



Mid-Term Evaluation Report

Rule of Law, Sustaining Peace and Social Cohesion Portfolio

UNDP Sierra Leone

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other international partners, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) and other implementing partners involved in the programme implementation.

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PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION		
PROJECT/OUTCOME TITLE	RULE OF LAW, SUSTAINING PEACE AND SOCIAL COHESION	
ATLAS ID	00118458	
CORPORATE OUTCOME AND OUTPUT	UNSDCF Outcome 2: By 2023, people in Sierra Leone benefit from more gender- and youth-responsive institutions that are innovative, accountable, and transparent at all levels and can better advance respect for human rights and the rule of law, equity, peaceful coexistence, and protection of children, girls, and persons with disability. CPD Output 2.1: Targeted oversight and accountability institutions (Parliament, HRC, NEC, ACC and IPCB) are strengthened to perform their mandates. CPD Output 2.2: Rule of law institutions (Judiciary, SLP, IPCB, HRC, MOJ, SLCS) are strengthened to uphold human rights, access to justice and security. CPD Output 2.3: Gender-responsive institutional frameworks strengthened for peace, citizen’s voice and participation for social cohesion.	
COUNTRY	SIERRA LEONE	
REGION	AFRICA	
DATE PROJECT DOCUMENT SIGNED	25 AUGUST 2020	
PROJECT DATES	START	PLANNED END
	1 July 2020	30 June 2024
PROJECT BUDGET	\$ 4,292,556 (2020-2022)	
PROJECT EXPENDITURE AT THE TIME OF EVALUATION	\$ 3,134, 304 (2020-2022)	
FUNDING SOURCE	US Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Embassy of Ireland, Global Rule of Law Programme, Peace Building Fund, Funding Window, Government of Germany	
IMPLEMENTING PARTY	UNDP Sierra Leone	
EVALUATION INFORMATION		
EVALUATION TYPE	Project/Portfolio	
PERIOD UNDER EVALUATION	Start	End
	July 2020	December 2022
EVALUATOR	Afolabi O Samuel (Lead Consultant) and Edwin E Valnora (National Consultant)	
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EVALUATION DATES	Start	End
	January 2023	October 2023

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CPA	Criminal Procedure Act 1965
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DHRC	District Human Rights Committees
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
FBO	Farmer Based Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
ICPB	Independent Complaint Police Board
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAB	Legal Aid Board
LPPB	Local Police Partnership Board
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture
MOHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MSG	Multi-Stakeholder Group
MSC	Most Significant Change
MT-NDP	Medium-Term National Development Plan
NAYCOM	National Youth Commission
NIM	National Implementation Modality
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee
OVR	Office of the Vice President

PWD	Persons with Disabilities
ROL	Rule of Law
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
JOSL	Judiciary of Sierra Leone
LAB	Legal Aid Board
LPPB	Local Police Partnership Board
MOYA	Ministry of Youth Affairs
NACEED	National Commission for Civic Education
SLCS	Sierra Leone Correctional Service
SLEITI	Sierra Leone Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure
WFP	World Food Programme
Y@R	Youth at Risk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The UNDP Rule of Law, Sustaining Peace and Social Cohesion portfolio comprises four projects, viz: (1) *Support to capacity strengthening of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone*, (2) *Strengthening the Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Human Rights and Security in Sierra Leone*, (3) *Mitigating Localized Resource-based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba districts*; and (4) *Empowering youth at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience in Tonkolili and Kenema districts*.

The mid-term evaluation was conducted to assess the progress, achievements, challenges and lessons learnt towards informing the continued activities and potential renewed engagements within the portfolio. The evaluation reviewed the impact of project interventions at local, regional and national levels. Specifically, the evaluation assessed the impact of UNDP's support towards strengthening the capacity of oversight institutions, increasing access to justice for the indigent, vulnerable people and victims of human rights violations, and supporting legal reforms as well as sustaining peace and social cohesion.

2. Approach/Methodology

A convergent mixed method design informed the mid-term evaluation process. The methodological approach, the instruments and the evaluative analysis were based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's (OECD-DAC) criteria, inclusive of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation used a participatory and gender-focused and responsive approach. The evaluation used mixed methodology with desk review, key informant interviews, fieldwork, case studies and desk review to collect data from all the stakeholders involved in the project design and implementation. The stakeholders included staff of the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone (HRCSL), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), relevant government institutions, District Human Rights Committees (DHRCs), Judiciary of Sierra Leone (JOSL), Legal Aid Board (LAB), Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS), Local Police Partnership Board (LPPB), civil society organisations (CSOs), youth and women groups at the community level.

3. Findings

Relevance- The Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) through the MT-NDP has articulated its vision on how it would strengthen governance and accountability. This was outlined as promoting inclusive and accountable justice institutions; building public trust in state institutions; and strengthening public service delivery. In addressing Cluster Five, the national plan articulates the broad target of promoting the empowerment of women through reducing the number of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases and improve access to entrepreneurial services among other interventions. This was evidently seen in the fieldwork undertaken. The

MT-NDP is directly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which directly contribute to achieving Goal 5 and Goal 16.

Coherence- There was a strong collaboration of state and non-state actors and the UNDP. Notably, the project design captured the strategic interventions of the various institutions. Partners such as the Judiciary, the Correctional Service, the Legal Aid Board, and Implementing partners such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NACEED), the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MOYA), and CSOs that include Humanist Watch Salone (HUWASAL) and Namati had already established networks within these communities through which interactions and engagement that involved both men and women were sustained. The DHRCs provide support for the HRC in the implementation of some of its activities which include the mobile complaint hearing. This initiative engaged remote communities who brought in their complaints. Complaints from community residents were recorded and those complaints outside the mandate of the HRC were subsequently referred to relevant institutions including the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the Judiciary, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning. These already existing resources, strategies and structures were utilised throughout the implementation of the various project activities. Women were well positioned to have a voice and have their concerns heard but more importantly, participate in the discussions to address them.

Efficiency- The evaluation revealed that the challenges faced by partner institutions were similar and included insufficient funding, lack of adequate knowledge of project objectives and intended outputs not strictly adhered to. The lapse between the design of the project, approval of the release of funds and the start of implementation raised serious concerns for implementing partners. The time span unfortunately was challenged with inflation resulting in the rising costs of services such as transportation. Despite these hurdles, knowledge of previous interventions by partners in the project areas greatly assisted in the timely delivery of activities and the utilisation of resources. Resources made available were utilised for the intended purpose resulting in the project achieving its projected outputs.

Effectiveness- The approaches adopted for the intervention were effective and cost effective. Taking cognisance of gender peculiarities and power dynamics in the application of strategies for engagement proved instructive in generating the required contribution especially of women in the discussions related to land.

Sustainability- Beneficiaries have acquired livelihood skills that will support their growth beyond the project lifespan. Additionally, knowledge around navigating grievances and engaging stakeholders at the community level for peaceful resolution has equipped beneficiaries to enhance peaceful co-existence. Implementing partners both state and non-state actors had engaged in similar activities prior to the UNDP intervention. Most importantly, trust and relationships built on mutual respect significantly contributed to the success of the activities. Previous interaction with local structures including women and youth groups further strengthened these groups to sustain the livelihood skills acquired, knowledge around land acquisition and skills acquired in engaging multilateral companies are some key achievements of the portfolio intervention.

However, Persons with Disabilities were not active participants in the various projects of the Portfolio, even though the four projects within the portfolio were designed to cater for the participation of persons with disabilities. In practice, they were not significantly represented in activities or as beneficiaries. Also, the targeted disability group was not specified nor defined. Few who participated included those with mobility challenges and the visually impaired.

4. Recommendations

The following are recommendations derived from the analysis of data on the evaluation:

- The Government as the primary duty bearer in conjunction with UNDP and other partners should consider scaling up the projects, especially youth at-risk engagement in view of the significant impact identified in the lives of youths in the pilot districts of Tonkolili and Kenema and other areas, especially in view of the continued challenges which the youths experienced in various forms across the country.
- Inflationary trends should be factored into the planning and funding of interventions by Government and International organizations including UNDP.
- UNDP and implementing organizations and state agencies should agree on strengthening the already existing quarterly meetings but also adopt a one-on-one engagement to discuss and address the peculiarities of the various organizations and state institutions. This will support organizations to ensure timely reporting and addressing any challenges experienced.
- The approach to project implementation is good and going forward, UNDP and partners must discuss and agree on a common framework related to processing and disbursement of funds. Each partner engaged raised concern about the time lapse between grant approval and disbursement of funds.
- When engaging multiple partners on the same project with UNDP a coordinating group must be established for information flow and coordination of activities. This was emphasised by NACEED and the Youth commission whose activities clashed as they were engaging the same partners in the same communities. **Issues to be addressed:** A common work plan is recommended to address this challenge and could be considered going forward.
- Sustainability of CSOs engagement requires support for institutional operations. This is because only a project-based funding approach weakens CSOs' capacity to continue the engagement beyond the project cycle.
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- There must be a more robust definition and expansion of categories of PWDs to not only include the visually impaired and those with mobility challenges but others such as the hearing impaired (sign language interpreters) and albinos. **Issues to be addressed:** Clear meaning and conceptualization of PWDs must be defined and reflected in the project document. This will remove any ambiguity. Also, there are senior citizens who have developed certain disabilities should also be considered in the design, implementation and monitoring of projects. This was discussed and recommended by the Y@R in all areas engaged.

- Government buy-in and continued ownership of the project should be encouraged and sustained through budgetary provision and support, especially for structures that exist at the community and district levels. **Issues to be addressed:** The continuation of the projects under the ROLSPSC should focus on government financial provisioning and continued systemic support for the projects and its activities.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, various Sierra Leone governments have initiated several reforms to address and respond to the recommendations of the 2004 Truth and Reconciliation report following a decade long civil conflict. As a result, Sierra Leone experienced improved investment to strengthen reform initiatives within the justice sector, human rights protection, peace, and social cohesion. This was due to the recognition that supporting rule of law and human rights are prerequisites to achieving sustainable peace, promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding which contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16¹.

The design of the portfolio seeks to address the continued challenges of accessing justice. This is significantly challenging for vulnerable groups including women, children, persons with disabilities (PWDs), youths at risk and victims of human rights violations. There is the need for a robust intervention for especially the vulnerable to survive within the context of an essentially polarized political environment that hampers the consolidation of peaceful initiatives, perceptions of exclusion and limited opportunity for all to participate and enjoy the resources of the state. Poor and limited court infrastructure and paucity of legal personnel affect the capacity of justice sector institutions to respond to the justice needs and deliver services to the population. The HRCSL is also challenged in carrying out its human rights protection and promotion mandate amidst a lack of adequate personnel and prevalent human rights issues in various parts of the country, both urban and rural. According to the 2021 Sierra Leone Human Rights Report,² significant human rights issues included unlawful or arbitrary killings by the government; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the government or on behalf of the government; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; serious government corruption, though the situation is positively improving.

Similarly, the fragility assessment in 2019, identifies challenges and areas in need of reform to support Sierra Leone to not only transition from fragility but consolidate and sustain gains made for an improved justice system that would uphold human rights. Challenges identified included the limited number of personnel to administer justice, especially in non-urban areas, political interference, and lack of basic logistics. Despite a number of progressive legislations such as the Sexual Offences Act 2012, The Sexual Offences (Amended) Act 2019, the three Gender Acts of 2007 (Devolution of Estate Act 2007, Customary Marriage and Divorce Act 2007 and the Domestic Violence Act 2007) women's access to justice and rights are stifled by tradition and customs. The various reforms have not significantly taken into consideration the endemic patriarchal structures that have existed over the years and significantly marginalised women, youths and persons with disabilities. Laws alone cannot address these entrenched practices rooted over decades in the minds and orientation of those mandated to create the change. To address the existing challenges, UNDP, in collaboration with its donor partners,

¹ SDG Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive society for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

² See Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021. United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/313615_SIERRA-LEONE-2021-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf

developed the Rule of Law and Sustaining Peace and Social Cohesion Portfolio (2020-2024) in 2020. The portfolio sought to consolidate the gains made in the previous similar projects undertaken and implemented by UNDP.

The portfolio incorporates components to strengthen the capacity of the HRCSL to effectively deliver on its statutory mandate, enhance the ability of the justice sector institutions to expedite justice service delivery with a focus on enhancing access to justice for women and girls. It further focuses on enhancing access to justice for persons under prolonged detention in correction facilities, and supporting initiatives geared toward promoting peace and social cohesion as reflected in the Sierra Leone National Medium Development Plan 2019-2023 cluster four (Governance and Accountability for Results). Funding for the implementation of the various projects was provided by the US Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Embassy of Ireland, the Global Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights Programme, the Funding Window Rule of Law Programme and the Peace Building Fund.

As defined by the Terms of Reference (TOR), the mid-term evaluation of the portfolio seeks to inform remaining activities and interventions through lessons learnt, innovative approaches that would inform continued engagement and addressing gaps to ensure that the implementation process works towards achieving the desired objectives. The evaluation would support programme staff to realign and modify strategies through sustaining good practices, note adaptability measures to evolving context to meet the project objectives and more especially in strengthening structures for sustainability.

In concrete terms, the evaluation assessed the UNDP ‘**Rule of Law Sustaining Peace and Social Cohesion in Sierra Leone**’ Portfolio which comprises four projects: (1) Support to Capacity Strengthening of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, (2) Strengthening the Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Human Rights and Security in Sierra Leone, (3) Mitigating Localized Resource-based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba districts; and 4) Empowering youth at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience in Tonkolili and Kenema districts. It assessed the progress, achievements and lessons learned, as well as challenges faced regarding capacity strengthening support to rule of law and human rights institutions, and civil society organizations working to strengthen peace and social cohesion initiatives. It reviewed the impact of project interventions at local, regional, and national levels within the wider context of the technical and financial assistance provided by UNDP and its partners. Specifically, the evaluation assessed the impact of UNDP’s support towards strengthening the capacity of oversight institutional, increasing access to justice for the indigent, vulnerable people and victims of human rights violations, and support to legal reforms as well as sustaining peace and social cohesion. Questions were designed to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and to identify measures in place at the design and implementation phases to see whether vulnerable and marginalised groups such as women, persons with disabilities and youths were included. More specifically, the evaluation assessed how gender was integrated into all facets of the portfolio in terms of design and implementation.

The primary audience for the evaluation is largely the UNDP Country Office and secondarily for the implementing partners. Personnel in this unit (UNDP) will utilise the lessons learnt for future design, and implementation of the projects under the portfolio, ensuring that there is a deliberate effort to include persons with disabilities as key beneficiaries and partners in the process and make the decision on its scalability. State institutions include the JOSL, LAB, SLCS, LPPB, working in collaboration with CSOs. Lessons drawn from these interventions will inform and improve future engagements, especially in coordination, management and scaling up.

As the project is at the midterm stage, the consultants (international and national) undertook a desk review to evaluate the projects' implementation and the gains it has made so far. An inception phase was conducted from January to February 2023, with consultations between staff at UNDP and the consultants to ensure that the planning process was effectively done to minimise potential challenges in the field. The entire exercise was conducted between January and May 2023, which was ideal for a midterm evaluation given the over two-year period of implementing the project.

This report is divided into six sections: the sub-sections of section one present the purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation, describe the project and its intervention logic and the methodological approach used by the consultants. Section two examines the context that necessitated the development of the project, and in which it was implemented. Section three presents an analysis of the findings. Sections four and five present the conclusions, which drew on lessons learned from the project, and also provide actionable recommendations for the respective actors involved in the implementation of the project. The report also contained annexes, an evaluation matrix and a list of some of the documents reviewed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

UNDP's Components of the Rule of Law, Sustaining Peace and Social Cohesion Portfolio seeks to deliver on four outputs namely: 1. Inclusive and gender-responsive rule of law and human rights institutions and systems are strengthened to uphold human rights and expedite access to justice, and security at national and local levels strengthened. 2. Social cohesion and security of local communities to prevent conflict and promote peace in Sierra Leone strengthened. 3. National policy formulation and implementation improved and inclusive. 4. Civil society and community peace and security structures' capacity strengthened to address injustices and conflict in local communities.

The mid-term evaluation assessed the extent to which activities under specific outputs have been implemented as planned and captured challenges faced and lessons learned as the basis for determining whether the pursuit of the overall objective of the portfolio is on track. The strategic focus of the evaluation in assessing the four projects that comprised the portfolio was based on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Specifically, the evaluation assessed:

- the performance of the rule of law, human rights, and social cohesion programme and how the outputs contribute to achieving the outcomes as stated in the Country Programme Document.
- the sustaining peace and social cohesion interventions; focusing on support to youths at risk to strengthen conflict management skills.
- the knowledge and behavioural change of stakeholders and youths at risk
- the appropriateness of the project strategy, implementation approach and programme institutional/management arrangements
- the contributions of the portfolio to enhancing gender equality, human rights and empowerment of youths and indigenous groups

NATIONAL PRIORITY/GOAL: Governance and Accountability for Results (Cluster 4); and Empowering Women, Children and persons with disabilities (Cluster 5)
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UNSDCF OUTCOME 2: By 2023, people in Sierra Leone benefit from more gender- and youth-responsive institutions that are innovative, accountable, and transparent at all levels and can better advance respect for human rights and the rule of law, equity, peaceful coexistence, and protection of children, girls, and persons with disability.

The project interventions seek to complement the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019-2023 of the Government of Sierra Leone. It specifically supports Cluster Four -Governance and Accountability for Results and Cluster Five Empowering Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities. Similarly, the project aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024 specifically, its signature solutions. The programme seeks to contribute to the UNSDCF outcomes through two interrelated clusters: (a) inclusive democratic governance, based on signature solutions 1, 2 and 6, contributing to UNSDCF outcome 2.

Different key partners are involved with each of the four components of the project. Key partners in the implementation of the ‘Strengthening judicial reforms within the ROL sector’ are the SLCS, the JOSL, the IPCB and the LAB. In the Strengthening the Capacity of the HRCSL project, the HRCSL is the key partner and collaborate mainly with the DHRCs. In the third project, the office of the Vice President, served as a key partner on the project ‘Mitigating Localized Resource-based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba districts. The fourth project ‘Empowering Youths at Risk as Resources for Sustaining Peace and Community Resilience in Tonkolili and Kenema Districts, the Ministry of Youth, NACEED, the CYC and youth-based organisations in the two Districts served as key partners.

Cross-cutting issues:

While the project seeks to address specific justice, peace, social cohesion and related issues, a rising share of UNDP projects have included measures to reflect cross-cutting issues including gender, persons with disabilities and youths. The design and implementation of the ROLSPSC projects included cross-cutting themes, the enhancement of men and women’s equal opportunities to access justice, participation at the decision-making levels within their

communities and youths and persons with disabilities (PWDs) as integral partners and beneficiaries. The project design and interventions were deliberately crafted to ensure the inclusion of women, youths and PWDs. Discussions with stakeholders during the baseline study reiterated the importance of a more inclusive approach in addressing the vulnerabilities within their communities. Yet it should be noted that before the project intervention, such opportunities were not readily available, leaving many, whether youth at risk, PWDs, marginalized groups, victims of gender-based violence, poor and disadvantaged men and women open to abuse and defenceless, often without access to justice with an acute sense of exclusion. In sum, the four project outcomes reflected the inclusion of the identified vulnerable groups, though, for the PWDs, a more robust conceptualization and definition would have greatly helped in structuring their proper identification and the benefits to them. The groups identified above as vulnerable were key beneficiaries of the projects and thus contribute to social inclusion, peacebuilding, and national cohesion. This is particularly reflected in the project on empowering youth at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience in Tonkolili and Kenema districts. A collaborative synergy was noted between the DYCs and CYCs. As well, gender and disadvantaged groups' issues were highlighted at the design stage and focussed on during implementation.

Focus and scope of the intervention.

As a fundamental strategy, the portfolio seeks to consolidate gains made during the previous interventions and focussed on rule of law, human rights, mitigating Localized Resource-based conflicts and increasing community resilience and empowering youth at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience projects.

The scope covers an examination of the impact of UNDP's support to the SLCS with a focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates through vocational training and earning schemes, decongestion of overcrowded correctional facilities and provision of water and sanitation within correctional centres and legal representation of persons in detention³. It also covers the capacity strengthening of the Judiciary, LAB and civil society organisations to address sexual offences through the provision of legal aid services, support to IPCB on ensuring professionalism of law enforcement officers through training, investigation of misconduct and recommendation for disciplinary actions. The scope of the evaluation also covered other projects within the Portfolio (Programme). This includes Human Rights Commission activities; mitigating localized resource-based conflicts and increasing community resilience; youth at risk and social cohesion projects. Details include the impact of the Human Rights Commission's human rights complaints process within the referral partnership forum and mobile community complaint hearing and contribution to the universal periodic review (UPR) process, among others. Additionally, it covered empowering youth at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience in Tonkolili and Kenema districts in Sierra Leone project, and mitigating localized resource-based conflicts and increasing community resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba districts of Sierra Leone.

³ See UNDP ROL Project document.

It should be noted the projects contributes to the UNDP Sierra Leone Country Programme Document (2020-2023) through strengthening capacities of oversight institutions and fostering access to justice and protection of fundamental human rights within the Inclusive Democratic Governance Cluster (CPD 2020-2023 P.5-6)⁴. As well, the projects complement the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to advance rule of law and promote justice and human rights⁵. It contributes to the Sierra Leone Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (JSRSIP IV) 2019-2023, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 16, and the priorities of the African Union Agenda 2063, especially Goals 11 and 17⁶.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The mid-term evaluation of the project seeks to inform remaining activities and interventions. In terms of objectives, the evaluation will cover the projects within the Rule of Law, Security, Human Rights and Social Cohesion portfolio and assess the achievements, successes, lessons learnt, national, regional and district dynamics in implementation and the impact of these interventions based on the stated objectives. The implementation process works towards achieving the project objectives and outputs. The evaluation is meant to support programme staff and the field operations to realign and modify strategies through sustaining good practices, note adaptability measures to evolving context to meet the project objectives and more especially in strengthening structures for sustainability.

Specifically, the evaluation:

- a) Reviewed the performance of the rule of law, human rights, and social cohesion programme in achieving the outputs stated in the programme document and their contributions to the Country Program Document outcomes.
- b) Reviewed performance of the sustaining peace and social cohesion interventions focusing on support for conflict management and youth-at-risk.
- c) Assessed the factors that have been affecting national ownership and the outcome and its sustainability.
- d) Assessed the knowledge and behavioural change of stakeholders and youth at risk on integration and involvement of youths and peace and social cohesion (Youth Empowerment).
- e) Assessed the appropriateness of the project strategy, implementation approach, and programme institutional/management arrangements.
- f) Assessed the contributions of the portfolio to enhancing gender equality, human rights and empowerment of youth and indigenous groups.
- g) Documented best practices and lessons learned from the programme to feed into the next phase of the programme cycle.

⁴ CPD 2020-2023 Page 5-6

⁵ See (GOSL Medium Term National Development Program – MTNDP 2019-2023, Vol. 1, P. 125)

⁶ See African Union Agenda 2063 goals.

- h) Proffered concrete recommendations that may be required for enhancing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of a future programme.

Evaluation Criteria

The methodological approach, the instruments and evaluative analysis are based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's (OECD-DAC) criteria, inclusive of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

Methodological Approach and Evaluative Analysis: Theory of Change

The theory of change for this work is hinged on the belief that as currency of policies and legal frameworks, justice systems and institutions are improved to develop an internal web-based case management system, sector coordination and collaboration on justice service delivery is heightened and institutional and staff capacities are strengthened, then justice services will be delivered in a timely, secure, and effective way to uphold all citizens' human rights. This is because an automated and functional data system with adequate institutional capacities is critical to achieving equal justice for all. The understanding of the theory of change and the methodological approach as explained served as the framework for evaluative analysis for the evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation used a theory-based approach as explained, leveraging the need for development. It analysed the causal relationship between activities, intermediate outcomes, and long-term impacts. The portfolio's theory of change was assessed and used in the evaluation, adopting an inclusive approach through the assessment of gender equality, inclusion, persons living with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

Data sources:

The evaluation used data from secondary analyses (project documents and reports), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGD) and fieldwork (observation) were utilized to collect data from all the stakeholders involved in the project evaluated. The stakeholders included UNDP staff, HRCSL, relevant government institutions, District Human Rights Committees (DHRCs), civil society organizations, and beneficiaries at the district and community levels. In addition, as earlier mentioned, fieldwork was conducted for more than a week in late May to early June 2023 with government agencies, youth-at-risk executives and members, CSOs and DHRC and beneficiaries of the projects.

In specific terms, the following are the data sources:

Desk Review/Review of Literature: The consultants reviewed UNDP Sierra Leone's internal documents specific to the ROLSPCS projects, the Country Programme Strategy, projects implementation reports, and the Country Programme Annual Review reports among others.

The Project design and programme inception reports were reviewed to provide among other information the project strategies' logic, the end results frameworks, implementation approaches and timelines, and related issues. The project implementation reports were reviewed to provide the activities implementation approaches, the results achieved, the effectiveness of activities, challenges encountered, and lessons learnt.

At a second level, the consultants reviewed national legislations and policy documents to understand the objectives and strategies of the Government of Sierra Leone for improving justice delivery, access to and maintenance of human rights, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, inclusion, and social cohesion. The consultants also reviewed international literature to understand good justice delivery, human rights, peace, and social cohesion promotion strategies and benchmarks, for comparative insights on challenges and approaches to solutions in contexts similar to Sierra Leone.

Key Informant Interviews were conducted with 74 persons (Male 45, Female 29) of the various governmental institutions (Total of 20, Male 16, Female 4), CSOs (23, Male 15, Female 8), UNDP (3, Male 2, Female 1) and key beneficiaries (Male 12, Female 16), that are directly involved with the project, to generate information, particularly regarding the effectiveness of the programme's approaches, the national and community-level outcome changes that result in positive outcomes; and the challenges and opportunities for promoting justice, peace and social cohesion (ANNEX IV). The key informant interviews generally addressed the questions around effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact; and collaboration and synergy across the different governmental institutions, donors and CSOs directly involved with the project.

Fieldwork and FGDs: The data collection tools were developed using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria including Relevance and Design of the Project, Efficiency, Coherence, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability and Cross-Cutting Issues. The Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Mining was used to analyse the data collected. Data from different sources was coded, collated and triangulated so that informed inferences were deduced. It helped to strengthen and further enrich the sections on context, findings and especially recommendations.

It is important to note that all COVID-19 regulations were fully adhered to during field consultations. Additionally, some of the interviews were conducted virtually by the consultants' pre- and post-fieldwork. In all, data collected by the International and national consultants through all the methods enumerated above contributed to the effective evaluation of the project.

Fieldwork was undertaken to visit project sites, implementing partners and beneficiaries of the project deliverables. This was done to ensure that face-to-face interactions with beneficiaries and physical observation/inspection of project deliverables and that projects' outcomes are seen. The fieldwork also involved the conduct of FGDs, one-on-one interviews, and physical visitation. The fieldwork approach used for the evaluation supported the generation of sufficient relevant data that provided findings that were significant in achieving the objectives of the evaluation. In the fieldwork, just like other forms of contact for data gathering, a strong participatory approach was applied to ensure maximum engagement of all the relevant

stakeholders. Purposive and snowball techniques were used to select informants. Key informants were selected for their specialised knowledge and unique perspectives on the issues examined in the evaluation. A total of 71 (43 males, 28 females) respondents were engaged in the evaluation for both field work and interviews. Data was collected in Freetown, Moyamba, Mile 91, Port Loko, Kenema, and Bo. The fieldwork was conducted by both the international and national consultants.

Ethical Considerations

The Consultants adhered to the principles in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders were protected, and this was explained prior to the conduct of the interviews. All measures including anonymity, selection of venue, purpose of the interview and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting data were strictly adhered to. The consultants worked with an approach that is deliberate and systematic in ensuring that those interviewed or participated in answering questions understand the purpose and intent of the evaluation. Additionally, the consultants were aware of their moral responsibility towards all participants in the evaluation, bore the best interests of the participants in mind, treated respondents with due respect and took their opinions seriously. Throughout the evaluation, the consultants put the safety and security of participants first. The do no harm principle was followed which ensured the safety of all respondents and the information provided was secured.

The Consultants are aware that information secured during the conduct of the evaluation will be used solely for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorisation of UNDP and other partners.

Informed Consent, confidentiality and Protection: A clear and easy-to-understand Informed Consent Form was provided to respondents prior to any of them participating in the study. The forms were user-friendly. The consultants respected the principles of voluntary participation and informed consent. The decision to participate was based on free will and participants were made aware that they may withdraw from the study at any time they want to. Risks to the respondents were explained to them before their consent was obtained. No names were mentioned in the report and assurances were given to those interviewed so that they were open and frank to discussing important, yet sensitive, topics. The consultants respected the confidential nature of the information collected and protected all data files.

Gender and Cultural Sensitivity: The consultants have been gender and culturally sensitive in their data collection methods, segregated by sex and age, and gender analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Collected data was computerised and the process was facilitated by pre-coding mostly closed-ended questions. Where qualitative answers and open-ended questions are involved, post-coding was done before computer entry. Descriptive, thematic and content analysis was used to analyse the data. Qualitative Data Analysis Miner (QDA) was used to analyse data from interviews and FGDs. The data collected was informed by the need to address the objectives

of the questions and is presented under thematic areas in the findings section. This was done to strengthen and further enrich the sections on context, findings and especially recommendations, as it contained specific questions on the kind of changes that the respondents would like to see within the remaining implementation period.

FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

The mid-term evaluation concludes that the overall objective of the ROLSPS projects, and its component thematic focus are clearly relevant to the context and circumstances in Sierra Leone. As a background, Sierra Leone is rebuilding the critical institutional foundations for justice and human rights protection as undergirds of peace and social cohesion since emerging from a violent 11-year conflict in 2002. The emphasis put on justice and human rights protection was itself an agenda set by the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the 1991-2002 civil conflict. Scholarly works have contended that bad governance characterised by injustice was the harbinger of the civil war⁷. Consequently, promoting human rights and justice dominated the recommendations made by the TRC, as the critical pillar for state recovery and national building and development.

The UNDP and all other international development partners have therefore, consistently anchored the agenda for justice and human rights protection in their approaches to supporting Sierra Leone's development efforts. Various Country Assistance Strategies of the World Bank, DFID, and the UNDP have recognised the continuation and consolidation of the agenda for justice and human rights protection as fundamental to any successes that may be derived from their delivery of assistance to the country. A lot has been achieved over the past two decades since the UNDP and all other international development partners began rebuilding the justice sector, and protection and promotion of human rights in Sierra Leone; including the evolution of new institutions, enhancement and broadening of the legal and regulatory space, promoting the conducive behavioural and cultural change in the population among other areas.

The Government of Sierra Leone and Civil Society, Organizations recognise the need for continuously investing in the promotion of justice and social cohesion. Consequently, every national development under different political parties have carried ambitions to continue investing in promoting justice, peace, and social cohesion. In Pillar 4- *Governance and Accountability for Results*, in the Medium –Term National Development Plan, government has a key objective to improve fairness, cohesiveness, security and peacefulness. The approach of government specifically includes 'building public trust in state institutions', 'strengthening public service delivery', 'promoting inclusive and accountable justice institutions', and 'strengthening security institutions'⁸. It is here that projects under the ROLSPSC portfolio support the priorities of justice sector, human rights institutions, youths at risk and conflict

⁷ See the Public Perception Survey conducted in 2017 and 2019 through collaborations by UNDP and the Justice Sector Coordination Office (JSCO).

⁸ See Medium Term Development Plan

resolution with a strong focus on capacity building, reorientation, and positive engagement of the beneficiaries. Evidence from fieldwork and interviews demonstrated the projects relevance in meeting the practical and strategic needs of all genders, youths, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups and strengthening their capacity for inclusion, social cohesion, and development.

The projects under the ROLSPSC aligned with the MT-NDP 2019-2023 of Sierra Leone. Cluster 6 is on youth employment and Cluster 4 is on Governance and Accountability. Cluster 6 has among others, several key targets - increase youth employment by 15 per cent, with special attention given to gender equality; ensure that the number of young people involved in entrepreneurial activities is higher than in 2018. Cluster Four-governance and accountability for results 4.6. It also aligned with SDG 5 on gender equality and complements the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to advance rule of law and promote justice and human rights (GOSL Medium Term National Development Program – MTNDP 2019-2023, with relevance to the Sierra Leone Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (JSRSIP IV) 2019-2023, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 16, and the priorities of the African Union Agenda Goals 11 and 17. It is directly informed by the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, specifically its signature solutions. The programme will contribute to the UNDAF outcomes through two interrelated clusters: (a) inclusive democratic governance, based on signature solutions 1, 2 and 6, contributing to UNDAF outcome 2; and (b) sustainability and inclusive local economic development, based on signature solutions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and contributing to UNDAF outcomes 1, 3 and 4.

Further, the projects aligned with the National Commission for Civic Education and Development (NaCCED) programme on civic education for youths. The project is also aligned to the National Youth Policy (NYP) where there are provisions that define the promotion of employment and decent jobs for youths, engagement for youths in agriculture and youth participation amongst others. The project further aligns with the NYP in enabling Sierra Leonean youth of all categories to develop their full potential and self-esteem while institutionalising youth participation at all local and regional levels in decision making processes.

The projects contribute to addressing the challenges identified with vulnerable groups, women inclusion, gender equality, and youths that includes association with cliques and gangs, possessions of knives and machetes, high number of male youths in correctional services⁹ at the forefront of all protests and riots. With the growing youth concern in various parts of the country; access to harmful drugs, limited platform to articulate concerns and significantly excluded from decision making spaces, this project has supported state and community structures to address the growing need to address the youth crises.

The findings noted the following *(1) Support to capacity strengthening of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone*, based on the achievements outlined in the report and confirmed by the DHRC's and Assistant directors of HRCSL during the FGD-28 (M21, F7) HRCSL personnel trained (5 new Commissioners and 23 staff). 42 (M33, F9) members of the DHRCs

⁹ Project document –Empowering Youths at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community Resilience

on gender concepts, human rights, the treaty body reporting process. On the project *Strengthening the Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Human Rights and Security in Sierra Leone*, 150 (M120, F30) border security officers and community residents were trained by IPCB, in collaboration with ONS and MRU Secretariat on cross-border community policing and preventing the spread of COVID-19, while on *Mitigating Localized Resource-based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba districts*; problems identified that required the project intervention as presented in the project design outlined that in Makpele chiefdom, though with a more active grievance committee yet female representation was extremely low (2 out of 17 members), whilst youth were not represented at all. For Outcome 1: Communities in Pujehun and Moyamba districts benefit from more accountable institutions and mechanisms that promote peaceful relations between communities and private companies, the results framework presented and confirmed by the CYC in Makpele and Upper Banta-that Forty-five from one hundred and thirty members of Section Grievance Redress Committees (SGRCs) in Pujehun are women, while Moyamba District has forty-four women out of the one hundred and forty SGRC members. Among the women are also female youths.

Youth at risk (women and men) are empowered and included in decision-making processes in their communities in the target districts-900 community members (M: 773; F:127) completed and graduated from the established 18 husband schools in June 2022, now serving as ‘lead fathers’, ‘lead mothers’ and mentors in their communities. UNDP through NaCCED supported the participation of youth through dialogue fora between the Y@R and community stakeholders, to address Y@R inclusion in decision-making, access to services and discrimination. NAYCOM facilitated pieces of training on transformational leadership, social change, and conflict resolution for the Y@R, DYC/CYC 501 persons (M: 285 F: 216).

PWDs were mainstreamed as beneficiaries but this did not materialise during implementation. For instance, focus group discussion and KII with DYCs and CYC revealed that PWDs were not included in the training and requested their inclusion in any subsequent intervention.

COHERENCE

The projects’ interventions are coherent with government policies. The project has had a positive impact on the social cohesion in the target communities; reducing the levels of crime and violence associated with the youths at risk and cliques/gangs as well as anti-social and risky behaviours (substance use, verbal aggression and fighting, gambling). The youths at risk beneficiaries report that they are now involved in community decision-making and other development activities; while community stakeholders report a sense of relief and improved feeling of peace and safety in the community observing that the youths at risk are now involved in productive activities (agricultural and others) instead of idling in the streets at night. For those in the correctional centres, access to water equally for male and female inmates provided by UNDP met a critical need. So also, was the provision of solar-powered electricity to these centres in Bo and Moyamba. However, it was noticed that the inmates were far more in number than the allocated space resulting in overcrowded cells (normal space 133, actual inmates in

cells 780 at BO). For DHRC, the projects fit in with their mandate and have been implemented as needed with more capacity building necessary.

Civic education lacking for Y@R not exposed to formal education was provided for by NACEED. Additional skills and professional training were provided for by WFD in collaboration with the MOF. The interventions directly supported the wider objective of providing entrepreneurial skills for youths. Engagements with civil society organisations include, Fambul Tok- which engaged in social cohesion complimenting, NAMATI, which provided training for the youths and women, providing knowledge on land use and CDCs. There are already existing networks such as the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Mother's Club, and the DHRC that were already engaged in referral, engaged in advocacy and discussion programs on radio and television at the local level. Fine-SL in collaboration with UNFPA's engagement further reinforced these interventions through the training sessions that built on existing knowledge and engaging the young men to serve as advocates against gender-based violence.

During the interviews – (KII's and FGDs), there was no mention of organisations outside the UNDP portfolio implementing similar activities. Organisations assigned to implement activities within this project complimented each other's mandate and areas of expertise as already illustrated. All the projects were in coherence with the Gender Equality and Empowerment Policy 2022 and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act 2022. Each intervention catered for a minimum of 30% representation of women at all levels.

EFFICIENCY

The project is well-designed and has a good intervention logic that is straightforward and realistic as noted above. The programme was implemented within its stated timelines and cost estimates in spite of the COVID-19 disruptions. The implementation mechanisms put in place are good, with UNDP and other implementing partners overseeing the projects. The programme interventions focused on the set of activities they were expected to produce. The evaluation showed that projects achieved significant results. The abilities of implementing partners like the Human Rights Commission, District Human Rights Commission and other CSOs helped in the smooth execution of the project. The ability of the implementing partners provides them with a sense of ownership and leadership of the projects. It mitigates any potential for micromanagement by international partners. Decisions related to activities are said by the partners to be jointly taken. Thus, it was concluded that the implementation mechanisms that were put in place were good, and they enhanced the potential for the project to achieve its expected result. From the evaluation of the financial reports and data from the fieldwork, resources were allocated in ways that considered the youth, gender equality, and inclusion of person with disabilities. The allocations were done in such a way that consideration was given

to gender equality, youth and persons with disabilities. This approach on project focused resource appropriation was deemed appropriate and beneficial to achieving the programme objectives. In addition, findings revealed that there were identified synergy between UNDP-funded interventions and other similar, especially on projects that focused on inclusion, gender equality, youths at risk, and persons with disabilities. These synergies helped in reducing costs and in achieving the deliverables of the projects. Similarly, it was noted that in some instances, especially in youth at risk, there were complaints of inadequate funding of the projects, especially in terms of areas covered and number of beneficiaries.

As earlier noted, the support of several state and non-state actors enhanced the implementation of the different components of the project. In practice, these institutions supported the project's capacity-building exercises through workshops, meetings, and the facilitation of referral partnership forum meetings. While not all partners were integrated into the project's implementation team, they were all involved during monitoring exercises, as their perspectives were critical to the success of the project. This was evidently gathered at Kenema with the District Human Rights Committee. Additionally, their participation and commitment to the project provided it with significant political capital that a project like the one reviewed requires. Indeed, there is a shared understanding on the part of the actors (state and non-state) that the project is complementing their actions in their areas of expertise and that it is in their interest to best support the implementation of the project for maximum success. Constant monitoring and evaluation procedures were applied by UNDP and partners to ensure adherence to implementation plans and ensure accountability. This was achieved through periodic M&E visits by UNDP to projects' sites, monitoring and data gathering by implementing partners and its analysis for constant review, assessment, and evaluation.

The media, especially Community Television and Radio stations, have been noted to play an important role in creating and raising awareness in relation to all the projects. Incorporating and mainstreaming media actors in the project, would not only help in enhancing visibility and sustainability but result in reduced cost of information dissemination. Greater use of their services should be harnessed. Also, the engagement and inclusion of the private sector could also present future opportunities that should be explored and sustained. This is important in terms of project sustainability and scalability.

Based on the results framework, activities are on track and resources allocated were expended as detailed in the budget. During the interview sessions with implementing agencies, they confirmed that the budget was expended on activities as detailed in the proposal. This was

further confirmed by reviewing the financial reports made available. Disbursements made to date at the time of the evaluation was at over 60% for all the projects¹⁰. This is suitable and appropriate given that the implementation is a little above the halfway line.

Sharing further details, NACEED and the CYC in Mile 91 noted that there was a challenge with transportation refunds provided for Y@R who attended the series of training organised by NACEED. This is because, following the budget development, approval, disbursement of funds and implementation, there was about a six-month duration during which there was an increment in the pump price of fuel resulting in the increased cost of transportation. The participants raised concerns that the allocated amount was below the actual cost of transport. There was some level of tension as the youths requested to be refunded based on the existing cost of transportation. NACEED invited the chair of the board who was also in Mile 91 and helped to quell down the situation. NACEED presented another scenario in which the football teams who participated in the football gala held in Kenema were aggrieved that they were not provided with DSA in view of their traveling and residing out of station for a couple of days. To address challenges of this nature, UNDP should consider inflation percentages in the budget and minimise approval and disbursement delays. A maximum of three months for disbursement is suggested.

The activities implemented were developed based on consultations conducted by UNDP and state agencies such as MOYA and MOA. These consultations comprised stakeholders at the community level that subsequently were now beneficiaries at the implementation level. The capacity-building engagements, the financial skills training, and identifying stakeholders to participate in the various interventions were conducted at the community level. Therefore, the activities mirrored the felt needs of the beneficiaries. During the FGD in Kenema with the Y@R from Gormbu, the DYC chair confirmed that the activities as stated above were designed by the youths themselves during the baseline study that informed the project engagement.

Women, PWDs and youths were the direct beneficiaries of the various interventions of the project. They participated in the various trainings conducted that included stakeholder engagements and dialogue on gender, GBV and Y@R issues in target communities in both districts; trained and supported Male Advocacy Peer Educators (MAPEs) to raise awareness on GBV and SRHR at community level. The emergence of COVID-19 in the country forced

¹⁰ See projects reports.

the UNDP to adjust in the allocation and utilisation of some funds, but only within the overall project. These adjustments in the allocation and utilisation of some funds however have not affected any output aspect of the project at the mid-term.

A number of monitoring visits were conducted by UNDP with the government, including a mission with the Hon Minister of Youth Affairs, the Hon. Deputy Minister of Agriculture and the Heads of Agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNFPA). Another was a joint monitoring visit with all technical focal persons of the agencies, counterpart government institutions at national and district level. Partner organisations were encouraged by these visits, and it provided the opportunity to discuss progress. Largely, the project is on course and achieving its set objectives at more than 60 per cent.

EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation focused on the effectiveness of the main activities of the projects and its achievements. The evaluation was done using qualitative and quantitative methods as the activities under the outputs are suitable to be evaluated using mixed methods. The evaluation used available figures and asked interviewees about main/key activities of the outputs without neglecting the finer details about them as well as what these achievements have meant for progress in the four projects. The effectiveness of a project signposts its usefulness and the achievement of its objectives.

Based on the various data collection methodologies employed, the evaluation team believed that the results have been achieved as outlined in the results framework up to 2022. These include the following project interventions:

Under a partner agreement with FAO, Caritas Bo and Caritas Makeni has been supporting the implementation of Outcome 3 in as well as general project monitoring activities in the Kenema district. The partner has established Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) schemes in 9 communities and supported cassava crop production in 3 communities. Also, under a partner agreement with UNDP, PTMH-MoHS assessed Youth at risk on drugs and substance abuse, Training for Community Health Workers to conduct counselling sessions and conducted psychoeducation with Youth at Risk, family and communities. Under a partner agreement with UNDP, NACCED has facilitated civic education trainings for Y@R, identified and trained peace ambassadors at the chiefdom level, and conducted dialogue fora between Y@R and community, chiefdom and district stakeholders.

The approaches, resources and conceptual frameworks were relevant to achieve the intended outputs. Primarily, the project interventions largely involved all partners; the beneficiaries, and implementing agencies (government agencies and CSOs). Based on the interaction with the community stakeholders that included the CYCs, local authorities, women and youths and their insights on if the projects have been effective, and involved women youths and PWDs, the consensus was that the programmes have engaged and transformed these groups on civic responsibility, life earning schemes and economic support.

One of the key achievements of the projects have been the active involvement of usually marginalized groups –women, youths and PWDs in the design and implementation of the activities. Based on the KII engagement there is great satisfaction with the project approach and strategies. Beneficiaries can identify with the content of the training because it was discussed with them, they provided meaningful contributions on platforms created for dialogue-such as the engagement with local community leaders in Mile 91 and Y@R. for youth at risk, they identified the structures they needed as part of the project deliverables, and these include seeds, rice mill, and community centres.

The water and sanitation project (construction of three boreholes) to address sanitation in the correctional centres in Port Loko, Moyamba and Bo, also provided a much-needed service for 600-1000 inmates and correctional officers. 90 per cent of the inmates were male and 10 per cent female. For output 1, each activity within this output included both men and women though the men were higher in number than the women as shown in the figure above. Additionally, the procurement of two motorbikes aided the human rights outreach on the sexual offences Act and available referral pathways. Indeed, there is also support to the HRCSL which has been effective in the capacity strengthening of the Commission. The key outputs achieved so far, include several working sessions by the technical Working Group to review the HRCSL Act 2004 with the aim of further strengthening its mandate, functions, and powers in line with the Paris Principles and other best practices of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Africa, as contexts similar to Sierra Leone.

Under Outcome 2, the project partners are working directly with the correctional centres, with project activities centred around strengthening the capacities of officers and institutions to continue to implement the Earning Scheme Policy and Virtual Prison Courts utilizing the input and equipment provided by the project. With regards to the CPA and SLCS Act, the project is hopeful that they will be passed before the end of the project, otherwise UNDP may continue to support advocacy activities through its other partners/activities. Under a partner agreement with UNDP, CARL supported the review and amendment process of the CPA and SLCS Act including advocacy.

In Partnership agreement with UNDP, SLCS coordinated and facilitated the process of earning scheme and skills training program for Youth at-risk inmates in prison. Trained prison staff on life skills curriculum, supported the rollout and facilitated the review, and the amendment of the SLCS 2014 Act. Under a partner agreement with the SLCS, RWI is engaged to facilitate targeted pieces of training aimed at strengthening the capacities of Centre managers, correctional industry officers and the Standards Inspectorate Department on pilot earning scheme activities, correctional management and maintenance of detention standards, development of M&E Plan for the Correctional Service and youth-responsive policing strategies.

Refurbish and improve water and sanitation across 5 Correctional facilities (including the provision of 5 boreholes) contributed to **Activity Result 3.2.2: Strengthened capacity of the SCLS staff to ensure the welfare and safety of inmates, of the INL Reinforcing Credible and Sustainable Improvements in Sierra Leone's Criminal Justice Sector Project Multi-Year Work Plan 2020-2021**. Three (3) Correctional facilities in Port Loko, Moyamba and Bo were equipped with boreholes in addition to the construction of a perimeter fence at the Port Loko Correctional Centre. Additionally, five (5) inmate isolation facilities in correctional centres are equipped with water, hygiene, and sanitation facilities, thus, ensuring staff and inmates access to essential services and are in humane and safe conditions amidst COVID-19.

Under the rule of law, the project seeks to support the priorities of the justice sector and human rights institutions, with a strong focus on capacity strengthening. The project enabled the continuous functioning of the courts and correctional centres during COVID-19 through the provision of hygiene, water and sanitation facilities such as COVID-19 kits including face masks and hand sanitizers that were given to judges, inmates and staff to stay safe from the Coronavirus and the construction of boreholes to ensure sustained water supply. In terms of the Judicial Virtual Court, some information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and two (2) motorbikes were procured to support the establishment of one pilot Judiciary virtual SGBV court, thereby complementing court operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This support has helped in facilitating SGBV survivors' right to access justice remedies through effective prosecution and punishment of offenders.

For inmates' communication with outsiders, communication equipment (mobile phones and top-up for 3 months) was provided to Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS) to complement the suspension of visitation to correctional centres and facilitate continuity of communication between inmates and families. Essential hygiene items were also provided for five correctional isolation units (provisional detention isolation facilities for newly admitted inmates) within five correctional centres.

Output 3.2: The institutional capacity of the HRC is strengthened to effectively respond to COVID-19 and ensure the protection of human rights. In response to COVID-19, the HRCSL embarked on a sustained public education programme throughout the country, purposely to increase awareness on human rights and other issues with human rights implications, and influence policy action of duty-bearers and behavioural change amidst COVID-19 disease. Likewise, in the training of law enforcement officials in response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease, the project supported the training of 90 law enforcement officers on a human rights-based approach to enforcing COVID-19 regulations and on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the National COVID-19 Emergency Response Centre (NaCOVERC).

The Commission ensured sustained media engagement to raise public awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic across the country through 9 regular radio discussion programmes, 876 jingle slots aired in four local languages in 14 community radios and press releases on COVID-19 and Human Rights. These awareness-raising activities emphasised the need to respect and comply with human rights norms and standard operating procedures by security officers during lockdown. Further information was disseminated on the wellbeing of the vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities, the homeless, among others, and urge the line ministries to ensure the provision of required services such as access to regular clean water, food and healthcare without discrimination in relation to region and ethnicity.

Stakeholders interviewed agreed that the work of the Commission has contributed significantly to the reduction in the incidents of brutality perpetrated by security personnel against citizens.¹¹ The project enabled the Commission to adopt an innovative means of receiving complaints through dedicated cell phone numbers at headquarters and regional levels to reduce the rate of physical contact with the public. The Commission also responded to a complaint involving 600 quarantine persons over their food, medical services and other essential items entitlements. The training helped raise the knowledge of LEOs who were made to understand that not all human rights are suspended during a state of emergency and the need to ensure a balance between enforcing compliance with COVID-19 regulations and to adhere to the obligation to protect fundamental human rights of individuals. For activities under outcome 3, Caritas Bo and Caritas Makeni have been supporting its implementation in partnership with FAO as well as general project monitoring of activities in Kenema district. The partnership has

¹¹ According to one project monitoring report it reduced by by 83%.

established Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) schemes in 9 communities and supported cassava crop production in 3 communities.

Other activities were effective in engendering change and meeting projects' objectives. For instance, stakeholder engagements and dialogue on gender, GBV and Y@R issues in target communities in focal districts were facilitated, while awareness and enlightenment campaigns were undertaken on GBV and SRHR at the community level. Also, UNDP in conjunction with FINE-SL has established and operates one Crisis Drop-In Centre in each district which serves as a point for GBV referrals and a safe social space as an alternative to the street and 'ghettos'.

The MOYA facilitated the implementation of two rounds of football galas in the targeted communities, chiefdoms, and districts to promote friendly interactions, peacebuilding and social cohesion among the beneficiaries. Under a partner agreement with UNDP, NAYCOM has facilitated trainings on Transformational Youth Leadership, social change and conflict resolution for Y@R as well as for District and Chiefdom Youth Councils (DYCs/CYCs). Likewise, under a partner agreement with UNDP, NACCED has facilitated civic education pieces of training for Y@R, identified and trained peace ambassadors at the chiefdom level, and conducted dialogue fora between Y@R and community, chiefdom and district stakeholders. The peace club has demonstrated its effectiveness by being ambassadors of peace in their localities and communities while showing the impact that UNDP has engendered in their lives¹². According to one of the coordinators based in Port Loko, 'the Peace Club initiative by UNDP has transformed young adults (male and females) into a model of resilience, courage and valour with a penchant for peacebuilding and scholarship. "We see ourselves as ambassadors of a better and brighter future while taking our educations seriously"¹³.

IMPACT

The portfolio has had a very positive impact on strengthening the rule of law and local peace-building and social cohesion in the target areas. The portfolio through one of the projects has supported institutional capacity of the HRC through the development of a strategic plan, providing logistics including vehicles, training staff and commissioners and conducting mobile complaint hearings, training of the DHRC were key interventions that complement the vision as reflected in the MTNDP. It contributed to increasing access to justice, especially in marginalised communities and vulnerable groups including inmates, especially for beneficiaries outside the headquarters districts. The referral partnership forum serves as a confidence-building and trust entity for citizens. The projects have also contributed to the enlightenment and awareness of business and human rights in the country (several districts) leading to the ease of doing business. CSOs were particularly engaged in trumpeting the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which eventually culminated in the creation of the Grievance Redress Committee to resolve disputes and issues that might arise during the course of business transactions. Likewise, business and human rights have benefited from the introduction of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council (HRC) of the United Nations (UN), which aims at improving the human rights situation on ground of each of the 193 UN Member States. In Sierra Leone, the projects contributed to the development of the Integrated UPR-

¹² See the collection of stories titled "Young Voices in Sierra Leone are Leading Human Rights and Peace Clubs in Schools, Supported by UNDP & Irish Aid". The short report was produced in 2022.

¹³ Interview with Port Loko Peace Ambassador/coordinator of one of the two secondary schools in the district.

SDG MTNPD National Implementation Plan. This in turn has strengthened the National Reporting Mechanism (NRM) within the country¹⁴.

The portfolio has had a very positive impact on social inclusion, protection of human rights, inclusion, gender equality, women's rights, local peace-building and social cohesion in the target areas. This was confirmed by implementing partners and projects beneficiaries. For instance, the level of crime and violence associated with Y@R and cliques/gangs has drastically reduced as reported by communities and local security providers. Behavioural changes on the part of the beneficiaries are evident, with a significant reduction in anti-social and risky behaviours such as theft, fighting, aggression, prostitution and substance abuse, a result of the wide range of training and counselling activities ranging from civic education, youth leadership, conflict resolution and gender, as well as of their preoccupation with project activities and in particular agriculture, making them less 'idle' enabled by the projects' intervention. During the FGDs in Kenema and KII's with Y@R in Mile 91, a number of Y@R recounted the positive transformation following their participation in the various interventions of the project and the peer-to-peer positive influence that generated in their communities. A female Y@R in Kenema whilst sharing her experience stated had been a sex worker, was mostly away from home for long periods, quite disrespectful to family members and community members. Her interaction with the project created a significant transformation of self-worth, self-dignity. She now felt valued, respected and appreciated. This was similar to another female Y@R in Mile 91 who had a similar background but was now enrolled in a tertiary institution after retaking her West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Exams (WASSCE). A male Y@R was opportune to attend the 'Africa Connect' conference in Rwanda organised for youths. This was a transformative experience for him. He was now engaged in a small-scale information technology activity. He had members of his mosque accompany him to apologise to his mother who was usually insulted because of his previously negative activity. He now attended prayers regularly on Fridays.

Gender norms are slowly changing. The CYC from Yonibana chiefdom in Mile 91 now supports his wife with doing the household chores and would take along his daughter to the hospital when she was ill. Female youths are also consulted at the community level. This is significant as they were not only women but considered to have adopted postures contrary to what is expected and required within their families and the chiefdom at large. The health talks provided by their healthcare workers have enlightened them on the dangers of drug abuse. This has greatly contributed to improved health status and more positive behaviour that had been previously influenced negatively by drugs. The economic livelihood opportunities initiatives of the projects have provided a regular source of income. For example, for those capacitated and supported in agriculture and other skills acquisition programmes, this has enabled them to support not only their family, but also their parents and other siblings. Also, eighteen (18) Y@R groups have been registered as FBOs with MAF and local councils and have established bank accounts.

With UNDP support, the GRCs and MSPs have become critical community structures for conflict management. Their services have contributed to reduced incidents of violent conflict between community members and the companies. In the past, protests and blockades were frequent, adversely affecting company operation and peaceful co-existence. With the strengthening of these structures, both sides have found a peaceful and inclusive way of resolving conflicts and other emerging issues. Consequently, the Government, through the OVP and the Ministry of Local Government continued to support them for continued services in the communities after the end of the project. Working with Local,

¹⁴ See UPR Info Annual report 2021; 2021 Rule of Law Annual Report; 2022 Rule of Law Annual Report

and Chiefdom Councils, the OVP has created a path for the institutionalization of these structures to sustain peace through conflict prevention and resolution. These groups are also being integrated into the One Fambul Framework being spearheaded by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

The UNDP supported Land Degradation Assessment which was conducted in late 2020 to determine the impact of extractive industries on the availability and quality of arable land in target communities. Since the report was not validated owing to COVID-19 and lengthy follow-up consultations, the project convened a validation workshop in March 2022 in partnership with OVP. It was attended by representatives from relevant MDAs¹⁵, traditional leaders; CSOs and community members. The report highlights a set of thirteen general recommendations and eight recommendations for the mining and agriculture communities which will be used to further strengthen the communities' resilience in the two districts and by the government to address the recurrent challenges. The Report was adopted by the forum and will inform ongoing review of land-related policies and legislation, and share lessons learned for similar and future interventions. 100 copies have been disseminated among stakeholders including the Chairperson on the Inter-Ministerial Committee by OVP.

As well, UNDP's partner Namati, developed, tested and validated a checklist of land acquisition that will be guided by the existing regulatory legal framework and international best practices. The simplified checklist of key land acquisition regulations, particularly around the SLEITI, VGGT and the National Land Policy and framework is now being used as a tool to communities to increase adherence of companies to existing regulatory frameworks when acquiring land, which can be used as a simplified step-by-step guide to review both existing land acquisition targets under this project, in addition to future investment. The implementation of the simplified checklist serves to empower communities to hold companies more accountable, strengthen their negotiation position and provide a mechanism to make them effectively advocate for their rights as per the regulatory frameworks.

With the OVP, UNDP supported the review of the 2019 SLEITI Report. The report covers up to 15 Dec. 2021 and is the 10th Report since the county joined EITI in 2008. It made 5 recommendations, based on findings, to enhance transparency and accountability in the extractives industry. These include disclosure of contracts and licenses granted to investors; publicly available register for oil and gas licenses; and disclosure of the sector's contribution to the economy, especially contribution to GDP, Government revenues, exports, and employment. Out of 3 recommendations from the previous report, one (standardization of surface rents for transparency) had not been addressed.

In terms of social tensions reduced by enhancing sustainable livelihoods and improving food security, WFP's food purchases using catalytic funding provided a market for the FBOs in the four targeted chiefdoms in Pujehun and Moyamba districts. Over 108 MT was aggregated, processed, and marketed by the FBOs to support WFP's home-grown school feeding pilot. This opportunity transformed the FBOs from purely subsistence farmers into competitive players in the market, placing them on a path to sustainable livelihoods.

In coordination with the district health management teams under the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, support was extended to six mother support groups under its poultry rearing enterprise pilot. This enhanced communities' access to affordable nutritious food and incomes. Village savings and loans schemes further improved access to cash in rural communities. The activities reduced the practice of distress loaning, which was a source conflict in the communities and amongst households, prior to the

¹⁵ Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Mines & Mineral Resources; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Lands, Housing & Country Planning; and the Judiciary.

project. The projects enhanced the participation of high-risk youths and women, providing them with skills and access to resources necessary for transforming agriculture. Through the MoA, the community youth contractor scheme made a mark, empowering youths to inspire their peers and change perceptions around agriculture. From seeing it as an unattractive vocation, youths now see agriculture as a means to sustainable livelihoods. Through this scheme, the youth often filled gaps where government extension services were inadequate.

SUSTAINABILITY

The achievement of the project is a sustainability process. The Y@R have changed their attitudes and behaviour. They are self-motivated by their agricultural activities which provides them with a source of income. They were also engaged in the construction of the community led structures-community centers etc. It has become a source of pride and motivation and providing them with a new and positive outlook to life. The Y@R have changed their attitudes and behaviors and are now too busy with their farming activities to be in the streets engaging in crime and anti-social behaviors. Their confidence and ownership towards their agricultural livelihood activities has increased significantly, and they express pride and motivation for what they have achieved. Partnerships have been developed and sustained from the inception to the point of conducting the evaluation. Consultations that informed the baseline study for the project development were instrumental in building the partnership and collaboration that has significantly contributed to the success of the project. The added value of these partnerships has been the diversity of the implementing agencies and stakeholders. Governance structures at the community level both traditional and local government, women and youth groups, private sector, non-state actors, state agencies and ministries of government. The GEWE act 2022, the Land Rights Commission Act 2022, the GEWE policy 2020, the customary land Rights Act 2022 are among a few policies and legislations in place that will support the transformation of social norms to promote gender equality in the project locations.

Under outcome 3, the sustainability of agricultural livelihood activities is sought through the organization and consolidation of the Y@R groups as small enterprises with business plans developed jointly with all groups, who have been linked up with relevant market actors and supply chains, to ease the continued running of their operations. All groups have established mentorship relationships with existing FBOs and/or private sector entities relevant to their chosen livelihood activities. 18 Y@R groups have been formalized as FBOs, which will ensure a continued linkage with the MAF and access to technical services and agricultural inputs distributed through the ministry's structures. FAO is planning to support some additional strengthening of the young women's position within the structures to ensure that they continue to be included after the end of the project, through experience-sharing and coaching sessions for the female beneficiaries, linkages to other female farmers in the target areas for mentorship, and engagement of the youth at-risk groups and community stakeholders as part of the project exit strategies.

The outputs and planned outcomes of the HRC engagement were structured to ensure engagements are sustained beyond the project lifespan. The DHRCs are existing structures operational at the district level that have supported the operations of the HRC. This intervention has further strengthened their capacity to sustain their supportive role in the work of the HRC. Similarly, the referral partnership forum will sustain the engagements with support from the DHRC beyond the lifespan of the project through the continued collaboration and coordination of providing access to justice for the marginalised. The ROLSPSC projects have an explicit exit strategy that seeks to ensure that good outputs and outcomes continue for a long time. Several comprehensive monitoring exercises have been conducted during this reporting period, with a view to identifying key prospects and challenges for sustainability. Exit strategies to be implemented during the recently approved No Cost Extension have been drafted for all

activities and results areas and are presently under discussion among the partner agencies and partner organizations and institutions. The GRCs held district meetings comprising Sectional committees in preparation for transition after project closure, culminating in an inter-district MSP meeting in Bo City. An Exit and Sustainability was discussed and adopted by the MSP.

Humanist Watch, among the CSO partners in Bo, supporting the implementation of the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence intervention engaged existing community structures in Kono and Kailahun District that included the mother's club, child welfare committees on the gender laws (Sexual Offences Act reviewed in 2019) and Covid -19 measures and general health emergency protocols. These were already existing structures and with the added knowledge could continue engaging on SGBV matters. The peace clubs have demonstrated their sustainability through their outreach, collaboration and partnership with the District Human Rights Commission. They work in collaboration with the DHRC to monitor human rights violations, especially issues related to youths. Some of the teachers are activists and the school authorities are supportive of the complementary roles the students and teachers play in monitoring human rights violations, and their engagements in human rights education on rights and responsibilities. They are recognised at the community level and there is a call for their expansion to more secondary schools in the chiefdoms in Port Loko and other districts visited¹⁶. From the interactions and evaluation data, the Peace Club has already become an integral part of the schools and society. Peace Club acceptance and the positive effect in the places they are located is a sign of their continuity and functionality that will outlive the project. Therefore, more Peace Club is advised to be established and supported throughout the project cycle.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

This programme is ranked based on the Gender Equality Marker Scale, to be Gender 2, as gender equality is adequately integrated into the programme as a cross-cutting issue. The portfolio document was designed to promote gender equality. Each project was developed with strong gender components and benefits both genders. The portfolio also has a PBF-funded GEN 3 project whose implementation started in 2023. The project aims to make a significant contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The projects have attended to cross-cutting issues. For example, ten (10) female inmates were selected for the life skills initiative - as per the project targets and reflecting the gender balance of inmates ensured that female inmates selected for the training benefited from skills initiatives. Gender awareness is included in the life skills training to be rolled out to both male and female inmates. The empowerment of correctional officers included female officers (21 out of 38 trainees) as equal participants in capacity-building workshops, and implementation of program activities in and around correctional centres, while the training workshop for justice and security institutions to improve their responsive skills in addressing youth-at-risk issues prioritized the involvement and contribution of female participants across all institutions, including female Y@R representatives. To highlight and improve the response to female youth at risk by the various institutions and actors, gender is included as a key point of discussion through workshops and post-training monitoring of action points, to ensure that improved youth-responsive and gender-sensitive strategies are employed and that gender-specific challenges affecting the relationship between the Y@R and local security institutions are addressed.

Agricultural livelihood activities supported under Output 3.2 have progressed significantly. Trainings have been rolled out in line with the MoA on basic business management (418 beneficiaries, 220 males,

¹⁶ Interview with a female member of the peace club in Port Loko

198 females); post-harvest management of maize for poultry feed production (191 beneficiaries; males 105, females 86); and post-harvest management and processing of cassava, groundnut, and rice (74 beneficiaries; males 34, 40 females). While the project seeks to address specific justice, peace, social cohesion and related issues, a rising share of UNDP projects have included measures to reflect cross-cutting issues including on gender, persons with disabilities and youths. The project was specifically tailored to address vulnerable and usually marginalised groups namely, women, youths and PWDs. In the selection of the beneficiaries implementing agencies were specific that in all engagements special effort must be made to ensure the inclusion of women, youths, and PWDs. These include MoHS trained 25 health workers (M: 20; F: 5) in Kenema and Tonkolili Districts, and psycho-education sessions were rolled out to 336 persons (Male 206, Female 130) beneficiaries on the bio-psychosocial effects of substance abuse; FINE-SL organized a community sports meet in each project community, during which a family planning referral spot was established and 6400 condoms distributed reaching 1,280 persons (F: 925; M: 355).

Specifically on women, approaching the challenges of land and investment in Moyamba and Pujehun that leveraged on a gender perspective was instructive. Separate sessions were held for men and women. Women had a longer-term developmental approach to land acquisition and use and the men had a more short-term monetary perspective on land use. Conducting separate sessions for the two groups generated a more sustainable engagement strategy with the investors which resulted in subsequently quelling the rising tensions and misunderstanding in the community. A similar focus on women's inclusion and gender-focused initiatives was noticed in the four programmes under the portfolio.

UNDP ensured that all activities including conflict resolution, civic education, counselling, and sporting/social activities reflected the project's commitment to gender equality and women empowerment. A total of 194 female Y@R participated equally in trainings, dialogues on youth and duty-bearers, and other capacity-building activities. This was confirmed by the CYC in Yonibana chiefdom, Mile 91 and by the DYC in Kenema. The equal inclusion of male and female beneficiaries and other stakeholders is prioritized in the establishment of community structures and youth structures working with the project, which has increased the participation of women through election as 50% female youths (72 out of 144) were elected to leadership roles.

CONCLUSION

All projects are well on track and have made significant progress in this mid-term evaluation reporting period. Feedback from beneficiaries and communities is overwhelmingly positive. Coordination structures are working well at district and national level, with generally good cooperation from government institutions. The No Cost Extension of programmes and their implementation by implementing (approved in October 2022) will be used to finalize outstanding activities (such as pending livelihood activities in accordance with the agricultural seasonal cycle and advocacy activities with regards to the Criminal Procedure Act (CPA); address gaps and challenges as identified during joint monitoring missions; and overall consolidate the gains made so far in terms of both behavioural changes and livelihood activities. Meanwhile, the implementing agencies will work together to seek to mobilize additional resources to scale up the project to other areas.

For the Y@R project all activities in the target districts are accompanied by the district youth structures including District and Youth Councils. Youth leadership and peace-building activities were directly implemented by government institutions. NACCED implements civic education and dialogue fora which also involves other government institutions; and MOHS facilitates counselling sessions on

substance abuse through their district extension structures. Likewise, activities under Output 2.1 are implemented directly with the Sierra Leone Correctional Services. For the livelihood activities under Output 3.2, all trainings are co-facilitated with the district officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, serving as the lead institution, monitoring crop production activities on a weekly basis together with the FAO agronomist.

Yet, there were challenges identified in the implementation of the projects. First was the incidence of coronavirus. Interviewees identified the prolonged effects of COVID-19 at the global and national levels, which led to changes in the priorities of both donors and the GoSL” with a probability and impact on results. In response, portfolio plans were reviewed in consultation with donors and a vaccination plan was rolled out in 2021. The current political situation remains stable; with general elections close by, although UNDP has contingency plans to adopt flexible approaches in project planning and implementation to ensure activities remain relevant and realistic. This can be achieved through constant dialogue at the technical and policy levels with the government and partners. Other identified challenges/risks include lack of adequate knowledge of programme objectives and timelines by implementing partners, especially the CSOs and DHRC, political instability largely due to elections-related violence, which may disrupt peace and security in the country, failure on the part of the government to promote sustainability and continuity of the projects as a result of over-reliance on donor support, and unnecessary bureaucratic red tapes on the part of both GoSL partners and UNDP which may result in delays and failure to achieve expected results within timelines set, as well as corruption and maladministration within government institutions.

But in spite of the identified challenges discussed above, it is necessary to state that these projects are highly relevant, ambitious and cover key areas that require attention both by the Government and International Development Organizations like UNDP and its partners. Its implementing partners were carefully selected and are playing key roles in achieving the objectives of the project. The objective of the project was to build and strengthen HRCSL capacity, strengthen judicial reforms within the Rule of Law (RoL) sector, engage in mitigating Localized Resource-based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in selected areas (Pujehun and Moyamba districts), and empowering youth at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience in Tonkolili and Kenema districts, has significantly achieved its stated aims within the period of its implementation as evaluated, with the need to improve on some as noted in the in the body of the work, particularly in the recommendations section. The intervention logic is good, and the indicators as set during the design stage of the project were unambiguous, gender sensitive and implemented by partners. The choice of activities and outputs delivered by the project was good as they took into consideration the kind of support that was required and the implementing partners, faithful to the agreed aims and objectives of the project and the onsite nuances in the bid to ensure Rule of Law, protect and promote human rights, strengthen capacity engender inclusion, and encourage social inclusion in Sierra Leone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: UNDP should continue to support the implementation of key projects of the portfolio even as the 2023 general elections draw near.

Issues to be addressed: UNDP and partners should consider scaling up the youth at risk project noting the positive impact in the lives of the youths in the pilot communities in Tonkolili and Kenema and the positive outcomes noticed in these communities with the request for expansion and scalability. Same for other projects save the project on Strengthening the Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Human Rights

and Security in Sierra Leone that need to be tweaked to involve and communicate project objectives and intended outputs to implementing partners.

Recommendation 2: Funding Issues – Given the rate of inflation in the country, the inflationary trend should be taken into before and during the process of disbursement.

Issues to be addressed: UNDP should factor in inflationary trends during the budget development process of funding implementing partners. This is to address anticipated discrepancies that might occur within the funding process.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should develop procedures that accommodate the unique nature of state institutions that operates within a different framework from civil society organisations given State bureaucratic delays and nuances, while more openness and engagement is encouraged and expected from State officials.

Issues to be addressed: Careful consideration should be undertaken when designing projects in partnership with State institutions, especially the Judiciary given its bureaucratic nature as they may not have similar flexibility as the CSOs in implementing the UNDP programmes. State officials are also expected to engage with UNDP on any bureaucratic bottleneck.

Recommendation 4: Timely release of project grants.

Issues to be addressed: With complaints of late release of funds, UNDP and partners are enjoined to ensure timely disbursement of project grant to partners, if possible, within three months after grants approval.

Recommendation 5: When engaging multiple partners on the same project with UNDP, it is important that a coordinating group would be ideal for information flow and coordination of activities. This was emphasised by several partners whose activities clashed as they were engaging the same partners in the same communities.

Issue to be addressed: It is recommended that a common work plan should guide UNDP operation to reduce duplication of activities with other INGOs and targeting of the same beneficiaries.

Recommendation 6: Project sustainability and ownership - Government buy-in and continued ownership of the project should be encouraged and sustained through budgetary provision and support, especially for structures that exist at the community and district levels.

Issues to be addressed: The continuation of the projects under the ROLSPSC should focus on government financial provisioning and continued systemic support for the projects and its activities.

Recommendation 7: Project Design and Review of UNDP Projects on Cross-Cutting Issues

Issues to be addressed: A review is required for reflecting cross cutting issues in future programs. Gender issues must include engaging non-state actors with representation of male and female heads of organisations, staffing that includes both male and female, trainers, facilitators, and consultants must

be male and female. Similarly, there must be an expansion of categories of PWDs to not only include the visually impaired and those with mobility challenges, speech and hearing impaired (Sign language interpreters) and albinos. The elderly who by virtue of age have developed certain disabilities should also be considered in the design, implementation and monitoring of projects.

Recommendation 8: Clearly defined categories of PWDs as beneficiaries should be covered in the project document.

Issues to be addressed: The category of PWDs and level of engagement must be clearly defined in the project document to ensure their full participation including taking note of their peculiar needs to aid their participation. For instance, having a sign language interpreter would be a good starting point for those with hearing and speech impairments.

LESSON LEARNT

There are some lessons learned that could be of relevance in the further implementation of the ROLSPSC Portfolio and future projects. They include:

- The project components cover most of the critical areas of need (Rule of Law, enactment of enabling Laws, Human Rights, Conflict management and peacebuilding as well as Inclusion and Social Cohesion) of the country given her recent history. and is timely and impactful.
- Furthermore, the expressed concern about the continued inadequate and lack of financial resources by implementing partners has a negative implication for the protection and promotion of human rights and the Rule of Law in Sierra Leone. The project-based approach to accessing funds and implementation of activities is not a sustainable means through which a human rights culture can be sustained. Though national and community structures have been strengthened, sustained and timely funding is required from the government and its partners.
- Engaging local youth organizations and local authorities stimulate interest that fosters inclusion and builds mutual respect and understanding. This is pivotal within a context that had previously neglected and relegated its youths. The strategy of direct engagement between local authorities and youths fosters peace and cohesion.
- The effective monitoring and evaluation in a progressive manner is also a valuable lesson. This helped to make the project effective and efficient.
- Continued buy-in from and national and sub-national governments ownership of the project is important and a valuable lesson that is central to project sustainability.
- Funding delays, time constraints, scheduling conflicts and prospective partners capacity are important areas that could make or mar projects. This was evident in few of the activities that are not well understood and should serve as a lesson.
- Capacity building for project partners to train others, especially with the DHRC, Y@R and other women groups is important.

- Peacebuilding activities and skills acquisition require huge capital outlay. While most districts are resource handicapped, more private sector funding are required.
- Clarity of purpose and management of project partners and beneficiaries' expectations is important. This is to avoid misconceptions and mischaracterization of expectations, that if not attended to, might result in trust and confidence issues.
- Awareness campaigns, sensitization and reorientations programmes are important and should be prioritised and undertaken.
- With the 2023 elections general elections close by, more activities of the projects' portfolio are needed to provide Women, youth, and PWDs engagement through electoral and democratic support and ensure peacebuilding leading to credible and peaceful elections.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Evaluation Plan and Schedule of Schedule of Deliverables

	Deliverables	Due Date	Resources Required	Reporting Specialist
1.	Inception Report	13 th January 2023		Team Lead
2.	Feedback	18 th January		UNDP
3.	Coordinate contact between consultants and contact personnel within related institutions	18 th January	List of institutions including contact details provided	UNDP
4.	Conduct virtual/physical interviews	19 th - 24 th January	Facilitate access for consultants	Consultants
5.	Fieldwork and FGDs	28 th May – 4 th June	Facilitate access for consultants	Consultants
6	Submit draft report/	11 th June		Lead Consultant
7.	Half-day session with UNDP to present findings and recommendations	19 th June	Venue with facilities to project	Consultants/UNDP
8.	Incorporate feedback and submit final report with annexes and power point presentation for dissemination	26 th June		Lead Consultant

ANNEX II: Evaluation Matrix

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria guide was used including Relevance and Design of the Project, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Coherence, Impact, Sustainability and Cross-Cutting Issues. Further descriptions of the criteria used can be seen below:

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub questions	Data sources	Data collection methods/ tools	Indicators/ success standards	Methods for data analysis

Relevance	<p>To what extent does UNDP Rule of Law, Security, Human Rights and Social Cohesion Portfolio respond to the priorities of the Government of Sierra Leone National Development Plan (2019- 2023) and similar strategies, the UNDP Country Programme Document (2020-2023), Embassy of Ireland Mission Strategy 2019-2023 and the Sustainable Development Goals?</p> <p>How relevant are the sustaining peace and social cohesion, the rule of law, security and human right interventions to the needs of Sierra Leone's supply-side justice institutions and to demand side beneficiaries' lives?</p> <p>How does the support for project interventions contribute to the longer-term development results in terms of approaches, capacities, policies and strategies?</p> <p>How relevant have project interventions been in leveraging the UPR recommendations to support sustainable development?</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners organizations publications and officials,</p> <p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p> <p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p> <p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p>	<p>Transcription, Description</p> <p>Content Analysis.</p>
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	<p>Does the intervention meet the practical and strategic needs of all genders, persons with disability, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups?</p> <p>How did the intervention address the cultural nuances of the various districts?</p>					
Design of the Project	<p>Did the design of the project take into consideration contextual issues, actors and potential challenges?</p> <p>What are the thematic areas that the project sought to address?</p> <p>Were the target groups involved in the design of the project? If yes, to what level were they involved?</p> <p>Is there a logframe designed for the project and used as a management tool?</p> <p>Were the indicators in the logframe assessed and revised to keep them relevant and updated?</p> <p>Were partners particularly CSOs involved in the design of the project? If yes, which partners?</p> <p>Is the design realistic when compared to the resources available for the implementation of the project?</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners organizations publications and officials,</p> <p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p> <p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p> <p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p>	<p>Transcription,</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Content Analysis.</p>

	<p>Are potential risks that may undermine the project identified, with mitigation factors established at the design stage?</p> <p>To what extent was gender addressed in the design of the project?</p>		Surveys			
Coherence	<p>To what extent the UNDP Rule of Law, Security, Human Rights and Social Cohesion Portfolio is coherent with Government's policies?</p> <p>To what extent does the intervention support national legislation and initiatives that aim to improve gender equality and human rights? What lessons can be learned?</p> <p>To what extent the UNDP Rule of Law, Security, Human Rights and Social Cohesion Portfolio addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UN and other development partners?</p> <p>To what extent the UNDP Rule of Law, Security, Human Rights and Social Cohesion Portfolio interventions is coherent with existing gender policies and laws?</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners organizations publications and officials,</p> <p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p> <p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p> <p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p>	<p>Transcription,</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Content Analysis.</p>

Efficiency	<p>Has the programme been implemented within its stated timeframe and cost estimates?</p> <p>Did the programme interventions focus on the set of activities that were expected to produce significant results?</p> <p>Were there sufficient (human and financial) resources allocated towards achievement of the programme objectives?</p> <p>Were different resources allocated in ways that considered gender equality, and inclusion of person with disability and youth? If so, how were they allocated?</p> <p>Was differential resource allocation appropriate?</p> <p>Was there any identified synergy between UNDP-funded interventions and other similar interventions that contributed to reducing costs while supporting results?</p> <p>Has there been over expenditure or under expenditure in programme interventions?</p> <p>Were there any unanticipated events, opportunities or constraints? What could</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners organizations publications and officials,</p> <p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p> <p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p> <p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p>	<p>Transcription,</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Content Analysis.</p>
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	<p>be done differently in the future?</p> <p>What measures were taken to assure the quality of development results and management practices, both in relation to process and products, and to partnership strategies?</p> <p>What monitoring and evaluation procedures were applied by UNDP and partners to ensure greater accountability?</p> <p>Were adequate measures were put in place during implementation to ensure efficiency of gender interventions?</p>					
Effectiveness	<p>Have the expected programme (quantitative and qualitative) results been achieved and what were the supporting or impeding factors?</p> <p>Were the approaches, resources and conceptual frameworks relevant to achieve intended outputs?</p> <p>What are the main lessons learned from the partnership strategies and what are the possibilities of replication?</p> <p>To what extent have interventions' objectives and results contributed to gender equality, women and</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners organizations publications and officials,</p> <p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p> <p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p> <p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p> <p>High/Success-ful</p>	<p>Transcription,</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Content Analysis.</p>

	<p>youth empowerment, empowering indigenous and the vulnerable groups as well as impunity of SGBV crimes and human rights violations?</p> <p>Which aspects of the interventions had the greatest achievements? What have been the supporting factors? How can UNDP build upon or replicate these achievements?</p> <p>In which areas does the programme component have the least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome?</p> <p>Were the approaches, resources and conceptual frameworks used relevant to the achievement of planned outcomes/outputs?</p> <p>What were the unintended results (positive/negative) of project interventions?</p>		<p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Surveys</p>		High/ Success-ful	
Impact	<p>Are the portfolio interventions causing a significant change in the lives of the intended beneficiaries?</p> <p>How did the portfolio interventions cause higher-level effects (such as changes in norms or systems)? To what extent have impacts contributed to</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners organizations</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p> <p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p>	<p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p>	<p>Transcription,</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Content Analysis.</p>

	<p>equal power relations between people of different genders?</p> <p>Are all the intended target groups, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, including women benefiting equally from the portfolio interventions?</p> <p>Are the portfolio interventions transformative – does it create enduring changes in norms – including gender norms – and systems, whether intended or not?</p> <p>Are the interventions leading to other changes, including “scalable” or “replicable” results? How will the interventions contribute to changing society for the better?</p> <p>Were there any unintended social and environmental effects of the project intervention?</p>		<p>publications and officials,</p> <p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p>	
Sustainability	<p>To what extent were sustainability considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the programme of activities at different levels?</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners organizations publications and officials,</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p> <p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p>	<p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p>	<p>Transcription,</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Content Analysis.</p>

	<p>Were exit strategies programme interventions appropriately defined and implemented, and what steps have been taken to ensure sustainability of results?</p> <p>How did the development of partnerships at local and national level contribute to sustainability of the results?</p> <p>How were different stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation? Have interventions been implemented with appropriate and effective partnership strategies? What has been the nature and added value of these partnerships?</p> <p>To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development by primary stakeholders?</p>		<p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p>	
<p>Cross-Cutting Issues</p> <p>(Human rights, Gender equality and</p>	<p>To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project?</p>		<p>Relevant government and project documents</p> <p>Newspapers, journals, implementing partners</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews (KII),</p>	<p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/</p>	<p>Transcription,</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Content</p>

disability inclusion	<p>To what extent has the portfolio integrated Human Rights Based Approach in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project? Have the resources been used in an efficient way to address Human Rights in the implementation?</p> <p>Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?</p> <p>To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the promoting the rights of women and persons with disability? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?</p>		<p>organizations publications and officials,</p> <p>Interviewees,</p> <p>Project managers</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Online mediums</p> <p>virtual ICT platforms</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>Focus group discussions (FGDs),</p> <p>In-depth interview (IDI) and</p> <p>Fieldwork observation.</p>	<p>Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p> <p>High/ Success-ful</p>	Analysis.
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ANNEX III: Work Schedule/Plan

Activities / Deliverables	January March				April - June			
	W1	W	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8
Prepare Inception report	X							
Submit inception report Receive feedback UNDP to establish contact with partner institutions for interviews			X					
Conduct virtual/physical interviews with stakeholders. Engage UNDP to coordinate field visits with stakeholders						X		

Develop draft report								
Develop power point presentation						X		X
Submit draft report								
Coordinate with UNDP for half day presentation								
Half -day session with UNDP on findings and recommendations					X			
Incorporate feedback								
Finalisation and submission of second draft report with annexes and power point for dissemination						X		
Address any outstanding feedback or reviews							X	
Submission of Final Evaluation Report								X

ANNEX IV: List of Stakeholders and Actors interviewed.

DESIGNATION	INSTITUTION	
Acting Director General	Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS)	M
Human Resource Manager	Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS)	M
Portfolio Manager	Ministry of Youth Affairs (MOYA)	M
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	National Youth Commission (NAYCOM)	M
Court Administrator	Sierra Leone Judiciary (SLJ)	F
Executive Secretary	Human Rights Commission (HRC)	M
Acting Coordinator	Justice Sector Coordinating Office (JSCO)	M
Director of Programmes	National Council for Civic Education (NACEED)	M

Executive Director	Humanist Watch Sierra Leone	M
Executive Director	NAMATI	M
Senior Rule of Law and Human Rights Officer	UNDP Staff	M
Gender Specialist	UNDP Staff	F
National Youth Expert	UNDP Staff	M
Youths@R	Mile 91	
Youths@R	Kenema	
Members	District Human Rights committee Kenema	ss
Members	District Human rights Committee Moyamba	
Assistant Director	Human Rights Commission Port Loko	
Officer in Charge	Male Correctional Centre Moyamba	
Officer in Charge	Male Correctional Centre Bo	
Survivors of SGBV	Kenema	
Members	Peace Clubs (Furlanga Educaid Senior Secondary, Rolal, Port Loko) (Shrilenkeh Secondary School, Marforkie chiefdom Port Loko)	
Chairperson	Kenema Justice Program	
Multi Stakeholder platforms Upper Banta	Chiefdom Youth Leader Youth Leader DPO Moyamba District	
GRC's (Lower Banta)	Chiefdom Security Chiefdom Women's Leader CSOs	

Institution	Type	Male	Female
Judiciary		0	1

Ministry of Youth Affairs	Government	1	1
Youth Commission	Government	1	1
National Council for Civic Education	Government	2	0
Human Rights Commission	Government	2	0
District Human Rights Committees	CSO	10	6
Sierra Leone Correctional Service	Government	7	1
Inmates (SLCS)		1	1
Peace Clubs	Youth	3	1
Y@R	Youth	6	10
Local Authority	Government	1	
Legal Aid Board	Government	2	
Fambul Tok	CSO	1	
Namati	CSO	3	1
Humanist Watch	CSO	1	1
SGBV survivors		2	4
UNDP	UNDP	2	1
TOTAL		45	29

ANNEX V: Documents Reviewed

The documents reviewed directly related to the design and implementation of the project evaluation and include UNDP documents and others produced by the Government of Sierra Leone and other actors. The documents provide a good contextual, thematic and programmatic background, which were essential for the development of the tools and the context section of the main report. The documents include:

- ✓ Event Monitoring Report on the Regional stakeholders' consultations on the Review of the HRCSL Act 2004
- ✓ Event Monitoring Report on the Regional training of security personnel on COVID-19 and Human Rights and SOPs

- ✓ Regional stakeholders' consultations on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process in the North-West (Makeni) and Southeast (Bo)
- ✓ Project Proposal
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Project Reports
- ✓ PFB Project Progress Report updated October 2022
- ✓ Project monitoring reports
- ✓ Support to Capacity Strengthening of the HRCSL
- ✓ Terms of Reference for the Mid-term Evaluation of the UNDP Rule of Law and Sustaining Peace and Social Cohesion Portfolio
- ✓ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Phase II
- ✓ Mission Plan Irish Aid
- ✓ UNDP Country Programme Document for Sierra Leone (2020 -2023)
- ✓ The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone
- ✓ The HRCSL Act of 2004
- ✓ Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023)

ANNEX VI: Evaluation Terms of Reference

ToR is attached separately.