create an environment conducive to radicalization where individuals may be more susceptible to extremist ideologies that can exacerbate social divisions. According to the UNDP report, many religious schools operate unregulated, and it is not always known if their curricula promote peace and respect for human rights or preach conservative sectarianism that could contribute to radicalization<sup>24</sup>. The lack of regulation and its enforcement poses a significant threat to peace and stability, as it can lead to the emergence of individuals or groups willing to resort to extremist narratives and violence to achieve their objectives. Key recommended strategies to address this challenge include the standardization of school curricula, including in religious schools, dialogue with religious leaders and associations for collaboration on the modernization of religious education, and the establishment of structures for the modernization and harmonization of religious education<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, when schools are not subject to school safety and protective measures that are required of by the national education system and left unmonitored, there is a risk of having some schools that place their learners in vulnerable situations whereby they are subject to violence, abuse and exploitation.

In addition to introducing a policy framework that can oversee, regulate and support religious schools to ensure compliance and quality assurance, it will be important to revamp efforts in Guinea-Bissau to strengthen the provision of education for peace and social cohesion across all schools, so as to nurture in every learner values, attitudes, skills and behaviours that uphold peace, human rights, tolerance, respect for diversity, and living together in harmony with others.

The current national curriculum includes education for citizenship and for life that addresses themes such as religious and racial tolerance: the curriculum guidance developed through RECEB (*Reforma curricular do Ensino Básico na Guiné-Bissau, 2015-2021*) refers to education for citizenship in the second cycle, being a new subject area that should “make it possible to expand on themes begun in the first cycle, as well as to develop skills in education for tolerance (including religious and racial tolerance), consumer education and vocational training” (p. 19). Regarding the third cycle, it says that “Education for Life replaces Education for Citizenship, although in the same way, and takes on a special importance in this cycle of studies, as it will allow us to deepen competences in the areas of education for tolerance (including religious and racial) and education for consumption, and for the preservation of biodiversity” (p. 20). Through RECEB, textbooks and teachers’ guide for the first cycle (grades 1-4) were developed, but not for grade 5-6; and the curricular guidelines were developed for grades 5-6 but not for grades 7-9.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Discussion%20Paper%20-Preventing%20Violent%20Extremism%20by%20Promoting%20Inclusive%20Development.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.imvf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/estudo-compreensivo-extremismo-observatorio-da-paz-guine-bissau.pdf> ; <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Discussion%20Paper%20-Preventing%20Violent%20Extremism%20by%20Promoting%20Inclusive%20Development.pdf>

The “Referencial Educação para a Cidadania, os Direitos Humanos e a Paz na Guiné-Bissau (2019)<sup>26</sup>” (Referential on education for citizenship, human rights and peace in Guinea Bissau) was developed through the collaboration between the National Institute for the Development of Education (INDE), the Human Rights Section of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), with the technical and financial support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). A 276-page document, the Referential is rich in content but appears to be very dense and not so user-friendly for teachers. While it is necessary to assess the use of this document since its publication and its usability, it will definitely serve as an important resource for doing further work in this area, capitalizing on other existing resources of relevance.

## Stakeholders’ analysis

Below is an analysis of the main stakeholders concerned with the project.

Actor	Roles	Needs	Interests
<b>Ministry of Education</b>	<p><b>Regulation and oversight</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establishing a policy framework for integrating religious schools in the education system and overseeing the implementation of the framework.</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum alignment and implementation support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating with religious schools and others to ensure curriculum alignment and implementation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting curriculum alignment and implementation through teacher training and material support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Dialogue facilitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promoting dialogue between different religious and other stakeholder groups to foster understanding and cooperation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organizing forums or workshops that involve various stakeholders in discussions about education for peace and social cohesion.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Data and research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research to understand the gaps in existing policies, legal frameworks and guidelines concerning the regulation of private education and religious schools.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Data to understand the needs and interests of parents, religious schools and teachers to inform the development of the policy framework and strengthening of education for peace and social cohesion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources and training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Access to funding and resources to effectively implement the framework and regulations and promote initiatives to strengthen education for peace and social cohesion.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training of staff on how to support the implementation of the policy framework and strengthened education for peace and social cohesion</li> </ul> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships with religious leaders, community leaders and organizations, parents, protection sector to foster cooperation and share best practices</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social cohesion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promotion of a harmonious society where different religious and cultural groups coexist peacefully, and reduction of grievances and the potential for conflict.</li> </ul> <p><b>Quality education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring that all schools, including religious ones, provide high-quality education that prepares students for a diverse and interconnected world whereby they can participate actively and meaningfully.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting that all schools that adhere to national standards, provide certification.</li> </ul> <p><b>Civic responsibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Learners uphold values of citizenship and civic responsibility, regardless of where they are schooled.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assert Government Control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to decrease the number and influence of private schools and increase the power of the Ministry of Education to regulate private schools</li> </ul>
<b>Religious leaders</b>	<b>Advocacy and influence</b>	<b>Clarity in the policy framework and guidelines</b>	<b>Protection of religious freedom</b>

<sup>26</sup>[https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/binder1\\_final\\_inde\\_referencial\\_29\\_november2019\\_revised\\_for\\_web.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/binder1_final_inde_referencial_29_november2019_revised_for_web.pdf)

Actor	Roles	Needs	Interests
	<p>communities in discussions about the development and implementation of the policy framework for integrating religious schools into the education system and the strengthening of education for peace and social cohesion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advocates for policies and guidelines that support the rights and needs of religious schools within the broader education system.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mediation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Serve as intermediaries between the government and religious schools and communities, helping to facilitate dialogue and understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide moral and ethical guidance within religious schools, shaping curricula that can promote peace and social cohesion.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to the design of the framework and curriculum strengthening that align with religious values while promoting inclusivity and peace.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the teachings reflect a commitment to respect for diversity and interfaith understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate dialogue within communities to foster understanding and cooperation among different faiths and cultural groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Require clear and transparent framework and guidelines regarding the integration of religious schools to ensure compliance without compromising religious freedoms.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources and training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Need resources and training to understand and effectively support the promotion of the policy framework and guidelines as well as curriculum strengthening for peace and social cohesion within the religious schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Collaboration opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seek partnerships with government entities, NGOs, civil society organizations, and communities to contribute to the development of the policy framework and guidelines and curriculum strengthening for peace and social cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interested in ensuring that any framework, guidelines and curriculum respect the rights of religious communities to educate according to their beliefs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social stability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promoting social harmony and preventing conflict within their communities and with others through education and dialogue.</li> </ul> <p><b>Positive community impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing issues such as peace, social cohesion, poverty, discrimination, through education to impact the religious community positively.</li> </ul> <p><b>Legacy and influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interested in maintaining or increasing their influence in their communities, which could be at odds with proposals to integrate religious schools into a national public education framework</li> </ul>
<b>Regulos</b> <i>(traditional leaders)</i>	<p><b>Cultural authority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traditional leaders serve as custodians of local customs, values, and traditions, influencing community norms and practices, including education.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mediation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> They often act as intermediaries between the community and government or educational institutions, facilitating dialogue and addressing concerns.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community mobilization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traditional leaders can mobilize community members around educational initiatives, promoting participation and engagement in school-related activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Advisory</b></p>	<p><b>Clear Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> They need clear, accessible information about educational policies, regulations, and their implications for the community and local schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Involvement in Decision-Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traditional leaders seek meaningful involvement in the development of educational policies, programmes and practices that affect their communities to ensure local needs are considered.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support for Cultural Integration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance in finding ways to incorporate local cultural and religious values into the</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cultural Preservation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leaders are interested in policies that help preserve and promote local culture and traditions through education, ensuring that future generations understand their heritage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Harmony</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> They have a vested interest in fostering social cohesion and peace within their own community, promoting values of respect and understanding among community members. Horizontal cohesion with different communities may be less of a priority.</li> </ul> <p><b>Quality Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traditional leaders advocate for quality education that equips</li> </ul>

Actor	Roles	Needs	Interests
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> They provide guidance to parents and educators on how to integrate cultural values and teachings into the school environment.</li> </ul>	<p>educational framework, ensuring relevance for learners.</p>	<p>children with the skills and knowledge necessary for personal and community development – as long as it does not conflict with traditional practices or beliefs.</p> <p><b>Community Stability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leaders are concerned about the broader implications of education on community stability and development, including economic opportunities and social well-being.</li> </ul>
<b>Civil society organizations</b>	<p><b>Advocacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs often advocate for inclusive and equitable education that align with human rights standards, ensuring that all children have access to quality education.</li> </ul> <p><b>Watchdog</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs monitor the implementation of policies and regulations, holding governments and schools accountable for adhere to legal and ethical standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mediation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs can act as mediators between different stakeholders, including parents, schools, facilitating dialogue and understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Capacity building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs may provide information provision, training and resources for schools, educators, parents and communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Research and policy development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs may conduct research to provide data and evidence that can inform policy and programme development related to education.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Access to information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs need timely and relevant information about existing educational policies, regulations and changes to effectively advocate and respond to developments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Funding and resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs require sufficient funding and resources to carry out their actions and initiatives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Collaboration opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs need partnerships with other stakeholders such as government, schools, communities and international organizations for effective advocacy and action implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Training and development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs often require ongoing training to enhance their knowledge and skills in advocacy, policy analysis and programme implementation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Equitable education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs are interested in promoting policies that ensure equitable access to quality education for all children, regardless of their backgrounds or capacities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Human rights protection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Many CSOs focus on safeguarding human rights in education, including freedom of religion and the right to education free from discrimination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social cohesion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs are invested in fostering an educational environment that promotes peace, tolerance and understanding among diverse groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>Influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CSOs seek to influence educational policies, guidelines and programmes to include perspectives that reflect the needs and rights of marginalized communities and populations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engaging communities in the development and implementation of educational policies is a priority for CSOs, ensuring that local voices are heard and considered</li> </ul>
<b>Religious school operators</b>	<p><b>Administration and educating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> They manage the day-to-day operations of religious schools, overseeing curriculum, staff, and student welfare; they may play the role of educator.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clear policies and guidelines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Operators need clear and consistent policies, regulations and guidelines that govern religious schools, enabling them to</li> </ul>	<p><b>Religious Freedom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Operators are often deeply invested in maintaining the right to provide education that aligns with their religious beliefs and values; any initiative that</li> </ul>

Actor	Roles	Needs	Interests
	<p><b>Policy implementation</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> They have the role to implement educational policies and regulations at their institutions, ensuring compliance with both educational and religious guidelines.</p> <p><b>Community Leader</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Religious school operators often serve as community leaders, influencing local perceptions of education and fostering relationships with parents and community members.</p> <p><b>Advocacy</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> They may advocate for policies that support the interests of religious education and the rights of parents to choose religious schooling for their children</p>	<p>understand their responsibilities and ensure compliance</p> <p><b>Funding and Resources</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate financial support and resources are crucial for ensuring compliance with the regulations, guidelines and curriculum, and for maintaining quality education and facilities.</p> <p><b>Professional Development</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for training and development for teachers and staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in both religious and secular educational practices.</p> <p><b>Support for Integration</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Operators may require support to integrate education for peace and social cohesion initiatives into their day-to-day work without compromising their religious values and teaching</p>	<p>threatens this will likely be viewed with suspicion</p> <p><b>Quality Education</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> May be interested in ensuring that their schools deliver quality education, which includes academic excellence and the promotion of moral and ethical values. However, many may be more interested in protecting their influence and economic interests.</p> <p><b>Community Engagement</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Operators want to foster strong relationships with parents and the wider community, promoting their schools as valuable contributors to family welfare, community and vertical social cohesion.</p> <p><b>Regulatory stability and support</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> A stable regulatory environment that respects their autonomy while benefiting from support to ensure compliance can help operators focus on education rather than navigating complex legal challenges</p>
Parents who have their children in religious schools	<p><b>Advocacy and influence</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents can act as advocates for their children's educational needs and values, pushing for policies that reflect their beliefs and priorities; they can influence decisions about school choice, enrolment and engagement in school governance</p> <p><b>Collaboration</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents may work with schools, educators, and policymakers to help shape framework, guidelines and curriculum</p>	<p><b>Quality education</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents want assurances that their children receive quality education</p> <p><b>Safety and wellbeing</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents are concerned about the physical and emotional safety of their children in educational settings</p> <p><b>Value alignment</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents seek educational environments that reflect their religious or cultural values while promoting knowledge and skills acquisition</p> <p><b>Transparency and communication</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Clear communication from schools and policymakers about regulations and policies is essential for parental trust and engagement.</p> <p><b>Support for engagement</b></p>	<p><b>Respect for their religion</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents want their right to choose religious education for their children respected</p> <p><b>Social cohesion</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents are likely interested in narrow social cohesion and community harmony; education aligned with this would be welcome. Education for horizontal/intercommunal peacebuilding might be viewed with suspicion.</p> <p><b>Influence</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents want a voice in the development of policies, frameworks, guidelines and curriculum that have an impact on their children's learning and schooling</p> <p><b>Equity in education</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Parents may advocate for equitable access to quality education, regardless of a child's background or the type of school</p>

Actor	Roles	Needs	Interests
		<input type="checkbox"/> Parents may need support and resources to participate in discussions and dialogue about policy framework, guidelines and curriculum that affect their children	attended. While many schools charges fees, most parents advocate for no or reduced fees.

### Alignment with Governmental and UN strategic frameworks

The proposal is also rooted in the objectives of the 2017-2025 Education Sector Plan (ESP), and in particular Priority #1 (universal basic education to reduce inequalities) and Priority #4 (strengthening education sector governance). It will also feed into the process of drawing up a new plan for the education sector, which should begin in 2025, with an analysis of the education sector and a redefinition of the national education policy as a first step. Indeed, the sector plan should reflect the government's main responsibility, linked to the right to education or the legal provisions relating to compulsory schooling, which is to guarantee elementary education for all children, including those enrolled in private and religious schools. In addition, the priority reform in the Partnership Compact between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which is currently under development, is centred on ensuring all children 5-14 access quality learning. The Compact includes a strong focus on reaching all children through formal and alternative learning structures, including integrating religious education.

The programme document also builds on the progress undertaken in the 2022-2025 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Guinea-Bissau under Outcome 1, Transformational and inclusive governance encompassing respect for the rule of law and sustaining peace, and Outcome 3, Human capital development. The proposed project is particularly aligned with the following outputs:

- Output 1.1 *"The institutional framework and the human and operational capacities of the State, non-State actors, including agents of change, are enhanced to support a transformational change and societal shift in favor of consolidating peace and democratic governance and to respond to all citizens' needs."*
- Output 3.2 *"Education institutions and teachers have increased capacities to ensure an equitable and inclusive education system and to strengthen access to quality formal, informal and non-formal education for children, youth, and adults, transversal skills, and lifelong learning opportunities."*

It is also aligned with the UN Roadmap developed in 2021, which has helped guide UN interventions in 2022 and 2023, under the themes of equitable and inclusive access, quality and skills development, and education sector governance.

The proposal is aligned with the aspirations inscribed in the *African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa we want*, as it addresses the following aspirations in particular: "A prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development", "An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law", and "An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."<sup>27</sup>

The proposal also seeks to achieve the 2030 UN Agenda on Sustainable Development, especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education, particularly SDG 4.1 (universal primary and secondary education), 4.4 (relevant skills for decent work), 4.5 (gender equality and inclusion), 4.7 (education for sustainable development), and 4.c (teachers and educators), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), particularly 16.2 (protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence) and 16.c (promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies).<sup>28</sup> By adopting the SDG 4, countries have committed to providing inclusive quality education for all children. This noble goal cannot be achieved without all schools, including religious

<sup>27</sup> <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/goals>

<sup>28</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

ones, supported to provide the same conditions to learners as part of a single system with common standards, support and oversight mechanisms. As stated in the Education 2030-SDG 4 Framework for Action (2015), the state has a crucial role in “regulating standards, improving quality and reducing disparity between regions, communities and schools.” A recommendation from the Guinea-Bissau Voluntary National Review (VNR) on SDG4 called on the education sector to improve coordination mechanisms to improve gender equity, human rights and citizenship in education (Republic of Guinea-Bissau, 2022).

Finally, the proposed intervention would also help Guinea-Bissau fulfill its human rights obligations, including the commitments it made in the context of the universal periodic review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council in 2020. Recommendations from the 2020 UPR include “Take effective steps to improve access to education” (Ukraine) and “Take measures to make the right to education accessible for all at all levels in order to achieve sustainable development” (Azerbaijan). Integrating religious education into the national education system would increase access to quality education for vulnerable children in Guinea-Bissau. This is aligned with the National Strategy for Out-of-school Children (2023), which explicitly includes calls for the development of a policy framework to integrate *Qur’anic* centres and religious schools into the national education system

### Alignment with other Relevant Interventions

Project name (duration)	Donor and budget	Project focus	Difference from/ complementarity to current proposal
Development of the Guinea-Bissau National Teacher Policy 2024-2030	UNICEF and UNESCO USD 250,000	Supporting the Government of Guinea-Bissau to develop the National Teacher Policy 2024-20230	The policy was validated at the technical level in 2024. It provides a policy framework for the recruitment and allocation of teachers. The proposed framework for the oversight and integration of religious schools into the national education system will align with this policy. This is important, as in 2023 98.3% of the Ministry of Education budget was on staff costs.
No Sumia Paz ( <i>We sow peace</i> ): Improvement of the educational offer and promotion of peace, citizenship and human rights in Guinea Bissau. 2022 - 2026	European Union EUR 1,339,340	Strengthening Civil Society Organizations and public institutions in the education sector to improve both access and quality of the education, while expanding opportunities for women and young people, with the objective of reducing violent extremism.	The project aims to strengthen access to education in priority regions and promote human rights, including supporting civil society organizations in promoting dialogue and preventing the radicalism of violent extremism.  Unlike this PBF proposal, the <i>No Sumia Paz</i> project does not address questions of public policy and regulations regarding the oversight of religious education. In addition, it is focused solely on combating

<b>Project name (duration)</b>	<b>Donor and budget</b>	<b>Project focus</b>	<b>Difference from/ complementarity to current proposal</b>
			extremism in Islamic communities.
Observatory of Peace: <i>No Cudji Paz</i> (2022-2025) implemented by Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos – LGDH29	European Union CAMOES Instituto de Cooperacao et da Lingua Portugal	Contribute to dialogue and prevention of radicalization and violent extremism through strengthening the participation, networking and establishment of strategic partnership between CSOs and other political actors; production of knowledge and monitoring of conflicts; supporting peace initiatives by mobilizing communities to counter narratives of radicalization and extremism focusing on youth and women; policy promotion and legal reformation	The project does not have the Ministry of Education as partner, and provide for concrete actions for addressing risks of radicalization and violent extremism and improving quality, wellbeing and safety of children in religious schools.
Programa de Educação Acelerada (PEFA) ( <i>Accelerated Formal Education Programme</i> ) (2022-2025)	UNICEF USD 350,000	Development of an accelerated learning curriculum for out-of-school and at-risk children, and the experimentation of the programme with a target of 900 adolescents in Gabu and Bafata	No peacebuilding lens. Components of the accelerated curriculum methodology for out-of-school children could be relevant for <i>talibés</i> studying in non-formal schools
PBF “Enhancing the Human Rights protection system in Guinea-Bissau” (2021-2025)	UNDP: \$ 1.790.436 UNICEF: \$ 640,588 OHCHR: \$ 912,326	The project intends to enhance the individual and institutional level capacity of both duty-bearers and rights-holders, in	The new proposed project will complement the “Human Rights” PBF project by focusing on strengthening national capacities to develop and implement the National

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.imvf.org/en/project/peace-observatory/>

<b>Project name (duration)</b>	<b>Donor and budget</b>	<b>Project focus</b>	<b>Difference from/ complementarity to current proposal</b>
		<p>human rights as an essential foundation to build a resilient, peaceful, inclusive, and just society. The project focuses on strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights' systems to sustain peace by supporting the implementation of the national human rights action plan, engaging and supporting human rights civil society organizations and defenders for monitoring and early warning.</p>	<p>Human Rights Action Plan. A key priority is promoting human rights education within the school community. Additionally, the project aims to enhance the capacity of human rights organizations to monitor and report on human rights violations and abuses, particularly those involving children and gender-sensitive cases.</p> <p>The current project will benefit from the child protection incident reporting and case management system developed by the Human Rights project. This system is crucial for strengthening the monitoring, referral, and case management of critical child rights violations, including violence in and around schools and violent discipline.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Human Rights project is enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations to promote and protect human rights, with a focus on child and women's rights and gender equality.</p>
System Transformation Grant (2025 -2027/28)	Global Partnership for Education USD 5.71 million	<p>The grant will support catalytic actions to support the transformation of the education system in line with the Priority Reform, which is that all children successfully complete basic education (with a focus on grade 6). The three main axes of the Priority</p>	<p>The STG is focused on the education sector, without a specific peacebuilding lens. It will support the Government of Guinea-Bissau to implement priority actions to strengthen access to quality education and grade 6 conclusion rates. Funds from the STG could be used to complement the PBF proposal's work developing peacebuilding curricula and supporting Out of School Children at</p>

<b>Project name (duration)</b>	<b>Donor and budget</b>	<b>Project focus</b>	<b>Difference from/ complementarity to current proposal</b>
		Reform are Access, Quality and Governance.	Qur'anic centres to be integrated into the system and to continue their studies.
System Capacitation Grant (2025 – 2027/28)	Global Partnership for Education USD 2.13 million	The SCG will support system strengthening and coordination, as well as evidence generation and funding for the development of the next Education Sector Plan (from 2026 onwards).	The SCG will strengthen coordination, sector capacity building and evidence generation. The work of the PBF proposal developing the policy framework to integrate religious schools into the public education system could be put into practice via SCG funding, for example, by including elements of it in the next Education Sector Plan or by using SCG funds to update the Basic Education Law. The SCG can complement efforts to implement the policy framework.
Human Capital Project (2025 – TBD)	World Bank, USD 20 million for the Health and Education Sectors	<p>The proposed development objective is to strengthen service delivery in the social sectors to improve human capital outcomes.</p> <p>Using a multi-sectoral approach, the project proposes to strengthen human resources and introduce PBF to improve service delivery across the social sectors. In the education, health, and social protection sectors, increased investments in capacity building are required to ensure the workforce has the skills required to improve</p>	<p>The proposal will use project-based financing to strengthen accountability mechanisms for both health workers and teachers linked to the Government's ongoing human resources reform program.</p> <p>This is aligned with this project's proposal to harmonize regulations for religious schools to better integrate them into the national system. Criteria regarding which non-state schools can benefit from publicly-funded teachers will be clarified.</p>

Project name (duration)	Donor and budget	Project focus	Difference from/ complementarity to current proposal
		service delivery.	
DIRECT (Développement, à l'Insertion et au Renforcement des Compétences Techniques en Guinée Bissau) Project, implemented by UNESCO	European Union (5-year project starting in the first quarter of 2025), 10 million EUR	The project aims at strengthening TVET for youth in Guinea-Bissau	A potential complementarity of this project is that it may be possible to create opportunities and pathways for learners completing religious schools to continue to develop technical and vocational skills, reducing their economic and social exclusion.

## II. Project content, strategic justification and implementation strategy (4 pages max Plus Results Framework Annex)

### Strategic window of opportunity to act now

As noted in the above section on peacebuilding context and rationale, educational exclusion and auto-exclusion on religious grounds present a threat to social cohesion in Guinea-Bissau. Structural and cultural factors have created parallel learning systems with inconsistent and incoherent government oversight. This, in turn, has led to many children from religious communities not acquiring the foundational learning and citizenship skills they need to thrive, (re) producing inequality and threatening stability.

Now is the time to address the problem of weak governance of religious schools. The Government of Guinea-Bissau has made concrete commitments to increasing access to education in Guinea-Bissau. The National Development Plan 2020-2023 (later extended to 2024) emphasizes education as a key priority alongside other sectors, and the 2017-2025 Education Sector Plan (ESP) and the 2023-2030 National Strategy for Out-of-School Children and National Action Plan explicitly commit the government strengthening the oversight of religious education to increase access and quality. Integrating religious institutions is prioritized under section 2.1 of the ESP (Strategies for improving access and equity), and *Key Action #3* in the National Strategy for Out-of-School Children directs the government to “Finalize the strategic framework regarding the integration of madrassas and *Qur'anic* centres into the national education system,” building on previous efforts and experiences to integrate these schools. This highlights that integrating religious schools into the national education system via harmonized regulations and a comprehensive policy framework is a national priority.

Previous efforts to integrate religious schools, specifically madrassas, failed because of a lack of political will, a lack of sustained engagement from development partners and government, and inadequate dialogue and engagement and stakeholders and partners across society throughout the process. There is an opportunity now because of progress in all three areas.

First, since 2023 there has been consistent cross-party political consensus regarding the need to strengthen the integration of Islamic schools into the formal education system and protect *talibé* children. On March 15th, 2023, the current President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, ordered the arrest of any *Qur'anic* master who from March 27th 2023 onwards sent a *talibé* child to beg on the streets of the country: “Put your children in school and stop sending them to beg, that's not Islam.”<sup>30</sup> This has led to an increased focus

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<sup>30</sup> Quote from Umaro Sissoco Embaló on March 15, 2023, during the inauguration ceremony of a school complex in eastern Guinea-Bissau.

on the issue of *talibé* students and *Qur'anic* education, and the government has signaled that the integration of Islamic schools into the formal education is one of their key education priorities. In addition, in the 2023 parliamentary elections, opposition parties included points on integrating *Qur'anic* schools and the public madrassas into the national system in their platforms. Despite continued political instability after the events of December 1, 2023 - which resulted in the dissolution of parliament and the establishment of a Government of Presidential Initiative – this emerging political consensus suggests that senior leadership in the Ministry of Education and Government of Guinea-Bissau will continue to support improved integration and oversight of religious schools during the project's planned time window (2025-2027).

Furthermore, during political and institutional uncertainty in Guinea Bissau in 2024, the Ministry of Education has maintained stability in its organization and in the appointment of executives to lead the technical departments. Unlike many other ministries, the technical leadership within the Ministry of Education remained unchanged after the dissolution of the National Assembly on December 4, 2023, the installation of the new government on December 21, 2023, and the subsequent reshuffle on August 20, 2024. This continuity in technical leadership within the Ministry of Education suggests a consensus among political leaders regarding the importance of the education sector and the challenges it faces. The education sector remains a priority for the government – 19.9 per cent of the allocated budget (not including external debt servicing) was allocated to education in the 2024 budget, and this is projected to grow to 39.9 per cent by 2027.<sup>31</sup> Regardless of the governing party, it is evident that major parties and leaders agree on the significance of the education sector for the next three years.

Second, international development partners are also interested in supporting the government to strengthen the oversight and integration of Islamic and evangelical schools into the national system. The European Union's Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 (MIP) for Guinea-Bissau notes that the EU will support efforts to reflect on the “role of *Qur'anic* schools and Luso-Arabic speaking schools in the Bissau-Guinean education system, as to their potential role towards further inclusiveness on the one hand, but also conflict prevention, on the other” (European Union, 2021, p.8). The MIP also states it will support the establishment and implementation of a legal framework for schools outside the formal educational system, such as *Qur'anic* and evangelic schools, and it views a strengthened education sector to combat “social unrest, irregular emigration and radicalization (EU, p.3). The EU supports the “*No sumia paz*” project in Guinea-Bissau, which promotes peace, citizenship and human rights in Guinea-Bissau with the explicit aim of preventing violent extremism in the country.

In addition, the Government of Guinea-Bissau and partners have also submitted the Partnership Compact with the Global Partnership for Education; this mechanism will unlock approximately 7.91 million USD for the Guinea-Bissau education sector in the next four years around the priority reform of improving access and retention of students aged 5 to 14 through access and inclusion, quality education and system strengthening. The priority reform's focus on supporting children to successfully complete basic education (at a minimum grade 6), which will guide the GPE's next 3–5-year funding cycle, is strongly aligned with and complements the proposal to better integrate religious schools into the national system. GPE funds, including the System Transformation Grant (STG) and System Capacity Grant (SCG) funding windows, could be used to strengthen and scale-up the peace building investments proposed in this programme document.

Third, this is a moment where genuine multi-stakeholder exists to strengthen the governance of religious schools in Guinea-Bissau. In 2023 and 2024 UNICEF and UNESCO engaged in a series of meetings and focus group discussions with leaders from the Muslim community in Guinea-Bissau and the leadership of the National Association of *Qur'anic* teachers. During the discussions, they met with the representative from the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), the president and vice president of the National Association of *Qur'anic* teachers, and the Imam representing the largest Muslim community in Guinea-Bissau. All these stakeholders expressed a strong interest in working with the Government of Guinea-

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<sup>31</sup> Based on the GPE Funding Matrix submitted to the GPE by the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

Bissau, UNICEF, UNESCO and other partners to strengthen the integration of Islamic education within the national system. While it is true that Islam in Guinea-Bissau is very heterogenous, with differing communities and traditions adhering to different ideologies representing a wide range of diverse opinions and viewpoints, the strong participation and feedback from the leadership of several Islamic organizations suggests that there is significant interest to advance with this agenda. There is increasing recognition from Islamic leaders that *Qur'anic* centres are not equipping children with the complete set of skills needed to thrive. In addition, leaders expressed a willingness to explore how to align schools with the national system and to examine how to incentivize *Qur'anic* masters to end the practice of children begging as a tool to generate revenue.

### **Project overarching goal**

The goal of this proposal is to enhance social cohesion and reduce conflict in Guinea-Bissau by integrating religious and confessional schools into a unified national education system. This initiative seeks to formalize the relationship between these educational institutions/communities and the Bissau-Guinean state, fostering an inclusive environment that respects local cultural and religious values while promoting shared values and skills among children. By (1) addressing both educational inequalities in access and outcomes and (2) strengthening inclusion and peacebuilding pedagogical practices in classroom the proposal aims to enhance social cohesion and foster peace in Guinea-Bissau by reducing grievances and cultivating intercommunal dialogue and understanding based on Guinea-Bissau's traditional culture of peaceful coexistence.

At the structural level, this integration will allow the government to allocate educational resources more equitably across diverse religious, ethnic, and geographic communities. At the psychocultural level, children in religious and confessional schools will benefit from learning environments that cultivate a culture of peace. Social cohesion will thus be strengthened by reducing both real and perceived grievances felt by some religious communities in Guinea-Bissau. Harmonizing curricula and establishing common service standards—such as safety, hygiene, and teacher qualifications—will concretely improve the conditions of children in these schools, and curricula that include both religious content *and* foundational and transferable skills will enhance access to quality education for vulnerable children and lead to better learning outcomes, reducing potential drivers of conflict (particularly for marginalized communities) and increasing social cohesion. In addition, inclusive peacebuilding pedagogies will improve perceptions of different religious and ethnic communities.

The integration of religious schools into a common educational framework will remove barriers that limit educational opportunities for girls. This intervention will strengthen and harmonize curricular frameworks and strengthen minimum standards and oversight in religious schools to create spaces where girls feel safe and empowered to learn and participate. Girls in informal, unregulated confessional schools face a double set of challenges; while like boys they often face physical violence and limited educational instruction, anecdotal evidence and focus group discussions suggest they also face significant unique challenges like sexual harassment and abuse, early marriage and pregnancy. This project will help nurture girls to contribute to social cohesion by creating safe, more democratic learning spaces. Common quality standards and oversight will ensure safer learning environments, protecting girls from violence and neglect and reducing drivers of conflict. The new harmonized national referral and case management mechanisms developed by the Ministry of Woman, Family and Social Solidarity, for incident reporting and case management on violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, will be disseminated and expanded to the education sector, including religious schools.

### **Implementation strategy**

The project envisages to strengthen national capacities to create a common set of values, knowledge, and skills, leading to increased social cohesion amongst students, teachers and religious and confessional school communities, a strengthened social contract, and increased positive peace, with the collaboration of religious institutions.

The leading national implementing partner will be the Ministry of Education, supported by the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Solidarity (MWFSC). These entities' role will be to ensure the alignment with the national peacebuilding priorities and to support the implementation process by ensuring synergy with the ongoing initiatives on peacebuilding, particularly from religious bodies/institutions, CSO and intra-community and national dialogue for peace.

Partnership agreements will be established with CSO to support the implementation of the project activities, as per the needs, such as applied research, training and awareness raising on peacebuilding values. All implementing partners will be subject to capacity assessment using UNICEF/UNESCO corporate checklist for CSOs/NGOs.

The development of the framework for the integration of religious schools into the national education system will be done in collaboration with the National Institute for Education Development (INDE), supported by experts. Technical assistance will be also provided to support the Ministry of Education to analyse the education for peace and social cohesion components of the national curriculum and existing guides and teaching support. The piloting components, including trainings and supervision, will be conducted in collaboration with civil society organizations, in particular.

The 'Do no harm principle' and "No one left behind principle" will be inherent in the project interventions including the monitoring system. This will be done by designing the capacity building activities in a participative manner, as well as through dialogue with the local authorities and key influential persons. The activities engaging children and adolescents will focus on using non-violent approaches. The project aims to also bring about a positive influence on how children deal with the situations in life, build resilience to use peaceful approaches for voicing their issues and become less vulnerable to manipulation.

### **How the proposal will address the root causes of conflict**

This proposal will address key conflict drivers in the following ways:

<b>Conflict Driver</b>	<b>Means of addressing the cause of conflict</b>
Weak government oversight of private schools, in particular religious private schools, which could weaken social cohesion and increase segregation <sup>32</sup>	Development of consistent curriculum expectations and strengthened oversight to ensure quality, peacebuilding curriculum being taught in all private religious schools.
Inequitable education investments in different religious, ethnic and geographic communities creates grievances	Development of a comprehensive framework for allocating public resources
Lack of harmonized certification process for all formal religious and confessional schools reduce students'	Framework for integration of religious schools will clearly outline requirements and types of schools in which students can receive certifications

<sup>32</sup> There is evidence that lack of government regulation and oversight of private schools, including private religious schools, often results in social segregation, stratification and inequality, with the richest most likely to afford the best (Nikolai and Helbig, 2021; Green, 2022; UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2021/2). Inequality and social segregation can create fertile ground on which grievances can build; and in the absence of incentives to avoid violence or address grievances, they can boil over into violence (Pathways for Peace, 2018).

[https://www.pathwaysforpeace.org/sites/pathways/files/2018-02/04CH4-PathwaysforPeace\\_CE\\_eBook.pdf](https://www.pathwaysforpeace.org/sites/pathways/files/2018-02/04CH4-PathwaysforPeace_CE_eBook.pdf)

<b>Conflict Driver</b>	<b>Means of addressing the cause of conflict</b>
ability to continue studies, increasing grievances	
Needs and interests of religious communities are not democratically addressed through dialogue or the provision of social services	Creation of a community dialogue consultations process with religious communities and educational authorities (informed by the situation analysis and Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices [KAP] study), including proposal for a permanent inclusive and gender-sensitive consultative mechanism, to increase communication and transparency
Lack of shared values and understanding of other communities due to lack of peacebuilding and citizenship education in religious and secular schools	Development and adaptation of citizenship and peacebuilding curriculum and resources (including peacebuilding narratives) to cultivate and foster shared values for positive peace among students, with a focus on students in religious and confessional schools
<i>Talibés</i> in <i>Qur'anic</i> centres do not acquire basic foundational learning skills, making it difficult for them to find employment, leading to economic exclusion and grievance	Development and experimentation of a roadmap to introduce foundational learning (literacy and numeracy), transferable skills and citizenship and peacebuilding education to <i>Qur'anic</i> centres
Lack of minimum protection standards and oversight in formal religious schools and <i>Qur'anic</i> centres create potential for violence against children and possibility of intolerance and the reproduction of violence.	Development and application of minimum standards for participating formal religious schools and <i>Qur'anic</i> centres, including referral systems, reducing cycles of violence against children and adolescents

## Theory of Change

IF the supply and demand factors leading to the increase in religious schools are investigated and understood and quality qualitative and quantitative data on religious schools is shared with stakeholders; and

IF this data is complemented by the voices and perspectives of all stakeholders in genuine dialogue to develop a comprehensive policy framework that provides clear guidance, standards, and regulations regarding the regulation of formal religious schools; and

IF the proposed framework for regulation of formal religious schools is piloted, tested and revised in consultation with stakeholders; and

IF the curriculum develops children's key competencies related to peacebuilding and global citizenship and is implemented across religious schools; and

IF dialogue processes are held with religious leaders, community leaders, civil society and the Islamic masters of non-formal Islamic learning spaces (*Qur'anic* centres) to better understand the objectives of and challenges facing *qur'anic* centres; and

IF a pathway for government recognition of *Qur'anic* centres is established (including minimum standards, code of conduct and key criteria); and

IF the recognition process for *Qur'anic* centres is piloted in at least two regions in Guinea-Bissau, and key findings and lessons learned are documented;

IF the teachers of formal and informal religious schools (including Qur'anic centres) are trained on how to respect the minimum standards and code of conduct and implement the harmonized peacebuilding and citizenship education curriculum using the contextualized teaching and learning materials;

THEN, more children in formal and informal religious schools will be equipped with a common set of values, knowledge and skills, leading to increased social cohesion, a strengthened social contract, and increased positive peace in Guinea-Bissau.

#### Assumptions

- There is sustained commitment from the Government of Guinea-Bissau to provide sustainable, impartial oversight of religious schools.
- Incentives including teaching and learning materials and trainings, combined with engagement with religious leaders and teachers, will encourage non-formal religious spaces (in particular *Qur'anic* centres) to voluntarily adopt minimum standards and codes of conduct.
- Formal religious schools recognize the role of the Ministry of Education in setting curricular and minimum standards and providing oversight of schools in Guinea-Bissau
- The Government and/or education sector technical and financial partners will provide assistance to non-formal religious spaces/*Qur'anic* centres that voluntarily adopt minimum standards and codes of conduct (such as teaching and learning materials, school feeding).

#### Key Project Components<sup>33</sup>

The project aims to equip children in religious schools with a shared set of values, knowledge, and skills that promote social cohesion, strengthen the social contract, and foster positive peace. This will be achieved by enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Education and religious education institutions to adopt a unified framework and harmonized curricula that integrate education for peace, social cohesion, and conflict prevention. This includes strengthening the capacity of religious teachers and schools directors. By aligning religious and formal education systems with these principles, the project seeks to create an inclusive, peaceful environment that empowers students to contribute to a more cohesive and resilient society.

The following section provides a description of the outcomes, outputs and the main activities envisioned:

**Outcome 1:** By 2027, the Government of Guinea-Bissau and stakeholders have increased capacity and commitment to promote safer, more inclusive learning environments in religious schools, and to instill a common set of values, knowledge, and skills, contributing to increased social cohesion, a strengthened social contract, and positive peace in Guinea-Bissau.

- **Output 1.1: Qualitative and quantitative data on religious schools and *Qur'anic* centres, including religious leaders, teachers' and parents' perceptions of public and religious education, are generated and used to inform community dialogue and the integration framework.**

This output will broadly consist of the following activities:

**Activity 1.1.1: Situation analysis on the implementation of existing policy instruments, the typologies of religious schools and the state of participation in different types of religious schools:** The activity involves a comprehensive assessment of various facets of religious schools, including their typologies and the state of participation in different types of religious schools, the existence and implementation of policy instruments related to the regulation and governance of religious schools, the broader social, cultural and political context

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<sup>33</sup> Annex C has a complete list of all outcomes, outputs, and indicators.

within which these religious schools operate, and the parental and community perceptions of religious schools, including their impact on peace and social cohesion. It will require a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as policy document reviews, field research, interviews, focus groups, and community dialogues, known as *djumbais*. The aim is to develop a nuanced understanding of the landscape of religious education, its role in society and within the education sector, and its impact on social cohesion and peace in Guinea-Bissau. The study will also look at the impact of religious schools in the education of girls and boys and whether the enrollment of boys in religious schools “frees” families’ budgets to send girls to regular schools. Furthermore, the situation analysis should conduct gender-specific data collection to analyse and better understand the differentiated ways that girls and boys experience education in formal and non-formal religious schools.

The situation analysis will be undertaken by an institution with expertise in mixed methods research and perception studies for education policy with practice and with expertise in this topic. The institution will be chosen through a competitive bidding, organized according to the UN rules and regulations. UNICEF and UNESCO will jointly guide the work of the institution. As for the organisation of key informant interviews, focus group and *djumbais*, which will be part of the process of generating the situational analysis, collaboration will be forged with the Ministry of Education, the local authorities, traditional and religious leaders and associations, civil society organizations. National and regional restitution workshops (1 national and 3 regional) will be organized to share the results of the situation analysis with key stakeholders. Feedback and suggestions for improvement generated through the workshops shall be integrated in the finalization of the situational analysis report.

**Activity 1.1.2: A focused situation analysis on talibés and parental attitudes and practices regarding Qur’anic centres in Guinea-Bissau.** Technical assistance will be provided to conduct a comprehensive situation analysis focused on *talibés* (children in *Qur’anic* centres) and parental attitudes and practices regarding *Qur’anic* education in Guinea-Bissau, with emphasis on how religious education affects families’ choices for education pathways for boys and girls. Issues related to gender – often overlooked in the existing data and literature on *Qur’anic* centres – will also be closely examined. For example, the school mapping of *Qur’anic* centres found that over 35 per cent of teachers and over 45 per cent of *talibé* students are female. However, the role and impact of female *Qur’anic* masters is not well known, nor are the differentiated ways that girls experience *Qur’anic* education understood. Qualitative research, including case studies, will help to shed light on these phenomena.

This activity will include a series of consultation meetings with key informants - such as community leaders, educators, and child welfare experts - to gather in-depth insights into the current state of *Qur’anic* schooling and its social implications. Following the analysis, national and regional workshops will be organized to present and discuss the findings with relevant stakeholders, ensuring the results are widely disseminated and understood. Finally, the outcomes of the situation analysis will be thoroughly documented, creating a detailed report that will serve as a foundational resource for future interventions and policy recommendations.

**Activity 1.1.3: Dissemination of the situation analysis results:** The activity will support the Ministry of Education in the dissemination of the results of the situation analysis through the layout and printing of the situation analysis report. The budget will cover the printing of about 250 copies and shall be distributed to the participants of the above-mentioned national and regional workshops, as well as other stakeholders. The possibility of making the digital copy of the report available on internet will be explored. An infographic or pamphlet will also be developed to facilitate understanding of key findings and support the dissemination of key messages.

**Activity 1.1.4: Provision of institutional assistance to support the identification of integration models from other countries:** To support and inform the development of a framework for integrating religious schools within the national education system in Guinea-Bissau, a study will be conducted to identify interesting models of integration from other countries, especially African countries with similar historical, socio-economic, religious and cultural contexts, but also examples from other regions of the world. The study will be undertaken by a consultant or an institution knowledgeable about this topic, to be chosen through a competitive bidding,

organized according to the UN rules and regulations. UNESCO and UNICEF will jointly guide the work of the consultant or institution. The study will focus on how these schools impact the education of girls and boys.

**Output 1.2: Based on the results of Output 1.1, a comprehensive framework for the integration of religious schools into the national education system is developed.**

This output consists of the following activities:

**Activity 1.2.1: Development of the framework for the integration of religious schools into the national education system:** The activity will involve the development of a framework for the integration of religious schools into the national education system, the methodology for piloting the framework, and the strategy to operationalize the framework. The initial version of the framework and the operationalization strategy will be informed by the results of the study on the existing integration models and the situation analysis. An institutional contractor to carry out the work will be identified through competitive bidding; and a contract shall be established with the identified institution to this end. The work of developing the framework, the piloting methodology, and the operationalization strategy will be informed by the outcomes of the various working sessions with the national technical team, the national workshop, and the piloting of the framework.

The framework should include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- Harmonization of the programme of study and the curricular contents (including the number of teaching hours per discipline)
- Clear guidance on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), including establishing minimum standards and strengthen school gender-based violence (SGBV) reporting mechanisms
- Human resourcing strategy, including the processes for (1) allocating publicly funded teachers to schools; (2) creating certification pathways for community teachers; (3) and strengthening gender equality to increase the number of female teachers and school directors
- Minimum standards for religious schools and *Qur'anic* centres are agreed upon, including incentives and sanction mechanisms
- Development of an oversight framework to monitor the curricular guidelines and minimum standard established by the framework.

**Activity 1.2.2: Development of minimum standards, a code of conduct for the functioning of *Qur'anic* centres and a pathway for government recognition of *Qur'anic* centres.** As part of the overall framework, a pathway for *Qur'anic* centres to work towards and attain a set of minimum standards and a code of conduct for the centre functioning will be developed. To this end, technical assistance will be provided to develop a set of minimum standards, a comprehensive code of conduct, and a pathway for the government's recognition of *Qur'anic* centres, all grounded in the findings of the situation analysis and KAP study. This process will involve close collaboration with religious leaders, educational authorities, and child protection experts to ensure that the framework aligns with both cultural practices and international child rights standards. Additionally, a series of training sessions will be conducted for *Qur'anic* centre masters, equipping them with the knowledge of child rights and child protection mechanisms to foster a safer, more supportive learning environment. These will include issues of gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women. To further enhance educational quality, technical assistance will be provided in the creation of a learning program tailored for *Qur'anic* centre children, with a specific focus on foundational literacy and numeracy, ensuring that these children are prepared for formal education alongside their religious studies. This comprehensive approach aims to strengthen the educational outcomes and protection of children in *Qur'anic* centres while facilitating their recognition within the broader national education system. Finally, a costed plan for scaling up the integration of *Qur'anic* centres meeting minimum requirements, including expanding school feeding, teacher allocation and school inspection services, will be completed.

**Activity 1.2.3: Organization of a national dialogue process in Guinea-Bissau to discuss the proposed integration framework:** A national dialogue process (including consultations at the community and regional level) will be designed and organized by the Ministry of Education or a partner to discuss the proposed integration framework, including the pathway for government recognition for *Qur'anic* centres. This process will include the active participation of women leaders. Similar national dialogues have been successfully organized in other countries in the region, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Senegal, and Chad. The dialogue will address concerns and suggestions for improvement regarding the proposed framework and gather suggestions for implementation. It will also present the proposed methodology for piloting the framework in 12 schools. The inputs gathered through this workshop will be considered in the revision of the proposed framework and the piloting methodology.

At the end of the workshop a consensus document will be drafted and signed by stakeholders outlining the roadmap and actions needed to finalize the adoption and implementation of the integration framework, including advocacy actions and technical support.

**Output 1.3: The Ministry of Education curriculum is adapted and implemented to foster peacebuilding and social cohesion in religious and confessional schools.**

This output consists of the following activities:

**Activity 1.3.1: Provision of technical assistance to support the review of existing curricula, teaching and learning materials and school practices:** The activity will support the review of the education for peace and social cohesion components of the national curriculum, teaching and learning materials and school practices in a sample of religious schools, which will inform the identification of the essential contents to be included in the learning programme of religious schools and the development of teaching and learning materials that are aligned with the identified essential contents. Curricula and teaching practices will also be analysed through a gender lens to assess the extent to which they are gender responsive and/or transformative, and gender equality and women's empowerment will be a key theme in the curriculum.

The level of education that will be targeted for this activity may be primary and lower secondary education considering the age groups covered in existing religious schools in Guinea-Bissau; however, it will be determined in consultation with the Ministry of Education in light of the pilot schools to be selected. This will involve establishing a contract with an institution to conduct the review of the curriculum, the identification of the essential contents and the development of adapted and contextualized teaching and learning materials through competitive bidding as per the rules and regulations of the UN. The institution will also design the methodology for piloting the adapted contextualized teaching and learning materials that address the identified essential curriculum contents in selected religious schools. The process of identification of the essential contents will involve the organization of review sessions with the national technical team.

**Activity 1.3.2 Organization of a national workshop to share the results of the review among key stakeholders to collect recommendations:** The activity will consist of supporting the Ministry of Education in the organization of a national workshop on education for peace and social cohesion to share and discuss the results of the curriculum and pedagogy review and the proposed methodology among key stakeholders to generate recommendations on how to strengthen the provision of education for peace and social cohesion contextualized and adapted to religious schools. The analysis, presentations and discussions will include an analysis of how the proposed curricular material will use a gender lens to understand and be to transform gender norms in communities. The workshop will also generate recommendations on the teaching and learning materials to be used in religious schools that will be developed through the project.

**Output 1.4: The piloting process strengthens knowledge and understanding regarding the extent to which components of the integration framework and peacebuilding curriculum are relevant, equitable, sustainable, efficient and effectively contribute to social cohesion.**

This output will include the following activities:

***Activity 1.4.1: Piloting of the elements of the proposed integration framework in selected religious schools:***

The activity will support the Ministry of Education or a partner organization in the organization of the piloting of the proposed framework, according to the methodology, taking into account the suggestions from the national workshop. The piloting will take place in 12 religious schools in the three target regions. The piloting exercise, which will be documented, will provide lessons learned and recommendations on how to refine the framework, its implementation process and operationalization strategy.

***Activity 1.4.2: Teachers and school inspectors' capacity building.*** The project will provide targeted training for teachers and inspectors to effectively support the piloting of the newly developed minimum standards, code of conduct, and pathway for the government recognition of *Qur'anic* centres. These training sessions will equip educators and inspectors with the knowledge and practical skills needed to implement the new frameworks in a way that aligns with both educational quality and child protection standards. Teachers will be trained on how to incorporate the minimum standards and adhere to the code of conduct in their daily interactions with students, while inspectors will receive guidance on how to assess compliance and provide ongoing support to *Qur'anic* centres during the pilot phase. This capacity building will include a strong gender component in three key areas: (1) how to ensure that schools meet the minimum standards to ensure that school environments are safe and empowering for girls and female staff; (2) support to strengthen gender-responsive and gender-transformative pedagogy in schools; (3) information on school gender-based violence (SGBV) and reporting mechanisms, such as the case management system, to ensure that instances of violence are reported.

This capacity-building effort aims to ensure the successful integration of these frameworks into *Qur'anic* centres, laying the groundwork for their formal recognition by the government and contributing to the overall improvement of the educational environment for children enrolled in these institutions.

***Activity 1.4.3 Piloting of the education for peace and social cohesion curricula and teaching and learning materials in selected religious schools:*** The education for peace and social cohesion curricula and teaching and learning materials will be piloted in 12 schools, the same schools identified activity 1.4.1. The piloting will consist of training teachers on the harmonized curriculum/essential contents on education for peace and social cohesion, including on how to develop complementary teaching and learning materials that facilitate the implementation of the harmonized curriculum/essential contents. The developed complementary teaching and learning materials will then be printed for use by teachers in the implementation of the harmonized curriculum/essential contents regarding education for peace and social cohesion. Because of their specific nature, a different approach will be used for Koranic centres. It will be necessary to adapt the tools for an audience with little or no literacy. An SBC approach will also be considered, with group sessions led by community volunteers, using local languages or Arabic. Subsequently, outreach sessions will be organized by the Ministry of Education to present the harmonized curriculum/essential contents and the teaching and learning materials to learners, teachers and parents in pilot schools. Furthermore, support will be provided to create a community of practice among the teachers at the pilot schools to share their experiences and know-how.

***Activity 1.4.4: Establishment of safe learning spaces in 8 communities.*** The project will involve the construction of modulable temporary learning spaces, designed to provide flexible and sustainable educational environments for communities in need. The aim is essentially to improve learning conditions in Koranic centres, so that the pilot can be properly implemented. In fact, Koranic centres do not use the learning space in the same way as conventional schools. Most of the time, the children are grouped together in the same area. For the pilot, it will be necessary to create separate spaces for groups of different ages and levels of education. These spaces will consist of three classrooms, each equipped with a photovoltaic energy system to ensure reliable access to electricity, supporting both lighting and the use of educational technology. The learning spaces will also contribute to create a more safety and protective environment for the children. It will also be a means of creating greater acceptance and ownership of the intervention by the Koranic masters. In addition to the classrooms, the

learning spaces will be complemented by essential WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities, including latrines and water points, to promote a safe and hygienic environment for students and teachers. This integrated approach aims to enhance the learning experience by addressing both educational infrastructure and basic sanitation needs, contributing to improved health and well-being while ensuring continuity of learning in underserved areas.

**Activity 1.4.5: Equipment and materials for teachers and students.** As part of the piloting process for the newly developed minimum standards, code of conduct, and recognition framework, the project will provide essential equipment and materials to support both children and teachers at eight *Qur'anic* centres across four regions in Guinea-Bissau. This will include teaching materials such as textbooks, educational kits, and learning resources that align with the standards and curriculum being piloted, as well as tools to facilitate a more interactive and effective learning environment. Additionally, students will receive age-appropriate learning materials to support their educational progress, particularly in foundational literacy and numeracy. Teachers will be provided with resources to enhance their pedagogical practices, including training manuals, reference materials, and classroom supplies. Information materials on SGBV reporting systems and the rights of students to study in safe learning environments will also be developed and distributed. This provision of equipment and materials is crucial to ensure the successful implementation of the pilot, fostering an environment where both teachers and students can fully engage with the new frameworks and achieve improved educational outcomes.

**Activity 1.4.6: School feeding for children and teachers.** To support the successful implementation of the piloting process for the minimum standards, code of conduct, and recognition framework in *Qur'anic* centres, the project will provide school feeding for both children and teachers across four regions in Guinea-Bissau. Nutritious meals will be provided to ensure that students have the energy and focus needed for effective learning throughout the day, especially in areas where access to regular meals may be limited. Teachers will also receive meals to support their well-being and ensure their full participation in the program. This provision of food not only addresses the immediate nutritional needs of the school community but also encourages school attendance and participation, contributing to a positive learning environment. By ensuring that children and teachers are well-nourished, the project aims to improve educational outcomes and enhance the overall success of the piloting phase for the *Qur'anic* school recognition process. To ensure the sustainability of the school feeding, the project will aim to foster local ownership and build capacity of key stakeholders within the pilot centres to sustain the initiative. The project will work with the National Directorate of School Feeding in the Ministry of Education to plan and manage the school feeding activities; in addition, collaborations with organizations like the World Food Programme (WFP) and/or Catholic Relief Services (CRS) will be explored to take advantage of their valuable expertise in homegrown school feeding programs, which integrate local food systems and engage communities. The initiative will raise awareness of teachers, administrators and communities on the importance of nutritious meals for children's education and teachers' wellbeing and provide opportunities to develop strategies for sustaining the initiative, such as partnerships with local farmers, school gardens, and nutrition-focused fundraising. Additionally, integrating health and nutrition education into the curriculum could reinforce these practices, ensuring the long-term impact of the initiative while promoting a cultural shift towards sustained nutritional support.

**Activity 1.4.7: Strengthen the monitoring and supervision capacities.** To strengthen the Ministry of Education's capacity to supervise and monitor the piloting of the minimum standards, code of conduct, and pathways for the government recognition of *Qur'anic* centres, the project will provide essential equipment, including 12 motorcycles, 1 vehicle, and 20 tablets. The motorcycles will enable education inspectors and field staff to travel efficiently to remote *Qur'anic* centres across various regions, ensuring regular and effective supervision. The vehicle will serve as a mobile base for more extensive monitoring activities and transportation of materials to support the piloting process. Additionally, the tablets will be provided to facilitate data collection, reporting, and real-time communication, enabling education officials to track progress, assess compliance with the new standards, and provide timely feedback to the schools. This equipment will significantly enhance the Ministry's ability to effectively oversee the pilot phase, ensuring the successful implementation of the new frameworks and supporting the eventual government recognition of *Qur'anic* centres.

**Activity 1.4.8: Evaluation and documentation of the piloting process.** The project will include a comprehensive evaluation and documentation of the piloting process for the minimum standards, code of conduct, and

recognition framework for *Qur'anic* centres. This will involve systematically assessing the implementation of the new frameworks across the pilot schools, gathering feedback from key stakeholders—including teachers, students, education inspectors, and community leaders—and analyzing the effectiveness of the initiatives in improving educational quality and governance. The evaluation will focus on key outcomes such as the extent of compliance with the established standards, the impact on teaching and learning, and the overall feasibility of the recognition process. Additionally, the entire piloting process will be thoroughly documented, with detailed reports capturing lessons learned, challenges encountered, and best practices identified. This documentation will serve as a valuable resource for refining the frameworks, informing the operationalization strategy and future interventions, and guiding the eventual scaling and formal recognition of *Qur'anic* centres within the national education system.

## Project Targeting

As mentioned earlier, the project has a national scope in that its overall goal is to social cohesion and peaceful existence through the development of the framework for integrating religious schools into the national education system, which religious schools nation-wide will be subject to, and the piloting of the harmonized curriculum contents related to the education for peace and social cohesion and teaching and learning materials adapted to the use by religious schools. To test the appropriateness, relevance and feasibility of the framework as well as the harmonized curriculum contents and teaching and learning materials, the project will conduct the pilot-testing in selected 12 pilot schools in 8 communities found in the three target regions, namely SAB, Gabu and Bafata. The three regions will be targeted so as to be able to experiment with the piloting in both rural and urban settings. Gabu and Bafata regions have high proportions of Muslim residents, thus providing a good ground for piloting the framework in Islamic education institutions. SAB has the largest Christian community in the country. The selection of target schools and communities within the three regions, including both Christian and Islamic educational institutions, will be made in consultation with the key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Investigation (MENESIC), the local authorities, Catholic dioceses, evangelical associations, the National Association of *Qur'anic* Teachers, and relevant civil society organisations.

### III. Project management and coordination (4 pages max)

#### a) Recipient organizations and implementing partners:

Agency	Total budget in previous calendar year	Key sources of budget (which donors etc.)	Location of in-country offices	No. of existing staff, of which in project zones	Highlight any existing expert staff of relevance to project
<b>Convening Organization:</b> <b>UNICEF</b>	UNICEF Guinea-Bissau's total 2023 budget was USD 9.6 million.	UNICEF has two main sources of funding: (1) UNICEF Regular Resources, which come from country contributions and UNICEF fundraising;	Bissau	The UNICEF Guinea-Bissau Country Office (GBCO) has 52 staff, including 7 international and 45	UNICEF has five full-time staff in its Access to Learning section in Guinea-Bissau (a P-4 Chief, three National Officers and one PA), and the Child Protection Manager will also provide technical
ENVISIONED Implementing partners:  Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Scientific					

Agency	Total budget in previous calendar year	Key sources of budget (which donors etc.)	Location of in-country offices	No. of existing staff, of which in project zones	Highlight any existing expert staff of relevance to project
Investigation; Ministry of Women, Family and Social Solidarity; InterPeace,		<p>and (2) Other Resources (regular and emergency), which fund specific projects.</p> <p>In 2023 and 2024, UNICEF Guinea-Bissau's most important OR funders include:</p> <p>The Global Fund, the French Development Agency (AFD), GAVI, the World Bank</p>		<p>national staff.</p> <p>In addition, GBCO has 2 international UN Volunteers and 4 national UN Volunteers,</p>	<p>support. In addition, the UNICEF regional office has technical experts in Education, Child Protection, and Gender who will provide support to project implementation.</p>
<b>Recipient Organization:</b> UNESCO	USD 278,200 at the country level (PBF project: Political Stabilization and Reform through Confidence Building and Inclusive Dialogue)	UNESCO has two main sources of budget: (1) assessed contributions, which are mandatory contributions due from Member States by virtue of their membership; (2) voluntary contributions, which are contributions from various donors in a country, including ministries, municipalities and organizations in	Dakar (non-resident agency)	80	UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa based in Dakar, Senegal, has education specialist staff with expertise in policy and sector planning and analysis, curriculum, teacher training and non-formal education, education for peace and global citizenship. The Regional Office is in the process of hiring a gender specialist who will be able to support the gender mainstreaming of
Implementing partners: National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO International Bureau for Education (IBE), Ministry of Education			Note: An antenna office is to be established soon in Bissau to manage an upcoming project for Guinea Bissau funded by the European Union		

Agency	Total budget in previous calendar year	Key sources of budget (which donors etc.)	Location of in-country offices	No. of existing staff, of which in project zones	Highlight any existing expert staff of relevance to project
		<p>the form of cash or non-cash assets in addition to the assessed contributions</p> <p>As far as the projects in Guinea Bissau are concerned, they are funded by PBF and assessed contributions</p>			<p>the project in 2025. In addition, technical support in gender mainstreaming is available from the Division of Gender Equality situated at UNESCO Headquarters. Furthermore, UNESCO has specialized education institutes such as the International Bureau for Education (UNESCO-IBE) based in Geneva).</p>

Both UNICEF and UNESCO plan to partner with local civil society organizations to implement key components of the *Strengthening social cohesion in Guinea-Bissau by aligning and integrating religious schools with the national education system* project. For example, UNICEF envisions working with the organizations Interpeace and Voz di Paz to support community dialogue processes around the development of the integration framework and to assist with community-based monitoring.

**b) Project management and coordination:**

The day-to-day management of this joint program rests with a Project Coordinator – a national programme specialist, level NO-3, specialized in peacebuilding and leadership skills development to be hired for this purpose and placed in UNICEF's Bissau office. A national Project Officer, NO-2, will also be recruited to represent UNESCO at country level, to ensure timely and effective mobilization of UNESCO's expertise and inputs to the project, and to provide support to the overall project coordination and implementation. They will also be based in Bissau.

In addition to the Project Coordinator and Project Officer, technical staff from UNICEF's Access to Learning and Child Protection sections based in Guinea-Bissau will contribute to project implementation. This includes the Chief Access to Learning (P-4), two Education Officers (NO-B), the Child Protection Manager (NO-4), and the Child Protection Officer (NO-2). The team of UNESCO Regional Office based in Dakar consisting of education specialists in education for peace and citizenship, non-formal education and education planning will closely communicate and coordinate with the on-site colleagues so as to be able to provide timely support for project implementation.

The Project Coordinator will lead the project management and coordination of the project. A steering committee with representatives from the Ministry of Education and other key stakeholders will be established.

*Recruitment strategy* – UNICEF and UNESCO will publish these opportunities on their websites, through traditional and social media and with diaspora communities in Portugal to mobilize as many applications as possible from qualified, motivated candidates. UNICEF will also hold an information session in Bissau on the opportunity to raise awareness and to answer any questions from interested candidates.

A Joint Coordination and Implementation Team (JCIT) will be established engaging other professional staff from both organizations, such as Education chief, Education and Child Protection Specialists, Program Associates, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists, Communication Specialist and Gender focal point.

The JCIT will be in charge for the supervision of the project implementation process, including joint field missions for programmatic visits and project overall quality assurance and reporting, and for technical backstopping and programmatic guidance to the Project Coordinator. The Project Board, composed by UNICEF/UNESCO and implementing partners' representatives, will be established to perform the duties and tasks assigned. It will meet once per quarter.

Each Recipient UN Organization (RUNO) will be accountable for implementing each assigned output/activity, according to its own programmatic and financial structures. More specifically, financial oversight and quality assurance functions will be managed and undertaken by each RUNO.

At regional and community level, the implementation approach will include collaborations with local civil society organizations, Committee for Management of the Tabanca (village communities) and religious leaders. The project will hire a community-based monitoring officer, who will be part of the JCIT, supporting the design and implementation of community-based monitoring of the project.

RUNOs will be responsible for complying with all narrative and financial reporting requirements established for this project, in addition to any internal agency reporting requirements. RUNOs shall submit an Annual Work Plan to the PBF Secretariat by 31 January for each year of the project. UNICEF will be responsible for the submission of the report.

Under Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers Framework (HACT), in use since 2016, spot check and programmatic visit to assess implementing partner compliance with corporate procedures in the project management will be held to mitigate fiduciary risks and timely undertake remedial actions throughout the project implementation.

**c) *Explicitly indicate how the project implementation team will ensure sufficient gender or youth expertise.***

The project implementation team will ensure sufficient gender and youth expertise by leveraging UNICEF and UNESCO's technical experts in these areas. First, UNICEF Guinea-Bissau has a specialized Adolescent Development and Engagement Specialist who will support the project implementation to develop youth sensitive dialogues and research. In addition, the Child Protection section has considerable skills and expertise working on gender issues and violence against children, including in school environments. This project will leverage this expertise, particularly in the work to develop minimum standards pathways for *Qur'anic* centres. The country Gender Focal Point will also provide technical support and review all documents to ensure that the programmatic approach is gender responsive and attuned to the differentiated ways that religious education and exclusion positively and negatively affect girls and boys. Second, both UNICEF and UNESCO will draw on considerable technical expertise in regional offices and headquarters to ensure that interventions respond to the needs of gender and youth. For example, UNICEF has designated Gender and Adolescent Advisors in the West and Central Africa Regional Office in Dakar who provide technical support when needed. UNESCO regional Office for West Africa based in Dakar, Senegal, is currently in the process of recruiting a gender specialist who will be able to support gender mainstreaming efforts of the present project in 2025. Further technical support

on gender mainstreaming will be available from the Division of Gender Equality situated at UNESCO Headquarters.

*d) Explain project coordination and oversight arrangements and ensure link with PBF Secretariat if it exists.*

Project oversight mechanisms will include a steering committee, chaired by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Investigation. Other members of the steering committee will include the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Solidarity (Institute of Women and Children (IMC)), the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), the National Association of Parents and Caregivers (ANPEE), and other stakeholders civil society organizations to be decided at a later date after discussions with government counterparts. In addition, to secure the buy-in of key development partners, UNICEF and UNESCO will suggest to the government that the World Bank and GPE are invited to participate in the steering committee.

The PBF Secretariat will accompany project implementation and provide technical support. The PBF M&E Specialist will work with the UN M&E Group and project implementers to ensure a workable Results Framework is in place and that it has the proper tie-ins or complementary to the UNSDCF and other UN strategic documents. If necessary, the PBF Secretariat will provide capacity building support to PBF projects with regards to their M&E systems.

In addition, in the framework of the joint program, the PBF Secretariat and local authorities will participate in scheduled verification missions. These missions will ensure national ownership and will enable to analyze, discuss and increase field coordination between all participating actors as well as to increase coordination between all joint project actors at field level. It will also enable a better understanding, coherence and complementary actions among all actors, and thereby better overall efficiency of project operational activities.

Finally, the PBF Secretariat will also be invited to participate in technical meetings and steering committee meetings.

**e)** Fill out project implementation readiness checklist in **Annex A.1** and attach key staff TORs.

**f) Risk management** – Identify project-specific risks and how they will be managed, including the approach to updating risks and making project adjustments. Include a Do No Harm approach and risk mitigation strategy.

Project specific risk	Risk level (low, medium, high)	Mitigation strategy (including Do No Harm considerations)
Political crises impede project implementation.	High	Work at decentralized level with governmental structures and increase partnerships with CSOs to reduce impact of changes in senior leadership at the Ministry of Education.  Increase technical expertise (human resources) to key government implementing partners, such as the Ministry of Education.

		Continue to build broad-based, cross-party political support for integrating religious schools.
Islamic teachers/masters of <i>Qur'anic centres</i> do not participate in the project and view it as a threat to their livelihoods	Medium	<p>Establish strong relationships with networks and associations representing <i>Qur'anic centres</i>, such as the National Association of <i>Qur'anic Schools</i>.</p> <p>Engage in extensive dialogue with stakeholders, including Islamic masters, to understand their concerns and demonstrate respect.</p> <p>Create positive incentives for participation, such as teaching and learning supplies.</p>
Religious leaders, parents and communities refuse to let their schools and children participate in the project.	Medium	Undertake comprehensive social and behaviour change communication (SBC) with communities and leaders to understand their concerns, engage in dialogue and explain the objectives of the project.
Increased publicity and awareness of the project has the unintended consequence of motivating some parents to remove girls from religious schools and/or non-formal <i>Qur'anic</i> learning spaces to avoid perceived negative influence of government/ UN engagement	Medium	Engage in strong communication and engagement in communities regarding the project and the right to education, including an SBC strategy that engages local religious leaders and is contextualized to religious beliefs to increase trust.
There are high levels of reported cases on disciplinary violence, abuse, and exploitation, including forced begging, and child labor, involving both boys and girls.	Medium	<p>Strengthen awareness raising on positive discipline and prevention of violence, abuse and exploitation, including sexual abuse, among the religious school community.</p> <p>Strengthen awareness and information on violence prevention and referral pathways among children and adolescents that attend religious schools.</p> <p>Dedicated specific awareness sessions on PSEA among school community and students, especially girls.</p>

Children and adolescents, including girls, will be surveyed regarding whether they have experienced or witnessed violence in formal and informal learning spaces. This sensitive information could put them at risk if questions are asked insensitively or if the responses are not kept confidential	Medium	<p>Ensure that ethical protocols are in place and ensure that the purpose of the data collection is explained to communities and children before the survey, with consent obtained and families and children having the right not to participate.</p> <p>Ensure that questions are child sensitive; work with M&amp;E experts at UNICEF Regional Office to get feedback on proposed survey.</p> <p>Ensure that data protection protocols are in place and that data is not linked to identifying information (name, etc)</p>
Skepticism and criticism from education stakeholders regarding supporting non-formal and informal religious schools when formal public schools face several challenges, including underfunding, poor infrastructure, weak oversight and poor learning outcomes	High	<p>Undertake extensive dialogue and consultation with stakeholders to understand their concerns and demonstrate respect, and to build consensus around the importance and benefits of supporting religious schools' integration in the national education system (strengthened national education system and strengthened social cohesion between religious communities)</p> <p>Involve stakeholders in the development of a feasible, phased strategy for operationalizing the framework that adequately addresses sustainability issues and that integrates strong consultation components for promoting buy-in and adherence</p>
The Ministry of Education does not have the technical or administrative capacity to support the implementation of the project	Medium	Work with the Ministry of Education and other implementing partners to develop a detailed workplan at the outset of the project. This should assist with planning, particularly in Ministry directorates where staff

		resources are scarce due to competing priorities.  In addition, areas requiring additional technical support will be identified.
The recruitment of project staff and partners/consultants providing technical assistance is delayed, impeding project implementation and threatening the successful completion of the project.	Medium	Establish a clear recruitment and procurement plan at the outset of the project so that all project staff and technical assistance needed for the launch of the project are on board within the first three months of the project.
Religious schools and students participating in the project may be stigmatized or seen as 'inferior' or nests for 'extremists' by other religious and ethnic communities.	Medium	Develop a clear communications and visibility plan regarding the project to clarify its objectives and share with traditional and local leaders in participating regions, as well as regional education staff.
Formal religious schools and <i>Qur'anic</i> learning centres feel coerced to participate in the programme due fears of being shut down or punished by the government if they don't take part.	Low	Participation in the pilot will be voluntary; this will be clearly communicated to all potential participating schools and informal <i>Qur'anic</i> centres

**g) Monitoring and evaluation:**

The Monitoring and Evaluation plan will include regular monitoring activities, to be conducted jointly with project partners. The project coordination team will have the overall responsibility for data collection from the project activities in close consultation with partners, including close collaboration with the Monitoring and Evaluation Officers of the partner agencies. UNICEF has an NO-3 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist in Guinea-Bissau who will support monitoring and evaluation activities under the project. In addition, the UNICEF and UNESCO Regional Offices in Dakar provides on-demand technical support as needed. The Project Coordination team, the RUNOs and the PBF Secretariat will work together to organize regular monitoring activities. Much of the travel costs itemized in the budget are to cover expenses related to monitoring beyond the capital Bissau. The time of professional staff is an in-kind contribution of the Agencies.

- **Project baseline:** This will be established within three months of the start of the project through a survey. The information gathered will inform the various indicators identified in the Monitoring matrix.
- **Field Monitoring Visits:** Regular monitoring visits will be carried out based on a plan to visit the project sites and collect feedback from the beneficiaries to assess progress and identify possible bottlenecks and solutions. Quarterly reviews will be conducted with the local authorities participating in the project coordination and implementation.
- **Community-based Monitoring:** The project will partner with a civil-society organisation to support the design and implementation of community-based monitoring. This partner will work hand in hand with the project team members and the Monitoring and Evaluation Officers of the partner organizations. This partner will support the regular collection of quantitative and qualitative data and observations at

the community level that will allow the project to assess the implementation status and the quality, relevance, timeliness and inclusiveness of project activities.

- **Independent evaluation:** An independent evaluation carried out at the end of the project to appraise its achievements and gauge its overall effects.

The monitoring and evaluation activities will be approximately 9% (6% for monitoring) of the total costs of the project.

**Reports:** Half-yearly and Annual Reports will be provided to PBF. A final report will be provided at the end of the project implementation. The reports will be jointly prepared by the RUNOs.

#### *h) Project exit strategy/ sustainability*

National ownership will be ensured by facilitating the participation of all stakeholders in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating activities. A gender-sensitive approach will be promoted throughout the project, ensuring girls' and women's inclusion in key phases. The gender-sensitive approach will be applied in various project activities including the situation analysis of the state of religious schools and qur'anic centres, analysis of parental attitudes and gendered practices of placing children in religious schools, development of minimum standards and code of conducts taking into account the differing needs of girls and boys, production of teaching and learning materials that are gender sensitive, portraying positive images of both girls and boys, inclusion of women and men, girls and boys in consultations and dialogues to be carried out within the framework of the project.

Additionally, national sustainability will be enhanced regionally by supporting the strengthening of governance frameworks and civil society organizations at both the national and regional levels. The strategy for operationalizing the framework for integrating religious schools in the education system, including government recognition of *Qur'anic* centres meeting minimum standards, will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, accompanied by a costed, phased plan that addresses sustainability issues and outlines actions and investments needed to bring the strategy to scale, such as expanding school feeding for these spaces, training and allocating teachers and increasing inspection and oversight.

UNICEF and UNESCO will work within existing education sector coordination structures, such as the Local Education Group (LEG) and the development partners group to support the enactment of framework as a legally binding education sector policy. This will ensure the sustainability of the framework and facilitate the inclusion of funding for the continued integration of religious education into the formal education system by opening up funding opportunities with the GPE and the World Bank, the most important education sector donors in Bissau. This PBF project will develop the policy framework and a "proof of concept" to scale-up the integration of all religious educational institutions and learning spaces into the national education system. By engaging in high quality data collection and sustained engagement with communities and stakeholders, including religious leaders and religious educators, the project will generate both the evidence needed to understand the challenges and constraints and issues to be addressed, and create the conditions for integrating and harmonizing religious education through sustained dialogue and consensus-building. The project will develop tools to support this integration, such as minimum standards and contextualized peacebuilding curriculum, providing a costed model that can be scaled to all religious schools.

This project will be leveraged as an entry-point for further investments by donors, development partners, and the Government of Guinea-Bissau around education and education system strengthening for social cohesion and peacebuilding. Linkages will be made with complementary projects, such as the EU-funded DIRECT<sup>34</sup>

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34 DIRECT stands for "Développement, à l'Insertion et au Renforcement des Compétences Techniques en Guinée Bissau."

project, a five-year project on strengthening technical and vocational education and training for youth implemented by the Government of Guinea-Bissau with UNESCO's support starting in the first quarter of 2025, to create opportunities and pathways for students completing religious schools - including *Qur'anic* centres - to continue to develop technical and vocational skills, reducing their economic and social exclusion. Given that UNESCO oversees the implementation of DIRECT, the linkage with this project could be explored incessantly through sharing of the projects' implementation status and identification of potential opportunities for synergy, at regional and national levels. In addition, the project's interventions are well aligned with the Partnership Compact between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Global Partnership for Education (the largest donor in the Guinea-Bissau education sector), which focuses on increasing access to quality basic education. The "Strengthening social cohesion in Guinea-Bissau by aligning and integrating religious schools with the national education system" project will create opportunities to scale-up further and institutionalize policies and frameworks to better govern private and religious schools, to scale-up peacebuilding curricula and pedagogies, and to expand minimum standards and oversight of *Qur'anic* centres. In particular, the System Capacity Grant (SCG) funding window, valued at approximately US\$ 2.2 million for Guinea-Bissau in the next funding cycle, can be used to strengthen the integration of private and religious schools in the new Education Sector Plan and planning cycles, such as Joint Sectoral Reviews for the education sector.

Codifying and clarifying the government's role in religious and confessional schools will also lead to more equitable, consistent and sustainable investment. The government's main investment in the education sector is through teacher salaries; therefore, clarifying the criteria regarding the placement of publicly funded teachers in non-state schools will likely lead to increased sustained investment in under-resourced schools, while also ensuring minimum standards are being met.

Partnerships and engagement will be needs-based, focusing on beneficiaries and maximizing local-level initiatives for change. Long-term engagement and sustainable outcomes and outputs will be supported to ensure transparency and accountability, raise sound risk management, explore innovative engagement models and best practices to achieve better outcomes for beneficiaries, and enhance communication and field visits with main partners and potential donors.

In addition, a communications and visibility plan will be developed to provide information on the project to key stakeholders; roundtables and public events targeting donors and development partners such as the GPE, the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and others will be help to provide information and analysis regarding the project's progress.

In summary, a key objective is that this initial investment creating (1) a strengthened enabling environment for the integration of religious schools, including a comprehensive policy framework and genuine, good-faith dialogue with stakeholders; and (2) a tested model with tools and strategies to integrated religious schools, will crowd-in further investment from the Government of Guinea-Bissau and development partners to finance the comprehensive integration of all religious schools and informal religious learning spaces in Guinea-Bissau into the public education structure.

#### **IV. Project budget**

Provide brief additional information on projects costs, highlighting any specific choices that have underpinned the budget preparation, especially for personnel, travel or other indirect project support, to demonstrate value for money for the project. Proposed budget for all projects must include sufficient funds for an independent evaluation. Proposed budget for projects involving non-UN direct recipients must include funds for independent audit. Fill out **Annex A.2** on project value for money.

Please note that in nearly all cases, the Peacebuilding Fund transfers project funds in a series of performance-based tranches. PBF's standard approach is to transfer project funds in two tranches for UN recipients and three tranches for non-UN recipients, releasing second and third tranches upon demonstration that performance benchmarks have been met. All projects include the following two standard performance

benchmarks: 1) at least 75% of funds from the first tranche have been committed, and 2) all project reporting obligations have been met. In addition to these standard benchmarks and depending on the risk rating or other context-specific factors, additional benchmarks may be indicated for the release of second and third tranches.

Please specify below any context-specific factors that may be relevant for the release of second and third tranches. These may include the successful conduct of elections, passage of key legislation, the standing up of key counterpart units or offices, or other performance indicators that are necessary before project implementation may advance. Within your response, please reflect how performance-based tranches affect project sequencing considerations.

Fill out two tables in the Excel budget **Annex D**.

In the first Excel budget table in Annex D, please include the percentage towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) for every activity. Also provide a clear justification for every GEWE allocation (e.g. training will have a session on gender equality, specific efforts will be made to ensure equal representation of women etc.).

	UNICEF	UNESCO	Totals
<b>1. Staff and other personnel</b>	\$ 288,123	\$ 188,078	<b>\$ 476,201</b>
<b>2. Supplies, Commodities, Materials</b>	\$ 100,000	\$ -	<b>\$ 100,000</b>
<b>3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture (including Depreciation)</b>	\$ 55,800	\$ 1,900	<b>\$ 57,700</b>
<b>4. Contractual services</b>	\$ 265,200	\$ 215,000	<b>\$ 480,200</b>
<b>5. Travel</b>	\$ 88,290	\$ 43,047	<b>\$ 131,337</b>
<b>6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts</b>	\$ 746,000	\$ -	<b>\$ 746,000</b>
<b>7. General Operating and other Costs</b>	\$ 280,011	\$ 65,000	<b>\$ 345,011</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,823,424</b>	<b>\$ 513,025</b>	<b>\$ 2,336,449</b>
<b>7% Indirect Costs</b>	<b>\$ 127,640</b>	<b>\$ 35,912</b>	<b>\$ 163,551</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,951,064</b>	<b>\$ 548,937</b>	<b>\$ 2,500,000</b>

Performance- Based Tranche Breakdown				
	UNICEF	UNESCO	TOTAL	Tranche %
<b>First Tranche:</b>	\$682,872	\$192,128	<b>\$875,000</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Second Tranche:</b>	\$682,872	\$192,128	<b>\$875,000</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Third Tranche:</b>	\$585,319	\$164,681	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,951,063</b>	<b>\$548,937</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>	

#### Annex A.1: Checklist of project implementation readiness

Question			Comment
	Yes	No	
<b>Planning</b>			
1. Have all implementing partners been identified? If not, what steps remain and proposed timeline		X	<p>UNICEF and UNESCO have a robust set of policies in place to identify and select implementing partners in a fair, transparent manner that guarantees value for money and reduces potential risk.</p> <p>When the project is launched, UNICEF will launch a call for proposals for interested partners to manifest their interest and submit proposals for the identified technical work. This will happen in the first month of the project; partners should be selected by the end of the first quarter of project implementation. The remaining step is to develop ToRs for the call for proposals.</p>
2. Have TORs for key project staff been finalized and ready to advertise? <u>Please attach to the submission</u>	X		
3. Have project sites been identified? If not, what will be the process and timeline		X	<p>The project sites will be identified in initial discussions with the Ministry of Education after the official launch of the project. The identification process will leverage qualitative and quantitative data regarding religious schools and will be completed in the first three months of the project.</p>
4. Have local communities and government offices been consulted/sensitized on the existence of the project? Please state when this was done or when it will be done.	X		<p>Multiple rounds of consultations have taken place with government partners and local religious and community leaders. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>September 2023</i>: focus groups with Islamic teachers, religious leaders, parents' representatives, students</li> <li>- <i>July 2024</i>: Workshop to present the proposal to key civil society partners, including teachers'</li> </ul>

			unions, CSOs, religious leaders and educators, and the Ministry of Education - <i>October 2024</i> : bilateral meetings with senior leadership in the Ministry of Education to discuss the final proposal
5. Has any preliminary analysis/ identification of lessons learned/ existing activities been done? If not, what analysis remains to be done to enable implementation and proposed timeline?		X	N/A
6. Have beneficiary criteria been identified? If not, what will be the process and timeline.	X		Direct project beneficiaries include ministry of education officials, school directors, teachers, religious leaders and <i>Qur'anic</i> masters. Indirect project beneficiaries will be the children and adolescents studying at religious schools.
7. Have any agreements been made with the relevant Government counterparts relating to project implementation sites, approaches, Government contribution?	X		No formal agreements have been made. However, several rounds of consultations with the Ministry of Education have taken place and they agreed with the objectives of the project and the proposed geographic sites.
8. Have clear arrangements been made on project implementing approach between project recipient organizations?	X		UNICEF and UNESCO have discussed and agreed on a common project implementation approach.
9. What other preparatory activities need to be undertaken before actual project implementation can begin and how long will this take?	N/A		
<b>Gender</b>			
10. Did UN gender expertise inform the design of the project (e.g. has a gender adviser/expert/focal point or UN Women colleague provided input)?	X		The UNICEF Guinea-Bissau gender focal point reviewed the proposal and gave feedback; the proposal was also shared with UNICEF's Regional Gender Advisor for review and feedback.
11. Did consultations with women and/or youth organizations inform the design of the project?	X		
12. Are the indicators and targets in the results framework disaggregated by sex and age?	X		
13. Does the budget annex include allocations towards GEWE for all activities and clear justifications for GEWE allocations?	X		

## Annex A.2: Checklist for project value for money

Question	Yes	No	Project Comment
1. Does the project have a budget narrative justification, which provides additional project specific information on any major budget choices or higher than usual staffing, operational or travel costs, so as to explain how the project ensures value for money?		X	The project budget does not have higher than usual staffing, operational or travel costs: the costs are comparable with those of similar interventions in Guinea Bissau. In terms of major budget choices, consideration has been given to budgeting amounts that will enable sufficient levels of stakeholder consultations so as to capture their opinions and perspectives and to ensure their ownership and buy-in of the project activities and their results.
2. Are unit costs (e.g. for travel, consultancies, procurement of materials etc) comparable with those used in similar interventions (either in similar country contexts, within regions, or in past interventions in the same country context)? If not, this needs to be explained in the budget narrative section.	X		
3. Is the proposed budget proportionate to the expected project outcomes and to the scope of the project (e.g. number, size and remoteness of geographic zones and number of proposed direct and indirect beneficiaries)? Provide any comments.	X		
4. Is the percentage of staffing and operational costs by the Receiving UN Agency and by any implementing partners clearly visible and reasonable for the context (i.e. no more than 20% for staffing, reasonable operational costs, including travel and direct operational costs) unless well justified in narrative section?	X		
5. Are staff costs proportionate to the amount of work required for the activity? And is the project using local rather than international staff/expertise wherever possible? What is the justification for use of international staff, if applicable?	X		
6. Does the project propose purchase of materials, equipment and infrastructure for more than 15% of the budget? If yes, please state what measures are being taken to ensure value for money in the procurement process and their maintenance/ sustainable use for peacebuilding after the project end.		X	Project materials, equipment and infrastructure will be procured through UNICEF's Operations section, which has robust policies in place to ensure value for money.
7. Does the project propose purchase of a vehicle(s) for the project? If yes, please provide justification as to why existing vehicles/ hire vehicles cannot be used.	X		The National Directorate of Basic Education in the Ministry of Education does not currently have a car,

			which severely limits their ability to support the implementation of the project via dialogues with key communities and monitoring of the project.
			Given the poor state of roads and that two of the geographic regions of implementation - Bafata and Gabu - are in the east of the country, a vehicle is needed to support implementation.
8. Do the implementing agencies or the UN Mission bring any additional non-PBF source of funding/in-kind support to the project? Please explain what is provided. And if not, why not.	X		<p>Non-PBF funding will be used to support and complement project funding. Besides the Chief Access to Learning, Education Officer and Protection Officer, the Child Protection Manager and Education Specialists from both UNICEF and UNESCO will provide technical support to the project.</p> <p>In addition, the monitoring and evaluation system for the project will be based on UNICEF's mWater database, which is supported with supplementary funding.</p>

## **Annex B.1: Project Administrative arrangements for UN Recipient Organizations**

*(This section uses standard wording – please do not remove)*

The UNDP MPTF Office serves as the Administrative Agent (AA) of the PBF and is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, the transfer of funds to Recipient UN Organizations, the consolidation of narrative and financial reports and the submission of these to the PBSO and the PBF donors. As the Administrative Agent of the PBF, MPTF Office transfers funds to RUNOS on the basis of the signed Memorandum of Understanding between each RUNO and the MPTF Office.

### **AA Functions**

On behalf of the Recipient Organizations, and in accordance with the UNDG-approved “Protocol on the Administrative Agent for Multi Donor Trust Funds and Joint Programmes, and One UN funds” (2008), the MPTF Office as the AA of the PBF will:

- Disburse funds to each of the RUNO in accordance with instructions from the PBSO. The AA will normally make each disbursement within three (3) to five (5) business days after having received instructions from the PBSO along with the relevant Submission form and Project document signed by all participants concerned;
- Consolidate the financial statements (Annual and Final), based on submissions provided to the AA by RUNOS and provide the PBF annual consolidated progress reports to the donors and the PBSO;
- Proceed with the operational and financial closure of the project in the MPTF Office system once the completion is completed by the RUNO. A project will be considered as operationally closed upon submission of a joint final narrative report. In order for the MPTF Office to financially closed a project, each RUNO must refund unspent balance of over 250 USD, indirect cost (GMS) should not exceed 7% and submission of a certified final financial statement by the recipient organizations’ headquarters);
- Disburse funds to any RUNO for any cost extension that the PBSO may decide in accordance with the PBF rules & regulations.

### **Accountability, transparency and reporting of the Recipient United Nations Organizations**

Recipient United Nations Organizations will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the Administrative Agent. Such funds will be administered by each RUNO in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures.

Each RUNO shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent from the PBF account. This separate ledger account shall be administered by each RUNO in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures, including those relating to interest. The separate ledger account shall be subject exclusively to the internal and external auditing procedures laid down in the financial regulations, rules, directives and procedures applicable to the RUNO.

Each RUNO will provide the Administrative Agent and the PBSO (for narrative reports only) with:

Type of report	Due when	Submitted by
Semi-annual project progress report	15 June	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual project progress report	15 November	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in

		consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
End of project report covering entire project duration	Within three months from the operational project closure (it can be submitted instead of an annual report if timing coincides)	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual strategic peacebuilding and PBF progress report (for PRF allocations only), which may contain a request for additional PBF allocation if the context requires it	1 December	PBF Secretariat on behalf of the PBF Steering Committee, where it exists or Head of UN Country Team where it does not.

#### Financial reporting and timeline

Timeline	Event
<b>30 April</b>	Annual reporting – Report <b>Q4 expenses</b> (Jan. to Dec. of previous year)
<i><b>Certified final financial report to be provided by 30 June of the calendar year after project closure</b></i>	

UNEX also opens for voluntary financial reporting for UN recipient organizations the following dates

<b>31 July</b>	Voluntary Q2 expenses (January to June)
<b>31 October</b>	Voluntary Q3 expenses (January to September)

Unspent Balance exceeding USD 250, at the closure of the project would have to be refunded and a notification sent to the MPTF Office, no later than six months (30 June) of the year following the completion of the activities.

#### Ownership of Equipment, Supplies and Other Property

Ownership of equipment, supplies and other property financed from the PBF shall vest in the RUNO undertaking the activities. Matters relating to the transfer of ownership by the RUNO shall be determined in accordance with its own applicable policies and procedures.

#### Public Disclosure

The PBSO and Administrative Agent will ensure that operations of the PBF are publicly disclosed on the PBF website ([www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund](http://www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund)) and the Administrative Agent's website ([www.mptf.undp.org](http://www.mptf.undp.org)).

#### Annex B.2: Project Administrative arrangements for Non-UN Recipient Organizations

*(This section uses standard wording – please do not remove)*

##### Accountability, transparency and reporting of the Recipient Non-United Nations Organization:

The Recipient Non-United Nations Organization will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the Administrative Agent. Such funds will be administered by each recipient in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures.

The Recipient Non-United Nations Organization will have full responsibility for ensuring that the Activity is implemented in accordance with the signed Project Document;

In the event of a financial review, audit or evaluation recommended by PBSO, the cost of such activity should be included in the project budget;

Ensure professional management of the Activity, including performance monitoring and reporting activities in accordance with PBSO guidelines.

Ensure compliance with the Financing Agreement and relevant applicable clauses in the Fund MOU.

#### **Reporting:**

Each Receipt will provide the Administrative Agent and the PBSO (for narrative reports only) with:

Type of report	Due when	Submitted by
Bi-annual project progress report	15 June	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual project progress report	15 November	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
End of project report covering entire project duration	Within three months from the operational project closure (it can be submitted instead of an annual report if timing coincides)	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual strategic peacebuilding and PBF progress report (for PRF allocations only), which may contain a request for additional PBF allocation if the context requires it	1 December	PBF Secretariat on behalf of the PBF Steering Committee, where it exists or Head of UN Country Team where it does not.

#### Financial reports and timeline

Timeline	Event
28 February	Annual reporting – Report Q4 expenses (Jan. to Dec. of previous year)
30 April	Report Q1 expenses (January to March)
31 July	Report Q2 expenses (January to June)
31 October	Report Q3 expenses (January to September)
<i>Certified final financial report to be provided at the quarter following the project financial closure</i>	

Unspent Balance exceeding USD 250 at the closure of the project would have to be refunded and a notification sent to the Administrative Agent, no later than three months (31 March) of the year following the completion of the activities.

#### **Ownership of Equipment, Supplies and Other Property**

Matters relating to the transfer of ownership by the Recipient Non-UN Recipient Organization will be determined in accordance with applicable policies and procedures defined by the PBSO.

## **Public Disclosure**

The PBSO and Administrative Agent will ensure that operations of the PBF are publicly disclosed on the PBF website ([www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund](http://www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund)) and the Administrative Agent website ([www.mptf.undp.org](http://www.mptf.undp.org)).

## **Final Project Audit for non-UN recipient organization projects**

An independent project audit will be requested by the end of the project. The audit report needs to be attached to the final narrative project report. The cost of such activity must be included in the project budget.

## **Special Provisions regarding Financing of Terrorism**

Consistent with UN Security Council Resolutions relating to terrorism, including UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) and 1267 (1999) and related resolutions, the Participants are firmly committed to the international fight against terrorism, and in particular, against the financing of terrorism. Similarly, all Recipient Organizations recognize their obligation to comply with any applicable sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council. Each of the Recipient Organizations will use all reasonable efforts to ensure that the funds transferred to it in accordance with this agreement are not used to provide support or assistance to individuals or entities associated with terrorism as designated by any UN Security Council sanctions regime. If, during the term of this agreement, a Recipient Organization determines that there are credible allegations that funds transferred to it in accordance with this agreement have been used to provide support or assistance to individuals or entities associated with terrorism as designated by any UN Security Council sanctions regime it will as soon as it becomes aware of it inform the head of PBSO, the Administrative Agent and the donor(s) and, in consultation with the donors as appropriate, determine an appropriate response.

## **Non-UN recipient organization (NUNO) eligibility:**

In order to be declared eligible to receive PBF funds directly, NUNOs must be assessed as technically, financially and legally sound by the PBF and its agent, the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO). Prior to submitting a finalized project document, it is the responsibility of each NUNO to liaise with PBSO and MPTFO and provide all the necessary documents (see below) to demonstrate that all the criteria have been fulfilled and to be declared as eligible for direct PBF funds.

The NUNO must provide (in a timely fashion, ensuring PBSO and MPTFO have sufficient time to review the package) the documentation demonstrating that the NUNO:

- Has previously received funding from the UN, the PBF, or any of the contributors to the PBF, in the country of project implementation.
- Has a current valid registration as a non-profit, tax exempt organization with a social based mission in both the country where headquarter is located and in country of project implementation for the duration of the proposed grant. (NOTE: If registration is done on an annual basis in the country, the organization must have the current registration and obtain renewals for the duration of the project, in order to receive subsequent funding tranches).
- Produces an annual report that includes the proposed country for the grant.
- Commissions audited financial statements, available for the last two years, including the auditor opinion letter. The financial statements should include the legal organization that will sign the agreement (and oversee the country of implementation, if applicable) as well as the activities of the country of implementation. (NOTE: If these are not available for the country of proposed project implementation, the CSO will also need to provide the latest two audit reports for a program or project-based audit in country.) The letter from the auditor should also state whether the auditor firm is part of the nationally qualified audit firms.

- Demonstrates an annual budget in the country of proposed project implementation for the previous two calendar years, which is at least twice the annualized budget sought from PBF for the project.<sup>35</sup>
- Demonstrates at least 3 years of experience in the country where grant is sought.
- Provides a clear explanation of the CSO's legal structure, including the specific entity which will enter into the legal agreement with the MPTF-O for the PBF grant.

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<sup>35</sup> Annualized PBF project budget is obtained by dividing the PBF project budget by the number of project duration months and multiplying by 12.

**Annex C: Project Results Framework (MUST include sex- and age disaggregated targets)**

Outcomes	Outputs	Indicators	Means of Verification/ frequency of collection	Indicator milestones
<p>Outcome 1: By 2027, the Government of Guinea-Bissau and stakeholders have increased capacity and commitment to promote safer, more inclusive learning environments in religious schools, and to instill a common set of values, knowledge, and skills, contributing to increased social cohesion, a strengthened social contract, and positive peace in Guinea-Bissau.</p> <p>SDG goals: 4 (education, including 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7) 5 (gender equality) 10 (reduced inequalities) 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions, including 16.2 and 16.c)</p>		<p>Outcome Indicator 1a Percentage of Ministry of Education officials and religious school leaders who express commitment to integrate religious education into the public system (including peace education), disaggregated by age, gender and type of stakeholder.</p> <p>Baseline: TBD Target: 75%</p>	Monitoring reports, Testimonials, surveys	2027
		<p>Outcome Indicator 1b Percentage of girls and boys enrolled in religious schools who perceive the classroom and school environment as a safe space where they feel able and encouraged to learn and participate, disaggregated by age.</p> <p>Baseline: TBD Target: 75% (for both male and female and primary and secondary school aged students)</p>	Monitoring reports, Testimonials, surveys	2027
		<p>Outcome Indicator 1c Percentage of children who have a positive perception of different ethnic</p>	Monitoring reports, Testimonials, surveys	2027

Outcomes	Outputs	Indicators	Means of Verification/ frequency of collection	Indicator milestones
		<p>groups and religious communities, disaggregated by age and gender</p> <p>Baseline: TBD Target: 90%</p>		
		<p>Outcome Indicator 1d Percentage of children experiencing or witnessing violence at school level, disaggregated by type of violence, gender, and age.</p> <p>Baseline: TBD Target: Less than 25%</p>	Monitoring reports, Testimonials, surveys	2027
		<p>Outcome Indicator 1e Percentage of children demonstrating gender-equitable attitudes in schools, disaggregated by age and gender.</p> <p>Baseline: TBD Target: 75%</p>	Monitoring reports, Testimonials, surveys	2027
		<p>Outcome Indicator 1f The integration of formal and non-formal religious schools receives funding from additional development partners (e.g. EU, WB, GPE, IDB) or is included in calls for proposals or proposals.</p> <p>Baseline: Not funded by development partners</p>	Calls for Proposal; Grant documents	2027

Outcomes	Outputs	Indicators	Means of Verification/ frequency of collection	Indicator milestones
		Target: At least one development partner allocates or plans to allocate funding to support the integration of formal and non-formal religious schools into the national education system.		
	<p><b>Output 1.1:</b> Qualitative and quantitative data on religious schools and Qur'anic centres, including religious leaders, teachers' and parents' perceptions of public and religious education, are generated and used to inform community dialogue and the integration framework.</p>	<p>Output Indicator 1.1.1 Percentage of education stakeholders (MENESIC, CSOs, religious school leaders and teachers, parents) with increased knowledge of private religious educational institutions, including these institutions' alignment with national education goals and their role in contributing to social cohesion, disaggregated by age, gender and stakeholder type.</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target: 50%</p>	Workshop pre-post tests; Activity reports, Study/Research reports, Observation, Perception survey	2025
		<p>Output Indicator 1.1.2 Percentage of parents and community members with increases in knowledge and positive attitudes regarding how quality education can contribute to peacebuilding and social cohesion, disaggregated by age and gender</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target: 50%</p>	Perception survey Activity reports, framework and operationalization strategy documents	2026

Outcomes	Outputs	Indicators	Means of Verification/ frequency of collection	Indicator milestones
	<p>Output 1.2: Based on the results of Output 1.1, a comprehensive framework for the integration of religious schools into the national education system is developed.</p>	<p>Output Indicator 1.2.1 Existence of a framework and its operationalization strategy for the integration of religious schools into the national education system</p> <p>Baseline: No Target: Framework for the integration of religious schools into the national education system is developed and approved by the <i>Conselho Diretivo</i> in the Ministry of Education.</p>	Activity reports; Framework documents;	2026
		<p>Output Indicator 1.2.2 Percentage of stakeholders (MENESIC staff, parents, religious leaders, religious school directors and teachers, CSO members, students and youth) who feel that they were meaningfully engaged and adequately consulted in the development of the framework (disaggregated by gender, age, and stakeholder type)</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target: 90%</p>	Activity reports; learning programme documents	2026
		<p>Output Indicator 1.2.3 Percentage of stakeholders who feel that the proposed framework appropriately addresses their concerns</p>	Monitoring reports, Testimonials, surveys	2026

Outcomes	Outputs	Indicators	Means of Verification/ frequency of collection	Indicator milestones
		and interests (disaggregated by gender, age, and stakeholder type)  Baseline: 0 Target: 60%		
	Output 1.3: The Ministry of Education curriculum is adapted to foster peacebuilding and social cohesion in religious and confessional schools.	Output Indicator 1.3.1 Existence of reviewed curriculum, teaching and learning materials on education for peace and social cohesion  Baseline: National curriculum exists Target: Harmonized curriculum contents and Contextualized teaching and learning materials	Activity reports; curriculum document	2027
		Output Indicator 1.3.2 Percentage of teachers with adequate peacebuilding pedagogical content knowledge and practices in pilot schools, disaggregated by gender, school type and grade.  Baseline: TBD Target: 80%	Post training learning assessment	2027
		Output Indicator 1.4.1 Percentage of 12 targeted pilot schools (including informal <i>Qur'anic</i> centres) successfully adopting the minimum standards as per the proposed framework (harmonized curricular	Survey report	2027

Outcomes	Outputs	Indicators	Means of Verification/ frequency of collection	Indicator milestones
	integration framework and peacebuilding curriculum are relevant, equitable, sustainable, efficient and effectively contribute to social cohesion.	<p>programme adapted, including peacebuilding education; improved pedagogical practices; regular oversight by school inspectors; safer/healthier learning environments; school free of all forms of violence).</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target: 75%</p>		
		<p>Output Indicator 1.4.3 Existence of operationalization strategy, included costed scale-up strategy.</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target: Costed, operationalization strategy implemented, including the establishment of a representative committee to follow-up on action points.</p>	Activity reports; Operationalization strategy document;	2027