

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT OF THE
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT, ACCESS, AND PROTECTION (LEAP)
PROJECT
(May 2021- December 2023)**

Submitted to UN Women Kenya Country Office

IMPLEMENTED IN
TURKANA COUNTY - KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP AND KALOBYEI INTEGRATED SETTLEMENT AND
GARISSA COUNTY - DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP

CONDUCTED BETWEEN
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBOs:	Community-based Organizations
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFAO:	Cooperation for Africa and Overseas Motors Kenya
CSOs:	Civil society organizations
DRR:	Disaster Risk Reduction
ERG:	Evaluation Reference Group
FPIs:	Flagship Programming Initiatives
GBV:	Gender-based Violence
GEWE:	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
GERRAS:	Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System
IPs:	Implementing Partners
IRC:	International Rescue Committee
KNAP:	Kenya National Action Plan
LEAP:	Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection
MER:	Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTP:	Medium-Term Plan
PCVE:	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PSC:	Project Steering Committee
PWJ:	Peace Winds Japan
PWD:	People With Disabilities
RCK:	Refugee Consortium of Kenya
RBM:	Results Based Management
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV:	Sexual and gender-based violence
SME:	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SN:	Strategic Note
SRA:	Strategic Result Area
TOC:	Theory of Change
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
UNDAF:	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG:	UN Evaluation Group
UN Women:	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR:	United Nations Security Council Resolutions
UNSDCF:	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VSLA:	Village Savings and Loan Association
WEE:	Women’s Economic Empowerment
WOKIKE:	Womankind Kenya

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0. Introduction

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Kenya Country Office engaged an independent consultant to conduct a Final Evaluation of the project “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection in Crisis Response (LEAP III),” from May 2021 to December 2023, having received a no-cost extension from April 2023. The project was hereinafter referred to as the LEAP III. The project was implemented by UN Women from May 2021 to December 2023 with a funding allocation of USD 4,595,429 from the Government of Japan. The evaluation was conducted between October - December 2023. The project beneficiaries were the refugees living in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, Dadaab Refugee Camps, and the host communities. This report presents the key findings of the evaluation, key conclusions, and recommendations.

2.0. Background and Context of LEAP III Project

Kenya is affected by regional instability and spill-over effects from politically unstable neighbors such as Somalia¹, South Sudan² and the Great Lakes Region³. The long-term nature of refugee displacement is evident in Kenya, which currently hosts two refugee camps: Dadaab Refugee Camp, established in 1991⁴ and Kakuma Refugee Camp, established in 1992 with over 491,000 refugees fleeing from different countries. Displacement poses a unique and disproportionate impact on women and girls who are more likely to be victims of sexual and gender-based crimes, and experience restrictions on education, limited livelihood choices, access to basic services, exclusion from decisions on conflict transformation and sustainable development, and participation in public life. It is against this backdrop that UN Women developed the LEAP III project– to address the needs of women and girls.

In May 2021, UN Women received funding from the Government of Japan to implement the Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP) III Project. The two-and-a-half-year project aimed at i) increasing the capacity of women to participate and influence policymaking and programming on conflict prevention, peace and security and humanitarian action; ii) creating new sources of income and economic opportunities through skills and livelihoods development for women and girls refugees and host communities: and iii) increasing access to effective services and protection mechanisms for vulnerable women and girls through social spaces in refugee and host communities. The LEAP III project was implemented in Turkana County - which hosts Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, and in Garissa County - which hosts Dadaab Refugee Camp targeting the 452,916.00⁵ (2020) refugees living in Dadaab and Kakuma as well as the host communities. The project builds on the results achieved and lessons of previous projects supported by the Government of Japan through the Japan Supplementary Budget, specifically “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP II) in Crisis Response (31st March 2019 – 30th March 2020). “

3.0. Project Stakeholders and Their Responsibilities

The project was implemented through partnerships with the Government of Japan, the Government of Kenya Ministry of Public Services and Gender Affairs, Refugee Affairs Secretariat under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Kenya Police Service, Turkana County Government, Garissa County Government, UN agencies (UNHCR, UNDP, UN-Habitat), Peace Winds Japan, Toyota Kenya Academy, CFAO Kenya, BBOX, Mitsubishi Corporation,

¹ <https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/africa/somalia/somalia-conflict>.

² <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/south-sudan>.

³ <https://www.interpeace.org/programme/great-lakes/>.

⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/dadaab-refugee-complex>.

⁵ <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/KEN/kenya/refugee-statistics>.

women's organizations and civil society organizations, media and other private sector players. The government of Japan provided funding and a Project Steering Committee. Un Women coordinated different gender equality actors from Government, civil society, research institutions, and media organizations at the national level and in the four target counties to realize the objectives of the project. The government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Gender and Affirmative Action, participated in the project Steering Committee which served as a strategic decision-making body and provided oversight during the project implementation. CSO implementing partners focused on policy development and implementation, capacity development of key stakeholders, community dialogues on negative gender and social norms, and support to SGBV survivors.

4.0. Changes in project implementation duration

The LEAP III implementation period was initially planned to be from May 2021 to April 2023. A no-cost extension to December 2023 was requested by UN Women and granted by the donor. Several factors contributed to the request for a no-cost extension including the changes in the County Assembly leadership following the Country's General Election results in August 2022⁶. The implementing partners had to seek approvals for the garage construction from the new county government, which took a long time to clear. Further, changes in the initially selected implementing partner (Action Africa Help International - AAHI) due to reported fraud under another UN agency, resulted in UN Women seeking other implementing partners to undertake all the activities that had been under AAHI. It was also noted that the security situation deteriorated in Turkana County where the auto garage is being constructed. In response, the Public Order Act⁷ was issued in February 2023, which imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew further delaying the project implementation.

5.0. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The overall purpose of the end of project evaluation was to assess the project's achievements against the planned results, identifying and documenting lessons learnt (including design issues, lessons, and best practices that can be scaled up or replicated), analyzing challenges encountered, and assessing how the project contributed to gender equality and economic empowerment of women in refugee camps and host communities in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana County and in Dadaab Refugee Camp in Garissa County. The evaluation covered Outcome 1 (with Output 1.1 and Sub-Output 1.2) and Outcome 2 (including Output 2.1 and Output 2.2) respectively⁸ and data collection was conducted at the national and county levels (detailed result framework on Annex VI).

The outcome of the Evaluation is intended to among other things: (i) facilitate learning and improved decision-making in support of development of new projects on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action; (ii) enable accountability for the implementation of the project and analysis of the effectiveness of the project; (iii) support advocacy for the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions; (iv) enhance capacity building and mobilization of regional, national and community peace and security stakeholders to advance strategies towards integrating women in peace and security efforts in Kenya.

⁶ <https://nation.africa/kenya/elections>.

⁷ <https://uploads.mwp.mprod.getusinfo.com/uploads/sites/5/2023/02/Government-of-Kenya-Public-Order-No-1-of-2023.pdf>.

⁸ See detailed project logical framework in the attached Annex 5.

In line with UN Women Evaluation Policy⁹, this evaluation report and its corresponding UN Women management response will be disclosed publicly on the UN Women “Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) System” at <http://gate.unwomen.org/>¹⁰. The intended audience of the evaluation are UN Women at country, regional and headquarters level, development partners and particularly the main donor (Government of Japan), Implementing Partners to this project (National Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and Civil Service Organizations (CSOs) Government of Kenya, academic institutions (TVET projects), project beneficiaries and UN agencies.

6.0. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation adopted theory-based approaches and mixed methods for the evaluation approach that critically utilized qualitative and quantitative approaches as well as applying the most significant change approach. The evaluation applied six UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation criteria - relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, sustainability and impact, and human rights/gender equality. Evaluation questions and subsections under each criterion are detailed in the Terms of Reference (ToR) appended in Annex 1 and the detailed evaluation matrix in Annex II of this report.

The evaluation relied on both existing and new data. Existing/secondary data was obtained from implementing partner reports, project donor reports, donor briefs, and publications from CSOs, academia, and media related to the project. It utilized purposive sampling to identify project stakeholders and implementing partners in Turkana and Garissa Counties consulted. It relied on information from 12 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving 136 participants (122 females and 14 males) from refugees and host communities and 20 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) from Implementing Partners (IPs) - (14 females, 6 males), five KIIs (all female) from UN Women Kenya Country Office (KCO), two KIIs (1 male, 1 female) from the two County Governments and one KII (male) from the Government of Japan.

7.0. Summary Evaluation Findings/Conclusions

Relevance:

The evaluation found the project's Theory of Change (ToC) coherent as it was well-structured and clearly articulated the pathways to achieving change. The two outcomes remained relevant to the context and needs of targeted beneficiaries in the two counties and broadly in the rest of the country throughout implementation. The ToC aligned with the UN Women Global Strategic Plan (2022-2025), UN Women Kenya Country Office Strategic Notes (of 2019-2022 and 2023-2026), and UN Women Global Strategy. The project has tackled the major drivers of economically empowering women refugees and host communities through skills development and opportunities for women's participation in income-generating activities. It has addressed women's and girls' needs for economic empowerment, leadership in peace and security, protection from SGBV, and representation in decision-making. The evaluation thus deemed the project relevant to the gender equality context in Kenya as it sought to address gender gaps prioritized by the government (both county and national), development partners, civil society, and targeted communities. The evaluation notes nonetheless that there was room for better inclusion of PWDs in project activities ensuring strategies and approaches account for the special needs of PWDs. Further, whilst there was training that targeted beneficiaries, the evaluation notes that women could not start income-generating activities citing lack of capital as the major constraint. Also, it was notable that targeted women did not take up some courses like motor vehicle mechanic and computer training which pointed to a mismatch in their interest and available training. This points to gaps in the determination of relevant training and in balancing

⁹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/10/evaluation-policy-of-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women>.

¹⁰ <https://gate.unwomen.org/>.

resources to provide the necessary support (beyond training/course) to increase the relevance of livelihood activities to the needs of targeted beneficiaries. This conclusion is linked to *findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8*.

Coherence:

The project balanced alignment to international and national policy priorities and its outcomes reflected global, national, and local UN Women institutional frameworks for GEWE, humanitarian response, peacebuilding, and development. UN Women's position in Kenya as a thought leader on GEWE and its convening power enabled the entity to link and work with various agencies including UN agencies, CSOs, government institutions, and the private sector on projects funded by different donors. Still, it complemented the LEAP III project at the county level. For example, UN Women actively engaged and coordinated with the stakeholders through the Gender Working Groups in Turkana County and Garissa County to ensure the inclusion of women's organizations in the humanitarian inter-agency coordination platforms. Improved interagency coordination at the county level has also made the work of UN Women with funding from Japan visible to stakeholders. Nonetheless, there were notable lapses in coordination among some partners and unwillingness to work together. When there were project changes, like the design of the auto-garage, there was notable weak coordination and synergy among the County government of Turkana on the approvals, the government of Japan, IP, and UN Women. This indicated that more could be done to ensure coherence among local partners. This is based on *finding 9, 10, and 11*.

Effectiveness:

The project has achieved its planned outputs and made strong contributions to the two outcomes spelled out in the results framework. It has provided essential protection mechanisms through social spaces in refugees and host communities for strengthening SGBV identification, mitigation, prevention, and response. It has also contributed to improvements in women's living standards and ability to earn an income which has elevated women's status within the family (being involved in decision-making processes). It has increased participation of targeted women in livelihood activities equipping them with skills, resources and connections that have enabled them to independently provide for their families, cultivating confidence and dignity. As a direct effect, these outcomes have contributed to reduction in incidences of intimate partner violence. This has provided further evidence of economic empowerment as an effective strategy for reducing SGBV. There remain gender-specific structural barriers deeply rooted in prevalent socio-cultural norms, practices and attitudes that limit meaningful participation and influence of targeted women in peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes. Gender roles remit a burden of care work at household level that limits time and opportunities for women to actively participate. Also, patriarchal attitudes still affect the willingness and ability of women to engage constructively and contribute their ideas in peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes, activities, and forums. Empowering women to engage more meaningfully in humanitarian, peace and security processes should be viewed by stakeholders in the country as a long-term endeavor that requires continuous intervention from UN Women and partners, building on the net gains on knowledge and capacities developed through this project. This conclusion is based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17*.

Efficiency:

The project was delivered effectively and efficiently. All project output targets were met with three of them exceeded on time as per the work plan within the budget. The total LEAP III project (May 2021-December 2023) budget allocations of USD 4,595,429 against outputs seemed balanced and logical towards enhancing project outcomes. In managing the project operations, UN Women utilized Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tools including Atlas, Oracle, and Quantum (adopted in 2023) which enabled tracking of resources allocated to the project. Robust implementing partner selection processes to ensure minimum exposure to risk. These included consideration of technical expertise, geographical location/presence to

reach project beneficiaries and risk-based capacity assessment ratings. A robust Monitoring and Evaluation system was applied which utilized field monitoring visits, regular meeting with the implementing partners and tracking project results through reviewing quarterly partner reports. The project design allowed sufficient resources for implementing the larger part of its targeted outcomes. Finances were considered by partners to meet the task and the human resource endowment provided adequate technical and management support that ensured efficient implementation. Nonetheless, delays in the transfer of funds to implementing partners contributed to disbursement delays that impacted the pace of implementation and staff transition towards the end of the project posed major risk and created notable gaps in IPs coordination, strategic guidance, and forging partnerships. This conclusion is based on *findings 19, 20 and 21*.

Human Rights and Gender Equality:

The projects ToC was centred on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of refugee women and girls and host communities and focused on (i) enhancement of women's capacity to influence policy and programming on peace and security and humanitarian action; (ii) economic empowerment; and (iii) provision of services and protection. This demonstrated adequate attention to human rights of women tackled through awareness creation and capacity development, policy influencing, and male engagement to tackle socio-cultural norms, knowledge and practices that discriminate against women and girls. The project aligned well with national and international commitments on gender equality and human rights and adopted the Leave No One Behind principle, which ensured the targeting of poor and marginalised women and girls in refugee camps and host communities that have limited capacity to claim their rights. Although there was notable effort to document PwDs involved in the project there was a gap in resource allocation towards enabling meaningful participation of persons with disability that needs to be addressed in future interventions. This conclusion is based on *finding 22*.

Sustainability and Impact:

The project was driven by a sustainable and strategic model that ensures continuity even after the project closure. UN Women designed a sustainable exit strategy that is aligned to institutional strengthening and capacity development of national and county institutions. Sustainable strategies/approaches used to deliver the project include the formation of a women's cooperative in Kalobeyei, the building of a garage for mechanical training and handing it over to CFAO, the establishment of VSLA in Dadaab, provision of business start-up kits for women in Dadaab, construction of the Women Empowerment Centre in Kalobeyei and offering baking skills, weaving to girls in Kalobeyei. In addition, the building of women's safe spaces, garages, and business incubation centres will act as key successful landmarks for the LEAP III project. More capacity strengthening in resource mobilization, advocacy and lobbying for increased donor funding is key to strengthening financial sustainability. More focus is needed to potentially create various knowledge products developed by the project to improve capacity building and response towards women security, economic empowerment based on *finding 23*.

8.0. Lessons from the Evaluation

- **Lesson 1:** Strategic partnerships and collective action enable effective implementation and tackling of complex challenges and lay the foundation for sustainability. The project selected credible IPs with appropriate capacity, knowledge, experience, and goodwill with targeted communities. For instance, a seamless SGBV referral pathway was established through the collaboration among different project partners providing comprehensive survivor centered SGBV response. RCK provided legal aid and psychosocial support for SGBV survivors, IRC provided medical treatment, Don Bosco and Peace Winds Japan provided skills training to empower survivors economically, and through the judiciary and police case, investigation was fast-tracked to ensure access to justice for survivors. Lesson based on based on *findings 6, 10, 11 and 14*.

- **Lesson 2:** Effective implementation of the Leaving No One Behind principle requires adequate resources and specific budget lines to support specialized mechanisms that enable people with disability and/or women in marginalized and hard-to-reach areas to participate in project activities. PwDs and other socially excluded persons require support in the form of appropriate transportation, security, and assistive devices without which their meaningful participation cannot be guaranteed. Lesson based on based on *findings 6, 10, 11 and 14*.
- **Lesson 3:** Involving men and incorporating them at the programming level played a critical role since they have become part of women's economic empowerment and skills development champions within refugees and host communities. Male engagement is critical for tackling socio-cultural barriers that limit women economic empowerment and participation in public life. Continuous engagement of men has the potential to create long-lasting impact as influencers of community behavior change and protection of women and girls. For instance, the 'Tree of men' a Traditional Tribal decision-making organ that involves consultations with women leadership known as 'Tree of Women' has created harmonious dialogues with the Ethnic Refugee Leaders/Elders who act as main custodians of cultures in the refugee camps. This has improved the understanding of social norms among men and improved participation of women and girls in income-generating activities and peace committee decision-making. *Based on findings 3 and 13*.

9.0. Recommendations

1. UN Women and Implementing Partners to mobilize financial resources and partnerships for a successor project to build on the gains made in breaking the socio-cultural barriers through the LEAP III project for a stronger durable impact. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 2, 3 and 5*.
2. The government of Japan and other Development Partners to allow more financial resources, in future interventions, for livelihood skill development as a strategy to build economic resilience, foster prevention, and response of SGBV, and increase women's participation in peace and security structures. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 2 and 3*.
3. UN Women to engage the Government of Japan, other Development Partners, and implementing partners to mobilize financial resources and partnerships for a successor project to expand the scope to neighboring communities including non-refugee host communities (in Turkana Township and Garissa Township) to ensure benefits bring the neighbouring communities to the same level as the targeted refugees and host communities. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 3 and 4*.
4. Implementing Partners to further invest in male engagement in future interventions to complement and sustain progress on GEWE attained through the LEAP III project on tackling socio-cultural norms, practices, and beliefs that limit the empowerment of women and girls in refugee camps and host communities. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 2, 3 and 5*.
5. Private Sector partners and UN Women to pursue further partnerships to leverage skills, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls in refugee and host communities. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 2 and 3*.
6. UN Women to review existing modalities for funds disbursement to implementing partners to address reported delays for smooth implementation of future interventions and efficient enhanced and timely delivery of results. Based on *findings 19, 20, and 21* and *lessons 1, 2 and 3*.

SECTION ONE: OBJECT AND CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

1.1 Introduction

This is the Final Evaluation Report of Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection in crisis response (LEAP III) implemented in Turkana County - which hosts Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, and in Garissa County - which hosts Dadaab Refugee Camp with funding from the Government of Japan. The report provides details of the evaluation findings drawing from field consultations, secondary data, and results of validation processes with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). Drawing from these findings, the report outlines recommendations and lessons learned for similar upcoming projects in Kenya and beyond.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. UN Women provides support to Member States' efforts and priorities in meeting their gender equality goals and for building effective partnerships with civil society and other relevant actors.

In May 2021, UN Women received USD 4,595,429 funding from the Government of Japan to implement the LEAP III project (May 2021- December 2023). The project aimed at ensuring that women in refugee and host communities lead and participate in peace, security and humanitarian processes, and vulnerable women and girls benefit from protection mechanisms and enhance resilience and self-reliance through women's economic empowerment. The project builds on the results achieved and lessons of previous projects supported by the Government of Japan through the Japan Supplementary Budget, specifically "Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP II) in Crisis Response. Specifically the project's aimed to ensure: (i) Women's capacity to participate and influence policymaking and programming on conflict prevention, peace and security and humanitarian action increased; (ii) Refugee and host communities' women and girls have new sources of income and economic opportunities through skills and livelihoods development; and (iii) Vulnerable women and girls have increased access to effective services & protection mechanisms through social spaces in refugee and host communities. The results, outcomes and outputs of the project are clearly framed out of this ToC and makes it easier to follow the envisaged results chain following the indicators under the outcomes and outputs. The project's ToC was coherent and well-structured and clearly articulated how change would be achieved through the results chain of the project. The ToC was developed based on the assumption that the ongoing refugee assistance project was temporary.

UN Women operationalized the LEAP III project (May 2021- December 2023) through Flagship Programming Initiatives (FPIs) developed to achieve transformative results for gender equality and women's empowerment in Turkana County - which hosts Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, and in Garissa County - which hosts Dadaab Refugee Camp with USD 4,595,429 funding from the Government of Japan.

1.2 Background and Context

UN Women Kenya Country Office (KCO) has been implementing the LEAP III project between May 2021- December 2023. The project was initiated at a time when Kenya was making significant strides towards

gender equality. In the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) 2020 published by the World Economic Forum, Kenya was ranked 109th out of 153 countries. The index measures gender-based gaps in four key areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Kenya's Global Peace and Security Index (GPSI) ranking improved from 107 out of 152 countries with an index of 0.631¹¹ in 2017/2018 to 90 out of 170 countries with an index of 0.721 in 2021/2022¹². The improved ranking and index over the period reflect the progress made by the country in implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 through the development and implementation of the Kenya National Action Plan (KNAP) I and II, with support from UN Women. It also reflects the increased participation of women in peace processes at all levels and in institutions responsible for peace and security in the country. Kenya has been ranked as one of the countries that have exceeded their contribution target in terms of female military observers and staff officers deployed to UN Peacekeeping missions¹³. The country has also experienced a more than 30% increase in women's representation in peace committees. However, despite the progress noted above, the country's GPSI ranking declined to 149 out of 177 countries with an index of 0.650, representing a 0.071 index decline. This reflects a complex peace and security landscape in Kenya characterized by the threat of extremist-linked terrorism, ethnic conflicts related to sharing of natural resources, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and violence during elections. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by these different forms of violence.

Kenya has prioritized the development and implementation of its second-generation National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (KNAP II), also prioritizing gender equality, youth empowerment in line with UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS), counterterrorism and humanitarian action. At the national level, the project has a strategic alignment to national development priorities of Kenya Vision 2030, the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) III (2018-2022), realization of the UNSDCF Kenya (2022-2026), UN Women Kenya Country Strategic Note (2019-2022 and 2023-2026) and the Big Four Government development agenda, which is translated in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Strategic Result Area (SRA) I on Transformative Governance and the; outcome 1.3: "People in Kenya live in a secure, peaceful, inclusive and cohesive society" and SRA II on Human Capital Development, Outcome 2.8: "By 2022, individuals and communities in Kenya have reduced exposure to risks and are more resilient to disasters and emergencies."

In Kenya, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) interventions are implemented by government, development partners, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with focus areas being on addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), early marriage, Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), Women, Peace, and Security, and Women's Leadership and Participation. Women face higher unemployment rates and are often employed in low-skilled, low-paying jobs compared to men. Women and girls with disabilities experience systemic marginalization and face barriers across various sectors. Kenya has made progress in implementing UNSCR 1325 and developing National Action Plans (KNAP I and II) for Women, Peace, and Security. There is increased participation of women in peace processes and security institutions, but challenges persist due to patriarchy and GBV.

While Kenya's rank and score on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) has consistently improved since 1995, the country's most recent ranking of 126 out of 189 countries indicates that gender inequality continues to be an overarching concern in security, reproductive health, empowerment and labor market participation.

¹¹ An index of 1 is the highest while 0 represents the lowest

¹² Georgetown Institute for Women Peace and Security

¹³ https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/download_file.pdf

While Kenya has made a lot of progress, persistent negative gender and social norms, entrenched patriarchal values and gender stereotypes that perpetuate power inequalities and violate women's rights still persist. Challenges towards achieving GEWE included implementation gaps, inadequate funding, and lack of comprehensive data hinder effective GEWE interventions. There is limited progress in achieving gender equality targets despite existing legal frameworks.

With the implementation of the Kenya Refugee Act of 2022, Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps will potentially gain from the Kenyan government and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) new plans to increase refugee access to labour markets, financial inclusion, and freedom of movement. The multi-year Shirika plan and other commitments such as Nairobi Action Plan and Kampala Declaration on jobs self-reliance for refugees, involvement, livelihoods of returnees and host communities in IGAD region, could enhance economic improvements in areas where refugees have faced barriers in legal identification, skills accreditation, and labour markets. The plan targets Kakuma and Daadab refugee camps based on a model tried with Kalobeyei settlement which has transitioned to refugee openness, integration with host communities, self-reliance, protection and assistance, freedom of movement and rights of refugees to work. The transition of camps and economic inclusion aligns with LEAP commitment to building sustainable services and economic opportunities for both refugees and host communities.

The LEAP III project was implemented in Turkana County - which hosts Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, and Garissa County - which hosts Dadaab Refugee Camp. The two counties are patriarchal with women's participation in economic, political, and social spheres in both counties being limited. In both counties, women are relegated to a lower status¹⁴ to that of men with their traditional responsibilities of caring for the children and household duties. There are high illiteracy levels, high poverty levels, highly patriarchal with early marriages, and FGM being culturally propagated.

The LEAP III project was implemented at a time when the country was transitioning politically due to the general elections in 2022 at county assemblies, county governments, and presidential elections. The changes caused political transitioning and a change of county leadership that led to the need to request for an additional no-cost extension between April 2023 to December 2023 to enable UN Women and implementing partners to complete some of the activities. Delays in identifying strategic land locations up to March 2022 coupled with modification of garage designs in October 2022 to conform to weather and windy storms led to the late approval of the project in 2022 consequently a delayed start. It was also noted that security situation deteriorated in Turkana County where the project implementation was ongoing. In response, the Public Order Act was issued in February 2023, which imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew further delaying the project implementation.

1.3 Key Stakeholders/Partners of the Project and Their Roles

The project partners included the Government of Japan, Ministry of Public Services and Gender Affairs, Refugee Affairs Secretariat under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Kenya Police Service, Government of Turkana County, County Government of Garissa, UN agencies (UNHCR, UNDP, UN-Habitat), Peace Winds Japan, Toyota Kenya Academy, CFAO Kenya, BBOXX, Mitsubishi Corporation, women's organizations and civil society organizations, media and

¹⁴ <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/100405/Gichohi-Women%E2%80%99s%20Experiences%20In%20Peace%20Building%20Processes%20The%20Case%20Of%20Turkana%20County,%20Kenya.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

the other private sector players. The stakeholders and their roles in the project are succinctly described as follows:

- **Government of Japan:** The Government of Japan, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provided funding for the LEAP III project to UN Women which enabled UN Women to deliver on its mandate to protect the rights of women and girls and to foster an enabling environment where they can thrive alongside men and boys as equals. The Embassy of Japan was also a member of the Project Steering Committee where key updates on the project were provided and key decisions made. Further, the embassy participated in monitoring visits to the project sites to assess implementation progress.
- **UN Women:** Using its convening power and the fact that it is regarded by partners and stakeholders as a neutral and impartial development partner, UN Women's role in the project was to bring together different gender equality actors from Government, civil society, research institutions and media organizations at national level and in the four target counties to realize the objectives of the project. UN Women was also responsible for management, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of the project. UN Women also provided technical and capacity building support to government institutions at both national and county level, implementing partners and beneficiaries.
- **Government of Kenya:** Government institutions particularly the Ministry of Gender and Affirmative Action (formerly Ministry of Public Service and Gender) was the chair of the project Steering Committee which served as a strategic decision-making body and provided oversight during the project implementation. The project also worked with the Ministry of Interior, Refugee Affairs Secretariat, National Counter Terrorism Centre, and the County Governments of Turkana and Garissa in development of policies and SGBV response interventions.
- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** The project engaged with six CSO implementing partners who were selected through a call for proposals. The project prioritized partnerships with national and local actors as well as women's organizations and women-focused organizations in humanitarian action to strengthen local women's leadership and participation in the project implementation. The CSOs were engaged in policy development and implementation, capacity development of key stakeholders, community dialogues on negative gender and social norms, and support to SGBV survivors.

A detailed list of key stakeholders is attached as Annex IV.

1.4 Changes in project implementation duration.

The LEAP III implementation period was initially planned to be from May 2021 to April 2023. A no cost extension to December 2023 was requested by UN Women and granted by the donor. Several factors contributed to the request for no-cost extension including the changes in the County Assembly leadership following the Country's General Election results in August 2022¹⁵. The implementing partners had to seek approvals for particularly the construction of the garage from the new county government which took a long time to be cleared. Further, changes in the initially selected implementing partner (Action Africa Help International - AAHI) due to reported fraud under another UN agency, resulted in UN Women seeking other implementing partners to undertake all the activities that had been under AAHI. It was also noted that security situation deteriorated in Turkana County where the auto-garage is being constructed. In response,

¹⁵ <https://nation.africa/kenya/elections>.



the Public Order Act¹⁶ was issued in February 2023, which imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew further delaying the project implementation.

¹⁶ <https://uploads.mwp.mprod.getusinfo.com/uploads/sites/5/2023/02/Government-of-Kenya-Public-Order-No-1-of-2023.pdf>.

SECTION TWO: PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this independent evaluation at the end of the project is to inform UN Women's strategic direction and future programming on humanitarian-development nexus programming. In addition, UN Women committed to the donor to undertake an evaluation in accordance with its evaluation policy. Gender-responsive evaluation remains a priority area for UN Women and serves three key purposes: first, to demonstrate accountability to stakeholders; second, to provide credible and reliable evidence for decision-making; and third, to contribute important lessons learned about normative, operational, and coordination work.¹⁷ The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the LEAP III project achieved its stated results, documented lessons, and best practices, with the view to scaling up activities. In addition, the final evaluation was to analyse challenges encountered and assess how the project contributed to gender equality and economic empowerment of women in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement Turkana County, and in Dadaab Refugee Camp, Garissa County. The evaluation report informs project learning and decision-making for future programming in the field of Women, Peace and Security, and Humanitarian Action in Kenya.

2.2 Evaluation Objectives

According to the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) Annex 1, the specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the relevance of LEAP III intervention in addressing the needs of refugee and host community women in alignment with gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of UN Women's approach for achievement of results, as defined in the logical framework, including the Project's Theory of Change.
- Analyse how the human rights approach and gender equality principles were integrated in LEAP III and humanitarian action programming.
- Identify and validate lessons learned, promising practices and innovations of work supported by LEAP III Project within the context of the aid effectiveness agenda.
- Assess the added value of the LEAP III strategy and related interventions to UN Women's mandate and to the overall UN System presence in project locations.
- Assess the inter-connectedness and sustainability of UN Women's initiatives on increasing leadership, protection and economic opportunities for refugee women and analyse possible weaknesses to improve next steps for scale-up programming; and
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the strategy, and overall approach to UN Women's programming in humanitarian settings.

2.3 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation was an end-of-project evaluation and covered all project activities implemented from May 2021 to December 2023, in line with the results framework and the theory of change and against the UN Women Evaluation Policy and adhere to the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation and (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria ¹⁸(relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and gender equality and human rights). In addition, this end-term evaluation focused on the achievements

¹⁷ UN Women Evaluation Handbook, 2022

¹⁸ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

as well as recommendations for sustainability and learning for future programming as outlined in the realization of the UNSDCF Kenya (2022-2026), UN Women Kenya Country Strategic Note (2019-2022, and 2023-2026). The evaluation covered all components, outcomes, and geographic locations as implemented on the ground which are host communities and refugees in Turkana County (Lodwar Township, Kakuma Refugee Camp, and Kalobeyi Integrated Settlement), Garissa County (Garissa Township, and the three refugee camps in Dadaab). The evaluation involved national-level stakeholders and staff of UN Women through primary data collection in sampled locations and secondary data review. The evaluation covered key stakeholders and beneficiaries' representatives including conducting twelve FDGs from refugees and host communities, primary interviews with twenty KIIs from Implementing Partners (IPs), five UN Women Kenya Country Office Staff, two County Governments, and the representative from the Government of Japan. An evaluation matrix developed comprising the questions and issues investigated, and methods used to collect evidence that addresses them is presented in Annex 2.

2.4 Evaluation of audience and dissemination plan.

The main audience for this evaluation and their interest in it are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Evaluation audience

Audience	Interest in the evaluation
UN Women at country, regional and HQ level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on the project's effectiveness will be used to inform decision making for the design, review and scale-up of Women, Peace and Security Interventions and LEAP in particular. - Capacity development and mobilization of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. - Recommendations for improving the implementation other future projects including replication of LEAP project. - Lessons learned for the design and implementation of future similar projects and for organizational change and strategies. - Learning and improved decision-making to support the development of the next Strategic Note in terms of UN Women's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment
Development partners and particularly the main donors (Government of Japan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance of the project - Accountability for the development effectiveness of the LEAP to the donors and other stakeholders - Recommendations for improving implementation for future projects. - Ownership and commitment to scaling up of same intervention. - Lessons learned for the design and implementation of future similar projects
Implementing Partners to this project (National NGO's and CSOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance of the project - Recommendations for improving implementation of similar projects. - Ownership and commitment to scaling up of same interventions. - Lessons learned for the design and implementation of future similar projects

Audience	Interest in the evaluation
Relevant staff in partner government institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ownership and commitment to scaling up of same intervention. - Lessons and recommendations for similar projects and for organizational change
Academic institutions (TVET projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance of the project - Lessons learned for the design and implementation of future similar projects
LEAP Project beneficiaries (Host community and refugees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance of the project - Ownership and commitment to scaling up of same intervention
Relevant staff in UN agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance of the project - Lessons learned for the design and implementation of future similar projects and for organizational change. - Sharing joint activities on LEAP implementation.

SECTION THREE: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Evaluation Design and Approach

This evaluation was conducted through a participatory multi-pronged approach and mixed methods particularly qualitative and quantitative research as well as applying the theory-based evaluation approach that proposed a thorough analysis of the project causal/logic model to derive a full understanding of the interventions. Using this “theory-based approach”, the evaluation examined how the project inputs were expected to achieve outputs, outcomes, and impact, which were assessed against the links of the various results levels. To understand the outcomes of the project, this evaluation involved the assessment of the LEAP III project TOC and results framework to assess whether the project remained on track to achieve expected outcomes. A participatory and collaborative approach to the evaluation also involved close engagement with project beneficiaries, donors (national level), UN Women staff both field-based and at the national level, field-based Implementing Partners (IPs), civil society organizations (CSOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs) officials and County governments. In addition, the context of this evaluation work adhered to UN Women evaluation guidelines and principles based on the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation¹⁹ as well as the UN Women Evaluation Handbook.²⁰ The evaluation adhered to the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability), as well as standards based on Human Rights and Gender Equality. An evaluation matrix, presented in Annex 2, provides details of the questions, issues, data collection methods, and data sources used for the evaluation.

3.2 Data Collection Methods, Sampling and Analysis

3.2.1 Data Collection Methods

The evaluation was conducted through (i) desk review of all relevant documents related to the project and UN Women evaluation guidelines (ii) 29 KIIs (18 participants 11 female) and (iii) 13 FGDs (136 participants with 122 females and 14 males) knowledgeable about project activities and direct observation particularly for the construction of infrastructural projects and technical skills training.

The evaluation collected both quantitative and qualitative data from the field between October 2023 and November 2023 from the project sites, stakeholders, and IPs. Qualitative data collection involved intensive secondary desk review and analysis of all key and relevant documents related to the design and implementation of the LEAP III project provided by UN Women and the IPs. Through secondary review, all monitoring data was reviewed since the inception of the project, including annual action plans and annual reports for the two years, IPs quarterly progress reports, baseline and project proposal, Theory of Change (TOC), log frames and M&E plan, relevant UN Women evaluation criteria documents, strategies, and strategic note. Relevant data corresponding to the evaluation questions (which are linked to the UNEG criteria) were then extracted and thematized as per the criteria to deduce meaningful patterns.

The evaluation employed two techniques to collect primary data: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with UN Women staff, the donor, and implementing partners of the project. Through these multiple methods, the evaluation team reached out to the cross-section of stakeholders and beneficiaries of the LEAP III project. The evaluation collected stakeholder

¹⁹ The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation.
<https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

²⁰ UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation (2022).
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>

perspectives related to LEAP III project perceptions on the performance of the project (including success and bottlenecks) and views for future interventions. Thirteen FGDs (136 participants with 122 females and 14 males) were conducted with community host volunteers and refugees from the evaluation sites. Of these, five FGDs were conducted in Dadaab while eight FGDs were conducted in the Kakuma Refugee camp. FGDs also explored additional support and interventions that project stakeholders and beneficiaries would require for the future realization of the benefits. The FGDs aimed to determine the role that stakeholders can play in the absence of project intervention to ensure the sustainability of the project benefits. Annex 4 provides a list of those contacted.

Quantitative data collection for indicators of results and objectives, budget appropriation, and the evaluation used project reports and baseline study targets to display the targets and outcomes. Quantitative results data was also disaggregated into persons with disability, women, girls, and men for better understanding. The collated data was used as an input for the evaluation and data was triangulated and verified through the evaluation process. Triangulation was conducted by verifying submitted IP reports and cross-checking against UN Women compilations. A second corroboration was conducted through cross-validation from the KIIs interviews and FGDs sessions to ascertain the reality of outcomes and findings.

3.2.2 Sampling Strategy and Sample Sizes

The selection of respondents was based on purposive sampling of KIIs and FGDs from beneficiaries of the project and implementing partners as shown in the table 2 below:

- Ten UN Women officials and other UN agencies (UNFPA, UNHCR). From this sample six were reached (5 females, 1 male)
- Five Government Officers; Sub-County Commissioner Officers. From this sample five (3 females, and 1 male respondent was reached.
- Six County Government of Garissa and Turkana officials. From this sample, two were reached 1 female, 1 male.
- Twenty Implementing partners staff (IRC, Rural Women Peace Link, Don Bosco, RCK, PWJ, Woman Kind Kenya (WOKIKE)) of which twenty Key Informants were reached (14 females, 6 males).
- Thirteen FGDs were conducted from both Garissa and Kakuma refugee camps with 136 participants (122 females and 14 male)
- One male Key Informant from the Government of Japan was interviewed (*See Table 2 below*).

From the evaluation, the majority of the respondents targeted were met except for the County Government and National Government where only two respondents. However, this was noted to have not affected or influenced the outcome of the evaluation results. The evaluation, therefore, covered all stakeholder categories. From each implementing partner, respondents for KIIs were purposively selected based on their knowledge of the project and the roles they played during implementation. Respondents for FGDs were mobilised by implementing partners and only respondents who had intimate knowledge of the project or could inform on the strategic orientation of UN Women with the LEAP III project were consulted.

Table 2: Sample size for interviews (KIIs and FGDs)

	Dadaab refugee camp	Kakuma Refugee camp	IPs/UN Women staff in HQs	Totals
KIIs				
UN Women staffs	-	-	5 (5F, 0M)	5 (5 female)

	Dadaab refugee camp	Kakuma Refugee camp	IPs/UN Women staff in HQs	Totals
Implementing Partners	4 (3F, 1M)	6 (4F, 2M)	10 (7M, 3M)	20 (14 female, six male)
Donors (Development partners)	-	-	1 (1M, 0F)	1 (1 male)
UN agencies	-	-	1	1 (1 male)
Government (County and National)	1(1M)	1 (1F)	-	2
FGDs				
Host communities and Refugees	5 ²¹ (59 participants with fifty-two females and 7 males)	8 ²² (77 participants 70 females, 7 males)	-	13 FGDs with 136 participants (122 females, fourteen male).

3.2.3 Data Analysis and Reporting

Quantitative data collected was categorized as per the output level and disaggregated according to age, gender, disability, and other forms of vulnerabilities. All qualitative data was coded and analyzed using qualitative coding software, Nvivo. The transcripts were analysed to identify key themes in the data. These themes were analyzed to respond to the evaluation questions as shown in Annex 2. Using the software, the evaluation team conducted first-level coding to analyze the qualitative data in terms of geography, implementing partner, respondent type, and gender. The evaluation team then conducted a second-level analysis, by using inductive coding, to better identify emerging themes and explanations.

3.3 Gender and Human Rights

This evaluation process was guided by the UN Women Evaluation Handbook on How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation²³ and the United Nations Evaluation Group guidance²⁴ document on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations.²⁵ The evaluation addressed gender and human rights perspectives by ensuring that all stages of the evaluation process were based on thorough attention to

²¹ Each group with FGDs consisted of 8-15 people. In Dadaab, Five groups were involved in FGDs sessions. The first group was IRC VLSA Tie and dye group (consisted of 9 people (9 females, 0 male), IRC VLSA girl shine (12 people with 12 females and 0 male), IRC-VLSA baking group 9 people (8 females, 1male), RCK-CPPTs and Police consisted of 8 people (6 females and 2male and Tailors consisting of 13 persons (11female and 2male).

²² In Kakuma, PWJ- Mechanics consisted of 12 people (10 males, 2 female), PWJ *boda boda* Association with 14 people (14 male, 0 female), PWJ-*Jitegemee* Tailors (12 people with (9 female and 3 males), IRC-VLSA Group with 9 people (7 female and 2 male), IRC-Tailors with 11 people (10 females, 1 male), IRC Girl-shine with 8 people (8 female, 0 male), and Don Bosco Handicrafts and Tailors 14 people with (11female and 3 male).

²³ The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation. <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

²⁴ UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation (2022). <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>.

²⁵ UN Women Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2011/3/integrating-human-rights-and-gender-equality-in-evaluation>.

gender dynamics, social norms, inequalities and power relations in the context of assessing the extent to which the project was able to achieve its results. In addition, the evaluation process included data gathered from both men and women and the marginalized groups (within host community and refugees) including utilising the combination of gender analysis matrix framework²⁶ in theorizing and interpreting findings. Intentionally, the evaluation strived to understand how gender is incorporated in a variety of ways. The evaluation framed specific questions on the project's influence on power relations between men and women. Secondly, the analysis checked beyond sex-disaggregated data by exploring differential benefits between men and women and how the project is influencing these differences in benefits. Lastly, the evaluation explored the extent to which the project has benefited those excluded groups including people with disabilities and youth as narrated in the report as attached in the evaluation matrix in Annex 2.

3.4 Evaluation Governance and Quality Assurance

The evaluation process guaranteed quality through an elaborate system of checks and balances that ensured that all quality control measures were adhered to during the evaluation. To ensure consistent observation and quality checks, the evaluation methodology was guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and UN Women's Evaluation Policy quality assurance from the internal and external Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) formed by the UN Women. Comprehensive validation process was instigated for the evaluation process. From the inception report, validation was undertaken by the Evaluation Management Group and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). The process addressed appropriateness of the proposed evaluation design, methodology, data collection approaches and adherence to evaluation ethical guidelines. The results of the final evaluation were validated through two processes: internal review by the UN Women Evaluation Management Group for quality assurance, substantive comments, and feedback towards the report. The final review of the evaluation report involved presentation ERG for final approval and adoption.

3.5 Evaluation Constraints and Limitations

LEAP III evaluation was conducted in refugee bases within Kakuma and Dadaab which in a way limited access and interaction with full beneficiaries as stringent restrictions of movements and conditions for conducting interviews were seen to be derailing the full potentiality of getting data from beneficiaries. For example, during the data collection in Dadaab, a security alert was triggered due to insecurity hampering the full attendance of organized FGDs. However, this was mitigated by probing those who were in attendance to cover full evaluation information. Secondly, the selection of KIIs by the implementing partners (IPs) may create selection bias on individuals and groups with favourable response-based project activities. To mitigate any predetermined responses, the evaluator probed and asked the same questions in a different way to cross-validate the responses. Reports were also used to corroborate further on the responses. In addition, it was also challenging for some refugee and host communities' respondents, especially during FGDs to understand and speak English or Kiswahili. To mitigate the limitation of language barrier and communication, local research assistants and translators were employed to ensure translation into the understandable local context. Security concerns were also reported during the period of evaluation at Dadaab refugee camp which led to restricted movements within the camps. The fear was that respondents and FGD movements were going to be affected, however, with the support from IPs conclusive FGDs and KII interviews were organised at safer places.

²⁶ The analysis is conducted at four levels of society: women, men, household and community. The GAM examines impact on four areas: labour, time, resources and socio-cultural factors: https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2021/06/ETM_G_C CR_1%20Module%203.pdf.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was always guided by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System which include independence and impartiality; credibility; honesty and integrity; confidentiality; informed consent and assent; and avoidance of harm. The evaluation paid attention to the ethical issues including informed consent and confidentiality. The evaluator paid attention to the protection of the respondent's privacy and received oral consent from all interviewees. This was achieved by explaining the purpose of gathering information, its use, and users, and assuring respondents of their privacy. In addition, the evaluation process adhered to the quality and ethical standard as indicated in the evaluation guidelines by for instance asking for oral approval for the evaluator to take notes/record their responses and prepare a report from this information.

- **Regarding privacy and safety:** Evaluation participants were given fair, clear, honest explanations of the evaluation study's purpose and objectives. Discussions in communities were undertaken in locations that did not require the respondents to incur additional expenses to attend the FGDs or KIIs. All primary data was anonymised to ensure confidentiality. Access to this data will remain with the technical consultants. All the processes, informed consent, and confidentiality of data were adhered to by coding individual responses with a number, letter, symbol, or some combination. For the avoidance of bias, the evaluation findings were objectively reported to reflect the outcomes from primary and secondary sources.
- **Regarding accuracy, completeness, and reliability:** All evaluation questions were answered through triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources and were processed using multiple analytical tools. The evaluation matrix in Annex 2 of this report was used to link each evaluation question to the related evidence.
- **Regarding respect for dignity and diversity:** The evaluation process respected differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, age, and ethnicity, and was mindful of the potential implications of these differences on the evaluation findings. Participants were allowed to exercise their local customs when convening meetings such as praying and were requested to participate in the FGDs using a language that they were comfortable with. To minimize disruptions to the daily life activities and routines, participants were given advance notice about the meeting and the approximate time that they would spend participating in the FGDs to enable them to plan.
- **Regarding independence and impartiality:** Clear reasons for evaluative judgments and the acceptance or rejection of comments on evaluation products were provided in written "comment trails" for each version of the evaluation deliverables. All findings were triangulated and corroborated.

SECTION FOUR: EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section highlights the findings of the evaluation. It is organised according to the evaluation criteria with initial discussions of project design. The section highlights the findings of the evaluation based on six UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability), as well as standards based on Human Rights and Gender Equality.

4.1 Relevance

***Finding 1:** The project's theory of change was sound and demonstrates cumulative learning of UN Women through LEAP project. The Theory of Change demonstrated the realisation of empowering women economically and improving their status in the community and household as well as promoting gender equality.*

The project theory of change (TOC) was outlined; **that If** (1) women participate and influence decision-making processes related to peace and security and humanitarian action; **If** (2) women and girls have access to services and economic opportunities during and post-conflict and disasters and in humanitarian settings; and **If** (3) mechanisms are in place to protect women and girls' basic human rights and are free from sexual and gender based violence; **then** (4) women and girls will be resilient to the impact of disasters/emergencies and conflicts; **Because** (5) peace and security efforts and humanitarian response will address the rights and needs of women and girls who will be at the centre of peace and security and humanitarian assistance, livelihood opportunities and SGBV protection. This will in turn contribute to women being empowered to play crucial roles in the establishment of peaceful, sustainable, resilient, and cohesive societies.

The design of the LEAP project was relevant as it responded to the needs of the beneficiaries. The theory of change was clear and addressed the main drivers of empowering women refugees and host communities economically and through skills training. It also addressed women's vulnerabilities capacities ensuring greater women's agency and confidence to participate in protection and safety against all forms of violence and exploitation. The TOC also addressed the local ownership and participation of women, men youth, PWDs, CSOs, Security sector, CSOs, in both refugee camps and community and in collaboration with County and National governments in formulation of action plans that integrate and support WPS/KNAP leading to effective policymaking and policy implementation in relief and recovery for women in refugee and host communities. The broadness of the TOC allowed UN Women to establish partnerships and strengthen the influence of UN Women country initiatives for empowering women in skills development, economic empowerment and strengthening their response towards extremists' forms of violence and increased access to effective services & protection mechanisms through social spaces in refugee and host communities.

***Finding 2:** A robust Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework was integrated into the project with support from Government of Japan which was instrumental in tracking and measuring progress and facilitating adaptive management.*

The project had a clear monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (MER) plan which was undertaken in accordance with UN Women corporate standards as defined in the Programme and Operations Manual (POM). Using systematic field visits and reporting, UN Women conducted periodic monitoring and reporting documented and adequately managed and drew lessons from progress, challenges, risks, and opportunities. Overall, the project M&E approach was based on strengthened accountability for UN Women's work and results-based management (RBM). In addition, the project operated within a results

framework that clearly delineates project outputs and outcomes. It noted that the project established a robust monitoring and evaluation system, incorporating various tools and techniques such as Outcome Harvesting, regular reviews of implementing partner reports, monthly progress review meetings among others. It also utilised monitoring visits, which were useful in identifying challenges affecting implementation and attainment of targeted outputs. It applied a Results Management System (RMS) which served as a valuable tool for monitoring outcomes, complete with baseline data, specific indicators and outputs tied to donors and available resources. The assessed results framework for the project also identified key indicators for each output and outcome. The project utilized the project specific monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (MER) in line with the Strategic Note (SN) MER which was implemented and regularly updated during the Annual work planning cycle.

Finding 3: *The project incorporated young women and women with disabilities in the project in partnership with IPs and had provisions for recruitment of persons with disabilities in specific training and project activities.*

There was recognition from UN Women and partners on the need for inclusion of persons with disabilities, adolescent's girls, and young women. Conversations on this were also clear from concepts notes and project proposals. There were initiatives to include young women such as through the partnership with IPs. Persons with disabilities were also included in initial IPs concepts as part of the Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) strategy of the project. The project employed targeted interventions in peace and security, humanitarian response and recovery that addressed most vulnerable populations, particularly those facing multiple deprivations, inequalities, and vulnerabilities which is central to delivering the 2030 Development Agenda Principles. Additionally, the project's geographic location was confined to conflict and disaster-prone counties as well as refugee camps and host communities, as per the UN Women Kenya County Office Strategic Note covering (2019-2022 and 2023-2026). It was noted from the UN Women management perspective during the interviews that PWD inclusion could have been done much better by increasing number of PWD participants including adjusting strategies for additional involvement of more beneficiaries in the future.²⁷

Finding 4: *The project incorporated key stakeholders in the design of the LEAP III project. This ensured that the project benefitted from knowledge and input of critical partners on context, approaches and lessons from the LEAP III project that increased its relevance.*

Key stakeholders (development partners, CSOs, County Government, National Government (Ministry of Gender Services and County Commissioners Office) and CSOs) confirmed being consulted during the design of the LEAP III project. The project leveraged on the already existing partnerships with key institution²⁸ and IPs to forge additional strategic partnerships including working with county governments, Peace Committees, humanitarian, DRR and security actors, CSOs and the private sector to ensure sustainability. This included stakeholder engagement that considered the evaluation findings, recommendations, and lessons learned and the implementers' own experiences to build a frame for the design of the third phase and from past LEAP projects. Stakeholders were incorporated and consulted to validate the designs.

²⁷ UN Women management_KII_Interview_16/23.

²⁸ Stakeholders consulted in design of LEAP Project: CFAO-Kenya, County Government of Garissa, County Government of Turkana, IPs, Government of Japan, County Commissioners in Garissa and Turkana.

Finding 5: *The project responded well to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries who were the most vulnerable category of people in the refugee and host community context. It addressed women's and girls' needs for economic empowerment, women leadership in peace and security protection from SGBV and representation in decision making.*

Key informants and the project beneficiaries confirmed that the interventions and strategies adopted by the project addressed the needs of the beneficiaries. Such strategies included the choice of the project areas such as humanitarian response to the refugee and host communities and humanitarian action with a nexus of women, rights, peace, and security; targeting women and girls as individuals, capacity, and skills development, and building partnerships, all of which were relevant in addressing the needs of refugees and host communities. This allowed LEAP to have a holistic approach to addressing the underlying causes of GEWE especially in economic empowerment, women's economic empowerment, psychosocial support services, case management, safety and safe house placement, legal aid, clinical care, and case management, SGBV by focusing on norms and livelihood challenges.

Information from project reports and KIIs indicated that by design, the LEAP project to a larger extent responded to the identified priority needs of the beneficiaries from host and refugee communities. For the host community, the project has created a lifeline to most women and girls in terms of skills development, behaviour change and economic empowerment since they were initially excluded from interventions targeting refugees. Refugees have also benefited from improved economic participation created through integrated socialisation approach enabling them to conduct economic activities beyond the refugee camps.

Through this project, women are economically empowered, have access to humanitarian services, and their protection and safety are strengthened against all forms of violence and exploitation. In addition, the project has supported the needs of refugees and host community women and the results have seen increased proportion of women beneficiaries with increased access to financial resources from the livelihood programmes implemented by the project. The project has supported women and girls needs in livelihood programmes including in recovery and restoration of a support system, an income, independence, and empowerment among women in refugee camps and host communities. This project has equipped women with skills and engaged them into the workforce to independently provide for themselves and their families, cultivating confidence and dignity. KII_PWJ_12/23. During KII interviews, the relevance of the project to the beneficiary needs was also stressed by UN Women management.

The project has been very impactful in both fronts. Both the Government and UN Women are very proud of the project outcomes through supporting needs of the host and refugees' beneficiaries. This project went into real hardware as opposed to the usual software by creating sustainable models that can solve current and future needs of beneficiaries. KII_UN Women_16/23.

It was also stressed during FGDs interviews that:

"By supporting host and refugee community needs, there has been a notable reduction on GBV. Before the project there was a lot of intimate partner violence but now that is changing and there's a lot of trust now. Most men are now supporting their wives and even taking care of the children at home. Through this project, the needs of the women have been met including the construction of the completion of the GBVRC that offers protection to women. In responding to the needs of the addition, women protection has increased because of the project since their knowledge of rights and reporting procedures for cases of GBV and the location of the safe spaces to go to. Men on the other hand are aware that there will be consequences of violence on their wives which somehow restrains them. In

addition to this, the safety of women is much better than it was before. Also, there is a general improved livelihoods of the project beneficiaries since some have been able to secure jobs after graduation.” FGD_Dadaab_11/23.

The project has remained relevant and supported the immediate needs providing women and girls with a safe space to strengthen protection services and information, vocational training, and peer networks through the establishment of the Women Empowerment Centre in Kalobeyei. Evidence from the project reports shows that in Kakuma, a total of 339 women and girls have been supported in training and linked in diverse skills which include bakery, beading, tailoring, braiding embroidery, and crocheting. In Dadaab, 620 women completed skills building training of which 126 (35%) of them started businesses while 124 (34.44%) of them joined VSLA groups to earn income from their learned skills. However, it was noted that several women were unable to start any income generating activity citing lack of capital as the major factor.

Similarly, evaluation results revealed that there is increased number of women and girls who have been provided with essential protection mechanisms through social spaces in refugees and host communities through timely, quality, and comprehensive case and clinical management Case Management, GBV screening and referrals indicating that the project has supported their immediate needs. For example, in Kakuma, 2259 refugees and host communities comprising of (1550 women, 669 girls, 40 men and 27 PWD) survivors were facilitated through referrals from the response centre to other multi-sectoral partners. The needs of the potential beneficiaries that consist of influx of refugees needs to be properly aligned and budgeted for. For example, it was noted that the influx of refugees from Somali to Dadaab refugee camp due to drought alters the level resources allocation thus affecting effective response to the needs of existing refugees.²⁹

Finding 6: The choice of partnerships and coordination was relevant to the situation of refugee women and marginalized groups in the project operational areas.

The choice of the partners supported the UN Women in achieving its mandate towards ensuring gender equality and women empowerment. Particularly, the choice of partners was relevant to the situation of women and marginalized groups in the context of refugee women and host communities. Evidence from UN Women reports noted that LEAP III project leveraged on partnerships with IPs previous and on-going work on peace and security, DRR and humanitarian action, specifically on the implementation of the LEAP Phase 1 & 2 in Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, Kakuma and Dadaab Refugee Camps. The IPs (See attached Annex 5 on their roles) chosen to steer the project were noted to have had wide and deep-rooted experience, institutional capacity, a rich network of relevant stakeholders in promoting women’s economic empowerment, protection and representation of women and marginalized groups such as refugees, female-headed households, and persons with disabilities. Further, the IPs were noted to have operated in Kalobeyei and Dadaab for certain years, so they had contextual knowledge necessary for defining relevant strategies to achieve the project objectives.³⁰ The project further contributed to enhanced capacities of IPs on gender perspectives in their programming and its implementation. The vibrancy with which UN Women provided technical support to each key implementing partner to achieve results and complement each other in achieving the outcome of the project was reflected during the evaluation.

On the coordination mandate within the UN system, UN Women leveraged on its coordination mandate on GEWE to incorporate a gender responsive approach and engage women in efforts to prevent and respond

²⁹ KII_Interview_Dadaab.

³⁰ UN Women Project Proposal document

to conflict, humanitarian action, and disasters through strategic partnerships UN agencies such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in the refugee camps, the settlement and host communities³¹. The project forged key relevant partnerships with both state and non-state actors in the identification and mitigation of risks, prevention, and response of GBV and also for a continuum of care. This was confirmed by the response by UN Women staff:

“We have been deliberate on the choice of partners who had relevant experience to the situation of refugee women and marginalized groups in the project operational areas for LEAP III project since we have been the first organisation to implement integrated interventions that facilitated the establishment of networks across the divide between refugees and host community which contributed to cohesive living. For example, LEAP II was the first intervention to reach host community women in Dadaab with SGBV protection services in Kalobeyei settlement in Kenya in collaboration with UNHCR to support community participation and local ownership efforts towards increasing women’s participation in humanitarian programming, conflict management and peace building, including P/CVE. We, therefore, reinforced existing and forged new partnerships with women’s organizations, movements and networks, human rights organization, youth organizations, women-focused international and national civil society organizations in the refugee camps and host communities to achieve project mandate.” KII_UN Women_09/23.

Finding 7: *The project has been relevant in addressing inequality, special needs of disabled and young women. Opportunities to explore further beneficiaries exists for UN Women CO and IPs. There is need for UN Women to conduct prior baseline needs assessment of PWDs to inform targeting, using LEAP I and II as indicators for responding may not be adequate avenue for emerging statistics on PWDs.*

The project has considered special needs of persons with disability and young women in its programming. For example, in Dadaab, the provision of continued clinical care and case management to GBV survivors at one stop centre has led to 3562 (2921 women, 517 girls, 124 males, 46 PWD) clients seeking services including response to GBV, material support, referrals, and information. Notably, in Kakuma, 2259 refugees and host communities comprising of (1550 women, 669 girls, 40 men and 27 PWD) survivors were facilitated through referrals from the response centre to other multi-sectoral partners. While the project made efforts to include young women and persons with disability, there was still a gap in ensuring this was achieved across the projects. For instance, the number of young women and persons with disability was not realised in the training for mechanics and *boda boda* skills enhancement due to their technical nature. To support long-lasting change for women’s capacity for leadership, economic empowerment, response towards SGBV, and protection, respondents noted the need for more enhanced focus on PWDs, adolescent girls, and young women.

Finding 8: *There was evidence that stakeholders were taking up project concepts as a demonstration of ownership. However, there is need for clear operational model and ownership transfer strategy between the UN Women CO and implementing partners on the ongoing projects. Creating sustainable strategy and plans would be ideal for future ownership of the projects beyond LEAP.*

The IPs chosen by UN Women demonstrated clear ownership of the projects and clearly showed how they have replicated interventions into some of their ongoing projects. Even so, there was lack of existing evidence on sustainable strategic plans and clear plans for future ownership of some of the projects undertaken. UN Women may need to empower and enhance capacities of IPs on specific ownership and

³¹ *ibid*

translation of project interventions to their programming. The takeover of the garage by CFAO-Kenya through engagement with Peace Wind Japan (PWJ) and continuously provide mechanical training and skills development for mechanics in the garage facility is a clear example of how stakeholders have demonstrated ownership of the projects. Similarly, the completion of the Business Incubation Centre in Kalobeyei has provided a dedicated space for women to utilize their newly acquired skills even after the project closure. The centre, equipped with a handcraft workshop, childcare facilities, and necessary amenities, has created a supportive environment for women to foster entrepreneurship and creativity, positively impacting the host and refugee communities. Even though there was no evidence on secured funding and significant efforts towards raising funds for the implementation and continuation of this interventions for future programming, it was noted that community level gender transformation partnerships at local level would make them continue to support some of the projects. In the refugee context, UN Women has coordinated with UNHCR Kakuma and Dadaab offices overall in their planning, protection, and livelihood units to enhance the coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness of the refugee assistance projects at the field level creating a level of ownership for continued coordination of refugees' interventions in the camps.

4.2 Coherence

Finding 9: *Project coherence within UN Women and within UN Systems was strong and well aligned to aligned to the national priorities, the country's needs as well as international frameworks. The coherence of the project with international frameworks, instruments, and obligations for women's human rights was thus strong.*

UN Women's position in Kenya as a thought leader on GEWE and its convening power enabled the entity to link and work with various agencies including UN agencies, CSOs, government institutions and the private sector on projects funded by different donors but complemented the LEAP III project at the county level. For example, UN Women actively engaged and coordinated with the stakeholders through the Gender Working Groups in Turkana County and Garissa County to ensure the inclusion of women's organizations in the humanitarian inter-agency coordination platforms³². The effort has successfully resulted in consorted advocacy efforts during international day events, support to access to justice for GBV survivors through the court users' committees and the joint development of the Kenya National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 as well as the Counter Violent Extremism Action Plan in Dadaab. The improved interagency coordination at the county level has also made the work of UN Women with funding from Japan very visible to stakeholders. In terms of the alignment to international and national policy priorities and outcomes, the LEAP III project design reflected global, national, and local UN Women institutional frameworks for GEWE, humanitarian response, peace building and development as summarised in the table below:

Table 3: Project alignment to international and national policy priorities

	Outcome 1: Women meaningfully participate and influence peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes.	Outcome 2: Women are economically empowered, have access to humanitarian services, and their protection and safety is strengthened against all forms of violence and exploitation.
Global Norms	LEAP project was aligned to UNSCR 1325 (2000) and 2240 (2015) and 2250 (2015), SDGs, CEDAW, Beijing + 25, World Humanitarian Summit, Sendai Framework for Action (2015) and Leave No One Behind Principles.	

³² The members are UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, humanitarian and civil society organizations.

SDGs	LEAP project was aligned to Goal 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work), 16 (Peace & Justice) and 17 (Partnership)	
National Priorities	At the national level, the project was underpinned under the National priorities of Kenya Vision 2030, MPT III and Kenya’s National Action Plan II on Women, Peace and Security (2020-2024). The project was also aligned to the National Policy on Gender and Development and Development (2013 and revised on 2023) and the National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence in violence in Kenya.	
UN Women Global Strategic Plan (2022-2025) ³³	LEAP project is strongly aligned to UN Global Strategic Plan Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action	
UN Women Kenya Country Strategic Note (2019-2022) and	Outcome 4.1: Women's and girls' participation in conflict prevention and peace and security processes increased.	
	Output 4.1.1: Capacities to develop and implement the gender responsive policies and frameworks on peace and security, P/CVE, and DRR strengthened.	Output 4.1.2: Access to DRR and humanitarian services by women and girls increased.
UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Kenya (2018-2022)	Outcome 1.3: By 2022, people in Kenya live in a secure, peaceful, inclusive and cohesive society.	Outcome 2.8: By 2022, individuals and communities in Kenya have reduced exposure to risks and are more resilient to disasters and emergencies.
United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Kenya 2022-2026 ³⁴	LEAP project also responds to the national development framework priorities identified in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework linking it to the realization of the UNSDCF Kenya 2022-2026.	
	SP1: Outcome 1.1: By 2026, all people in Kenya at risk of being left behind – particularly all women and girls, all youth and children, all in the ASAL counties and all in the informal urban settlements – inhabit an inclusive, enabling, socially cohesive and peaceful environment, while enjoying human rights, trust institutions and participate in transformative governance systems that are gender-responsive, just and rule of law compliant.	SP1: Outcome1.2: By 2026, all people in Kenya at risk of being left behind – particularly all women and girls, all youth and children, all in the ASAL counties and all in the informal urban settlements - have improved, inclusive and equitable social and protection services.
	LEAP project is also aligned to the national priorities including the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2022-2026) which focuses on the overall realization of the SDGs while leaving no one behind.	

³³ UN-Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/186/22/PDF/N2118622.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁴UNITED NATIONS Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Kenya (2022-2026).

<https://kenya.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/UN%20Sustainable%20Development%20Cooperation%20Framework%20Kenya.pdf>

Kenya Strategic Note (2023-2026) ³⁵	Impact 2: Women's Economic Empowerment	Impact 3: Ending Violence Against Women	Impact 4: Women, Peace & Security, Humanitarian Action, & Disaster Risk Reduction
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Similarly, the project focused on both refugee and host communities which is in line with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the Wilton Park Principles and the UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security. The project outcomes contributed to broader outcomes of national and international commitments including alignment to the coordination of humanitarian interagency committee (Inter-Agency Standing Committee-IASC) response efforts in addressing the needs and rights of crisis affected women and girls, in all contexts. The table 2 below summarises key LEAP III alignment to international and national frameworks.

***Finding 10:** Project coherence with similar GEWE interventions nationally and at county level was strong, buttressed by positioning of UN Women as a thought leader and trusted convener of GEWE initiatives in the country. Strong position of UN Women in GEWE interventions has attracted other UN agencies to support UN Women to continue with its GEWE work.*

UN Women's position in Kenya as a thought leader on GEWE and its convening power enabled the entity to link and work with various projects implemented by other development partners and funded by different donors. Within the LEAP Project, IPs working within the same counties but on different pillars of the project complemented each other in some counties such as Garissa and Turkana as they at times conducted awareness and capacity building programmes jointly. UN Women regularly brought the IPs together for debriefs to discuss the issue of overlaps in programming and joint planning after monitoring visits within the same counties. In such counties, FGDs with beneficiaries revealed that they had knowledge of gender equality and women empowerment issues related to all the project outcomes. This indicated that the IPs adopted an integrated approach to programming in those specific counties. UN Women has coordinated with UNHCR Kakuma and Dadaab offices overall in their planning, protection, and livelihood units to ensure harmonization and complementarity of interventions for the refugees and host communities.

***Finding 11:** Project coherence within UN Women and within UN Systems in Kenya was strong. However, coherence coordination and synergies with the Government of Japan and some IPs were noted to be weak in some cases.*

The LEAP Project is aligned to the KCO Strategic Note and hence supported and complemented other programmes implemented under the SN funded by other donors. Internally within UN Women, synergies were created with other programmes implemented in different counties. In cases where their programme changes like the design of the auto-garage, there was notable weak coordination and synergy among the County government of Turkana on the approvals, the government of Japan, IP and UN Women.

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https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/FINAL_SN%20popular%20version_3003_edited%20brochure%20version_030422_ONLINE%20VERSION.pdf

4.3 Effectiveness

***Finding 12:** There has been a significant increase in women participation in policymaking and programming on conflict prevention, peace and security and humanitarian action that is attributed to intervention through support of the UNW and Government of Japan.*

The LEAP III project significantly improved the capacity of targeted women to participate in and influence policymaking and programming on conflict prevention, peace and security, and humanitarian action in the country. Notably, through training and capacity-building activities, the project equipped 1,600 women community leaders and community members with knowledge of UNSCR 1325 and skills to participate in peace and security processes to advance GEWE and social inclusion in WPS and Humanitarian Action. It also improved the capacities of 2,013 (1,186 female) duty bearers (providing skills and knowledge) to engage in WPS and governance processes.

The project facilitated 11 advocacy initiatives that included various community awareness and advocacy campaigns (radio, outreaches, barazas, marking of calendar days³⁶). To ensure buy-in and support toward the changing of harmful social norms and attitudes and for an inclusivity, the project that engaged men and boys as well as community and religious leaders directly reaching 2,127 with messages on KNAPII and women's participation in decision-making. Indirectly, the project reached an estimated half a million people through different advocacy initiatives.

The project also achieved a significant increase in women's participation in policymaking and programming through facilitating the development of strategies and frameworks on WPS and Humanitarian Action that integrate GEWE and social inclusion. For instance, the project supported and provided technical assistance to Garissa County key stakeholders that enabled the development of a WPS strategy and framework and Garissa County Action Plan that integrated GEWE and social inclusion. This resulted in the development and implementation of gender-responsive Action Plan for P/CVE on KNAP II (UNSCR 1325) in Dadaab and Gender Responsive Dadaab Action Plan on P/CVE which was launched on the 7th of June 2023.

Despite these improvements, socio-cultural barriers remain that limit meaningful participation and the influence of women in a significant increase in women's participation in policymaking and programming. These relate to patriarchal attitudes that put off women and stifle their voices even in policy spaces that have been created and with improved knowledge of WPS. Also, the burden of care remains a significant challenge to women who have to juggle care work responsibilities at home with providing time to participate in peace and security processes. These remain systemic barriers to women's participation in Peace and Security that require concerted and longer-term sustainable initiatives that build on progress made by such activities as the LEAP project. Also, whilst the project targeted to include marginalized groups like PwDs and refugees, participation of the PwDs was however notably low. This was a result of resource challenges – a lack of deliberate budget for activities to provide appropriate transportation, learning aides, and assistive devices and tools.

Overall, the evaluation noted that the project largely achieved its targeted results in Outcome 1 (as summarised in Table 4 below). This gave the indication that the project was effective in utilising resources and time made available to enhance women's participation and influence on peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes.

³⁶ Advocacy for GEWE was done during International Women's Day, International Refugee Day and 16 Days of Activism.

Table 4: Results on Outcome 1

OUTCOME 1: Women meaningfully participate and influence peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes.			
Output: 1.1: Women's capacity to participate and influence policymaking and programming on Conflict prevention, peace and security and humanitarian action increased.			
		Status	Mean of verification
<p><i>Indicator 1.1.A:</i> Number of strategies and frameworks in WPS and Humanitarian Action that integrate GEWE and social inclusion developed. (Baseline:0; Target: 1 WPS in Garissa)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target of creating WPS strategy and framework, and Garissa County Action Plan that integrate GEWE and social inclusion was developed through providing technical support to Garissa County. This resulted in the development and implementation of gender responsive Action Plan for P/CVE on KNAP II (UNSRC 1325) in Dadaab and Gender Responsive Dadaab Action Plan on P/CVE which was launched on the 7th of June 2023. 	Achieved	Verified from annual Reports from IPs, Verification of KNAPII and Gender Responsive Action Plan. Cross referencing during KIIs interviews
<p><i>Indicator 1.1.B:</i> Number of women participating in peace and security processes and humanitarian programming. (Baseline:43³⁷; Target:100)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation also noted that the target of 100 women participating in peace and security processes and humanitarian programming has been exceeded through conducting training for 400 County Peace Committees for members and women leaders on gender mainstreaming in peace processes. This indicator also involved targeting 1200 women participating in peace and security processes by WOKIKE which was exceeded by 1600 participating. The number of women leader's communities and committee members equipped with knowledge on UNSCR 1325 and skills to participate in peace and security has been exceeded from target of 360 to 436. Through capacity building and trainings, the target indicator of 360 of right holders equipped with skills and knowledge and engaging in WPS and governance processes has been exceeded by 480 by the IP. 	Achieved	Verified from Annual IPs Quarterly Reports, FGDs with peace committees. Cross referencing conducted during KIIs.
<p><i>Indicator 1.1.C:</i> Number of advocacy initiatives to advance GEWE and social inclusion in WPS and Humanitarian Action with UN Women support (Baseline:5³⁸; Target: 6³⁹)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicator target of conducting 6 advocacy initiatives to advance GEWE and social inclusion in WPS and Humanitarian Action with UN Women support has been exceeded by conducting 11 advocacy initiatives. This included conducting various community awareness and advocacy campaigns on positive social norms and attitudes for an inclusive approach that 	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations.

³⁷ The number of women who participated in peace committees through LEAP II (2019-2020)

³⁸ The number of women who participated in peace committees through LEAP II (2019-2020)

³⁹ The number of events implemented through LEAP II (2019-2020)

	<p>engages men and boys as well as community and religious leaders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The target indicator of 1700 people reached through advocacy initiatives that raise awareness on KNAPII and women participation in decision making processes by 2127 was reached. 		
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Finding 13: *There has been a significant increase in new sources of income and economic opportunities through skills and livelihood development for women and girls within refugees and host communities.*

The evaluation noted there has been an increased proportion of women beneficiaries with improved access to financial resources from the livelihood-related interventions implemented by the project. The percentage of women trained who report increased income - access to financial resources following participation in livelihood projects increased from 69.5% at baseline to 85% at the end of the project exceeding the target of 80%. The project beneficiaries reported increased opportunities for income generation, increased mental well-being, particularly the survivors of SGBV, and increased confidence to participate in public life, particularly following the establishment of the women and girl's paces.

The number of women and youth who indicated increased knowledge of vocational skills and business development increased from 694 at baseline to 1,256 at the end of the project, exceeding the target of 1,162. The project enhanced the vocational skills and business development capabilities of women and girls. This included skills training on the production of reusable sanitary productions, operating safe *boda boda* services, IT skills training as well as automotive servicing and repairs, tailoring, electrical engineering, and garage operations.

The evaluation noted that the construction of the garage which is one of the biggest interventions in Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Turkana West Sub-County is 85% complete. The completion of the garage was delayed due to a change of operational terms and an Implementing Partner. Initially, UN Women had engaged the Africa Action Help Initiative (AAHI) to undertake activities under the LEAP III project but changed the plans in December 2021 which led to enrolment of Peace Wind Japan. Compounded political factors during the 2022 elections, especially for the county assembly led to delays in country approvals of the modified garage design plan. In addition, the deteriorating security situation in Turkana County led to the Public Order Act in February 2023 imposing dusk to dawn curfew further delaying the project implementation.

From the evaluation results, it was noted that out of the targeted 28 refugees and host communities, at least 70% of 30 trained women and youth mechanics gained job opportunities at a modern automotive garage established through this project while some obtained financial support to establish their own garage for gainful employment while some have also gotten employment in private owned garages. ⁴⁰Cash for work for 6 mechanics [3 females (3 hosts, 0 refugees) aged between 21 to 25 years; 3 males (2 hosts, 1 refugee) aged between 21 to 30 years; 0 persons with disabilities] in the UNHCR garage in Kalobeyei for 4 months proved a viable and sustainable model for transitioning the trainees into the market for gainful employment.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Verified from the IP PWJ Annual Partner Reports and confirmed through interviews

⁴¹ Verified from the IP PWJ Annual Partner Reports

Operationalizing the Kalobeyei Handicraft Cooperative (established under LEAP II) by strengthening the capacities of 134 women artisans and enhancing market linkages was also achieved. The project was able to train members of the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) to strengthen their knowledge and skills in Village savings and loan operations as well as to understand the steps involved in the self-help registration process in Dadaab.

For enhanced livelihoods, out of the targeted 250 beneficiaries for beadwork, basketry, fashion, and design from host and refugees, a total of 192 were successfully enrolled in the project, 73 in fashion and design, 66 in beadwork, and 53 in basketry of which all were women. From the monitoring reports and follow-ups with KIs, Don Bosco led 136 beneficiaries to train (74M, 62F) (R 107 H29) and 121 youths on vocational training courses. It was noted that the target number of enrolment for women in all courses except motor vehicle mechanics and computers was not met since women did not show interest. This has enhanced the number of women and youth who indicated increased knowledge ⁴²on vocational skills. This intervention included men as one way of involving them in reducing cases of SGBV through the provision of employment, which provides basic household needs and reduces conflict. This capacity strengthening⁴³ activities were achieved through Market-oriented vocational training skills, ICT innovation, market linkage, talent enhancement, enterprise development, and increased income for women and girls.

The involvement of the County Government through the Department of Cooperatives in training women on cooperative and group formation skills was instrumental in helping women produce and sell reusable sanitary pads through market-based sanitation shops and door-to-door social marketing. The project enabled participation in livelihood activities including in recovery and restoration of an income support system, independence, and empowerment among women in refugee camps and host communities. These interventions have equipped women with skills and engaged them in the workforce to independently provide for themselves and their families, cultivating confidence and dignity.

It was noted that construction of a childcare room and workspace expansion in Kalobeyei Women Handicraft Cooperative Society premises has been 100% completed by March 2023 of LEAP III (2021-2023) project implementation. As per the project activity, this has created a child-friendly block with the provision of ambient space for kids' playing area, artwork, feeding room, sleeping room, play equipment, a storage area, and an office room. Activities related to enhancing women's livelihood in refugee and host communities were also completed with Shade-room being 100% completed.

As per the number of sanitary pad sales with links to the local value chain and private sector, out of the targeted 6,000 pieces of sanitary pads and 3,000 pouches produced, 1,211 pouches of 2,422 pads were sold within the local markets through market-based sanitation shops and door-to-door social marketing.⁴⁴ Notably, the management of distribution by private sector distributors to expand the market reach has enabled more penetration, sale, and income generation by refugee women. Even though the target has not been reached, strategic efforts including collaboration between tailors and marketers have enhanced coordination and profit sharing between them to ensure business sustainability. The linkage to institutions

⁴² Verified from the Don Bosco Annual Partners Reports

⁴³ Capacity Strengthening were provided by: Ministry of Co-Operatives: Governance, KKCF (Kakuma, Kalobeyei challenge fund): Access to Grants and Technical Assistance, EQUITY BANK: Digital channels, Savings, investment & credit products and Africa recovery and resilience plan and agency banking, Inkomoko is a financial institution operating in Kakuma: Business Mode Converse, Ministry of Trade: Trade, quality checks and marketing and KRCS: Health Talks.

⁴⁴ IP partner quarterly reports

and marketing campaigns has improved the purchase of the pads on behalf of vulnerable beneficiaries raising substantial income for better livelihoods.

Nonetheless, there was insufficient information to establish the extent to which the project improved the position of women and girls in household decision-making. Whilst the project targeted to increase (by 50%) the proportion of beneficiaries who report sole or joint involvement in household decision-making following participation in livelihood programs, available project monitoring data could not support a robust assessment of this indicator.

Table 5: Results on Outcome 2; Output 2.1 indicators

OUTCOME 2: Women in refugee and host communities have increased resilience (psychosocial and economic)			
<i>Output 2.1: Refugee and host communities' women and girls have new sources of income and economic opportunities through skills and livelihoods development.</i>			
		Status	Means of Verification
Outcome 2 indicators			
Indicator 2.A: Percentage of women trained who report increased income. (Baseline: 69.5% ⁴⁵ ; Target: 80%)	– To understand proportion of beneficiaries with increased access to financial resources following participation in livelihood projects. The indicator target of 50% was exceeded with 85% from the project implementer. The evaluation noted there has been increased proportion of women beneficiaries with improved access to financial resources from the livelihood related interventions implemented by the project.	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations.
Indicator 2.B: Proportion of women and girls accessing timely humanitarian, DRR and protection services with UN Women support. (Baseline: 41% ⁴⁶ ; Target: 50%)	– On the proportion of women and girls accessing timely humanitarian, DRR and protective services with UN Women support, the evaluation noted that the 50% target was exceeded by reaching 60% of women and girls from the refugees' areas and host communities. This was due to effective and efficient implementation of target activities by the implementing partners.	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations.
– Output 2.1 indicators			
Indicator 2.1.A. Number of women and youth who indicated increased knowledge on vocational skills and business development. (Baseline: 694; Target:1,162)	– The final evaluation of the LEAP project reported that 1,256 women and girls enhanced their vocational skills and business development against the set target of 1,162. This included across skills training on production of reusable sanitary productions, operating safe <i>boda boda</i> services, IT skills training as well as automotive servicing and repairs, tailoring, electrical engineering, garage operations.	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations.

⁴⁵ The proportion of women who report increased income through LEAP II (2019-2020).

⁴⁶ 41% of women and girls in Kalobeyei Village-3 reported to have visited the centre between 1-5 times to seek for services at Women Empowerment Centre in Kalobeyei established through LEAP II (2019-2020).

<p><i>Indicator 2.1.B:</i> Proportion of beneficiaries who report sole or joint involvement in household decision making following participation in livelihood programs. (Baseline: 0%, Target: 50%)</p>	<p>– Sufficient information is not available to make an assessment on this indicator from IP reports. The data for this indicator had not been updated by the time of conducting the evaluation.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><i>Indicator 2.1.C:</i> Proportion of beneficiaries with increased access to financial resources following participation in livelihood programmes. (Baseline: 0%, Target: 50%)</p>	<p>– To understand proportion of beneficiaries with increased access to financial resources following participation in livelihood related interventions. The indicator target of 50% was exceeded with 85% from the project implementer. The evaluation noted there has been increased proportion of women beneficiaries with improved access to financial resources from the livelihood related interventions implemented by the project.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	<p>Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations.</p>

Finding 14: *Through UN Women technical support the project increased access to effective services and protection mechanisms for vulnerable women and girls through social spaces in refugee and host communities.*

There has been a strengthened response to SGBV by stakeholders using the survivor-centred approach as a result of capacity development activities conducted by the project. This was reported to have built the confidence of targeted communities to pursue justice on SGBV-related cases. Evidence of this was observed in an increase in the number of SGBV cases reported and adjudicated through the formal justice system, Police Officers manning the gender desks adopted approaches that made survivors comfortable to approach them including being uniformed and accompanying them to health facilities.

There was an overall increase in the number of women and girls accessing timely services at the multi-sectoral women's center. For instance, in Dadaab, the provision of continued clinical care and case management to GBV survivors at a one-stop Centre led to 3562 (2921 women, 517 girls, 124 males, 46 PWD) clients seeking services including response to GBV, material support, referrals, and information. In Kakuma, 2259 refugees and host communities comprising (1550 women, 669 girls, 40 men, and 27 PWD) survivors were facilitated through referrals from the response centre to other multi-sectoral partners.

There was also an increase in the number of security personnel with increased knowledge of how to safely respond to incidents of SGBV. The project trained at least 505 staff of relevant institutions of government (duty bearers) and right holders equipping them with skills to safely respond to incidents of SGBV according to established protocols in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Garissa. The project trained at least 2,000 refugee women and girls who received psychosocial care and legal aid services in Kakuma, Dadaab, and Turkana. This included 40 persons with disability, 250 girls below the age of 250, 1,625 women between the age of 18-35 years, and 625 years of women who were above 36 years of age. Also, the project reached at least 14,100 beneficiaries with messages on SGBV using IEC materials, GBV instructional posters, and radio shows.

The table below summarizes the results under outcome 2. It indicates that the project achieved targeted outcomes and outputs signalling significant effectiveness.

Table 6: Results on Outcome 2; Output 2.2 indicators

Output 2.2. Vulnerable women and girls have increased access to effective services & protection mechanisms through social spaces in refugee and host communities.			
		Status	Means of Verification
Indicator 2.2.A: Number of women and girls accessing timely services at the multi-sectoral women centre. (Baseline: 5,400 ⁴⁷ ; Target: 10,800)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the indicator target of achieving 10,000 has been met by various activities contributing to the achievement. Evaluation noted that in Dadaab, the provision of continued clinical care and case management to GBV survivors at one stop Centre has led to 3562 (2921 women, 517 girls, 124 males, 46 PWD) clients seeking services including response to GBV, material support, referrals, and information. Notably, in Kakuma, 2259 refugees and host communities comprising of (1550 women, 669 girls, 40 men and 27 PWD) survivors were facilitated through referrals from the response center to other multi-sectoral partners. 	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations
Indicator 2.2.B: Number of security personnel who indicate increased knowledge on how to safely respond to incidents of SGBV (Baseline: 0; Target: 200)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target of training 355 staff duty bearers and right holders equipped with skills to safely respond to incidents of SGBV according to established protocols in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Garissa was achieved and exceeded by 505. 	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations
Indicator 2.2.C: No. of women and girls reached to direct them to available humanitarian, DRR and protection services. (Baseline: 0, Target 10,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation noted that 2,500 refugee women and girls were to receive psychosocial care and legal aid services to receive training by end of the project out of which (1230 legal and 1270 psychosocial) for Kakuma, Dadaab and Turkana. This population targeted 40 persons with disability, 250 girls below the age of 250, 1,625 women between the age of 18-35 years and 625 years of women who were above 36 years of age. Out of this target, 2000 were trained. 	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations
Indicator 2.2.3: Number of people reached through advocacy initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target of reaching 25000 people through advocacy initiatives had been exceeded by 28694 reached. The target of reaching 144,000 people with SGBV information through IEC materials, GBV instructional posters and radio shows was achieved by reaching out to 144,100 people. 	Achieved	Annual IPs Evaluation Reports, Verification in FGDs with peace committees. KIIs interview confirmations

⁴⁷ UN Women established the Women Empowerment Centre in Kalobeyei which can provide a safe space and SGBV counselling for 5,400 women and girls annually through “Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection in Crisis Response (LEAP)” funded by JSB 2019-2020.

To strengthen protection, referral mechanisms and access to justice for SGBV victims in refugee camps and host communities, LEAP 2021-2023 project also contributed to promotion of the safety of vulnerable women and girls through the orientation of 89 *boda boda*⁴⁸ riders and construction site workers on GBV and referral pathways. FGD respondents noted that:

“There has been a notable reduction on GBV as compared to previous times. Before the project there was a lot of intimate partner violence with incoming refugees, but now that is changing and there’s a lot of trust in interventions that responds to immediate needs of both refugees and host communities at the same time. The construction of the GBVRC is complete and this adds to the protection of the women which is a key achievement of the project.” FGD_Dadaab) 11/23.

From KII perspective, it was also summarised that:

“The project has created equal opportunities to render psycho-social and mental health support implemented in Garissa and Dadaab. The coverage and support are wide and impactful with the involvement of county hospitals, police and the judiciary in responding to issues GBV cases. The police on the other hand are very appreciative with regards to creation of gender desk and trainings in Kakuma and Dadaab. Before the project, victims of GBV would withdraw cases due to the alternative justice systems but now they are aware of their rights and are aware of the justice systems procedures. In connection to this, the county hospital can handle the SGBV, and the referral mechanism is taking shape. The project has therefore contributed to a systemic create and behaviour change among the host and refugee communities.” KII_IRC_Kakuma_12/23.

Finding 15: *The male engagement strategy was transformative in changing attitudes of individuals targeted as male champions. Furthermore, community level engagement of males has enabled wider scale attitude changes about women in leadership, economic empowerment and reduction of GBV.*

Despite the deep-rooted cultures within the project zones, involvement of men in the project strategy has been useful in creating balance in the gender strategy. Even though the program is loaded with expectation of women and girl empowerment, streamlining the project together with male beneficiaries has ensured achievement of peace and security initiatives right from planning to implementation. Male engagement at community (refugee and host) levels has been transformative for example, the involvement of male *boda boda* champions who train fellow *boda boda* riders on GBV and women protection. As noted earlier male attitudes about women’s involvement in leadership, economic empowerment was changing as a result of involvement in community mobilisation and awareness raising. Women attending tailoring FGDs noted that:

“Involvement of men in LEAP project has significantly led to 36behaviour36 change and reduced stereotyping attitude that was initially exhibited when women and men were involved in doing task. Majority of men have benefitted from the project and have come to understand the perspective of respecting women in equal measure. In this project, I can confidently say that men have become lead change makers for women participating in technical projects like tailoring where we had limited understanding in taking accurate measurements for designing materials.” FGD_Kakuma_PWJ_12/23.

⁴⁸ PWJ quarterly report

Equally, there was promotion of positive attitudes and behaviours for men and boys towards gender equality. This benefited the advancement of women under the LEAP towards wider scale attitude changes about women in leadership, economic empowerment, and reduction of overall GBV. Male engagement was therefore vital in the empowerment drive for women and in their participation in decision making in the community. This strategy was fundamental in ensuring more women are attracted to joining VSLAs. The “male engagement approach/role model men approach” has changed perspectives of patriarchal social norms and encouraged other men to be positive about gender equality and women’s rights. To ensure sufficient data is captured, there is need for direct project indicator on the number of men who have directly changed their attitudes towards women and girls.

***Finding 16:** The project was based on sound stakeholder engagement from design to implementation. The intervention succeeded in facilitating development of strategic partnerships, coordination with humanitarian organizations and the private sector. Opportunities exist for UN Women to deepen partnerships with development actors in the humanitarian-development programming.*

UN Women engaged stakeholders⁴⁹ from the conceptualisation of the project. To ensure effective and efficient coordination and collaboration with key partners, a Project Steering Committee (PSC)⁵⁰ was established to serve the project’s decision-making authority and oversight mechanism. This ensured buy in and co-ownership from across the stakeholder categories in the project design. During project initiation, UN Women created a platform for joint decision making headed by Project Steering Committee (PSC) among all stakeholders of the project allowing co-ownership of decisions. To enhance collaboration and coordination, government officials both national and county, community opinion leaders, and youth were actively engaged by PWJ in stakeholder engagements for the construction of a modern automotive garage in Kalobeyei. Through these engagements, community concerns were addressed, resulting in streamlined construction works. For example, in the pursuit of empowering women and girls in technical and vocational skills, PWJ collaborated with IRC and the *Jitegemee group*⁵¹ to distribute and market reusable sanitary pads. Their involvement in the selection and baseline assessment process for the tailor-to-tailor project mentees ensured a robust foundation for the project. Additionally, the engagement of the County Government Department of Cooperatives during the mentorship program highlighted the importance of joining cooperatives to the participants. PWJ successfully marketed and sold sanitary products by engaging *Duka Safi* operators, *Fumbua Shop*⁵² owners, and PWJ hygiene promoters. This approach effectively reached the target audience and generated positive outcomes.

For example, leveraging on RCK expertise on offering case management and psychosocial support to survivors, Judiciary, and courts in apprehending perpetrators, UNHCR role of oversight and coordination mechanisms in the camps and Refugee Consortium Kenya (RCK) role in offering pro bono services to the

⁴⁹ Stakeholders includes Ministry of Public Service and Gender Affairs, Refugee Affairs Secretariat under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Kenya Police Service, National Drought Management Authority, Governments in Turkana and Garissa Counties, women’s organizations, IPs, civil society organizations, humanitarian organizations, media, and the private sector such as CFAO Kenya, BBOX and Mitsubishi Cooperation.

⁵⁰ UN Women as serve as the Secretariat of the PSC, which will comprise of both state and none-state actors; which include UN Women, Government officials from Ministry of Public Service and Gender, Ministry of Interior, Refugee Affairs Secretariat, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Representatives from the County Governments of Turkana and Garissa, the Embassy of Japan, UNHCR and key CSOs working in both camps and host communities.

⁵¹ Marketing Agency involved in distribution and sales of re-usable pads in Kakuma.

⁵² Marketing and distribution shops for sale of re-sable sanitary pads

GBV survivors which include court preparations, debriefs and holding briefs during court proceedings. Equally, effective partnerships with the Kakuma Police Station and *Hagadera* in facilitating forensic investigations, apprehending of perpetrators, and reporting of GBV cases. The partnerships with private sector including by Cooperation for Africa and Overseas Motors Kenya (CFAO, formerly Toyota Kenya Ltd) to offer certification in modern automotive garage facility is a clear example of how effective partnership and coordination has been for this project. Partnership with the office of County Commissioners in respective counties was also noted to have contributed to the project success. In Garissa County, partnering with private marketing distribution agency helped drive sales and incomes.

***Finding 17:** The project put in measures for women and girls to prevent further discrimination from power imbalances which were embedded in host and refugee communities. However, there is a need for specific interventions that address power imbalance between refugees and host communities and between women and men.*

The project demonstrated that it has influenced change in attitudes towards women's participation in economic empowerment, safety and security, prevention SGBV, leadership and decision-making. Evidence from FGDs indicated that the project has enhanced integration and co-existence among the refugees and host communities through joint participation in the project activities and balancing power men and women. Discussions noted that:

"LEAP III project has given women a platform to demonstrate their independence through participation in income generating activities as well as empowerment towards protection of SGBV. Participation in skills development especially in mechanical and tailoring services given women conviction that they can equally be independent in the society. Most importantly, increased women participation and decision making in peace and security initiatives have given women more the opportunity to be decision makers at household level and community level." FGD_Garissa_04/23.

This has helped to increase the number of women gaining skills development through training and capacity building, economic empowerment and making independent decisions in the community. Such results, if sustained will reduce gender inequality in in the host and refugee communities. UN Women through IPs continued support towards changes in attitudes towards women's participation in leadership, economic empowerment and skills development will help to sustain this trajectory (decreasing inequality in in host and refugee communities). However, consultations at both national and local level revealed that the power relations between the men and women are still elusive in Turkana and Garissa with men still dominant in decision making due to deep rooted cultural values. UN Women through implementing partner need specific project and interventions with measurable outcomes addressing power relations between men and women and how it is occurring. This could also be extended to the relations between host and refugee communities to determine the specific progress.

***Finding 18:** The project did not realize any unintended negative effects of the interventions on women, men in host communities and within the refugee camps.*

The project has not realised any unintended negative effects during its implementation within the host and refugee context. Respondents alluded to the fact that the project has created positive outcomes instead.

4.4 Efficiency

***Finding 19:** The project was efficiently guided by effective project delivery team from UN Women. It comprised of a technical team within the UN Women Peace and Security Unit and a project management committee. The technical team provided the required guidance on project implementation standards, guidelines and operations management.*

The UN Women management structure efficiently supported implementation and delivery of Project results. To ensure effective and efficient coordination and delivery of the project, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was⁵³ established to serve the project's decision-making authority and oversight mechanism with UN Women serving as the Secretariat of the PSC, which will comprise of both state and non-state actors to oversee the day-to-day operation of the project. PSC was mandated to oversee the overall implementation of the project, provide strategic direction to programme implementation, mitigate any challenges, identify opportunities, including on resource mobilization efforts, endorse implementation reports and work plans; recommendations; and oversee and participate in programme monitoring, evaluation, and audits. The project management had the Peace and Security Unit within UN Women Kenya which was the executing agency for the overall oversight and management of LEAP project with the responsibility for developing a detailed work-plan, monitoring implementation.

Building relevant partnerships and meeting reporting requirements. The unit also enrolled the Peace and Security Specialist at UN Women as the overall Team lead responsible for overall accountability and reporting including forging partnerships and provide strategic guidance to achieve project objectives. A Humanitarian Program Analyst from Japan was meant to support and oversee the day-to-day management and coordination including advocacy and capacity building components under the guidance of the Deputy Country Director of UN Women Kenya.

To support the Humanitarian Programme Analyst in the implementation of the project, a National Programme Analyst focused on implementation of KNAP II was recruited to support the Government of Kenya in coordinating and managing the Implementation of Kenya National Action Plan (KNAP) on UNSCR 1325. This was to ensure the formulation of project strategies and implementation and facilitating knowledge building and sharing on the implementation of Kenya National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and support localization efforts, which are in line with the project objectives were included. The also enrolled Project Finance Associate who was responsible for providing support to implementation partners by ensuring they expense and liquidate disbursed funds within the stipulated timeframe of the project.

Equally, a Monitoring and Reporting Analyst was recruited to provide oversight on field monitoring, data collection methods, and outcome-based reporting in line with UN Women's guidelines. In addition, the M&E Analyst was to provide substantive support to implementing partners through Induction training and follow-up capacity developments based on needs. The project also supported UN Women Communication Analyst to support in the communication and evidence generation, knowledge management and development of communication products as part of accountability to partners and donors and project visibly. The project also enlisted the Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Specialist at UN Women Japan Liaison Office to support the overall coordination with the Government of Japan and assist UN Women Kenya Country Office to roll out the project. Even though the project had a robust structure and technical expertise to ensure full

⁵³ UN Women, Government officials from Ministry of Public Service and Gender, Ministry of Interior, Refugee Affairs Secretariat, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Representatives from the County Governments of Turkana and Garissa, the Embassy of Japan, UNHCR and key CSOs working in both camps and host communities.

implementation, key staff transition towards the end of the project posed major risk and created notable gaps in IPs coordination, strategic guidance, and forging partnerships.

***Finding 20:** Project funds and time were efficiently used to meet the project results. Budget allocations against outputs seemed balanced and logical as per the results. However, notable delays in funds disbursement were noted with specific implementations due to late reporting. Technical expertise was efficiently used to support the achievement of results.*

The total project budget allocations against outputs were appropriately budgeted for and logical towards enhancing project outcomes. Efficiency was also assessed from the perspective of the project operations in achieving the results against budget appropriation percentage. From the UN Women project documents, the planned outcome 1 and outcome 2 were sufficiently achieved with time and budget allocation respectively. All planned outputs were largely delivered within the required time and budget.⁵⁴

Furthermore, UN Women exercised strong audit mechanisms with action plans and provided technical support to implementing partners to comply with results based and financial reporting. Although most IPs supported by UN Women to implement the project noted cumbersome and bureaucratic reporting procedures, they were able to cope and complied albeit with some delays which affected receipt of the next disbursement. The delays were caused by a combination of factors that included bureaucracy within UN Women and delayed submission of reports or acquittals from the partners. For instance, one IP reported having signed a contract with UN Women and had only about a year to accomplish related project activities.⁵⁵ Other notable discussions from the KIIs include:

“Delays in fund disbursement and delayed reporting has hindered progressive implementation of the projects. There seemed to be a long process in disbursing funds to the implementing partners caused by long procurement procedures and bureaucracies. The delays shorten the implementation period and therefore, there has been some compromise on the project delivery.” KII_Kakuma_08/23.

Efficiency was also assessed from the perspective of the project operations in achieving the results against budget appropriation percentage and it was noted that projects' achievement was exceeded in most cases. Except for exceptional cases of delayed disbursement for garage construction due to architectural changes and delays in approval from the relevant authorities, the rest of the project interventions received timely and efficient funding for implementation. The second bottleneck was related to restrictive political landscape of the time. Issues of political campaigns for 2022 elective positions slowed down the start of activities, which generally slowed the pace of implementation of projects. The change of county government from the election cycle also led to the delay in getting plans and approvals to complete the construction project. Despite emerging challenges, several coordination structures were put in place ensuring that project resources were used efficiently. Through KIIs, the evaluation exercise learned that implementation of LEAP was within budget and the planned timeframe for the rest of the project implementation.

***Finding 21:** Project management and M&E structure was largely efficient for LEAP implementation. There is need for cost-based monitoring of implemented projects to ensure effective tracking of project planned costs.*

⁵⁴ UN Women Project Documents and Proposals. Outline IP budget and project budget allocations.

⁵⁵ Interview with an IP.

The project put in place measures to monitor project results but lacked on cost effectiveness monitoring since the traceability of expenses versus outcomes achieved was not documented from the project monitoring plans. UN Women used results-based management (RBM) and rights-based approaches widely considered as effective in monitoring large scale community development projects. The evaluation observed that UN Women took steps to ensure measures for quality control and assurance were in place. First, IPs were competitively selected through a call for proposal. The selection criteria included an assessment on due diligence, which provided assurance of IPs' capability to deliver the project. The IPs were happy with the M&E function and admitted that the LEAP was one of the best-monitored Projects they had implemented. This enabled them to pick lessons, gaps, and achievements as implementation went on. There were follow-ups and assessments evaluations during implementation. LEAP Project M&E teams with capacities in different LEAP components would hold review meetings with the IPs and provide them with feedback. In addition, the UN Women inducted the IPs into UN Women project management processes to enhance compliance and efficiency. These included the mentoring and handholding support provided through by UN Women M&E focal point, and outcome harvesting training which all IPs attended since 2022.

All implementing partners⁵⁶ used results-based monitoring for reporting project implementation. IP reports were produced on a quarterly basis while UN Women reported to donors annually throughout the project cycle. All these reports show progress based on the indicators and targets assigned at different levels ranging from outcome, output, and activity levels. These indicators and targets are both qualitative and quantitative. Besides, the findings show that UN Women through its internal practice continues to strengthen internal M&E capacities of IPs in data collection systems and overall technical support.

4.5 Human Rights and Gender Equality

***Finding 22:** Human rights and gender equality were central to the project's implementation approach, however there is need for more resources to scale human rights and gender equality approaches for host and refugee communities.*

The project was implemented following the global norms, standards and Programming principles of Human rights, development effectiveness, gender equality and the empowerment of women. Its design was centred on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of refugee women and girls and host communities. The ToC put at the centre of activities and targeted outcomes: (i) the enhancement of women's capacity to participate and influence policymaking and programming on conflict prevention, peace and security and humanitarian action; (ii) economic empowerment through creation of new sources of income and economic opportunities; and (iii) services and protection mechanisms for vulnerable women and girls. As such, the project had an embedded focus on the human rights of women tackled through various strategies including – awareness creation and training, policy influencing to engender the legal and policy framework for peace and security and humanitarian action, male engagement to tackle socio-cultural norms, knowledge and practices that discriminate against women and girls, and empowering duty bearers to develop institutions and policy/law that promote the human rights of women.

The project's results framework (outcomes, outputs and indicators) reflected a focus on women's human rights and gender equality. It aligned well with national (Constitution and Vision 2030) and international commitments such as CEDAW, Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on peace and security and the Beijing Platform for Action. The evaluation also noted that the project adopted the Leave No One Behind principle, which ensured targeting of marginalised

⁵⁶ Including Don Bosco, Woman Kind Kenya, Rural Women Peace Link, Peace Winds Japan, Refugee Consortium Kenya, and International Rescue Committee

and socially excluded groups of people (poor and marginalised women and girls in refugee camps and host communities) with limited capacity to claim their rights. For instance, in the male dominated projects like construction of garage tailoring and mechanical training skills development at Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement were engaged in a strategy that ensured that available women were elected as representatives in the key executive roles of the projects.

Whilst there was notable effort to document PwDs involved in the project there was a gap in resource allocation towards enabling meaningful participation of persons with disability for such things as appropriate transportation, learning aids and assistive devices that would have enabled their active participation in activities. Also, tackling the deeply rooted socio-cultural barriers to women's empowerment requires concerted long-term effort that cannot be achieved by one intervention. As such, there is need for more targeted interventions for the project to respond to more beneficiaries with disabilities and to elevate outputs on livelihoods beyond trainings/capacity development to strong sustainable income generating activities that can assure resilience of beneficiaries.

4.6 Sustainability

***Finding 23:** The project has strengthened the technical and operational capacities of UN Women, national and county institutions, implementing partners, community structures, and beneficiary groups. However, the financial capacity of these partners and stakeholders is weak and this remains one of the significant threats to sustainability.*

To ensure long term sustainable strategy and in reference project documents UN Women designed sustainable and exit strategy which was aligned to institutional strengthening and capacity development of national and county institutions. The project was also designed to institutionalize gender in policies, strategies, and frameworks, which will pave the way for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through gender mainstreaming in processes, programs, and operations. In broader sustainable alignment, the project was aligned to national gender equality and development priorities as outlined in Vision 2030, MTP III, and the UNSDCF (formerly UNDAF). Incorporation of stakeholder participation at all stages of the project design, planning, and implementation including identification of beneficiaries, as well as monitoring of activities ensured full ownership by stakeholders and beneficiaries. The project invested in capacity-building initiatives, strengthening knowledge and skills in women, girls, and duty bearers with a strong focus on imparting new knowledge that leads to a positive shift in attitudes and practices that promote positive gender norms. Participation of women, community members, and leaders is expected to increase ownership and sustainability and sustain the gains made. Sustainability aspects of the project were taken into consideration by strengthening the gender responsiveness of existing peace architecture in the national and county peace architecture, ensuring a well-functioning women's peace and security platform at the county level to continue advancing the WPS agenda in Garissa County.

For example, the aspirants training manual and handbook, media training manual and monitoring framework, community sensitization manuals, manual of training on VLSA, etc. have potential for continuation by partners enhancing the quality of LEAP work in the country. Local accountability for supporting continuation of activities have also been instituted including establishment of the management at the Women Empowerment Centers, completed garage and the partnership with the private sectors to ensure continuity. Other sustainable strategies/approaches used to deliver the project include formation of women's cooperative in Kalobeyei, building of garage for mechanical trainings and handing it over to CFAO, establishment of VSLA in Dadaab, provision of business start-up kits for women in Dadaab, construction of the Women Empowerment Centre in Kalobeyei and offering baking and, weaving skills to girls in Kalobeyei. These are likely to have a long-time effect on women's and girls' protection, participation, and economic

empowerment in Kalobeyei and Dadaab refugee camp as well as a shift on the gender norms especially on the roles of women in the economy and peace building.

Regarding women economic empowerment, organizing women beneficiaries into a cooperative and rolling out of innovative online marketing strategies in marketing sanitary pads, tie and dye clothes were particularly unique, sustainable and empowering. Another association, VSLA, enabled women raise, save and borrow funds for business purposes. This way women will be able to utilize business skills gained to earn an income. The continued use of VSLA structure to borrow funds and sustain businesses will ensure its runs efficiently hence sustaining project results. Even though the projects outlined above create sustainable strategies, there are risks that beneficiaries who fully depended on donor funding and support will not be able to transition to other income generating activities because of lack of start-up capital to purchase raw materials for their products. Sustainable formation of cooperative societies is threatened by the existence of stringent Government procedures which could not be met by the refugees like the Kenya Revenue authority tax pin and national identification numbers. The registration documentation required posed a challenge to the project sustainability particularly registration of tailor's group as a cooperative society which stalled.

The knowledge transferred to men and young women will continue to be used. This was noted from the KILs from the *boda boda* group who have been involved in male engagement through peer-peer education of fellow riders on issues to with gender equality and SGBV. Community volunteers and leaders have continued to support LEAP including continued awareness raising and transformation activities in their communities to ensure women remain a priority for empowerment and protection against GBV. The project also had the strategy of developing knowledge products that could continue to be used by project recipients. The excellent work undertaken at host community and refugee level was good practice and required a strategy for documentation, profiling and influencing uptake in other areas and beyond to ensure sustainability.

The project has enhanced the capacities of local women leaders and community structures through training and increased knowledge on Women, Peace, and Security. The skills acquired through this project are evident in the promotion of women's leadership in Turkana. So far, eight women have been appointed to public offices for demonstrating the ability to address community issues. The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has appointed three women to serve the constituency. In addition, four women have been appointed to nomination offices by the county governments. This will provide technical and financial support for the new offices established in the community.

Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement Community stands to benefit from integration and the cohesion that comes with the strengthened presence of the CPPT-Community Protection and Policing (CPPT) Teams. The skills will be passed on as the team leaders effectively engage individuals in the community to address emerging concerns. The service provider has also strengthened support for the female CPPT by planning to increase the number of women and female volunteers participating in security patrols in the refugee camp.

In Kakuma, training of community incentive volunteers and workers as Trainers of trainers of Girl Shine and Women Rise Curriculum enhances ownership and sustainability of the gains and promotes continuity after project closure. In Dadaab, adoption of henna drawing as peer-to-peer session for the girls has enabled them to make income and earn a living out of the skills and helping the family out financially. Women who exit Psychosocial support groups for GBV survivors upon completion of the GBV Blended curriculum are linked to other services which include empowerment groups and the psychosocial initiatives including the

adolescent girls and mother who are enrolled to the Girl Shine curriculums for further support to ensure continuity.

Trainings for the duty bearers, police officers, CPPT's, CBC's, SGBV translators, CSO's and women/refugees led organizations on how to safely respond and prevent SGBV incidences in the community enabled them to gain the relevant knowledge, skills and the right attitudes that will be translated to other refugees and host communities. They became the agents of change in the community to spread the good news. This gave the men who attended the trainings the insights on how to protect women and girls in the community against all forms of violence perpetuated to them and became the male agents of change.

RCK, through the strategic pillar of advocacy, policy, and governance, will continue engaging in advocacy efforts to influence policies and promote gender equality at local and national level to ensure the continuation of initiatives such as strengthening referral pathways for GBV. Training and skill development opportunities were provided to empower young people, enabling them to actively contribute to and benefit from the project activities. The CBCs, translators and protection monitors were drawn from the community, and they were trained on effectively responding to SGBV cases.

The Dadaab Gender Based Violence Recovery Centre (GBVRC) located at Dadaab Sub-County Hospital is fully operational and the hospital is expected oversee service delivery to the beneficiaries beyond the closure of UN Women project. Having trained the community health volunteers, it is envisioned that there will be a continuous provision of services to the community beyond the project period. Engaging and empowering the community leaders and government officials including the judicial officers, Department of Children's Services, County Referral Hospitals, Ministry of Gender and Social services, Police Stations will ensure that survivors of SGBV continue to receive assistance both legal and psychological first aid.

The evaluation noted that partnerships forged between the County Government and the communities at sub-county, village and ward level has further enhanced the public participation process. As a result of the intervention, there is strengthened and established frameworks of engagement between the citizens, National Administration and the county governments that will exist beyond the project life. The aspect of capacity building and policy influence will also ensure that the communities are able to efficiently participate in Peace and security initiatives, both at Sub County and County Level.

Capacity building forums has promoted ownership ensuring that the Communities has knowledge and skills necessary for P/CVE efforts within their communities. The understanding of VE and P/CVE among community stakeholders will enable these stakeholders to contribute to the design and implementation of effective P/CVE mechanisms that account for local context needed to sustain the project.

The adoption and implementation of developed Dadaab Gender Responsive P/CVE Action Plan and GCAP on UNSCR 1325 Action plan by Garissa County and other partners in the region will advance the participation of Women in Peace and security initiatives beyond project timelines.

SECTION FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

5.1 Conclusions

– Conclusion 1: Relevance

The evaluation found the project's ToC coherent as it was well-structured and clearly articulated the pathways to achieving change. The two outcomes remained relevant to the context and needs of targeted beneficiaries in the two counties and broadly in the rest of the country throughout the period of implementation. The ToC largely aligned with UN Women Global Strategic Plan (2022-2025), UN Women Kenya Country Office Strategic Notes (of 2019-2022 and 2023-2026) and UN Women Global Strategy. The project's activities aligned well with Global Strategic Plan that focusses on: (i) governance and participation in public life; women's economic empowerment; ending violence against women and girls; and women, peace and security, humanitarian action, and disaster risk reduction. In Kenya, despite existence of a progressive legal and policy framework, there remains a high prevalence of SGBV, driven by harmful socio-cultural practices, patriarchy and poverty, and there is significant underrepresentation and limited participation of women (especially marginalised and socially excluded women and girls) in peace and security institutions and processes. The project has tackled the major drivers of empowering women refugees and host communities economically through skills development and opportunities for women's participation in income generating activities. It has addressed women's and girls' needs for economic empowerment, leadership in peace and security, protection from SGBV and representation in decision making. The evaluation thus deemed the project relevant to the gender equality context in Kenya as it sought to address gender gaps prioritised by government (both county and national), development partners, civil society and targeted communities in the two counties. The evaluation notes nonetheless that there was room for better inclusion of PWDs in project activities ensuring strategies and approaches account for the special needs of PWDs. Further, whilst there were trainings that targeted beneficiaries, the evaluation notes that women were unable to start income generating activities citing lack of capital as the major constraint. Also, it was notable that targeted women did not take up some courses like motor vehicle mechanic and computer which pointed to a mismatch in their interest and available training. This points to gaps in determination of relevant training and in balancing resources to provide necessary support (beyond training/course) to increase relevance of livelihoods activities to the needs of targeted beneficiaries. This conclusion is linked to the *findings from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8*.

– Conclusion 2: Coherence

UN Women's positioning balanced alignment to international and national policy priorities and outcomes reflected the global, national, and local UN Women institutional frameworks for GEWE, humanitarian response, peacebuilding and development. The project alignment to global norms, SDGs, UN Women Global Strategic Note (2019-2022), UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Kenya (2018-2022), United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Kenya 2022-2026, National priorities of Kenya Vision 2030, MPT III and Kenya's National Action Plan II on Women, Peace and Security (2020-2024) has reinforced the positioned UN Women Country office in advancing women economic empowerment and influencing peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes through LEAP project. UN Women's position in Kenya as a thought leader on GEWE and its convening power enabled the entity to link and work with various agencies including UN agencies, CSOs, government institutions and the private sector on projects funded by different donors but complemented the LEAP III project at the county level. For example, UN Women actively engaged and coordinated with the stakeholders through the Gender Working Groups in Turkana County and Garissa County to ensure the inclusion of women's organizations in the humanitarian inter-agency coordination platforms. The effort has successfully resulted in concerted advocacy efforts during international day events, support to access to justice for GBV survivors

through the court users' committees and the joint development of the Kenya National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 as well as the Counter Violent Extremism Action Plan in Dadaab. The improved interagency coordination at the county level has also made the work of UN Women with funding from Japan very visible to stakeholders. Nonetheless, there were notable lapses in coordination among some partners and unwillingness to work together. When there were programme changes, like the design of the auto-garage, there was notable weak coordination and synergy among the County government of Turkana on the approvals, the government of Japan, IP and UN Women. This gave the indication that more could be done to ensure coherence among local partners. This is based on *finding 9, 10 and 11*.

– **Conclusion 3: Effectiveness**

The project has achieved its planned outputs and made strong contributions to the two outcomes spelled out in the results framework (ToC). It has provided essential protection mechanisms through social spaces in refugees and host communities for strengthening GBV identification, mitigation, prevention, and response. It has also contributed to improvements in women's living standards and ability to earn an income which has elevated women's status within the family (being involved in decision-making processes). It has increased participation of targeted women (in refugee camps and host communities) in livelihood activities equipping them with skills, resources and connections that have enabled them to independently provide for their families, cultivating confidence and dignity. As a direct effect, these outcomes have contributed to reduction in incidences of intimate partner violence. This has provided further evidence of economic empowerment as an effective strategy for reducing SGBV. Trainings, capacity and building activities implemented by the project have contributed to improvements in knowledge on UNSCR 1325 and skills to participate in peace, security and governance. Despite improvements in knowledge and capacity there remain gender-specific structural barriers deeply rooted in prevalent socio-cultural norms, practices and attitudes that limit meaningful participation and influence of targeted women in peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes. Gender roles remit a burden of care work at household level that limits time and opportunities for women to actively participate. Also, patriarchal attitudes still affect the willingness and ability of women to engage constructively and contribute their ideas in peace and security initiatives and humanitarian processes, activities, and forums. Future projects should consider the inclusion of better mechanisms for capturing data on changes in male attitudes towards women and girls like quantitative indicators in the results framework on changing male attitudes. Overall, achieving the goal of empowering women (with knowledge and resources) to engage more meaningfully in humanitarian, peace, and security processes should be viewed by stakeholders in the country as a long-term endeavor that requires continuous intervention from UN Women and partners, building on the net gains on knowledge and capacities developed through this project. This conclusion is based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17*.

– **Conclusion 4: Efficiency**

The project was delivered effectively and efficiently. All project output targets were met with three of them exceeded. Results were delivered on time as per the work plan within the budget. To ensure efficient implementation and delivery of targeted outcomes, UN Women relied on results-based management (RBM), monitoring for reporting project implementation, and strong audit mechanisms linked to action plans. The project relied on competitively selected IPs (through a call for proposals and due diligence assessment) assuring the capability to deliver. There were notable implementation delays, occasioned by gaps in the transfer of budget (disbursement of funding) that hampered effectiveness. These can be addressed through internal organizational efforts recognising and accounting for the time needed to go through the layers of approval and decision-making at the UN that sometimes contribute to delays. The project design allowed sufficient resources for implementing the larger part of its targeted outcomes. Finances were considered by partners to meet the task and the human resource endowment (including UN Women staff and seconded

capacity from Japan) provided adequate technical and management support that ensured efficient implementation. Nonetheless, staff transition towards the end of the project posed major risk and created notable gaps in IPs coordination, strategic guidance, and forging partnerships. This conclusion is based on *findings 19, 20 and 21*.

– **Conclusion 5: Human Rights and Gender Equality**

The ToC was centred on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of refugee women and girls and host communities and focused on (i) enhancement of women's capacity to influence policy and programming on peace and security and humanitarian action; (ii) economic empowerment; and (iii) provision of services and protection. This demonstrated adequate attention to human rights of women tackled through awareness creation and capacity development, policy influencing, and male engagement to address socio-cultural norms, knowledge and practices that discriminate against women and girls. The project aligned well with national and international commitments on gender equality and human rights and adopted the Leave No One Behind principle, which ensured targeting of poor and marginalised women and girls in refugee camps and host communities that have limited capacity to claim their rights. Although there was notable effort to document PwDs involved in the project there was a gap in resource allocation towards enabling meaningful participation of PwDs that needs to be addressed in future interventions. This conclusion is based on *finding 22* of the report.

– **Conclusion 6: Sustainability and impact**

The project is driven by sustainable and strategic model that ensures continuity even after the project closure. UN Women designed a sustainable exit strategy that is aligned to institutional strengthening and capacity development of national and county institutions. Sustainable strategies/approaches used to deliver the project include the formation of a women's cooperative in Kalobeyei, the building of a garage for mechanical training and handing it over to CFAO, the establishment of VSLA in Dadaab, provision of business start-up kits for women in Dadaab, construction of the Women Empowerment Centre in Kalobeyei and offering baking skills, weaving to girls in Kalobeyei. In addition, the building of women's safe spaces, garages, and business incubation centres will act as key successful landmarks for the LEAP III project. More capacity strengthening in resource mobilization, advocacy and lobbying for increased donor funding is key to strengthening financial sustainability. More focus is needed to potentially create various knowledge products developed by the project to improve capacity building and response towards women security, economic empowerment based on *finding 23*.

5.2 Lessons

- **Lesson 1:** Strategic partnerships and collective action enable effective implementation and tackling of complex challenges and lay the foundation for sustainability. The project selected credible IPs with appropriate capacity, knowledge, experience, and goodwill with targeted communities. For instance, a seamless GBV referral pathway was established through the collaboration among different project partners providing a comprehensive survivor centered GBV response. RCK provided legal aid and psychosocial support for GBV survivors, IRC provided medical treatment, Don Bosco and Peace Winds Japan provided skills training to empower survivors economically, and through the judiciary and police case, investigations were fast-tracked to ensure access to justice for survivors. Lesson based on based on *findings 6, 10, 11, and 14*.
- **Lesson 2:** Effective implementation of the Leaving No One Behind principle requires adequate resources and specific budget lines to support specialized mechanisms that enable people with disability and/or women in marginalized and hard-to-reach areas to participate in project activities. PwDs and other socially

excluded persons require support in the form of appropriate transportation, security, and assistive devices without which their meaningful participation cannot be guaranteed. Lesson based on based on *findings 6, 10, 11, and 14*.

- **Lesson 3:** Male engagement is critical for tackling socio-cultural barriers that limit women's economic empowerment and participation in public life. Continuous engagement of men has the potential to create long-lasting impact as influencers of community behavior change and protection of women and girls. For instance, the 'Tree of Men' a Traditional Tribal decision-making organ that involves consultations with women leadership known as 'Tree of Women' has created harmonious dialogues with the Ethnic Refugee Leaders/Elders who act as main custodians of cultures in the refugee camps. This has improved the understanding of social norms among men and improved women and girls' participation in peace committee decision-making and participating in income-generating activities. *Based on findings 3, 13*.

SECTION SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented in this section are to be addressed by UN Women Kenya Country Office in partnership and consultation with relevant national and county stakeholders and implementing partners. The recommendations also conform to the findings and lessons learnt from the evaluation. The recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions derived from the evidence gathered and analysed for this evaluation and synthesized inputs from project participants and stakeholders. Presentations of the evaluation preliminary findings; discussion on lessons and proposed recommendations; and final sessions to validate the report took place with the CO and the members of the ERG between October and December 2023. This section includes actions for consideration by the county office, based on feasibility within its current project. Some of the suggested actions are already under way given the time lag between the issuance of the preliminary findings and the finalization of the report. The level of assessed impact, priority, difficulty, and suggested timeframe for implementation are indicated below each specific recommendation. The evaluation urges that UN Women and partners pursue the following recommendations towards increasing capacity of women to participate in and influence policymaking and programming on conflict prevention, peace and security and humanitarian action; creating new sources of income and economic opportunities and increasing access to effective services and protection mechanisms for vulnerable refugee women and girls and their host communities:

1. UN Women and Implementing Partners to mobilize financial resources and partnerships for a successor project to build on the gains made in breaking the socio-cultural barriers through the LEAP III project for a stronger durable impact. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 2, 3 and 5*.
2. Government of Japan and other Development Partners to allow more financial resources, in future interventions, for livelihood skill development as a strategy to build economic resilience, foster prevention, and response of SGBV, and increase women's participation in peace and security structures. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 2 and 3*.
3. UN Women to engage Government of Japan, other Development Partners and implementing partners to mobilize financial resources and partnerships for a successor project to expand the scope to neighbouring communities including non-refugee host communities (in Turkana Township and Garissa Township) to ensure benefits bring neighbouring communities to the same level as targeted refugees and host communities. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 3 and 4*.
4. Implementing Partners to further invest in male engagement in future interventions to complement and sustain progress on GEWE attained through the LEAP III project on tackling socio-cultural norms, practices and beliefs that limit empowerment of women and girls in refugee camps and host communities. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 2, 3 and 5*.
5. Private Sector partners and UN Women to pursue further partnerships to leverage on skills, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls in refugee and host communities. Based on *findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17* and *lessons 1, 2 and 3*.
6. UN Women to review existing modalities for funds disbursement to implementing partners to address reported delays for smooth implementation of future interventions and efficient enhance and timely delivery of results. Based on *findings 19, 20 and 21* and *lessons 1, 2 and 3*.

Table 7 below presents a detailed analysis of the recommendations.








Table 7: Recommendations from the Final Evaluation

Recommendation 1: UN Women and Implementing Partners to mobilize financial resources and partnerships for a successor project to build on the gains made in breaking the socio-cultural barriers through the LEAP III project for a stronger durable impact..	
How to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mobilize more resources to provide further expand the reach of the project beyond the refugee camps and host communities. – Map out the hard-pressed sub-counties and wards that have not benefitted from the project interventions and prioritizing them in the next phase of the project. – Exploring partnerships with other development partners and implementing partners to that provide UN Women with capacities to expand and effectively reach support these vulnerable groups
Responsible actor(s)	– UN Women CO Kenya and Implementing Partners
What if it is not done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Failure to prioritize these will lead to an imbalance in the achievement of project results. – Limited progress will be made in benefiting PwDs and other socially excluded in the two counties
Urgency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High, there is a need for immediate interventions will progressively improve the conditions of vulnerable adolescent girls, and women in hard-to-reach and marginalized areas. – High, UN Women’s projects are informed by the principle of LNOB. The evaluation pointed to minimal inclusion of PwDs in the project which poses the risk of this group being left further behind.
Impact	– High, prioritizing these project intervention areas (Garissa and Turkana including host communities) is likely to address issues affecting young women, adolescent girls, and PWD.
Difficulty	– Medium, implementation of the project may be hampered by difficulties of accessing some of the already hard-to-reach areas. Security threats might further hamper KCOs efforts.
Link to conclusions/findings	– Based on findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 and lessons 1,2,3 and 5 .
Recommendation 2: Government of Japan and other Development Partners to allow more financial resources, in future interventions, for livelihood skill development as a strategy to build economic resilience, foster prevention, and response of SGBV, and increase women's participation in peace and security structures.	
How to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Through a deliberate capacity building design that makes the project gains sustainable for the women to be able to mobilize additional resources for increased income. – Localizing training (through understandable language/ local language) and digital financial literacy and skills development for women and girls with a focus on boosting employability and capability to venture into income generation activities
Responsible actor(s)	– To be implemented by Embassy of Japan and other Development Partners; UN Women CO Kenya and IPs.
What if it is not done	– Beneficiaries of LEAP III project may not be able to scale up and sustain their economic ventures due to lack or partial knowledge in financial literacy which will eventually lead to the reversal and collapse of economic gains.
Urgency	– High because there is need to escalate training for women who have started economic and maintain the already created momentum and to safeguard the gains that have been made on GEWE in the priority counties.
Impact	– High, potentially ensures sustainability of the achieved project results.

Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low, the Country Office together with Japan Embassy can negotiate with local microfinance banks, and local Implementing Partners to continue offering capacity and financial literacy training projects to continue investing in the project for sustainability of the results achieved and to drive impact.
Link to conclusions/ findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Based on <i>findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17</i> and <i>lessons 2 and 3</i>.
<p>Recommendation 3: UN Women to engage Government of Japan, other Development Partners and implementing partners to mobilize financial resources and partnerships for a successor project to expand the scope to neighbouring communities including non-refugee host communities (in Turkana Township and Garissa Township) to ensure benefits bring neighbouring communities to the same level as targeted refugees and host communities.</p>	
How to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Up scaling the project beyond host and refugee communities will expand benefits that can be replicable in other parts of the country. Expanding the scope of benefits to other sub-counties will also ensure that women who haven't been reached benefit from the interventions. – Mobilize more resources to expand project reach beyond host communities and refugee camps.
Responsible actor(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – UN Women CO Kenya
What if it is not done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Failure to extend to areas beyond host communities may affect the gains already made and has the potentiality to lead to further disparities in the already marginalized communities. It might also trigger conflict as witnessed during implementation.
Urgency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Medium, future interventions should gradually extend beyond refugee camps and host communities to other areas based on availability of resources.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High, expanding the project to the hard-to-reach areas, other sub-counties and township area will have high impact and influence on empowerment of women and girls.
Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Medium, implementation of the project may be hampered by difficulties of accessing some of the already sparsely and hard-to-reach sub-county township areas.
Link to conclusions/findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Based on <i>findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17</i> and <i>lessons 1,3 and 4</i>.
<p>Recommendation 4: Implementing Partners to further invest in male engagement in future interventions to complement and sustain progress on GEWE attained through the LEAP III project on tackling socio-cultural norms, practices and beliefs that limit empowerment of women and girls in refugee camps and host communities.</p>	
How to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promoting active involvement of men in all the activities of the projects with a clear strategy and intention to influence best practices in SGBV and women empowerment. – Promote male champions through (peer-peer networks) as role models in targeted communities
Responsible actor(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – UN Women CO Kenya; Implementing Partners
What if it is not done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Failure to engage and involve men as role models actively will not lead to meaningful behaviour change within the refugee and host communities.
Urgency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Medium; the engagement of men in GEWE components will lead to
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High, stakeholder engagement will promote ownership of the project at national and county levels.
Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Medium, involving men to be the changing architecture in societal behaviour change in refugee and host communities is likely to take time due to cultural orientations.

Link to conclusions/findings	– Based on <i>findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17</i> and <i>lessons 1,2,3 and 5</i> .
Recommendation 5: Private Sector partners and UN Women to pursue further partnerships to leverage on skills, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls in refugee and host communities.	
How to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continuing to combine short-term self-reliance support for both refugees and host communities through Cash for Work and engagement with private sector. – Expanding demand driven vocational training and match skills required by the labour market in partnership with private sector including extending training duration to allow sufficient time for acquiring skills and complementing skilling with job placement facilitation with the private sector. – Negotiate and follow up possibilities of ongoing employment post placement and training.
Responsible actor(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – UN Women CO Kenya – Implementing Partners – Selected Private Sector Institutions
What if it is not done	– Failure to strengthen the coordination and partnership with private sector will lead to LEAP project beneficiaries delaying leveraging their skills and earning income.
Link to conclusions/findings	– Based on <i>findings 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17</i> and <i>lessons 1,2 and 3</i> .
Recommendation 6: UN Women to review existing modalities for funds disbursement to implementing partners to address reported delays for smooth implementation of future interventions and efficient enhance and timely delivery of results.	
How to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Timely processing of call for proposals – Timely liquidations
Responsible actor(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – UN Women CO Kenya – Implementing Partners
What if it is not done	– Failure poses a reputational risk for UN Women
Urgency	– High
Impact	– High
Difficulty	– Moderate as the organization has policies and procedures in place
Link to conclusions/findings	– Based on <i>findings 19, 20 and 21</i> and <i>lessons 1,2 and 3</i> .

ANNEXES

Annex I	Terms of Reference	 Annex%20I.%20Terms%20of%20Referen
Annex II	Evaluation Matrix	 Annex%20II.%20Evaluation%20Matrix.doc
Annex III	Evaluation Tools	 Annex%20III.%20Data%20Collection%20Tr
Annex IV	List of Partners, their roles, and responsibilities	 Annex%20IV.%20List%20of%20stakeholde
Annex V	List of Key Informants Interviewed	 Annex%20V.%20list%20of%20stakeholde
Annex VI	Results Framework with indicators	 Annex%20VI.%20Project%20results%20fra
Annex VII	Reference documents	 Annex%20VII.%20Reference%20documents.