

Country Portfolio Evaluation Report

COUNTRY NAME: Liberia

Strategic Note 2014– 2017

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Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	UNFPA UNICEF	Ministry of Justice Right & Rice Foundation
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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

7PAP	7 Point Action Plan
ADB	African Development Bank
AFT	Agenda for Transformation
APT	UN Inter-Agency Programme Team
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWCBT	Association of Women in Cross-border Trade
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEA	Cost-Effectiveness Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CO	Country Office
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAMS	Donor Agreement Management System
DAO	Delivering as One
DFID	Department for International Development
DPFoG	Development Partners Forum on Gender
DRF	Development Results Framework
DSTV	Digital Satellite Television
DVDs	Digital Video Discs
ESRP	Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan
E-VAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and girls
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence

GenCap	Gender Standby Capacity Project
GEWE	Gender Equality Women's Empowerment
GGGR	Global Gender Gap Report
GoL	Government of Liberia
GRBP	Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Planning
GSST	Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce
GTG	Gender Theme Group
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRPS	Human Rights and Protection Service
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
ICT	Integrated Country Team
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
ITP	Integrated Transition Plan
JP	Joint Program
JP RWEE	Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women
LDHS	Liberia Demographic Health Survey
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MERP	Monitoring Evaluation and Research Plan
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MM4P	Mobile Money for the Poor Programme
MoH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAPEX	National APEX of Savings and Loans Associations in Liberia
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NGP	National Gender Policy

NGP RF	National Gender Policy, Results Framework
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEEF	Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Framework
OGA	Office of the Gender Advisor
ONE GF	UN One Gender Framework
OneUN OMT	UN Operation Management Team Group
PBF	Peace Building Fund
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PMUs	Programme Management Units
PSH(A)	Peace, Security & Humanitarian (Action)
RA	Regional Architecture
RMS	Result Management System
RWEE	Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
SCGE&CD	Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Child Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Secretary General
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SN	Strategic Note
SOAP	Servants of All Prayers
SPN	Social Policy Network
SSC	Significant Stories of Change
TA	Technical Assistance
Think	Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Term of Reference
UN	United Nations

UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNiTE	United Nations Initiative to End Violence Against Women
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNW-LBR	UN Women Liberia Country Office
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
VSLA	Village Saving Loan Association
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WFP	World Food Programme
WONGOSOL	Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia
WLCL	Women's Legislative Caucus of Liberia
WPL	Women's Participation and Leadership

Executive Summary

1. Overview of the Evaluation

The UN Women Liberia Country Office (CO) commissioned a Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) to systematically assess the contributions made by UN Women to development results with respect to gender equality in the country. With the Strategic Note (SN) as the main point of reference for the evaluation, the CPE was commissioned as both a formative and summative evaluation. The CPE facilitates strategic learning and decision-making by both the CO and other stakeholders, support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experience. Additionally, the evaluation was informed by the UN Women Evaluation Policy, and the UNW-LBR Evaluation Strategic Plan 2014-2017, including the recently adopted Global Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The CPE was gender-responsive and involved both women and men at the various levels; national, county, district and community. The CPE evaluation applied a theory-based evaluation design and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria.

2. Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

Using women's political participation as the main entry point for the Theory of Change (ToC) in the SN 2014-2017 and the revised SN 2016-2017, UNW-LBR's impact was to lead Liberia into an upper middle-income country by 2030. The evaluation found that the foundation that contributes to women's participation in leadership was missed in the ToC. Though there were interventions that contributed to building that foundation.

2.1 Normative:

- a) UNW-LBR played a lead role to support the government of Liberia to domesticate international and regional instruments on gender equality and the empowerment of women. This was through provision of Technical Assistance during preparation of country reports, implementation of programmes, preparation of policy documents and legislation; support to government to participate in regional and international processes and sharing of best practices through the UNW Flagship programmes.
- b) While progress was made to advance policy frameworks and action plans with relevancy to gender equality and the empowerment of women in Liberia; their implementation is hindered by governance, accountability and institutional challenges constraining UNW-LBR and other UN agencies to effectively, proactively, and collaboratively play their respective roles of advancing gender equality.

2.1 Coordination:

- a) UNW-LBR is the chair of the Gender Theme Group (GTG) and while the peacekeeping mission UNMIL was in Liberia, until the March 2018, UN women co-chaired the GTG
- b) UNW-LBR participated in several UN Joint programmes during the evaluation period. By 2017, UNW-LBR was the lead agency in three joint programmes among which: The UN Joint Programme on accelerating progress toward the economic empowerment of rural women (JP RWEE), as well as the Joint Programme on Elimination of Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Harmful Traditional Practices (JP SGBV/HTP) and Peacebuilding fund (PBF) supported "Inclusive Security project".
- c) UNW-LBR supported civil society organisations (CSOs) to advocate on several issues with relevance to gender equality and the women's empowerment; legislative reviews, support for women's political participation and leadership and to participate in regional and international policy processes such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

2.1 Programmes:

- Programmes were implemented directly by UNW-LBR or through implementing partners (IP). Where programmes were implemented through partners it contributed to skills and knowledge transfer and strengthening of institutional capacities of implementing partners.
- Community level interventions were mainly implemented through the peace huts as the entry point for programming. This implied that interventions in all the DRF areas were increasingly conducted in the same geographical space, targeting the same target groups and this contributed to coherence of programmes.

3. Main hindering and enabling factors in the development effectiveness of the Strategic Note 2014-2017.

The SN 2014-2017 and subsequent Strategic Note 2016-2017 were affected by enabling and hindering factors; political, policy, environment, structural and organisational factors.

3.1 Enabling factors contributed to the success of UNW-LBR:

- High-level political will within Liberia and also within UNW
- Funding provided by development partners
- Collaboration with UN agencies
- Support to civil society organisations

3.2 UNW-LBR faced inhibiting factors:

- The break-out of the Ebola Viral Disease (EVD) that affected programme implementation
- Weak legislative enforcement
- UNW-LBR short-term funding for its implementing partners
- Political uncertainty in 2017 due to elections that delayed implementation of some interventions
- Harmful societal beliefs, attitudes and practices that hinder gender equality
- UNW-LBR organisational challenges during the evaluation period relating to vacancies or unavailability of the Country Representative that affected delays in decision making.
- Withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

4. Main Recommendations

Recommendations were developed following the synthesis and analysis of data from the various sources and drawing conclusions from the findings.

The CPE suggests that UNW-LBR should:

1. Work with the government of Liberia as an entity and not separate Ministries.
2. Streamline its internal reporting structures to increase efficiency.
3. Strengthen the position of M & E to coordinate data collection, synthesis and analysis
4. Utilise implementing partners for implementation while it focuses on the legislative framework review and coordination.
5. Advocate for civil service reform to ensure sustainability of results beyond change of government.
6. Provide long term funding for programme work to make an impact.
7. Ensure alignment of its planning and implementation cycle with the implementing partners.

8. Link budgetary control, expenditure management, and achievement of programmatic results across the portfolio.
9. Strengthen its coordination role in the Gender Thematic Group, Liberia Multi-Partner Trust and Development Partners Forum on Gender.
10. Create an online dashboard for timely reporting of Joint Programmes.
11. Strive to provide timely communication to its partners particularly the Government of Liberia, implementing partners and the private sector.
12. Seek to create long-term partnerships with key stakeholders.
13. Continue to focus on the legislative reform process to create a conducive environment for gender equality and women empowerment.
14. Build the internal capacity of the Government of Liberia, particularly ministries that influence budgeting, laws, decentralisation, gender mainstreaming and women economic empowerment.
15. Support the Government of Liberia to collect sex and age disaggregated data and to conduct gender - analysis to enable monitoring gender equality trends.

5. Organisation of the report

The report is organised in six main sections; 1 – Introduction, 2 – Background, 3– Evaluation Methods, 4– Findings, 5 – Conclusion and 6 – Recommendations. The annexures to the report have been presented separately. These include:

1. Terms of Reference for the CPE
2. CPE Dissemination Strategy¹
3. Evaluation Matrix
4. Data collection instruments
5. Boundary partners and theories of change
6. Organisational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework (OEEF) 2014 – 2017
7. Persons interviewed, and sites visited
8. Mission reports A and B
9. List of documents consulted
10. Evidence Tables
11. 2016- 2017 planned outcomes and progress achieved
12. Annual Report Impact Indicators Matrix

¹ The following documents are the outputs of the national evaluation team member: 2) Dissemination Strategy; 8) Mission Reports A and B, and 11) CPE Case study report.

1. Introduction

This section presents the overview of the United Nations Women Liberia (UNW-LBR) Country Office Strategic Note (SN) 2014-2017. The SN 2014-2017 was the main document that formed the basis for UNW-LBR support to the Government of Liberia (GoL).

The SN 2014-2017 covers the three mandates of UNW-LBR; normative, coordination, programmes, and operational work to support the call of action for increased involvement and participation of girls and women in the development of Liberia. It was reviewed in 2016 following several contextual challenges. The review of the SN 2014-2017 culminated into the Revised SN 2016-2017. The programme was expanded in 2017 from three original impact areas: women's leadership and participation, women's economic empowerment, and women's role in peace security and humanitarian intervention to include Ending Violence against Women (EVAW). The decision to focus on these areas was informed by UNW-LBR's comparative advantage, national gender priorities, as well as the strategic entry points for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment over the four-year period. Sweden was the main donor to fund the SN 2014-2017.

The SN was extended to 2018 due to several factors, including: the extension of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) because of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak which diverted implementation and programming and the expected United Nations Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) withdrawal.

The UNW-LBR Liberia programme targeted rural women, adolescent girls, young women, women in cross border trade, women in village, savings and loans associations (V/SLAS), women in peace huts, women in politics and governance, women aspiring for political office, voters and women in the security sector. It also targeted women-led and gender equality focused Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), women's grassroots networks, and men as partner and gender equality champions, as well as duty bearers and decision makers.

As the SN came towards its expiry date, it was important to conduct an evaluation to assess its contribution to the development goals of Liberia, particularly in the areas of gender equality and women empowerment. During the evaluation, a new Government was sworn into office in 2018. The new Government has requested the extension of UNDAF until 2019, until it develops its own development agenda. Based on the outcomes of this process, UNW-LBR Country Office (CO) will develop a new SN for 2019- 2022.

Additionally, UNW-LBR sought to foster increased UN coordination and coherence on gender equality and women's empowerment through an innovative approach to system accountability.

UNW-LBR's Liberia programme, as articulated in the SN 2014- 2017, is summarised in the theory of change (ToC) which was revised in 2015. The core element of the ToC as revised in the SN 2016-2017 is as follows: "Continued capacity and skills building, coupled with economic empowerment of women, lead to (political) leadership and participation at all levels²."

Within this core element, the key aspects are spelled out as follows:

WPL

If (Outcome 1) electoral frameworks and arrangements promote gender balance and if (2) women are perceived as equally legitimate and effective political leaders as men

² UN Women Liberia Country Office Addendum to Strategic Note (2014-2017) Revision 2016-2017, page 16

And if

WEE:

If (Outcome 3) women are informed on their rights and have access to resources (information, skills, networks, space, ID, land, documents, economic opportunities, clean water, hygiene and sanitation, sustainable energy, climate resilient agriculture and finances) and

(Outcome 4) opportunities to secure income and sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families, in addition to gender responsive service

And if

PSH

(Outcome 5) If women participate in decision making processes related to prevention, management and resolution of conflict and

(Outcome 6) if they enjoy safety, physical and mental health and economic security

Then

Liberia will be able to more quickly recover from war and Ebola, and to become a mid-income country economy by 2030.

OEEF:

The revised SN 2016-2017 OEEF captures the following priorities: 1) Coordination, partnership and gender mainstreaming; 2) Results-based Management (RBM); 3) Organisational effectiveness and 4) Resource management and mobilisation.

Within two programmatic and two operational goals captured under the revised OEEF, the following outcome clusters have been identified as summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of OEEF priorities in the SN 2016-2017

Cluster	Outputs
Cluster 1: To drive more effective and efficient United Nations system coordination and strategic partnerships on gender equality and women's empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Output 1.1: A coordinated approach for interventions relating to GEWE is in place within the UN system in Liberia,• Output 1.2: Gender mainstreaming and capacities in GE are increased within UNCT, the National institutions and Implementing partners, and• Output 1.3: Partnerships for advancement of GEWE are established between UNW-LBR and key stakeholders

Cluster	Outputs
Cluster 2: To institutionalise a strong culture of results-based management, reporting, knowledge management and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 2.1: Results Based Management is applied at all steps of the programme cycle, and • Output 2.2: Knowledge products, including researches, on GEWE and progress towards, developed and disseminated
Cluster 3: To enhance organisational effectiveness, with a focus on robust capacity and efficiency at the country and regional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.1: Adequate and skilled staff are in place to advance the mandate and mission of UNW-LBR in Liberia • Output 3.2: UNW-LBR is accountable for efficient, harmonised and transparent use of resources, and • Outcome 3.3: Effective oversight and risks management systems are in place
Cluster 4: To leverage and manage resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 4.1: UNW-LBR's financial resource base is expanded and diversified to meet the demands for programming and technical assistance • Output 4.2: UN Women is accountable for efficient, harmonized and transparent use of resources.

The implementation of the SN 2014-2017 was done with the support provided by UNW headquarters and the West Africa Regional Office. Senior leadership from UNW headquarters and regional office visited the UNW-LBR CO. In addition, technical support was provided to implement several interventions, monitor and evaluate UNW-LBR Country Office. In addition, UNW-LBR participated in regional and head-quarter initiatives such as the designing flagship programmes and Regional Architecture evaluation.

Section one provided an overview to the SN 2014-2017, including the need for its revision in 2016, its underlying ToC, its DRF, the OEEF and the implementation arrangements. Section two that follows discusses the background.

2. Background

This section provides the overview of the CPE and the objectives and scope of the CPE in the context of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in Liberia. It discusses the technical design of the SN 2014-2017, the main boundary partners and the underlying ToC. Lastly, it outlines the OEEF goals, Results Management System (RMS), the knowledge management system and the communications strategy that were used during the implementation of UNW-LBR SN 2014-2017. **2.1 Objectives and Scope of the CPE**

As a priority, the CPE was intended to be gender-responsive, and would actively support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The evaluation sought to achieve the following objectives:

- a) Assess the relevance of UNW-LBR's contribution to the intervention at national levels, and its alignment with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment;
- b) Assess effectiveness and organisational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the Strategic Note;
- c) Identify ways in which UNW-LBR Country Office (CO) could improve its strategic positioning to better support the achievement of sustained gender equality and women's empowerment;
- d) Analyse how human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note;
- e) Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovation that support gender equality and human rights;
- f) Provide insights as to the extent to which the UNW-LBR CO has realised synergies between its three mandates (normative, coordination and programme); and
- g) Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the development of new programmes/ the next UNW-LBR CO Strategic Note.

The evaluation did not include an impact assessment (as defined by UNEG) as it was considered premature at this point. Similarly, UNW-LBR's organisational structures and systems outside of the CO were not within the scope of this evaluation and were only to be referenced where there was a clear implication for the design and implementation of the Strategic Note (SN) 2014-2017. Joint programmes, and programming, were within the scope of this evaluation. Where joint programmes were included in the analysis, the evaluator was supposed to consider the specific contribution of UNW-LBR, and the additional benefits and costs from working through a joint modality framework. In analysing the contribution of UNW-LBR, the evaluation team applied the Women's Empowerment Framework³. Annexure 1 contains the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are:

- a) Relevant staff in target ministries, local government and targeted government institutions, as well as participating CSOs;

³ The Women's Empowerment Framework has 5 criteria for assessing empowerment; welfare, access, conscientisation, participation and control. The framework assumes that women's empowerment takes places in different stages, starting from the least (meeting welfare needs of women) to the greatest (control over their bodies, resources and means of production). The framework was particularly useful in formulating our opinions based on the evidence received through Focus Group Discussions.

- b) Target beneficiary communities/groups;
- c) Technical Units and their heads in the participating UN-agencies, and Resident Coordinators' Office;
- d) UN-agency Headquarters; and
- e) Development partners, including the private sector, media and academia.

The evaluation results would be used primarily for:

- a) Learning and improved decision-making to support the development of new programmes;
- b) Accountability for the development effectiveness of the CO Strategic Note and the development of the new Strategic Note (2019-2023);
- c) Capacity development and mobilisation of national stakeholders for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Liberia.

Annexure 2 contains the Dissemination strategy

The evaluation criterion that was adopted for the CPE and the priority questions identified during the inception workshop are summarised in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Evaluation criteria

Criteria	Definition	Priority question(s)
Relevance	Relevance measures the extent to which strategic choices have maximised UNW-LBR's comparative advantages in addressing priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the strategy allow UNW-LBR to address underlying causes of gender inequality, the situation of women and marginalised groups both in terms of the strategic work areas prioritised and the weight given to each area? • Is UN Women Liberia Country Office (UNW-LBR) portfolio aligned with international gender equality and human rights norms? • Has UNW-LBR adapted its strategic focus (including work areas prioritised and weight given to each area) operations and results framework to the changing environment (national or regional)? • What are the factors determining UNW-LBR's programme choices and scale-ups, and to what extent are these evidence- and resource-informed?
Effectiveness	Effectiveness measures the extent to which UNW-LBR has contributed to achieving planned outcomes and mitigating negative externalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the portfolio aligned with national policies? To what extent has UNW-LBR strategic choices met the priority concerns of Liberia's development policymakers, key national stakeholders and right holders? • What changes might UNW-LBR undertake to enhance its impact in the future? • Are interventions contributing to the expected outcomes? What unexpected outcomes (positive and negative) have been achieved? • To what extent are the processes and quality of data collection and use of data for programmatic and management decisions appropriate?

Criteria	Definition	Priority question(s)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective are the CO's processes for logically concluding a project and disseminating the learnings from that programme to other COs? • How appropriate are planning, monitoring, and reporting systems and procedures? • What contribution is UNW-LBR making to UN coordination on GEEW? Which roles is UNW-LBR playing in this field? To what extent has gender equality and women's empowerment been mainstreamed in UN joint programming and UNDAF? • To what extent have planned outputs been achieved on time? Which activities are yielding desired results, which are not and what are the reasons for differences in performance? • What are the main enabling and hindering factors to achieving planned outcomes?
Efficiency	Efficiency measures the extent to which resources, organisational structures and management processes add to UNW-LBR's productive capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the governance structure and functioning enabling UNW-LBR to deliver efficiently on results? • Is the balance and coherence between programming-operational, coordination and policy-normative work optimal? • How can the workload across mandates be prioritised most effectively? • What is UNW-LBR comparative advantage over other UN entities and key partners? • What are the strategic directions UNW-LBR should undertake, in line with transition process of UNMIL and the political transition to the new Government, to successfully achieve sets targets and responsibilities? • Are the interventions achieving synergies within the UNW-LBR portfolio and the work of the UN Country Team? • To what extent (and how regularly) are the UNW-LBR programmes and initiatives subjected to cost effectiveness measures? • How do financial forecasts compare to actual expenditure? If costs are off track, how robust are the remedial actions?
Sustainability	Sustainability measures the extent to which positive outcomes can be maintained and advanced independently by local actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does UNW-LBR pay sufficient attention to strengthening the enabling environment for sustainability, including sufficient capacity-building activities so that national stakeholders can continue their activities without UNW-LBR support? • Is there national ownership and are there national champions for different parts of the portfolio? • What local accountability and oversight systems have been established to enhance local knowledge development and support sustainability of results?

Criteria	Definition	Priority question(s)
Human Rights and Gender Equality	Human Rights and Gender Equality criterion measures the extent to which the principles and standards of global human rights norms on gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed in UNW-LBR's country portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the portfolio been implemented according to human rights and development effectiveness principles; participation/empowerment, inclusion/non-inclusion, national accountability, transparency

Based on the above evaluation criteria and priority questions contained in the evaluation matrix (Annexure 3), detailed evaluation instruments (Annexure 4) were developed for each respondent category, including: UNW-LBR staff and representatives from the Liberia government, Development Partners, other UN agencies, civil society organisations, as well as women, traditional and religious leaders.

2.2 Context of gender equality and women's human rights

Having achieved peace, preceded by the decade long protracted civil war, Liberia is focusing attention on transitioning away from a fragile state status. However, several problems remain, including poverty, high income inequality, and limited access to basic services for the majority of the population. That notwithstanding, the basic infrastructure was severely destroyed during the war, thus necessitating major reconstruction. With almost half of the total population of 4.5 million people being women⁴, and with over 40% being young girls under the age of 20, addressing these challenges and achieving development goals will require their active engagement and participation.

The World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Gender Gap Report of 2017⁵, ranks Liberia as number 107 out of 144 countries, with a score of 0.6696. This demonstrates a lack of parity between Liberian women and men across a broad range of sectors. The labour force participation of women is 59.2%, compared to 64.2% for men. Many women who participate in the labour force are employed in the informal sector. They constitute 86.3% of workers in informal employment where wages are unpredictable, accompanied by limited or no employment-related benefits. As a result of women's predominant involvement in the informal sector, they are mostly at the bottom of the salary ladder in comparison to men. Liberia's Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES, 2016) reports that female workers' salary structure is more strongly concentrated at lower levels, an indication that more women are in low skill jobs and, therefore, receive lower pay than males. The results of the Gender Gap 2017 are similar to the HIES 2016 as far as showing that women are predominantly in the low socio-economic category.

The literacy rate among Liberian women is far less than that of men. As per the HIES (2016) report, it stood at 54%, and 77% among men. This mirrors the findings of the Liberia Demographic Health Survey (LDHS, 2013), which found that 47% of females have never attended school compared to 33% of males for the population aged 6 years and above. Although access to education increased for both females and males from 2007 to 2013, there existed a gender gap. From 2007 to 2013, access to education for children aged between 15 and 19 years

⁴ The 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) Report, Liberia's population is estimated to be over 4.2 million of which 51.1% are females and 48.9% are males

⁵ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf

⁶ The score is between 0 and 1, where 0 equals imparity and 1 equals parity

increased from 31% to 41% for girls; but in the same age group, boys access to education increased from 36% to 46% within the same timeframe.

Women continue to play minimal roles in governance in Liberia. After two successive post-war elections, Liberia continues to have a male-dominated Legislature. Women in the Legislature constitute only 12.3%, in comparison to 87.7% males. Their participation in the Legislature is well below the level of 30% which has been targeted in international and regional resolutions. Women in ministerial positions make up only 15.8% of appointed ministers in the Government, and a staggering 84.2% of ministerial slots are occupied by men (WEF, 2017).

Owing to cultural and traditional practices that condone violence against women, Liberian women are, on a routine basis, faced with the realities of being subjected to different forms of violence. In 2016, the Human Rights and Protection Service (HRPS) of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) indicated that rape was the second most commonly-reported crime in Liberia. In its Gender-Based Violence (GBV) report for 2016, HRPS mentioned that in 2015, the number of reported rape cases rose to 803 (up from 682 in 2014). 836 of 1,511 cases reported by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) were registered by the police which later forwarded 259 cases to court. Data collected from circuit courts showed that only 24 individuals were convicted for rape in 2014 and 34 in 2015.

According to the HRPS (2016) report, a significant proportion of the victims of reported cases of rape in 2014 and 2015 were under the age of 18. Of the approximately 150 cases monitored and documented by HRPS, in 2015, at least 78% of the victims were minors, some of whom died as a consequence of rape. In 2017 these statistics of reported SGBV cases rose to alarming 1,685 with over 60 percent of victims being minor girls under the age of 18. Almost half of those cases are children below 13.

Forty-eight per cent (48%) of girls are married off at the age of 18, thus limiting opportunities for young girls to develop their full potential. Negative and damaging cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation, are prevalent, with estimates suggesting that in rural areas this continues to affect approximately 58% of women and girls.

Under the previous leadership of a woman president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia's development efforts were guided by "Vision 2030" which is focused on social inclusion and sustainable economic development and a development compact articulated around the New Deal. The New Deal is the basis upon which the government and its development partners, including the UN system, have agreed upon development cooperation guided by the principles of national ownership and leadership, mutual accountability, and the formulation of a social compact recognising the contributions of all stakeholders to sustainable development.

The country has also adopted a policy environment which is more favourable to gender equality and women's empowerment. Liberia has made significant strides in developing a robust framework for addressing gender equality and women's empowerment, including the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the adoption of the Optional protocol.

Major achievements in the policy frameworks include:

- Establishment of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) that is mandated with mainstreaming gender in public policies and programmes.
- Coordination of activities focused on the National Gender Policy Strategic Framework and Plan 2010-2015.
- Establishment of County Gender Co-ordinator offices in all 15 counties

- Establishment of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Child Development (SCGE&CD) in the legislature.
- Development of Liberia’s Agenda for Transformation (2012 – 2017), a midterm development framework which includes several critical gender-related priorities.
- Development of the National Action Plan based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325).

In Liberia, the United Nations (UN) is collectively represented by UNMIL, as well as 16 specialised agencies, funds, programmes, and the World Bank, which together, form the Integrated Country Team (ICT). The Agencies developed the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2013 – 2017 and the corresponding One Programme Costed Action Plan, a commitment between the UN and the Government for collective actions and strategies which spell out the UN’s response to Liberia’s Agenda for Transformation (AFT) through the One Programme and individual agency programmes.

As part of the UNCT, UNW-LBR proactively and constructively engaged with the UN Mission in Liberia through participation in Strategic Management meetings with the leadership within the mission, interactions with the various substantive sectors, as well as with the Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA). As UNMIL exits Liberia, one of the priority areas in Liberia’s Integrated Transitional Plan (ITP) focuses on gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE). The respective mandates and capacities of individual agencies have led to a division of responsibilities as summarised in Table 3:

Table 3: Mandate and Responsibilities of UN agencies in Liberia relevant for gender equality and the empowerment of women

UN Agency	Mandate and Responsibility	Responsibility
UN Women	UNW-LBR played the lead role as an advocate and champion of gender issues within the UN family. The Gender Theme Group (GTG) is chaired and co-chaired by UNW-LBR and UNMIL Office of the Gender Advisor	Lead agency in programmes that are directly related to gender equality and women empowerment.
UNFPA	Sexual and reproductive health and rights, and taking the lead on violence against women with an emphasis on the provision of services to survivors	Prevention, and working with men to change social norms
UNDP	Gender responsive governance through its programming on elections and electoral reform as well as its work with Parliament	Promoting women’s leadership and governance capacities at the local and community level
WHO	Access to quality health services	Working through the H4+ Platform to address the cultural determinants which impact on women’s access to health and their ability to exercise their reproductive and sexual rights

UN Agency	Mandate and Responsibility	Responsibility
FAO and WFP	Agricultural production, agricultural marketing and food security with outreach to women farmers	Strengthening the capacity of small-holder women farmers to increase their access to technical expertise and credit, and establishing linkages with other networks of women
UNICEF	Rights of children, especially the rights of girls	Capacity building in entrepreneurship for young women to provide them with the tools for greater economic security
UNESCO	Education and literacy	Literacy and numeracy needs of rural women and women in holistic business development services for women in the informal sector
UNCDF	Provision of technical assistance in access to finance	Delivering comprehensive programming to facilitate access to finance by women and girls
UNAIDS	Fostering an integrated and comprehensive response to the HIV AIDs pandemic	Highlighting the role of gender as one of the primary drivers and determinants of the pandemic and its increasing feminisation
United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)[1]		Implements its Mobile Money for the Poor (MM4P) programme, supporting and cooperating with banks, mobile network operators and regulators to help reach millions of additional unbanked customers

Source: Adapted from UNW-LBR Strategic Note 2014-2017, page 4 and the Revised T.O.R GTG

In addition to playing complementary roles to other UN agencies, UN Women also works with other international development agencies that support gender equality and women’s empowerment such as: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Government of Italy, African Development Bank (ADB), and the World Bank, through its conditional cash transfer programme addressing social protection issues. The Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) and the Department for International Development (DFID) have also channelled their support exclusively through UNW-LBR. In addition, UNW-LBR interventions were supported by above mentioned donors through Peacebuilding Fund projects scoring three out of three in a gender marker ranking,

The SN 2014-2017 notes that the UN system has engaged with the international community to establish a strategic space where major development challenges, including gender equality and women’s empowerment, can be discussed. The Development Partners Forum on Gender (DPFoG) is the main space where UN agencies interact with donors and government⁷. Leadership to the DPFoG is on a 12-month rotational basis.

⁷ The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Development Partners Forum on Gender (DPFoG)

2.3 Technical Design of the Strategic Note

Under each of the result areas articulated in the revised SN 2016-2017, namely: 1- “Women Lead and participate in decision making at all levels”; 2- “Women, especially the poorest and the marginalised, are economically empowered and benefit from development”; 4- “Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women leadership and participation”, UNW-LBR identified specific interventions to be undertaken.

The SN 2014-2017 identified result areas as DRF 5: Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities outlined in the Agenda for Transformation and the Liberia National Gender Policy (SP DRF 5). Table 4 below contains the Development Result Framework for 2014-2017.

Table 4: Development Results Framework showing contribution to the UNW Strategic Plan, budgets, outcomes and expected outputs. Strategic Note 2014-2017.

DRF	Budget Allocated Per Result Area		Outcomes	Outputs
	Budget allocated	Percentage		
DRF 1: Women in Liberia lead and participate in decision making processes and national governance (SP DRF 1)	1 770 000,00	8,78%	Enhanced gender responsiveness in key reform processes such as constitutional reform and decentralisation through provisions which promote gender equality and women’s participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More national and local plans and budgets are gender-responsive ○ More and better quality data and statistics are available to promote and track progress of gender equality and women’s empowerment ○ More justice institutions are accessible to and deliver for women and girls
			Increased participation of women in electoral processes through a focus on both electoral institutions and policies as well as stimulating increased interest amongst women to exercise their civil and political rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More women of all ages fully participate, lead and engage in political institutions and processes
DRF 2: Liberian women and girls, especially the poorest and most excluded are economically empowered (SP DRF 2)	11 360 000,00	56,35%	Increased economic security and sustainable livelihood opportunities for 20,000 women and girls especially rural women, young women and women in situations of vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More women own, launch and/or better manage small and medium and large enterprises ○ More rural women secure access to productive resources and engage in sustainable agriculture

DRF	Budget Allocated Per Result Area		Outcomes	Outputs
			National and regional trade policies and their implementation builds linkages with neighbouring countries and support women entrepreneurs, including women in cross-border trade, and protect their rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More policies promote decent work and social protection for women
			Increased role of women in the management and oversight of community land, natural resources, and the environment and the expansion of renewable energy sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More rural women secure access to productive resources and engage in sustainable agriculture
DRF 3: Women's leadership and agency influence peace, security and humanitarian actions in Liberia (DRF 4)	3 746 500,00	18,59%	Accountability frameworks on global commitments on women, peace and security are institutionalised in Liberia with a focus on the Seven Point Action Plan and the LNAP on UNSCR 1325	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More commitments on women, peace and security are implemented by Liberia and the UN system, and more gender equality advocates influence peace and security processes
			The Liberia Security sector is more responsive to the differential security needs of women and girls through improved gender balance, enhanced knowledge, skills, and training, and improved accountability mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More women play a greater role and are better served by humanitarian response and recovery efforts
			Women and their networks are empowered to participate and assume leadership roles in peace building, security and national reconciliation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More women play a greater role in and are better served by disaster risk reduction and recovery processes
			Increased understanding and rejection of gender stereotypes that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TBD

DRF	Budget Allocated Per Result Area	Outcomes	Outputs
		perpetuate gender inequality and threaten women's security, including their sexual and reproductive rights.	
DRF 4: Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities outlined in the Agenda for Transformation and the Liberia National Gender Policy (SP DRF 5)	3 332 000,00	16,53%	
		Gender Responsive Accountability and oversight mechanisms operational for both the AFT and the National Gender Policy to advance effective implementation of Liberia's commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More and better quality data and statistics are available to promote and track progress of gender equality and women's empowerment
		National gender architecture has strengthened capacity for the implementation and tracking of gender equality commitments with respect to gender mainstreaming in key line ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More and better-quality data and statistics are available to promote and track progress of gender equality and women's empowerment
		Liberian gender equality advocates and civil society organisations strengthened and play an increased role in holding Government accountable for gender equality commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More commitments on women, peace and security are implemented by Liberia and the UN system, and more gender equality advocates influence peace and security processes
		Gender Responsive Accountability and oversight mechanisms operational for both the AFT and the National Gender Policy to advance effective implementation of Liberia's commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More and better quality data and statistics are available to promote and track progress of gender equality and women's empowerment
	National gender architecture has strengthened capacity for the implementation and tracking of gender equality commitments with respect to gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More and better quality data and statistics are available to promote and track progress of gender equality and women's empowerment 	

DRF	Budget Allocated Per Result Area	Outcomes	Outputs
		mainstreaming in key line ministries	
		Liberian gender equality advocates and civil society organisations strengthened and play an increased role in holding Government accountable for gender equality commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More commitments on women, peace and security are implemented by Liberia and the UN system, and more gender equality advocates influence peace and security processes
Total Budget Allocation	20 158 500,00	100,00%	

A mid-term review of the Liberia Country programme conducted in August and September 2015 confirmed the need to revise the Strategic Note 2014-2017. It cited the significant changes in the country context, the impact of the EVD crisis and the need to align to relevant national priorities, the drawdown of UNMIL as well as the need to align country operations and programs to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). International processes such as the outcomes of the Beijing +20 Review, Rio+20 outcomes and the high-level review of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security also had an impact in the need for the revision of Strategic Note 2014-2017. The Sendai global framework on disaster risk reduction, and World Humanitarian Summit (2016) that establishes ambitious goals, ensuring the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to be the norm in humanitarian action also contributed to this revision.

Within UNW-LBR Impact Area 4, the development result framework (DRF) goal contains specificities of security and context in Liberia, hence the need for incorporating the elimination of violence against women. Besides being aligned to the Government of Liberia priorities, the DRF goal is also aligned with the Flagship Programme Initiatives on Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action and SDG 5.2. The program aims to provide an opportunity for women and girls to live in dignity and safety and to enjoy protection from all forms of violence including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) which is rampant in Liberia, through the provision of safe spaces, equal opportunities for schooling, enjoyment of basic rights and through the identification of enablers, mechanisms and responses at all levels from the family, community and school to the government.

2.4 The Main Boundary Partners that UNW-LBR works through

The SN 2014-2017 defines the Boundary Partners with which UN Women sought to work. The intended changes under each boundary partner as summarised in Table 5:

Table 5: Boundary partners and expected changes

Impact Areas	Boundary Partner	Expected Changes
UNW-LBR Impact Area 1-Women Lead in Political Decision Making Agenda for Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact and implement gender-responsive policies and programmes

Impact Areas	Boundary Partner	Expected Changes
Economic Stabilisation and Recovery Plan UNDAF Pillar 4 Sustainable Development Goal 5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Justice • Liberia National Police • The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalisation • The Armed Forces of Liberia • Ministry of Commerce • Ministry of Internal Affairs • The Legislature • The Independent National Commission on Human Rights • The Governance Commission • The National Electoral Commission • The Constitutional Reform Commission • The Ministry of Defence • The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning • The Ministry of Agriculture • The Ministry of Internal Affairs • Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-information Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Responsive Accountability and oversight mechanisms operational for both the AFT and the National Gender Policy to advance effective implementation of Liberia's commitments • Accountability frameworks on global commitments on women, peace and security are institutionalised in Liberia with a focus on the Seven Point Action Plan and the LNAP on UNSCR 1325 • The Liberia Security sector is more responsive to the differential security needs of women and girls through improved gender balance, enhanced knowledge, skills, and training, and improved accountability mechanisms
UNW-LBR OEEF Cluster 1-Coordination and partnership and gender mainstreaming ⁸ UNDAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCT • UNMIL 	Support UNW-LBR to effectively implement complementary interventions alongside the rest of UN agencies that focus on women empowerment and gender responsiveness
Corporate UNW-LBR Impact Area 2- 20 000 Liberian Women, specifically rural women, young women and those in situations of vulnerability increase their economic security and sustainable livelihoods opportunities UNDAF Agenda for Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector or trade union representatives 	Facilitate more women to access decent work opportunities and social protection
UNW-LBR Impact area 1-Women lead in political decision making UNW-LBR Impact area 2- Women's economic empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households and community members 	Support and encourage more women of all ages to fully participate, lead and engage in political institutions and processes; support and encourage more women to own, launch and/or better manage small and medium and large enterprises
UNW-LBR Impact area 1-Women lead in political decision making UNW-LBR Impact area 2- Women's economic empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights-holders (gender advocates, women's organisations, and networks) • Rights and Rice Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage more women of all ages to fully participate, lead and engage in political institutions and processes;

⁸ UN Women Liberia Country Office Addendum to the Strategic Note (2014-2017) Revision 2016-2017 page 16.

Impact Areas	Boundary Partner	Expected Changes
UNW-LBR Impact area 4-More peaceful and gender equal societies UNW-LBR OEEF Cluster 1-Coordination and partnership and gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDUCARE • AFRICARE – Liberia • Development Education Network Liberia (DEN-L) • Population Services International • Foundation For Community Initiatives • National Adult Education Association Of Liberia • Servants of All Prayer Assembly • Planned Parenthood Association PPAL • Search for Common Ground • Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness (Think) • National Rural Women Structure • National APEX of Savings and Loans Associations in Liberia (NAPEX) • Foundation for Africa Educationalist 	<p>support and encourage more women to own, launch and/or better manage small and medium and large enterprises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and their networks are empowered to participate and assume leadership roles in peace building, security and national reconciliation processes • Liberian gender equality advocates and civil society organisations strengthened and play an increased role in holding Government accountable for gender equality commitments.
Corporate UNW-LBR Impact Area 2-20 000 Liberian Women, specifically rural women, young women and those in situations of vulnerability increase their economic security and sustainable livelihoods opportunities UNW-LBR Impact area 4-More peaceful and gender equal societies	Duty-bearers (local and national state authorities, traditional leaders, faith based organisations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and encourage more rural women secure access to productive resources and engage in sustainable agriculture • Increased understanding and rejection of gender stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequality and threaten women’s security, including their sexual and reproductive rights

2.5 Underlying Theories of Change

Working with the boundary partners listed above, UNW-LBR intended to achieve the desired changes by implementing different activities in order to achieve the expected theory of change set forth in the SN 2014-2017. The background the development of the SN 2014-2017 and the resultant theory of change and the proposed theory of change is described in the following section. *2.5.1 UN Women Liberia Theory of Change*

UNW-LBR Strategic Note 2014 -2017 was based on the following assumptions:

- Women’s access to information on their rights and linkages with other organizations and women’s organizations contribute to increased self-confidence and voice at the local, regional and national levels
- Women’s access to improved economic security and sustainable livelihoods creates greater self-confidence and builds improved resilience enabling them to exercise greater choice and agency

- Women coming together through civil society networks and autonomous organizations enable them to present more structured demands and require improved accountability to women's human rights by the State and by elected authorities
- Increased understanding by the State of the governance and business case for gender equality and women's empowerment creates greater political will and commitment
- Institutionalized accountability frameworks for tracking progress on gender equality and women's empowerment facilitate improved performance and civilian oversight;
- Proximity and institutional mechanisms bringing together rights-holders (gender advocates, women's organizations, and networks) and duty-bearers (local and national state authorities, traditional leaders) engender improved understanding and mutual accountability

In this model of change, UNW-LBR focuses on both strengthening the capacity of rights-holders to find their voice and demonstrate their agency (demand side) and strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers to assume their responsibilities and to be accountable to their constituents (supply side). Annexure 5 contains the type of boundary partners, indicators; target groups expected changes and the synergies between interventions.

One of the key elements for transforming governance is both the collective and organized action by women, and the proximity which is created between the State and citizens through institutionalized mechanisms for informed dialogue and accountability.

The revised Strategic Note (2016-2017) states as its primary goal to make a sustained impact on the pressing and emerging challenges faced by women, girls, boys and men, through strategically focusing and directing gender interventions to a limited number of highly effective actions as well as through developing synergies with key stakeholders and partners.

The Revised SN 2016-2017 provides several opportunities that are crucial for the implementation of UNW-LBR programmes. Chief among them includes the following:

- Peace-building and security and the central role of women in the Liberian context remain a high priority for several donors; especially with the elections in 2017 with President Sirleaf completing her second and last term
- National commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment at the highest decision-making level
- The implementation of the Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP) which identifies new areas for the economic empowerment of women for which UNW -LBR CO is strategically very well positioned
- The revision of the Agenda for Transformation which is a master plan guiding the national development process
- The imminent revision of the National Gender Policy by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Protection which can make the Policy and its implementation more in alignment with the emerging challenges of the reconstruction phase of development

The Revised Strategic Note (2016-2017) identified critical challenges for women and girls needing immediate intervention in the form of women's political empowerment and leadership and the impact of EVD on women and girls in Liberia. In order to militate against these, UNW-LBR identified five key priority areas to address the differentiated and specific needs of women and girls (Ibid page 7) within the post Ebola Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP). These were:

- Deployment of social safety nets, including the provision of cash transfers to support the households most affected by EVD epidemic, with a special consideration to women and children affected by the virus
- Implementation of economic stimulus programs including, loan schemes, housing construction projects for low-income earners, with special consideration to various categories of women whose economic livelihoods were adversely affected by EVD
- Financing the revised 7-year Health Investment Plan over the next two fiscal years to priorities maternal and child health (given that Liberia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates at 1072 per 100,000lbs); support to SGBV response systems; and strengthening the mental health support and psychosocial support systems
- Meeting the revised education investment priorities in response to the crisis to ensure a **gender responsive educational system**, promoting the dignity and protection of the girl child from risks of SGBV, provision of incentive measures to ensure retention of girls and boys in school and support to Ebola orphans
- Strengthening the WASH Ebola response and recovery implementation plan to be inclusive of gender friendly in schools.

The Country Office necessitated a shift in programming priority towards humanitarian assistance with a strategic focus on three priority areas namely:

- Women's political empowerment (Impact area 1)
- Women's economic empowerment (Impact area 2) and
- Peace, security & humanitarian assistance (Impact area 4) which also addresses SGBV (Impact area 3).

With the above priority areas set, UNW-LBR developed the theory of change⁹ as set out in the background section of this report. (See Introduction, page 1).

2.5.2 Rationale of the Theory of Change

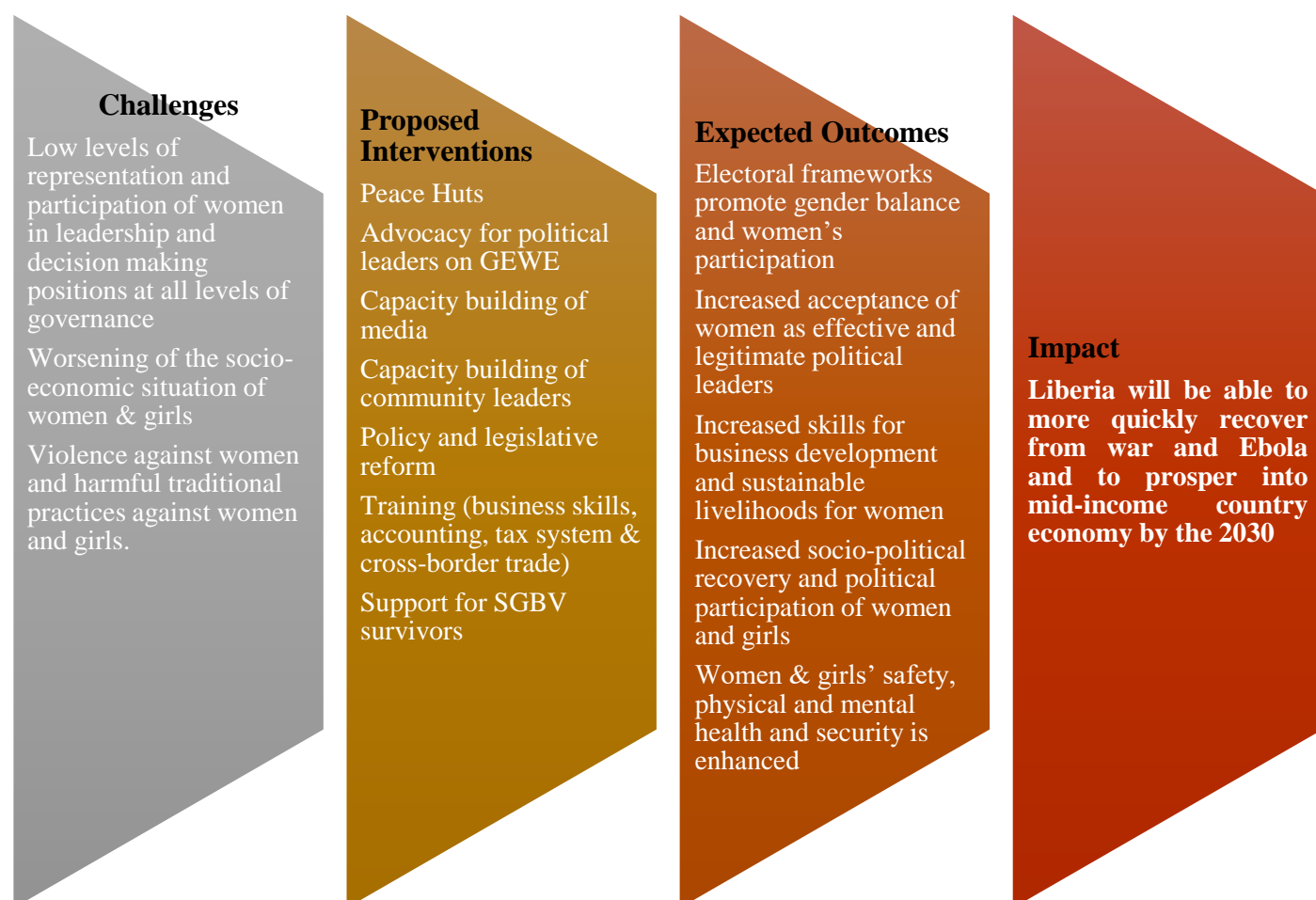
The theory of change was designed after a careful consideration of the challenges facing women and girls in Liberia. The country context, the outbreak of the EVD, the transition from war and the lack of women participation in economic and political participation were considered. This led to the development of interventions designed to assist Liberia to more quickly recover from the effects of war and Ebola and to propel it into a mid-income country economy by 2030.

⁹ UNW-LBR Country Office, Addendum to the SN 2014-2017. Revision 2016-2017 page 16

Other international processes such as the outcomes of the Beijing +20 Review, Rio+20 outcomes, the high-level review of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Sendai global framework on disaster risk reduction and the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit (2016) were also considered in the development of the theory of change.

Figure 1 below summarises the major challenges that UNW-LBR identified as key obstacles, interventions and outcomes in relation to theory of change of the SN 2014-2017.

Figure 1: Summary of Challenges, Interventions and Expected Outcomes



The above Figure 1 summarises the challenges that UNW-LBR identified as key obstacles for Liberia as country to reach the envisaged theory of change outcomes. It also summarises the development result framework which summarises the proposed interventions, the expected outcomes and the desired impact of the theory of change. A deeper root cause analysis of the Liberian country situation points to a deeper problem than that articulated in the current theory of change in the Revised SN 2016-2017. The theory of change focuses on the need to have women in political decision making and the enhancement of women's economic participation in the country with the ultimate goal of moving Liberia to a mid-income country economy by 2020. The Revised SN 2016-2017 identifies problems without analysing the underlying causes, which if not attended to, the attendant problems will remain. The theory of change also assumes a bigger impact which is "...Liberia will be able to more quickly recover from war and Ebola and to prosper into mid-income country economy by 2030." While this is supported by the Liberia National Vision 2030¹⁰, it is difficult for this evaluation to find the link between

¹⁰ <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/liberia/docs/docs/Liberia%20Vision%202030.pdf>

the identified problems and the economic transition into a mid-income country economy by 2030 as there are other economic indices that have greater contribution to this impact than UNW-LBR's work.

This evaluation argues that the underlying problem causing all the attendant problems facing women in Liberia is the low levels of education among women and girls. There is evidence across the globe that shows that education is the best weapon with which one can affect effective and sustainable change¹¹. In the health sector, education has been seen to provide a protective factor for adolescent girls and young women against sexual exploitation, HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy and sexual and gender-based violence. Again, full participation in the political and economic processes of the country require a cohort of educated feminists to uplift the other less fortunate segment of women to levels where they can stand up for themselves and demand gender equality and women empowerment. Political and economic processes require a high level of understanding of the country's laws and regulations to ensure one's ability to manoeuvre and outmanoeuvre opponents and business competitors (predominantly males) and this requires a sound educational base. Women can better advocate for electoral reforms that promote gender balance, have a better understanding of their right and access to resources and can fully participate in decision making processes if they are educated enough to understand and advocate for their cause rather than when it's done through men. Findings from the counties shows that where UNW-LBR has introduced literacy and numeracy skills, women were able to transition from micro income generating activities to small businesses. Another example from the counties also shows that where UNW-LBR supported awareness raising against gender-based violence, women gained respect from their husbands and families and some were able to participate in decision making.

While the provision of education is not the exclusive mandate of UNW-LBR, strengthening partnership with UNESCO and UNICEF will be an important entry point to contributing towards the attainment of the expected outcomes. By promoting education, UNW-LBR can leverage on UNW global's advocacy on the gender dividend. The concept of the gender dividend suggests that by creating conditions that can make a population more productive, there will be less dependency in the family and better development outcomes for different population groups based on sex, gender and age. The gender dividend suggests that economies could be more productive and equitable by closing gender gaps in the labor market. A key factor in these labor market gender gaps is the fact that women tend to perform the bulk of unpaid dependent care and household work¹². These are substantial time burdens for women in comparison to men, and this may prevent women from seeking better opportunities in the labor market. Therefore, this evaluation recommends the reconfiguring of the theory of change to indicate education as the entry point for effective and sustainable gender equality and empowerment of women. Therefore, the core element of the **theory of change** is as follows: **“Continued advocacy for provision of quality education, capacity and skills building of women will lead to effective and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia.”**

The detailed theory of change will be spelt as follows:

If quality education and capacity building is provided to girls and women,

And if

¹¹ Botting, E.H. (2016). Theories of human development: Wollstonecraft and Mill on sex, gender and education, in Botting, E.H.(2016) Wollstonecraft, Mill, and Women's Human Rights, Yale University Press, p115-154.

¹² Investing in women and girls for a gender dividend retrieved from <https://www.prb.org/investing-women-girls-gender-dividend/> on 30 June 2018.

Women are informed on their rights and have access to resources (*information, skills, networks, space, Identity Documents, land, economic opportunities, clean water, hygiene and sanitation, sustainable energy, climate resilient agriculture and finances*) (DRF 2) and IF they have

Opportunities to secure income through labour force participation and sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families (DRF 2) and IF

Women and girls are protected from all forms of violence and harmful practices and enjoy safe and secure environment at home, school, work and in public spaces

Then

Women will participate in decision making processes (DRF 1) and

They enjoy safety, physical and mental health and economic security (DRF 4)

Only then can we have - Effective and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia

2.5.3 The OEEF Goals and their relation to UNW-LBR's ability to achieve intended development results

Since its establishment, UNW-LBR has built systems for performance management and reporting, financial accountability, audit, human resource management, risk management, and evaluation function.

During the period under review, UNW-LBR focused on research and knowledge management, innovation, and resource mobilisation. Under the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency, the objective of UNW-LBR was to streamline and strengthen business processes, upgrade information systems and develop staff capacity for programme design and management. These priorities are captured in the following four organisational effectiveness and efficiency outputs:

- To instigate more effective and efficient United Nations system coordination and strategic partnerships on GEWE.
- To institutionalise a strong culture of results-based management, reporting, knowledge management and evaluation
- To enhance organisational effectiveness, with a focus on robust capacity and efficiency at the country level
- To leverage and effectively manage resources

Annexure 6 contains the Organisational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework 2014-2017.

2.5.4 The Results-Based Management System, the Knowledge Management System, and the Communications Strategy

UN Women implements a result-management system (RMS) that comprises two parts: the development results framework (DRF) and the organisational efficiency and effectiveness framework (OEEF). The RMS system geared towards reporting program activities and outputs that are directly linked to the DRF, which ultimately

contribute to the attainment of results. Programs and interventions' results are linked to the DRF and this enabled UNW-LBR to be able to track progress towards the achievement of the outcomes in each impact area.

The mid-term review and the ensuing change and refocus of the Strategic Note 2014-2017 was a result of UNW-LBR's ability to use knowledge to inform its program focus. The knowledge management system allows UNW-LBR the ability to tap into the past to inform program processes and focus. However, to strengthen the feedback loop it is critical that UNW-LBR increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the feedback loop from its stakeholders through frequent program progress reports aligned to its impact areas and outcomes.

The purpose of a communication and dissemination strategy is to ensure that information on programme/project activities are accurately communicated in a timely manner to the appropriate target audience and to ensure sustainability of programme visibility. Communication and advocacy are key elements in development programming. They are the medium through which development concepts are promoted, best practices shared, public thinking shaped towards constructive engagement, and above all consolidation of peace and development promoted. Effective management of communications helps to reflect organizations' values, mandate, contribution and its positioning within the development cooperation environment.

UNW-LBR has developed the UNW-LBR Communication Strategy, which it uses in conjunction with the UNW Global Communication Strategy, identifying channels through which UNW-LBR's results are communicated. UNW-LBR's key results are disseminated quarterly through newsletters, Facebook, twitter and the regional and global websites. The UNW-LBR's Communication Strategy 2013 has three objectives for the communication of its results which are:

- To drive and support advocacy efforts to advance women's empowerment and gender equality
- To increase visibility of the work of UNW-LBR and its partners to support resource mobilisation goals, and;
- To enhance public awareness on gender equality goals and UNW-LBR's role in achieving them and to create a stronger constituency for gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

An effective and successful communication plan should utilise key tools and approaches such as communication tools e.g. brochures, leaflets, news bulletins and DVDs on the different results featuring the programme beneficiaries. These will be developed for both internal and external audience and will be distributed to enhance UNW-LBR's contribution workshops, conferences and partner meetings. A communication strategy should also make use of advocacy campaigns on major programme issues such as FGM and women political participation, gender equality and women's empowerment for promotional and knowledge dissemination purposes. Press briefings, seminars, public forums, roundtables can also be used as programme communication tools. A repository for photos, videos and documentaries can be an important set of tools that can be used effectively during project launches for the dissemination of the results of work that UNW-LBR does ensuring results are provided in a balanced manner including reflecting beneficiaries' concerns. An effective communication plan should have timeframes and defined target audience who are the key stakeholders of the implementing organisations such as donors, the Government of Liberia, implementing partners, civil society organisations, general public and other UN agencies in Liberia.

These objectives are ably supported by the UNW-LBR's target audience for the Communication Strategy namely decision makers at local, national and regional level, opinion leaders including traditional leaders, gender advocates and donor countries supporting development efforts in Liberia. In order to increase its visibility and resource mobilisation goals UNW-LBR and its partners should target donors and other financial

partners, private sector actors championing women empowerment and gender equality and the diaspora group committed to advancing gender equality in Liberia. To enhance public awareness on gender equality and human rights, UNW-LBR would focus on youths, women and men in rural areas, traditional leaders and the Liberia public at large.

The Communication Strategy 2013 used together with the UNW Global Communication Strategy provides timelines for dissemination, key messages for each impact area as well as the different tools for disseminations such as newsletters, meeting reports, Facebook, twitter and campaigns.

Section 2 discusses the main building blocks that informed the design and implementation of the SN 2014-2017. Section 3 that follows presents the evaluation methods.

3. Evaluation Methods

This section presents the evaluation design, including the sampling frame and size, the evaluation processes, quality assurances and limitations.

3.1. Evaluation Design

While looking at successes, areas of improvement, and what was no longer relevant the evaluation applied four OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, effectiveness (including normative and coordination mandates of UNW-LBR), efficiency, and sustainability. Human rights and gender equality were added as additional criteria.

Deriving from the theory-based evaluation design, the following processes were undertaken:

- Review of relevant literature on UNW-LBR: Strategic Note 2014-2017, Mid-term review report of the Strategic Note, Strategic Note 2016-2017, Strategic Note 2017-2018, UNW Strategic Plans 2013- 2017 and UNW SP 2018-2022, Reports, and M&E plans and reports, among others.
- Inception workshop with stakeholders to review the SN ToC and the evaluation questions
- Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with the agreed upon respondents, including:
 - UNW-LBR staff
 - Representatives from: the Liberia government, Development Partners, other UN agencies, civil society organisations, as well as women, traditional and religious leaders.
- Content analysis of the data generated in accordance with the evaluation questions;
- Validation processes that included presentation of preliminary findings to stakeholders to obtain their input and feedback; and
- Development and submission of the draft CPE reports to UNW.

3.2 Sampling Frame, Sample Size, Data Sources and Instruments

The sampling techniques that were carried out consisted of chain or snowball and purposeful sampling¹³. Purposeful sampling was used to identify respondents who had experience working or collaborating with UNW-LBR. The list of these respondents was provided by UNW-LBR staff. Once the initial respondents were identified, they, in turn, referred the evaluation team to other key stakeholders who were deemed important to the evaluation. A total of 150 respondents (108 female and 42 male) participated in the evaluation.

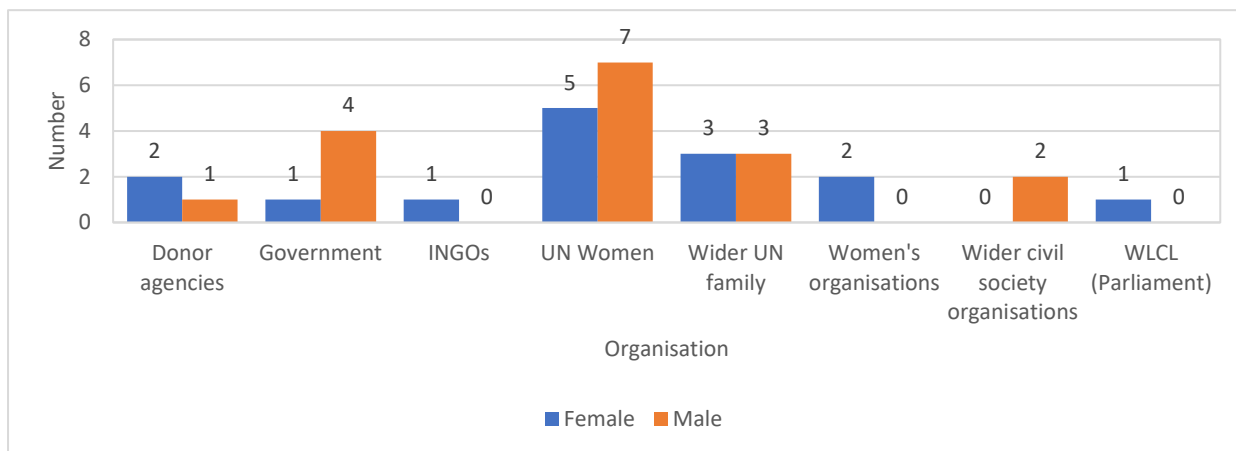
The participants selected for key informant interviews (Figure 2 below) and focus group discussions were drawn from various categories, including: CSOs, women's rights organisations, development agencies, government ministries and agencies, and the UN agencies.

¹³ Other sampling techniques include; typical, unique, maximum variation, and theoretical sampling (Merriam, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018)

Figure 2 below shows that 68 respondents (26 females and 42 males) participated in key informant interviews.

Figure 2: Key Informant Interviews

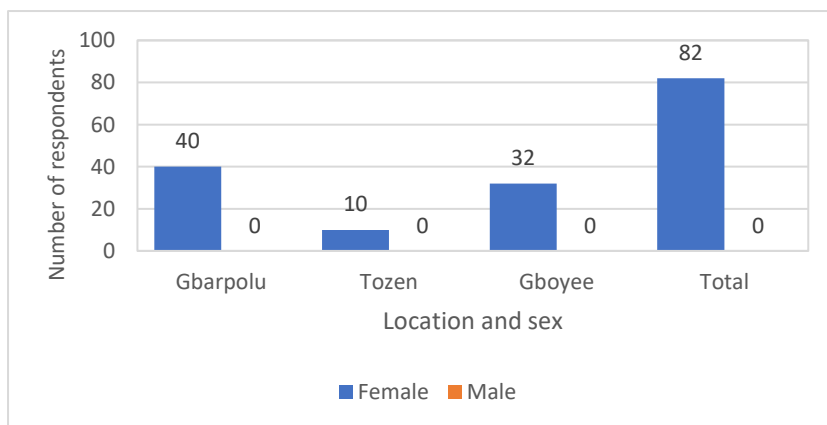
Key Informant Respondents by Organisation and Sex



Focus group discussions were conducted in three counties: Gbarpolou, Grand Bassa and Sinoe. These counties were drawn from the areas where UNW-LBR directly implemented its programmes or supported implementing partners in those areas. In total, 82 respondents (82 female and 0 male) participated in the focus group discussions – see Figure 3 below. Annexure 7 contains the list of persons interviewed and the sites visited. While Annexure 8A and 8B contain the mission - reports based on the counties visited.

Figure 3: FGD respondents

Number of respondents who participated in FDGs by location and sex



Annexure 9 contains the list of documents consulted. Annexure 10 contains the evidence tables based on information collected through key informant interviews. The responses received are arranged per evaluation question.

3.3 Quality assurance

The following management structures provided the quality assurance processes for the CPE:

- Country Office Evaluation Manager and Regional Evaluation Specialist for coordination and day-to-day management

- Evaluation Management Group for administrative support and accountability: Deputy Country Representative, Evaluation Manager, Regional Evaluation Specialist
- Evaluation Reference Group for substantive technical support: UNW-LBR programme staff, National government partners, Development partners/donors, UNCT representatives and civil society partners

3.4 Ethics

Ethical issues were taken into consideration in line with the Government of Liberia regulations. Official acceptance was obtained from all participating institutions. UNW-LBR staff facilitated the processes for obtaining official acceptance. Consent was sought from participants for audio recording before each interview or focus group discussion was started. No children were interviewed during the evaluation. Issues of vulnerability were considered, hence no information that was considered offensive to the personal lives of interviews was obtained.

3.5 Gender and human rights

Male and female groups were interviewed separately to encourage open and free deliberations, especially from the women. No situation arose where the interviewees needed psychosocial support. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted at times and locations / venues that were conducive to the evaluation respondents.

3.6 Methodological limitations and process constraints

Despite the CPE proceeding smoothly, the evaluation faced several constraints, as summarised in Table 6:

Table 6: Constraints and mitigating mechanisms

Constraint	Mitigation Mechanisms
Physical: Accessibility to some places due to poor transport infrastructure. This resulted in some areas either not being visited, or a lot of time was spent travelling. UNW-LBR was relocating from Mamba Point to PAP.	The evaluation team utilised secondary data sources and key informant interviews.
Time: Late commencement of assignment, coinciding with the festive season and the elections. This led to unavailability of some stakeholders. More time was spent on audio transcribing, analysing data and preparing the report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiated with UNW-LBR to re-consider the time for the production of the report. Dates for the deliverables were therefore reviewed and deadlines extended. • The National consultant was engaged to perform the field visits in the first half of January 2018
Human resources: Delayed recruitment of national consultant. The national consultant missed out on the initial inception meetings and key documents.	All evaluation team members tried to bring the national consultant up to speed by providing timely information.
Logistical: Lengthy UN procedures impacted on field work logistics, including DSA for field visits	Evaluation manager followed up to ensure that outstanding payments would be made in February 2018.

Section 3 discussed the evaluation process, data sources, instruments, safe guards and limitations. Section 4 that follows presents the findings of the evaluation.

4. Findings

This section discusses the evaluation findings based on the information that was available to the evaluation team. Information was collected through various data sources.

This section presents the evaluation findings guided by the five criteria provided in the ToR: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender and human rights, interwoven with the three mandates of UNW-LBR, namely; normative, coordination and programming.

4.1 Relevance

4.1.1 Priority Evaluation Question 1: Is UN Women Liberia Country Office (UNW-LBR) portfolio aligned with international gender equality and human rights norms?

Finding # 1: The evaluation found ample evidence to show that UNW-Liberia CO portfolio was aligned with international gender equality and human rights norms.

The alignment of UNW-LBR's portfolio to international trends in gender equality and human rights norms implementation was premised on its prior learning and experience. The SN 2014-17 identified several international gender equality and human rights norms such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), UNSCR 1325, Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The SN 2016-17 mentions that UNW-LBR work is aligned with key global normative frameworks; this includes the SDG5, the recommendation for Liberia's 7th CEDAW report, the validated report of the Liberia's National Action Plan on Resolution 1325, the Secretary General 7 Point Action Plan (7PAP) as one of the key frameworks that informed the work of the Peace Building Fund. Table 7 below summarises the alignment of UNW-LBR SNs to major international and regional instruments.

Table 7: Alignment of UNW-LBR work to major international and regional instruments

DRF	SDG ¹⁴	UNSCR 1325 and supporting resolutions ¹⁵	CEDAW ¹⁶	Beijing Platform for Action ¹⁷	Maputo Protocol ¹⁸
DRF 1: Women in Liberia lead and participate in decision making processes and national governance (SP DRF 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.5 - women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 7- Political and public life Article 8- Representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Objective G- Women in power and decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 9 Right to Participation in the Political and Decision-Making Process

¹⁴ <https://www.un-ngls.org/index.php/background-mgd10/1386-mdg-targets-and-indicators>

¹⁵ [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325\(2000\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325(2000))

¹⁶ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

¹⁸ http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/women-protocol/achpr_instr_proto_women_eng.pdf

DRF	SDG ¹⁴	UNSCR 1325 and supporting resolutions ¹⁵	CEDAW ¹⁶	Beijing Platform for Action ¹⁷	Maputo Protocol ¹⁸
	decision-making in political, economic and public life.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 17 Right to Positive Cultural Context
DRF 2: Liberian women and girls, especially the poorest and most marginalised, are economically empowered (SP DRF 2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5a.28 - undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resource • 5b-achieve universal access to reproductive health • contribute to SDG 8.6- Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training, specifically targeting Liberian vulnerable women. 		Article 13- Economic and social benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Objective A- Women and poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 13 Economic and Social Welfare Rights • Article 15 Right to Food Security
DRF 4: Women's leadership and agency influence peace, security and humanitarian actions in Liberia (DRF 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.2- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel • 5.3- Contraceptive prevalence rate • Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1- representation of women in institutions that promote peace building • 2- Strategic plan of action • 8b- support local women's peace building initiatives 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 4- The Rights to Life, Integrity and Security of the Person • Article 5- Elimination of Harmful Traditional Practices • Article 10 Right to Peace

DRF	SDG ¹⁴	UNSCR 1325 and supporting resolutions ¹⁵	CEDAW ¹⁶	Beijing Platform for Action ¹⁷	Maputo Protocol ¹⁸
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and at least four visits) • and partially 5.6 - unmet need for family planning) • and 5c-adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. 				
DRF 5: Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities outlined in the Agenda for Transformation and the Liberia National Gender Policy (SP DRF 5)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 3 - Guarantee of Basic Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms • Article 4- Special Measures • Article 5- Sex Role Stereotyping and Prejudice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Objective H. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 2- Elimination of discrimination against women • Article 8- Access to Justice and Equal Protection before the Law • Article 21 Right to Inheritance

As shown above, all result areas were aligned to at least two international or regional instruments. Documents reviewed show that, through its normative work, UNW-LBR contributed to bringing international instruments on gender equality to the attention and understanding of the Liberian government, civil society and other stakeholders. Through awareness and capacity building programmes, the government and other stakeholders have been made aware of these important instruments and their application. UNW-LBR supported the government of Liberia to report on human rights standards such as CEDAW¹⁹, UNSCR 1325 and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

¹⁹ Master Narrative – Liberia CO Narrative Questions & Answers for the 2017 Annual Report

UNW-LBR raised awareness among key stakeholders in government and non-governmental sectors on SDG gender targets and indicators as well as their implications to Liberia. Documents reviewed showed that awareness workshops were conducted on SDG 5-gender equality and empowerment of women²⁰. These workshops involved several stakeholders, and the alignment of SDGs to the Liberian gender policy framework were discussed.

Based on the above experience and learnings from UNW-LBR's prior work experience, the importance of aligning current programming to international trends in gender equality and human rights norms implementation was prioritised.

4.1.2 Evaluation Question 2: Has UNW-LBR adapted its strategic focus (including work areas prioritised and weight given to each area) operations and results framework to the changing environment (national or regional)?

Finding# 2: Despite the unexpected challenges encountered, UNW-LBR adapted its strategic focus to respond to the changing environment:

Through on-going engagement with government ministries, the UN, CSO, the legislature and the private sector, evaluations and annual retreats, documents reviewed showed that UNW-LBR examined its context continuously and adapted to the changing situations.

Documents reviewed, and interviews conducted confirmed that UNW-LBR adjusted its support to Government, when the country suffered from the Ebola crisis between 2014 and 2015²¹. This unexpected crisis affected the implementation of programmes.

UNW-LBR adjusted its internal capacity to engage in dialogues among stakeholders and government regarding the capacity of the Government of Liberia (GoL) to take over security responsibilities and to deliver services as part of the implementation of the decentralisation processes, national transition plan and the UN Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) draw-down.

Documents reviewed show that UNW-LBR played a key role to advocate for a position in MGSCP to coordinate implementation of UNSCR 1325. This followed the review of the National Action Plan 1325 conducted in 2015. The person was appointed in 2016 and the position is fully funded by MGCP²².

UNW-LBR adjusted its focus to assess the impact of the Ebola virus on the gender division of labour in the homes and communities. UNW-LBR also assessed vulnerabilities women and girls faced during the Ebola response, and supported interventions to address VAW.

UNW-LBR received no-cost extension till 31 Dec 2015 due to the delays experienced during the Ebola response.²³ This also implied that some activities such as the end line survey and evaluation for the peace and security programme were postponed. UNW-LBR identified EAW as a single area in May 2016, and

²⁰ End of Term report: Baseline on Gender Indicators/ Review of the National Gender Policy. 18 December 2015

²¹ 2015 Liberia Annual Report

²² 2016 Liberia Annual Report

²³ 2015 Liberia Annual Report

information availed indicated was that this was due to donor requests²⁴, as stated in the 2016 Liberia Annual Report.

At its 2017 annual retreat, UNW-LBR staff identified opportunities, challenges and threats that could impact on its work²⁵. The 2017 elections and the decentralisation processes were perceived as an opportunity to increase women's political participation. The OGA departure was perceived to give an expanded role to UNW-LBR. Interviews with UNW-LBR staff noted that depending on the priorities of the new government, UNW-LBR will increasingly seek to enhance the capacities of its CSO partners. However, the lack of coherence within the women's movement, harmful societal beliefs and practices, and the changing legal and policy environment were perceived as threats to UNW-LBR work.

4.1.3 Evaluation question 3: Does the strategy allow UNW-LBR to address underlying causes of gender inequality, the situation of women and marginalised groups, both in terms of the strategic work areas prioritised and the weight given to each area?

Finding #3: To some extent, the theory of change articulated in the Revised SN 2016-2017 UNW-LBR portfolio addresses underlying causes of gender inequality and poverty. However, the focus on women's political leadership, women economic empowerment, and peace security and humanitarian action, missed out on the underlying causes of gender inequality, and the building blocks that would get more women into political participation.

The SN 2014-2017 interventions that would contribute to addressing the underlying causes of poverty are implied in the four DRFs as stated in Section 2.5.2 of this report. The proposed ToC identified education, capacity building, awareness raising against harmful ideas, beliefs and practices as the entry point for addressing the underlying causes of poverty. Through education and awareness raising, it will eventually lead to a critical mass of a population that is conscientised about gender equality. It could lead to building movements within the population that respect girls, and women, enhance the access of girls and women to opportunities, skills, resources and information. In this way, the foundation to increase women's participation in political and economic processes and interventions will be enhanced.

Focus group discussions with stakeholders showed that women in Liberia are faced with multiple socio-economic problems, which manifest themselves as gender inequality. Historically, societal and structural barriers are regarded as the underlying causes of gender inequality. Some societal values and norms do not respect women. As one respondent put it:

"I have not seen a country where people are as strong as they are in Liberia, but I have also not seen where women are as victimised as they are in Liberia with rape being rampant."

Female genital mutilation (FGM) was mentioned as a major problem in Liberia as it is shrouded and protected by traditional practices. Over the years it has become a source of income for the traditionalists who are involved in its perpetuation. Respondents suggested that if they were offered alternative means of livelihood, the traditionalists would eventually desist from its practice. Hence, with regard to the work that UNW-LBR is yet

²⁴ 2016 Liberia Annual Report

²⁵ UNW-LBR Report on the 2017 Annual Country Office Retreat

to do, respondents believe that a lot still needs to be done through programme delivery in order to change harmful attitudes towards women and girls.

Gender inequality is caused by harmful traditional norms and values that have always placed men and boys as being more significant than girls and women. This has implications in terms of access to information, resources and opportunities for women and men. Interviews showed that there are ‘power brokers’ in the communities that could lead to change in harmful beliefs and practices. For example, a chief or the President, if they pronounce themselves on such matters, people will begin to take heed.

One UNW-LBR staff had this to say:

“I remember about some years ago we tried to dedicate recruitment for female officers around the institutions and it was very difficult because first you had to talk to the chiefs. It was almost like getting their consent. Some of them felt like the police was corrupt so there was no need for their daughters to train so even if that girl walked up to be a police officer the idea that the elders have spoken, and this is not right people follow. There are a couple of instances where the peace hut leaders had issues that they needed to resolve, and these were things that were hampering their work and the other thing was also even in the political sphere the chiefs would go and meet the representatives and they would not consult the women. They would decide that this is who the community should vote for and expect everyone to go along, and the women were also afraid that if not to go buy it. One of them was the case of Ebola. As much as we said that people should not touch dead bodies, they continued to wash bodies putting their lives at risk because the tradition dictated that the body should be washed before it is buried. So, people do not want to go against their religious belief that the bodies should be washed and purified before it goes.”

Interviews conducted with several stakeholders showed that the greatest challenge for UNW-LBR is to change long-held community perceptions. The UNW-LBR 2015 Annual report acknowledged harmful societal beliefs and practices as a challenge to the work of UNW-LBR. It highlighted a potential weakness in UNW-LBR’s initial approach to communities as having been the non-inclusion of men at the onset of interventions. According to them, men had been left out and, as a result, they did not support their wives when they sought help from UNW-LBR.

Because of this type of feedback, UNW-LBR changed its approach. When UNW-LBR went out to communities, it introduced campaigns such as “He for She” and worked with men as champions and advocates for women’s rights²⁶. Another technique which has been used for economic empowerment is the enlistment of young men during community interventions. These young men were tasked with conducting spot checks on schools to making certain that their wives – who were married when they are young – are attending classes. On graduation day, both men and women receive certificates to show that it was a joint effort. Internal documents reviewed showed that UNW-LBR adopted its approach to include men as advocates for the empowerment of women.

Stakeholders also felt that most of the interventions are **dealing with the adhoc rather than the underlying causes of gender inequality**. Using political participation of women, women’s political leadership, women economic empowerment, and peace security and humanitarian action as pre-requisites for achieving gender equality missed out the conditions that would enable women to participate in the public sphere.

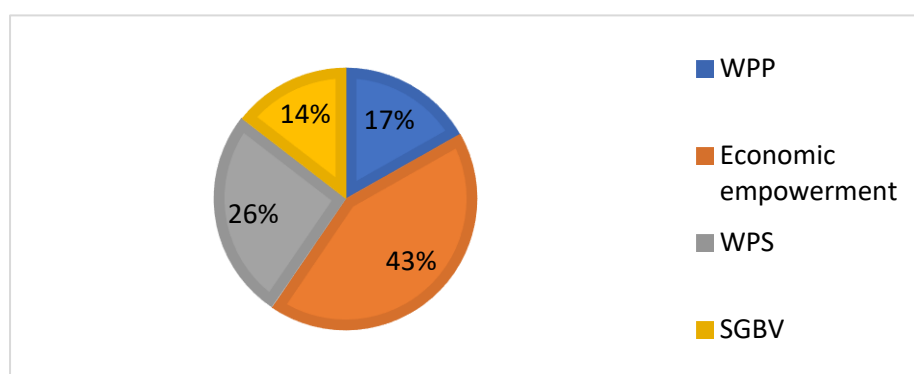
²⁶ 2015 Liberia Annual Report

In addition, interviews with stakeholders noted that the funding duration **was short, and often at the last minute**. For example, documents show that a grant was provided to Liberia National Women's Political Forum in September 2017 to support women's participation in leadership, yet elections were due in October. This particular project ended in November 2017, yet the second round of elections was held in December 2017. Such support, according to interviews conducted, **appeared ad hoc and not effective**.

The evaluation assessed the fund distribution (expenditure per thematic area) and found that women's economic empowerment (WEE) had the highest expenditure of 43%. The second highest expenditure was women's political participation (26%) followed by peace and women's peace and security (WPS) (17%) and EVAW (14%) respectively. Figure 4 below shows the expenditure per impact area.

Figure 4: Expenses per impact area, source (is the source RMS or the SN projection)

Expenses per IMPACT AREA 2014-2017



The expenditure above and the views of stakeholders of UNW-LBR addressing symptoms of women's inequality could be considered valid. Considering the harmful traditional ideas, beliefs and practices that cause inequalities between women and men, a stronger focus on preventing SGBV could have a ripple effect and synergies with the other DRF areas. This is because societal beliefs, norms and practices tend to translate into the access and distribution of resources and opportunities between different members in the family and communities. Numerous studies exist that show a link between negative beliefs, norms and practices and the position of women in society, and their access to information, roles and opportunities²⁷.

Studies also show that where gains have been made in the introduction of gender sensitive laws, women's leadership and political participation²⁸ and economic empowerment, feminist movements have been behind such gains²⁹. Therefore, a focus on supporting feminist movements and women's NGO's to change harmful beliefs and norms could contribute to increased opportunities and resources for women and girls could be a valid choice. This could be coupled with focus on women's economic empowerment, as another important DRF area. Once the environment is conducive in terms of respect for women and girls and there are gender sensitive laws and policies in place, there is higher likelihood that this would translate into increased opportunities for women. Community awareness raising for men programmes such as the He for She campaign, where men are

²⁷ Htun, M., & Weldon, S.L. (2012). The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005, *American Political Science Review*, 106 (3), 548-569.

²⁸ Phillips, R. (2015). How 'Empowerment' May Miss Its Mark: Gender Equality Policies and How They are Understood in Women's NGOs. *Voluntas: International Journal Of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organizations*, 26(4), 1122-1142

²⁹ Kumar Panday, P., & Feldman, S. (2015). Mainstreaming Gender in Politics in Bangladesh: Role of NGOs. *Asian Journal Of Political Science*, 23(3), 301-320.

recruited to work as advocates against gender based violence also enhanced gender equality and women empowerment. Hence participation and leadership in all sectors become some of the opportunities for women and girls.

4.1.4 Evaluation question 4: What are the factors determining UNW-LBR's programme choices and scale-ups, and to what extent are these evidence and resource-informed?

Finding 4: The SNs, lessons learnt from evaluations, societal changes and government priorities informed UNW-LBR programmatic choices

The revised SN 2016-2017 highlights several factors that contribute to UNW-LBR programme choices. This revision was in response to the mid-term review of the Liberia Country Programme, undertaken in August/September 2015 which recommended the need for revision owing to significant changes in the operating environment and context. This was because of the impact of the EVD crisis and the need to align to relevant national priorities in response to the Ebola crisis, the drawdown of UNMIL as well as the need to align to the outcomes of the Beijing +20 review, Rio +20 outcomes and high-level review of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Interviews with staff noted that UNW-LBR adjusted its programme based on the changing circumstance, though there were also challenges. Staff indicated that sometimes challenges arise in that they are pushed to work in areas which are prioritised by very few partners thereby impacting the quality of work outputs and progress towards planned targets. That said, UNW-LBR staff noted that there are on-going efforts to harmonise all programmes. For example, to avoid duplication, joint planning is now taking place for all the pillars that target the same communities. UNW-LBR Women advocated for one gender outcome in the UNDAF in 2014 though no results were achieved; hence the One Gender Scorecard was introduced in 2018. There is now one gender outcome within the work with the GTG.

Efforts are also being made to strengthen alignment of interventions at policy level by working jointly with different ministries, where possible. The 2017 UNW-LBR Annual retreat report mentioned that the UNW-LBR 2018 Results Framework will be aligned with the revised National Gender Policy Strategic Results Framework, including National Food Security Strategy. It also notes that UNW-LBR will utilise the UN Delivering as One model (DAO) to improve relationships with partners, share information, avoid competition for resources and avoid duplication of information.

4.1.5 Evaluation question 5: Is the portfolio aligned with national policies? To what extent has UNW-LBR strategic choices met the priority concerns of Liberia's development policymakers, key national stakeholders and right holders?

Finding #5: UNW-LBR portfolio is aligned with national policies; however, stakeholders noted some areas for improvement.

As a part of the regular procedure, the SN 2014-2017 identified national challenges and priorities both in national development framework and UNDAF and linked these to the Country office DRF. Through interviews, observation and the review of documents, the evaluation team found that there were synergies between what the Government of Liberia intended to achieve and UNW-LBR's interventions. Where there were gender gaps in the policy framework, UNW-LBR commissioned a gender review of the major strategic documents, including

in the UNDAF³⁰. The results of the gender review contributed to the review of the National Gender Policy and its Strategic Results Framework.

UNW-LBR undertook several capacity building interventions to align to the national policy framework relevant for gender equality, and to enhance ownership of results. All DRF areas indicated in the SN 2014-2017 contributed to the objectives and targets outlined in Liberia's Strategic Framework and Plan 2010 -2015. Major laws, policies and capacity building interventions undertaken by UNW-LBR include:

Normative Area

- The National Gender Policy 2018-2022
- Children and Social Protection Policy
- The National Strategic Policy for Food Security and Nutrition
- The National Agricultural Policy
- Domestic Violence Act
- Affirmative Action Bill
- The Rape Law
- The Inheritance Law
- Local Government Act

Institutional strengthening

- Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection was supported to strengthen co-ordination of the gender agenda within sector ministries through provision of TA, support to MGCSP interventions and reporting on internal obligations.
- Ministry of Internal Affairs was supported to enhance gender mainstreaming within the decentralisation policy and conduct of community dialogues in all the 15 counties of Liberia³¹
- Establishment of linkages between the National Action Plan on 1325 with the security sector reforms³². This work involved working with different security institutions to make sure that they have adequate policies, and that these policies are linked with the interventions supported by UNW-LBR at the community level; for example, the peace huts, rural women's groups which provides space for women to engage on conflict resolution and economic empowerment. Security institutions were also supported to set up their offices with the necessary infrastructure; Gender focal points in the security sector were

³⁰ Review of the National Gender Policy Framework, November 2015.

³¹ 2015 Liberia Annual Report

³² 2015 Liberia Annual Report

trained in 2017 in cooperation with UNMIL and the Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce (GSST) was established.

- National Disaster Management Unit was supported to track disaster plans in response to the Ebola crisis. UNW-LBR led the gender aspects during the Ebola response amongst the UNCT and this included advocacy against sexual and gender based violence, research on the gender impacts of EVD and support for the collection of sex and gender disaggregated data³³.
- Working with the Planning Division of the Ministry of Finance, UNW-LBR supported the mainstreaming of gender equality into the national budget³⁴. Consequently, the Ministry of Health (MoH) was selected as a pilot project to test the efficacy of mainstreaming gender into the budget. UNW-LBR is working with the Divisions of Budget and Development Planning on this mainstreaming effort. UNW-LBR is also working with other line ministries to develop gender responsive planning and budgeting. Technical teams from the MoH and MFPD, MGCSP, MIA and the Governance Commission are working with UNW-LBR to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks and that incorporate gender specific indicators.
- The Constitutional Review processes. UNW-LBR supported MGCSP, civil society organisations and the Parliamentary Women’s Caucus to promote participation of diverse groups of women to advocate for the integration of gender aspects in the Constitution Review Process. Evaluation found, that if the gains made in promoting GEWE in the draft Constitution are sustained, women’s rights in marriage and to inheritance and property will be protected. Article 23 (b) in the draft Constitution establishes a right to inheritance to include presumptive marriages for persons cohabiting for not less than 3 years and Article 22 (a), provides for joint property, which (property) was acquired during the marriage.

Review of national indicators in Liberia’s policy framework³⁵. The documents reviewed include; the Agenda for Transformation, the Economic Recovery and Stabilization Plan, Liberia’s Gender Policy and its Strategic Results Framework (2010-2015), the National Plan of Action for UNSCR 1325, and the United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF). The review found that the AfT did refer to gender as a cross-cutting issue and to the National Gender Policy and its Strategic Result Framework (2010-2015). The UNDAF listed only one gender related outcome and contained 28 gender related indicators that also take into account age and disability. However the UNDAF Gender Scorecard Report commissioned in January-March 2018 has found that the 2013-2017 UNDAF has 16 outcomes under four thematic pillars, and the assessment scored this indicator as: “Approaches minimum standards”. In order to meet minimum standards gender should have been mainstreamed across all outcome areas, which is not the case; or should have had at least one outcome that specifically targets gender equality. Of the 17 outcomes, only 8 are mainstreamed while 6 are completely gender blind.

To some extent, UNW-LBR addressed priority concerns of stakeholders. Interviews showed that the short interventions funded by UNW-LBR, and in some cases, the **support to one selected unit/departments within a government ministry were ad hoc and fragmented.** Discontent, according to the government stakeholders came up either because; UNW-LBR changed its position on prior agreed issues (Letter of Agreements (LOAs)) and issues agreed in meetings or UNW-LBR did not inform stakeholders of UN procedures relating to travel in

³³ 2015 Liberia Annual Report

³⁴ 2017 Liberia Annual Report

³⁵ Report on Baseline Gender Indicators contained in Liberia’s National Policy Framework, 25 November 2015

the field (counties). The discontent shows a trust and communications issue between UNW-LBR and the stakeholders. Indeed, the UNW-LBR Country Representative noted that she has spent a lot of time trying to build trust between UNW-LBR and key partners such as the MGCSP, UN agencies and donors. This effort is bearing fruit as the relationship is improving. It must be noted that the relation between UNW-LBR and government is critical for the success of all the programmes and the achievement of desired results.

4.2 Effectiveness

With regard to effectiveness, the evaluation team adopted the following definition as explained in the Guidance on Country Portfolio Evaluations in UNW-LBR document: the extent to which UNW-LBR has contributed to achieving planned outcomes and mitigating negative externalities on gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the Strategic Note, including testing the validity of theories of change.

4.2.1 Evaluation question 1: What changes might UNW-LBR undertake to enhance its impact in the future?

Finding 6: Communication, visibility and leadership of UNW-LBR critical for successful design, coordination and implementation of UNW-LBR CO programmes.

Concerns were raised by stakeholders on issues such as the **visibility and communication** of UNW-LBR. It was reported that the leadership of UNW-LBR has not been visible during part of the period for the evaluation (2016-2017). The lack of visibility was attributed to the absence for some time of a substantive Country Representative. The Country Representative is responsible for leading and managing Country Office (CO) portfolio and for translating the UN Women's Strategic Plan (SP) into development initiatives and developing effective partnerships with stakeholders, support for UN reform, and mobilization of visibility and resources to advance gender equality and women's empowerment³⁶. The human resources dashboard showed that the Country Representative (CR) position was vacant in 2014. When the position was filled, the Country Representative was deployed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in mid-2016. Then there was a second vacancy of the same position before UNW-LBR recruited the current CR who joined the office mid-2017. External stakeholders perceived the position of CR as being key in driving the UNW-LBR portfolio. As an example, one respondent commented:

“UN Women can work quite differently...they are very dependent on who is the Country Representative and that person really decides on which way UN Women is going. So, I have seen that has a big influence on the country office and maybe sometimes a little bit too much. Because it is not really sustainable when it is just one person having such a huge impact it should be divided among more staff. Unfortunately, UN Women has been without a Country Representative for a long time and I think it was almost one year before the current one came in. We had a lot of discussions with UN Women... because from experience we know that is not a very constructive way of working because what they did then was having the deputy and covering and the deputy didn't have anyone covering for him so that had a huge impact in Liberia. I would say for that year nothing much happened. And I think now we see the effect it has had. A lot of things have been severely delayed, and they have not been able to show the results we expect. So, I think that UN Women in New York need to understand how important the Country Representative is. You

³⁶ Job description UNW Country Representative

cannot only have the deputy stepping in and covering without anyone covering for him, it really has a negative impact on the results and support to Liberia.’’ (source: DP 2)

Interviews with CSO stakeholders showed that, during the absence of the CR, there were delays with decision making. Interviews with UNW-LBR staff to a considerable extent confirmed some of the perceptions provided by stakeholders, noting that there were delays in approvals.

Finding 7: The theory of change in SN 2016-2017 focuses partially on symptoms of gender inequality and not the underlying causes of gender inequality. There is insufficient capacity within UNW-LBR to deliver on the proposed theory of change.

UNW-LBR has provided support for the review of the legislative framework that impact on women’s participation in leadership, elimination of gender-based violence and FGM. However, there is need to advocate for increased access to quality education and skills building for women and girls and policies that impact on women’s access to land, finance and investment. The proposed theory of change argues that by investing in girls’ education and skills building for women through strengthening partnership with UNESCO and UNICEF will be an important entry point to contributing towards the attainment of the expected outcomes and will lead to a gender dividend³⁷.

By focusing on the fundamentals of gender equality and women’s empowerment it will contribute to sustainable results, This can be **ACHIEVED** through building champions, inculcating behaviour change among men, opinion leaders and women themselves; advocating for the provision of quality education to girls and women, training and involvement of men in issues affecting women, having male champions on women empowerment issues, establishing and strengthening of community based support structures and advocacy for affirmative action for women and review of laws and policies. As one key informant said, “.....we must get them to the level where they speak for themselves, where they understand issues and where they choose to make changes in a culturally acceptable manner”. Women’s active engagement in national and local institutions and in civil society will help to make governance more inclusive and responsive to the needs of society. Women’s improved representation will also translate into sustainable influence—in government³⁸, in business and in other spheres—so that women can make their full contribution to political, economic and social life.

So effective and sustainable change can only be brought to women in Liberia when the outcome pathways for social change to occur are addressed. The core element of the theory of change will be , “**Continued advocacy for provision of quality education, capacity building and skills development will lead to effective and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia**” with an impact outcome, “**Effective and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia**” However, the new theory uses education as the entry point, as it is common cause that without education, very few things can be achieved, let alone economic and political participation of women³⁹.

Building on the existing partnerships in the private sector and other financial/development partners including the diaspora, UNW-LBR can increase gender equality and women empowerment programmes. **Figure 5 below illustrates the proposed ToC.**

³⁷ See section 2.4.2 on the gender dividend

³⁸ Tripp, M.A. (2001). The Politics of Autonomy and Cooptation in Africa: The Case of the Ugandan Women's Movement, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 39 (10), 101-128

³⁹ <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/gender-dividend-the-economic-benefits-of-investing-in-women-13188/>

Figure 5: Proposed Theory of Change

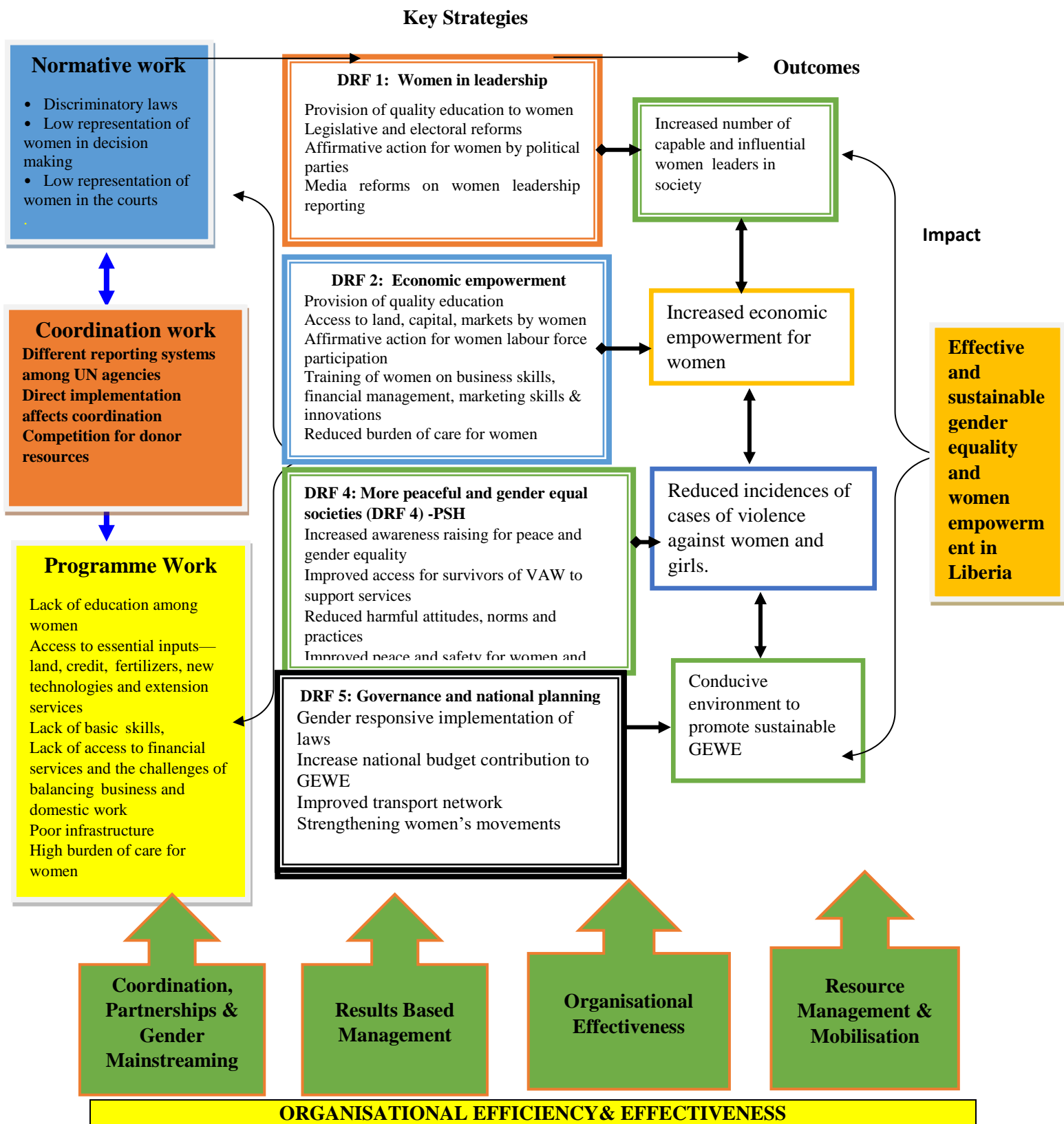


Figure 5 above shows that many areas are already addressed in the Revised SN 2014-2017 and SN 2016-2017 though there is a weak linkage on the root causes of the problems facing women which is the lack of education

to be able to stand up for their rights. The theory of change supports the UNW global's strategic priorities as stipulated in their Strategic Plan 2018-2022. These include:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence

Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action⁴⁰. The progress towards gender equality can be sustainably achieved only if there is a strong level of education and skill building among women in order to effectively sustain the gains. Education and skills enhancement and capacity building are preconditions for closing the gender gap in the labour market⁴¹. There is ample evidence to show that women perform the bulk of unpaid care and household work. Therefore, by creating conditions that reduce the burden of care for women, this will free up the time for women to engage in more productive sectors of the economy⁴². The theory of change in the Strategic Note 2016-2017 identifies strengthening government institutions at national and lower levels so that they can be able to mainstream gender equality and women empowerment in their work.

Key interventions identified at the Inception Workshop with stakeholders include addressing physical barrier to services such as the road infrastructure; societal barriers – harmful traditional beliefs and practices; institutional-strengthening the voice of the women's movements and women's organisations, addressing poverty for women, increasing opportunities for education training, improving market access for women's groups, strengthening women's leadership; legal- improving the policy and legal environment for gender equality. While this is important, it cannot be achieved by the levels of education among women⁴³ in Liberia; hence the need for a bottom up approach with education as the foundation as identified in the revised theory of change.

The theory of change in the Strategic Note 2016-2017 identified peace huts as the entry point for community level interventions. UNW-LBR interventions in the communities rallied on the gains made under its Women, Peace and Security (WPS) work (DRF 4), to conduct activities on women's economic empowerment and political participation. Stakeholders across the board recognised UNW-LBR leadership in the area of WPS. Visits to the communities confirmed that community interventions that involved awareness raising, literacy and skills building had multiplier effects in a number of areas; at individual, family and community level.

Violence against women affects all spheres of life⁴⁴. It is a major barrier to women's participating fully in the economy and the lives of their communities. It leads to absenteeism from work, poor physical and mental health and increases financial burden for women in terms of accessing services. The theory of change in the revised Strategic Note 2016-2017 identified access to comprehensive support services. There are limited support

⁴⁰<http://www.unwomen.org//media/headquarters/attachments/sections/executive%20board/2017/second%20regular%20session%202017/unw-2017-6-strategic%20plan-en-rev%2001.pdf?la=en&vs=2744>

⁴¹ Botting, E.H. (2016). Theories of human development: Wollstonecraft and Mill on sex, gender and education, in Botting, E.H.(2016) Wollstonecraft, Mill, and Women's Human Rights, Yale University Press, p115-154.

⁴² October 16, 2017 by Sandra Tzvetkova and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina: "Working women: What determines female labor force participation?" available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/women-in-the-labor-force-determinants>

⁴³ Liberia Demographic Health Survey (LDHS, 2013) found that 47% of females have never attended school compared to 33% of males for the population aged 6 years and above.

⁴⁴ Htun, M., & Weldon, S.L. (2012). The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005, *American Political Science Review*, 106 (3), 548-569.

services⁴⁵ to VAW, therefore, there is need to support interventions that aims to promote respect for women and girls, condemn VAW, and provide support services for survivors of VAW. Strengthening women's access to justice and utilizing integrated strategies focusing on property, inheritance, family and gender equality in laws and constitutions to VAW will lead to improved development outcomes⁴⁶ for women and their families. This implies that a range of interventions: build the capacity of partners to collect and analyse gender, age and sex disaggregated data within the justice sector; enhance the capacities of the magistrates, judges, police, prosecutors and court clerks to provide gender sensitive services to survivors of VAW and to address their labour policies in a gender responsive way, building the capacity of local community structures, including faith based institutions on the legal mechanisms for addressing VAW and to condemn VAW; strengthen women's and men's feminist movements and work in partnership with UN agencies, male champions and women's organisations to raise awareness on VAW and provide support to survivors of VAW.

4.2.2 Evaluation question 2: Are interventions contributing to the expected outcomes? What unexpected outcomes (positive and negative) have been achieved?

Finding 8: While there is strong evidence to show that UNW-LBR interventions contributed to women's economic empowerment, political participation and access to SGBV support services, these are not documented well and consistently in the Annual Report Impact Indicators.

The theory of change in the revised SN 2016-17 notes that capacity building is integral to the achievement of outcomes defined in the MERP 2016-17. The proposed interventions in the revised SN 2016-2017 are geared towards increasing the participation of women in political decision-making positions and their economic participation. Findings on progress made in DRF 2016-2017 show that some progress was made in DRF1, as UNW-LBR supported political participation of women in the 2017 elections. Interviews and documents reviewed show some progress in DRF 2 and 4. There were linkages between DRF 2 and 4, and achievements in terms literacy, numeracy and business management skills building were noted. Interventions in DRF4 had multiplier effects in terms of women's economic participation and empowerment. Women's views during FGDs showed that with the reduction in domestic conflict, there was time freed to engage in economic activities. For some women, they were able to participate in decision making both in their homes and communities. The DRF 2016-2017 also shows the achievements of the interventions and it shows that the interventions are contributing to the expected outcomes, albeit at a slower pace. For example, the electoral bill was advocating for a quota of twenty-one women positions in parliament, but it only managed to garner five with two others reserved for the persons with disability and the youth. Results, by the end of 2017 shows that the programme had a target of sixty women to run for office but by the end of the year only an additional twelve women were in parliament representing only 20% progress. In ministerial positions the same year, the target was forty women but only twenty-one were in ministerial positions representing a 52.5% achievement. There was also some progress seen in the reduction in the share and overall number of women in vulnerable employment⁴⁷. While interview sources indicated that there was an increase on the number of reported on VAW. In the absence reporting on indicators outlined under outcome 2 under DRF 4⁴⁸, it was difficult for the evaluators to ascertain the reporting of VAW.

⁴⁵ UNW-LBR Strategic Note 2014-2017.

⁴⁶https://www.saferspaces.org.za/uploads/files/Arango_et_al_2014._Interventions_to_Prevent_or_Reduce_VAWG_-_A_Systematic_Review_of_Reviews.pdf

⁴⁷ UNW-LBR Annual Report Impact Indicators 2017

⁴⁸ Timely essential services provided for survivors of GBV, harmful traditional practices in all counties

The MERP 2016- 2017 shows the following planned outcomes and progress achieved as shown in Annexure 11 for each Impact Area.

In terms of programme outreach, the information in terms of results is based on information provided by UNW-LBR staff. Table 8 below show the number of beneficiaries reached by UNW-LBR programmes. However, this data is from the matrix⁴⁹ provided by UNW-LBR staff but this data is missing from the Annual Report Impact Indicators. There is also a discrepancy with comments from UNW-LBR staff on the matrix that alludes to the programme having reached more than one million beneficiaries but not recorded in any of the Annual Report Impact Indicators 2015-2017.

Table 8: Total beneficiaries per year

Interventions	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Women’s leadership and political participation	35	0	3 827	2 771	500	200	500 000	500 000
Women’s economic empowerment	3 930	182	5 678	161	6 661	165	7510	363
EVAW	1 350	42	1 522	33	1 381	32	1 177	28
Women peace and security	750	375	2 500	1 000	925	200	215	125
Total	6 065	599	13 527	3 965	9 467	597	508 902	500 516
GRAND TOTAL	6 664		17 492		10 064		1 009 418	

Source: CPE-Beneficiaries reached-23rd Feb 2018 Matrix

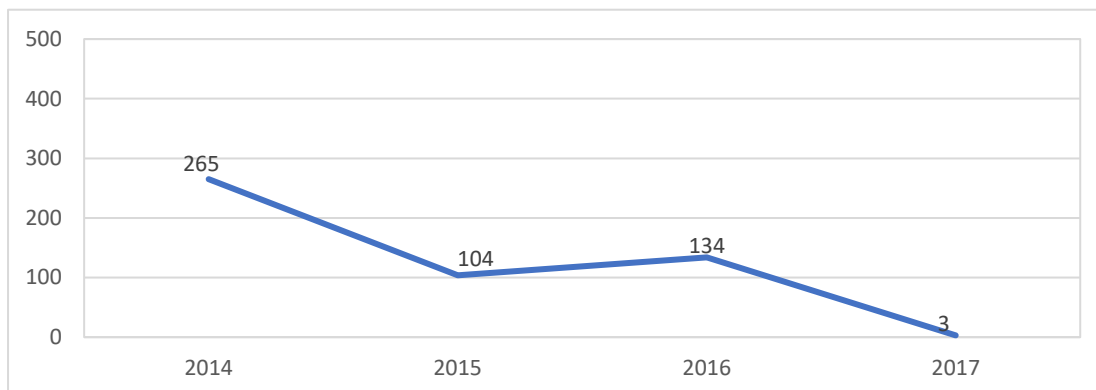
Table 8 above, shows that 6 664 beneficiaries were reached in 2014 under women’s economic empowerment, 17 492 in 2015, 10 064 in 2016 and 1 009 418 in 2017. The total number of beneficiaries reached in 2017 does not seem to be realistic considering the number of beneficiaries reached in the previous years. Furthermore, the financial resources provided to UNW-LBR between 2014 and 2017 cannot easily explain how with a budget of \$3.7m in 2015 UNW-LBR reached 10 064 beneficiaries, yet in 2017, with a budget of \$4.4m UNW-LBR reached 1 009 418 beneficiaries. The information provided to the evaluators is not conclusive as to how the beneficiaries were reached. This points to the need for effective and coordinated data collection and reporting during programme implementation.

Considering the financial resources discussed above, figure 6 below shows spend per beneficiary:

⁴⁹ CPE-Beneficiaries-23rd February 2018 Matrix

Figure 6: Spent per beneficiary

Spent per beneficiary per year



Source: Compiled from financial dash-boards and excel matrix provided by UNW-LBR staff

Figure 6 above shows that in 2014 UNW-LBR spent \$265 per beneficiary per year and this declined to \$104 in 2015, rising to \$134 per beneficiary in 2016 and significantly lowers to \$3 in 2017. This shows that as the programme increases its reach, it enjoys the economies of scale where the cost per beneficiary becomes low. UNW-LBR can therefore capitalize on this strategy with an increase in reach and a lower budget. This, however, recognizes that with the normative work of UNW Liberia it is not necessary to link every dollar to a beneficiary.

Visits to the communities confirmed that community interventions in one thematic area can have multiplier effects in a number of areas; at individual, family and community level. For example, interventions under DRF 4; also had positive effects in terms of economic empowerment, women’s leadership and changes in the perceptions about the role and status of women.

The evaluation team visited some communities where UNW-LBR implemented its programmes to collect Significant Stories of Change (SSC). Unexpected outcomes that were identified during FGDs show that there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that where UNW-LBR programmes were implemented, there were changes in interpersonal relationships in the home, skills building, and respect for women leadership in the communities. The examples of change are illustrated in the stories below:

Story 1: Peaceful resolution of conflicts in peace huts.

“... if a case is brought to the Court, women can now come and advocate with the involved parties and with the Court for the case to be brought to the peace hut and to be resolved there at the Peace Hut. Never had there been a time where a case taken from the court went back to the court. The women have been successful in handing the cases... Even now, when there is a conflict between women and men, I see women coming to advocate for peace through the peace huts to solve the problem. Before the peace huts, some women used to go on the site to cause more problems but now are different they come on the table to solve the problem. Women intervene very fast to solve these cases... these women are now able to solve their problems among themselves.” Source: participants who works with the court. FGD in Tuzon

Another anecdotal change that was recognised during FDG relates to increased women's leadership in mobilising communities, resources and gaining the support of the community leaders to rehabilitate infrastructure:

Story 2: Women lead in infrastructure development in their communities.

Women who have gone through the peace huts are now involved in the development of their communities. The wall of the local clinic was about to collapse. The women from the peace hut came together and discussed the matter. They invited the leaders to a meeting and told the leaders that they intended to renovate the clinic wall. The local leaders gave the go ahead for the women to repair the clinic wall. With the support of the local leaders and the community members, the clinic wall has been rebuilt. The next project was a dilapidated school building which the women also repaired.

"... this is a place where our children are, therefore, we decided to fix it". If the wall falls while the children are in the class, the women will be affected because those children are theirs, so women need to protect their family members." **Source: FGD in Tuzon**

The proposed theory of change is pointing to the need for UNW-LBR to reconfigure its ToC. The unexpected changes illustrated above shows that the interventions by UNW-LBR that focused on awareness raising, skills building, and literacy had multiplier effects in the areas of women's participation, economic empowerment and peace in the homes and communities.

4.2.3 Priority question 3: To what extent are the processes and quality of data collection and use of data for programmatic and management decisions appropriate?

Finding 9: There are multiple reporting obligations in terms of formats/structure, frequency, recipients and content; which can be strengthened through program progress reports with direct linkage to the theory of change.

The SN 2016-2017 articulates a definite need to focus on stronger planning, execution and monitoring and quality assurance of programmes and partners. The SN 2016-2017 recognises the need to develop tools for M&E, packaging and dissemination of knowledge products (OEE output 2.2). According to the SN 2016-17, this stronger emphasis for M & E was underpinned by donors and UN agencies during the mid-term review workshop as being among the top five priorities for Liberia.

The processes for collecting organisational level data; finance, human resources, procurement were adequate. The RA 2016 evaluation found the introduction of RMS and Atlas improved processes for data collection. On programming, the processes for data collection were incomplete.

The quality for decision making and use is enhanced by putting the following measures in place; the purpose, scope and methods for data collection; relevant statistical variables and indicators disaggregated by age, sex, gender and location, data collection tools and boundaries for data collection and dissemination and safety guards that address privacy, confidentiality and security of personal information.

The main issues that arose during the evaluation relate to reporting on indicators, reporting and communication within UNW-LBR internal structures. Interviews with UNW-LBR staff expressed the view that there are many indicators to be tracked and this creates confusion. All these are supposed to be tracked, but the preference was that these indicators be reviewed and harmonised so as to simplify the reporting processes. These views

expressed by UNW-LBR staff are similar to some of the findings in the Regional Architecture (RA) evaluation conducted in 2016. The RA (2016) notes that some people felt that there was too much reporting that was, at times, burdensome. The evaluation found that there were no changes in terms of reporting on indicators in 2017.

The 2016 organogram showed that the M&E Specialist, Partnership and Coordination Officer, and Communications Officer reported directly to the Country Representative at the time. The job description of the M & E indicates reporting to the Deputy Representative and being responsible for strategic planning, monitoring, evaluating, reporting and quality assurance on UN Women's Strategic Plan and UNDAF as well as support to strategic development and coordination of related programmes. However, during the period of this evaluation, there was a re-assignment of the M&E Specialist⁵⁰ who was positioned under Deputy Representative supervision.

The changes in reporting and roles of the M & E Specialist position, and the reporting of the Communications Officer created a weak link between M & E, Communication and the programme team. To improve the linkages between these teams, it is prudent to conduct regular review and learning fora where the M&E and programme teams come together to review data and information coming from the programmes, and to reflect on what it means for the programmes, beneficiaries, UNW-LBR, the UN family, and the key stakeholders. In this way, data and information would then begin to inform decisions and actions at all levels. The M&E Specialist and programmes could conduct joint field visits, and this would also clarify what each team looks for when they go on such visits.

The recommendation by the programme team to review all the indicators is appropriate. There is no point in having indicators that cannot be reported on, or whose data cannot be collected within the allocated budget. The budget for M&E is also non-existent – it exists in theory such as in the AWP, but the M&E Specialist has no decision-making power over it.

The evaluation team found that the M&E systems for UNW-LBR needed improvement, as the link between RMS and Atlas was not explicit enough to enable UNW-LBR to tie programme results with financial spend. It was also noted that the M&E Specialist does not receive or review the reports or PCA from partners and hence cannot make any links with the RMS. Neither is there a tool to track down the number of beneficiaries either by UNW-LBR or IP. The existing monitoring tool collects data on activities, but there is no provision on the form to link these to DRF areas. The evaluation team had difficulty in obtaining results from UNW-LBR staff, whereas, output data was provided, there was little to show on the outcomes. Therefore, though this report shows output information, there is little to show the changes that occurred in the lives of women and girls. For example, although the PCA-level monitoring process can track disbursements of funds to partners through the Atlas and project identification systems, **there seems to be inadequate linkages to the specific indicators and results to which these partners contribute.** According to input received from UNW-LBR staff there is a discrepancy between UNW-LBR planning cycle and that of their implementing partners as reflected in the following quote from one staff member “...Partners and implementing partners are identified and spelled out in the annual work plans. This is clear. The challenge is that some of them do not become IP because the AWP is designed in May – Sep of the previous year and the procedure for its changes is special and needs several lines of approval.”⁵¹ The number of partners funded by UNW-LBR and block amounts using PCA and milestones reached are clearly stated. To achieve set targets, UNW-LBR's programme management unit should provide detailed implementation plans with quarterly targets for each programme area. This should also be requested from

⁵⁰ This has especially changed after the new structure was adopted in late 2017

⁵¹ Interview with UNW-LBR staff member

implementing partners, CSOs and government to ensure that there is accountability and responsibility for programme outputs. Detailed implementation plans should be part of the solicitation of funds by the implementing partners; whereupon each funded entity should provide a costed work plan with targets linked to resources. These should be monitored on a weekly basis where reports are sent to UNW-LBR M&E for consolidation and recommendation of remedial actions. Where financial spending is not in tandem with results, poor performance is documented, and appropriate action taken.

Other stakeholders expressed the view that with the current M&E system implemented by UNW-LBR, it is difficult to quantify outcomes and impact, and also to consolidate what they do. This sentiment was expressed by key stakeholders noting that it has made it difficult for UNW-LBR to demonstrate the impact of their work in Liberia. Stakeholders also expressed the view that it appears these indicators are mainly used for upward reporting rather than learning in UNW-LBR.

Stakeholders were also concerned about the funding cycles of 6-12 months implemented by UNW-LBR, as it was difficult to track impact. Even though UNW-LBR has invested a lot in training and provides funding for partners to conduct training, stakeholders noted that no funds are provided for tracking changes over time. Stakeholders also called for engagement with UNW-LBR particularly on the development of indicators, selection for communities where they will work, programme design, and in terms of sharing results.

The view from government stakeholders was that there was misalignment between their indicators and those of UNW-LBR. Their recommendation was that this alignment should be addressed by jointly reviewing the indicators – by government and UNW-LBR. The expectation from MGCSP however, was for UNW-LBR to show contribution to its indicators. MGCSP report on Baseline Gender Indicators contained in Liberia's National Policy Framework (2015) aligns gender indicators in key strategic frameworks (e.g. AfT and UNDAF) to the National Gender Policy Strategic Framework and Plan 2010- 2015. This work was supported by UNW-LBR. It is critically important for UNW-LBR to conscientise its staff and implementing partners on the importance of programme outcomes reporting as they are key for assessing progress towards the broader theory of change outcome.

4.2.4 Evaluation question 4: How effective are the CO's processes for logically concluding a project and disseminating the learnings from that programme to other COs?

Finding 10: The process for project close-out at UNW-LBR were effective and included administrative and financial checklists, as per the contractual obligations. Through the UNW Flagship Initiative programmes, UNW West Africa regional meetings and the wider UN activities, UNW-LBR is able to disseminate learnings to other UNW CO, as well as incorporate learnings from other UNW Cos to its programme.

Operational guidelines specify key tasks that need to be completed for project closeout. A project is operationally complete when the last financed inputs have been provided and the activities have been completed. A project is financially completed when it is operationally completed or has been cancelled; the responsible implementing partner has reported all financial transactions to UNW-LBR; and the implementing partner have certified a final Combined Delivery Report. A review of project close^[1] out documents showed that UNW-LBR processes were too administrative consisting of financial and financial procedures.

^[1] Project close out status report April 2017 and Request for Approval for Project financial closure/Request for refund/Request for Reprogramming of Funds

Operational guidelines specify key tasks that need to be completed for project closeout. A project is operationally complete when the last financed inputs have been provided and the activities have been completed. A project is financially completed when it is operationally completed or has been cancelled; the responsible implementing partner has reported all financial transactions to UNW-LBR; and the implementing partner have certified a final Combined Delivery Report. However, the Request for Approval for Project Financial Closure/ Request for Refund/Reprogramming of Funds form focuses exclusively on financial matters **without the corresponding need to match financial spend and programme targets versus achievements.**

Interviews conducted with the staff of UNW-LBR indicated several considerations to concluding a project. First is the donor agreement which specifies the *modus operandi* of the project and conditions for close-out. There are two closures; the operational and the financial closure. Operational closure specifies when implementation should end, and this information is available in the project agreement which is available in the Donor Agreement Management System – which is utilized by the CO staff. In this case the programme managers use the UNW-LBR online platform, ATLAS, to operationally close the project. This implies that no further expenditures can be done once the project is operationally closed. All left over funds are returned to the donors. Financial closures take between 6 months to 12 months and involve external audits and the HQ. All assets are then disposed of as specified by the donor agreement or UNW-LBR asset disposal policy.

Even when projects are perfectly planned from beginning to end, unavoidable circumstances sometimes occur which could affect implementation timelines and prolong the project. The example cited by UNW-LBR staff was when the country suffered from the Ebola crisis between 2014 and 2015. This unexpected crisis affected the implementation of programmes. For example, the economic peace building projects (project 88115 and project 88113) were signed in October 2013, but due to the Ebola crisis the timeframe for the implementation of programmes was extended. This point to the importance of contingency planning within UNW-LBR planning processes.

UNW-LBR has a detailed communication strategy of how they share results and learnings from their programme work to different stakeholders including other UNW country offices. This is done quarterly, targeted at different audiences using newsletters, meeting reports, twitter, Facebook and postings on their websites. UNW-LBR has been effective in sharing lessons learnt through UNW media and communication platforms, FPIs and the media.

4.2.5 Evaluation question 5: How appropriate are planning, monitoring and reporting systems and procedures?

Finding 11: UNW-LBR planning, monitoring and reporting systems are weak, disjointed and not linked to the theory of change.

The evaluation team observed that the results frameworks are quite elaborate in terms of the hierarchy of results (outputs, outcome and impact) for each DRF. The challenge is that the data processes that link programme implementation to the MERP do not seem to be well developed.

The UNW-LBR annual reports mention that there were consultations with partners that informed its planning. The RA2016 report notes that UNW-LBR consulted its partners in the preparation of the SN 2014-2017. While UNW-LBR staff mentioned effective and robust consultation, some external stakeholders mentioned that they were not consulted to inform UNW-LBR design of the Strategic Note and Annual Work plans. However, the evaluation found documentary evidence that shows that UNW-LBR consulted its partners during the preparation of the Strategic Note 2014-2017 and its mid-term review. This point to inconsistencies in the information

sources between the UNW-LBR and its partners. It is important therefore for UNW-LBR to explain the consultation processes to their partners, as it is clear that some partners did not understand that the consultation would result in the review of the Strategic Note.

Internally, UNW-LBR staff noted administrative challenges that affected approvals for different activities. This finding is similar to the RA2016 evaluation which found that there were administrative bottlenecks around F10 approvals, DoA and use of organisational logos for publication. Internal programme meetings were in place. This is a platform where UNW-LBR staff held weekly meetings to review past progress and plan ahead. Interviewees indicated that during the Ebola emergency and the staff shortfall experienced during the evaluation period, sometimes the programme meetings never took place

Documents reviewed show that annually, UNW-LBR held annual staff retreats. During the annual retreats, UNW-LBR staff reflected upon progress made for the year, challenges encountered, and lessons learnt. Such retreats informed the preparation of the annual work plan for the following year. UNW-LBR staff also participated in UNCT retreats, whose outcomes informed the AWP for the following year and the development of UNDAF annual work plan.

Annual workplans reviewed show that there were impact, outcomes and output indicators. However, not each of the indicators had targets. The Organisational Effectiveness and Efficiency Results 2014-2017 (OEEF) indicators shows that the availability of baselines and targets for all indicators in Project documents, AWP and Strategic Note was 50% and this provides a challenge for evaluation as there is no baseline to compare with.

Minutes of meeting sampled show that the DPFoG served as a platform for planning interventions supported by different UN agencies and donors. During the meetings, members shared progress with their work, challenges and identified priority investment areas in line with the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The DPFoG is a platform for collaboration and the coordination in support of the Government of Liberia's efforts to achieve its goals on GEWE.

In terms of monitoring, information obtained show that the monitoring reporting systems and procedures were followed to the extent of reporting to the regional office or UNW head-quarters. Using the templates provided, collected the information and submitted the reports to the regional or head office. Documents reviewed indicate that some progress had been made to put in place a results-based monitoring system that includes sound data collection and tracking mechanisms (baselines, means of verification, etc.). However, interviews with UNW-LBR staff indicated that the monitoring tool had been developed but never utilised. The RA 2016 evaluation found that UNW-LBR monitoring and reporting systems were not yet fully operational, including the measurement of results (versus activities) and the sharing of organisational learning.

4.2.6 Evaluation question 7: What contribution is UNW-LBR making to UN co-ordination on GEWE? Which roles is UNW-LBR playing in this field? To what extent has gender equality and women's empowerment been mainstreamed in UN joint programming and UNDAF?

Finding 12: UNW-LBR played a leading role as an advocate and champion of gender issues within the UN family. UNW-LBR conducted a gender analysis of the UNDAF and contributes to its implementation.

Both the UNDAF 2013- 2017 and the UNDAF extension Dec 2018 advocate for the Delivering as One (Dao) model. UNW-LBR contribution is articulated in the four pillars within the UNDAF.

The Strategic Note (SN) 2014- 2017 confirmed that UNW-LBR works closely with the United Nations Agencies⁵². UNW-LBR is recognised as the lead agency on gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). UNW-LBR participated in several UN groups and these include; UN Inter-Agency Programme Team (APT), UN Operation Management Team Group (OneUN OMT), UN Human Resources Group, UN Communication Group and the UN M&E Working group as well as OneUN SDG and One UN SDG Statistics working groups. The latter two were established in 2016. UNW-LBR is the chair of the Gender Theme Group, as well as the driver behind improved UN coherence, and the Secretary General's (SG's) Seven Point Action Plan. It is well positioned to consolidate this leadership and promote increased investment for women and girls.

Documents reviewed⁵³ show that through the GTG, UNW-LBR co-ordinates interventions to support government to commemorate key international events around dates important for women and girls e.g. the 16 days of activism on VAW and UN reporting processes such as CEDAW and the CSW. Interviews with UN staff members recognised the role played by UNW-LBR but noted that sometimes, the representation of UNW-LBR at public fora does not reflect the DaO model. Examples were cited where logos, T-Shirts or banners at events reflect UNW-LBR and not the UN. UNW-LBR chairs the Gender Theme Group (GTG) that consists of all gender focal points/specialists in UN agencies⁵⁴. Stakeholders also felt that the GTG, which UNW-LBR chairs should be convened and chaired by a senior staff member of UNW-LBR, yet UNW-LBR sometimes send lower representation.

The Development Partners Forum on Gender⁵⁵ is open to any bilateral or multilateral partner (diplomatic missions, development cooperation, agencies of the UN system and entities of intergovernmental character) with the interest to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Liberia. Some stakeholder interviews indicated that it was a little difficult to understand the key role of this body or its terms of reference. Some stakeholders mentioned that they were not clear about the composition of members of this group, citing that at times, NGOs attend the meetings. This could be an indication that UNW-LBR needs to raise awareness and internally engage within this group about its composition and role.

UNW-LBR participates in UN Joint programme⁵⁶ and is the lead agency in some of the programmes, despite the delays in submission of reports by some UN agencies. Development of yearly timeframes or dashboards for submission of reports and circulating them among all the UN agencies may assist in having timely reports. This can also be used in conjunction with email notifications and google calendar notifications to all those responsible for the submission of reports.

Table 9 below shows UNW-LBR lead role in joint programmes:

Table 9: UNW-LBR leadership in joint programmes in 2017

⁵² See section 2.1, Table 3: Mandate and Responsibilities of UN agencies in Liberia relevant for gender equality and the empowerment of women

⁵³ UNW-LBR Annual Reports from 2015-2017

⁵⁴ T.O.R Development Partners Forum on Gender

⁵⁵ ToR DPFoG

⁵⁶ Master Narrative- Liberia Country Office Narrative Questions and Answers for the 2017 Annual Report

Project	Participating Agencies
GOL and UN Joint Programming Intervention on elimination of sexual and gender-based violence- and harmful traditional practices	UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR with support from UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)
Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JRWEE)	FAO, IFAD, UNW-LBR and WFP
Inclusive security; nothing about us without us	UNDP, IOM

UNW-LBR supported co-ordination of women/gender focused CSOs on key topical issues such as lobbying for the Domestic Violence law, and the participation of women in political leadership. There was ample evidence to show that UNW-LBR was very visible during the Ebola response. Despite the difficult circumstances at the time, examples were provided about how UNW-LBR mobilised the UN family to address gender aspects of the Ebola response. The report on the gender impacts of the Ebola response (Korkoyah & Wreh, 2015) shows how UNW-LBR mobilised Government, UN, INGOs and other stakeholders to address the different needs of women and men. In addition, UNW-LBR documented the different impacts of Ebola in 2014 and 2015.

4.2.6 Evaluation question 6: results, which are not and what are the reasons for differences in performance?

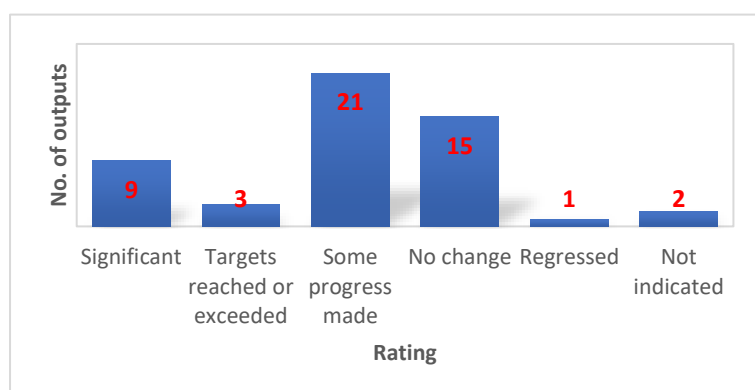
Finding 12: Two diverse sources of information that; UNW-LBR did not reach its targets on time, while the other showed that targets had been reached on time.

Internal documents available to the evaluation team showed that for 2016, UNW-LBR did not reach its impact areas targets on time. This is based on the different reports which show what UNW-LBR's target for the year for the different impact areas was and the totally achievement for that year. With UNW-LBR's programming which is based on yearly cycles, documents reviewed showed that none of the targets set out to be reached were reached within the year. However, it was difficult for the evaluation team to get information on the timely achievement of outputs within each impact area.

According to the AWP Report Narratives; UNW-LBR has not reached its targets on time in 2015, 2016 and 2017. However, another document named Annual Report Impact Indicators Matrix 2017 shows that there are some outputs which have witnessed significant progress, targets reached or surpassed, some progress made, no change, regressed or not indicated. See Annexures 12 for Annual Report Impact Indicators Matrix.

This matrix's indicators are represented in the diagram below.

Figure 7: Outputs reached on time



Source: Annual Report Impact Indicators Matrix 2017

This matrix presents a different picture from that shown in the AWP Report Narrative⁵⁷ which the evaluators believe is the official UNW-LBR report to UNW Regional and UNW Global. Besides, the matrix is difficult to comprehend as the ratings are different for the same level of achievement. For example, indicators with a 100% achievement or more have different ratings, with one falling under Significant Progress and another under Target reached or surpassed.

This presented a concern to the evaluators where an internal matrix is not talking to the data that appeared in the annual reports. It is recommended that periodic internal reports are produced, maybe quarterly which are agreed upon and signed off by key staff to ensure data quality and consistency over time. Other monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure data reports integrity can also be explored.

4.2.7 Evaluation question 7: What are the main enabling and hindering factors to achieving planned outcomes?

Finding 13: There were political, legal, societal, and organisational factors that affected UNW-LBR work.

Several documents⁵⁸ reviewed noted that political will by the government was a factor that contributed to UNW-LBR success. Political will was noted in five key ministries: Gender, Children and Social Protection, National Defense, Finance and Development Planning, Agriculture and Internal Affairs. The ministers and directors in government ministries supported the interventions for UNW-LBR. Documents reviewed also showed that UNW-LBR had regular interactions with the then President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. In addition, there was peace during the period of the evaluation, and this enabled UNW-LBR to make incremental gains per year.

The co-ordination within the UN family through the GTG achieved results of co-ordinated assistance to government⁵⁹. Documents reviewed showed that UN agencies pooled resources to support government participation to the CSW. There were also examples shared where working through joint programmes leveraged resources within the UN family.

⁵⁷Annual Report Impact Indicators Matrix 2017

⁵⁸ 2015-2017 Liberia Annual Reports

⁵⁹ UNCT Liberia Strategic Summary of Coordination Results 2016

However, various documents reviewed show that there were attitudinal barriers leading to delay in the promulgation of laws or changes to the once progressive Bills that were before the legislature. For example, the UNW-LBR 2017 Annual Report notes that despite the advocacy, lobbying and capacity building conducted, the clause on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was removed from the Domestic Violence Bill by the two Houses of the Legislature before it was sent to the President for signature⁶⁰. The clause had criminalised FGM.

The UNW-LBR 2017 Annual report notes the dependency on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) as a challenge to national ownership and sustainability of the intervention. Several interviews confirmed that once donor funding was exhausted, the Programme Management Units (PMUs) set up in various government ministries closed or remained dysfunctional.

The outbreak of the Ebola Virus took a toll on the capacity of government officials to engage, due to the crisis at the time (Annual report 2015). The outbreak of Ebola also caused challenges to the implementation of programmes, as there was a necessity to address the emergency at the time. The 2015 Annual report notes that the Ebola outbreak, which led to state of emergency and prohibited mobility of people, coupled with weak infrastructure, led to operational challenges. Mobility of staff members, partners and population was limited to a significant extent. A heavy rainy season presented serious challenges for the movement of logistics and staff in support of rolling out adult literacy and business skills classes in southeast Liberia. Some roads were inaccessible to many communities targeted by UNW-LBR and partners. Interviews confirmed that in subsequent years, some parts remained inaccessible during the rainy season.

Organisational changes leading to re-organisation of staff roles was a constraint shared across all interviews conducted⁶¹. The insufficient number of UNW-LBR personnel led to delays in programme implementation and affected partner relationships due either to inability of UNW-LBR to be represented in external meetings, or delays in decision making.

4.3 Efficiency

According to the Guidance on Country Portfolio Evaluations in UNW-LBR document, efficiency is understood to mean the extent to which resources, organisational structures and management processes add to UNW-LBR's productive capacity.

4.3.1 Evaluation question 1: To what extent is the governance structure and functioning enabling UNW-LBR to deliver efficiently on results?

Finding 14: To a certain extent UN governance structure enabled the delivery of results, with some gaps noted below.

Documents reviewed showed that UNW-LBR used a combination of direct execution and implementation of interventions through partners.

The staff capacity of UNW-LBR consisted of international and local staff backed up with international UN volunteers and consultants. Table 10 below shows UNW-LBR staff numbers between 2014-2017.

⁶⁰ UNW-LBR 2017 Annual Retreat report

⁶¹ Interviews with UNW-LBR staff, GTG, government, development partners, CSOs

Table 10: Number of UNW-LBR staff

Category	2014	2015	2016	2017
International	2	3	3	3
National Staff	6	6	6	6
Service Contracts	24	16	16	17
International UN Volunteers	0	1	2	5
National UN Volunteers	0	0	0	2
Special Service Assignment	1	0	0	3
Detailed assignment⁶²	1	1	0	1
Total	35	28	27	36

Source: UNW-LBR Human resources dashboards 2014-2016, Job descriptions & organogram 2016-2017

Table 10 above shows the number of staff for UNW-LBR between 2014-2017. In 2014, there was a vacancy of the CR, hence there were two international staff available. Numbers of staff remained relatively the same, except in the category of staff who had service contracts. Numbers of staff on service contracts reduced from 24 in 2014 to 16 in 2016. This could be attributed to the need to respond to the Ebola crisis in 2014 or short term or limited funding available to the Country Office. Interviews with UNW-LBR staff indicated that they were constrained with work-overload due to insufficient staff numbers, and the number of projects that UNW-LBR implemented. Interviews with stakeholders indicated however, that apart from the staff numbers, UNW-LBR needed more senior staff to cover the gap created by the departure of the Office of the Gender Advisor in UNMIL.

We reviewed the organogram for 2016-2017 to ascertain the organisational structure in terms of staffing. The CR as the head of UNW-LBR had eight reportees that included the Deputy Country Representative, Operations Manager, M&E Specialist, Communications Officer, Partnership and Coordination Officer, and three administrative staff. The Deputy Country Representative was responsible for programme staff, and the Operational Manager was responsible for administrative, finance and human resources staff. The organogram de-linked the key roles of M&E and communications from the programme team. The organogram also shows that UNW-LBR had no field-based staff located in the counties.

For UN Joint Programmes, the Technical Working Groups provided co-ordination units for programme planning, implementation and monitoring⁶³. In areas where UNW-LBR led programmes, it was responsible for day-to-day management and co-ordination of the programme. Stakeholders raised other challenges which, from their viewpoint, UNW-LBR needs to address the lack of field offices, especially in locations where it leads the UN Joint Programmes.

4.3.2 Evaluation question 2: Is the balance and coherence between programming-operational, co-ordination and policy-normative work optimal?

⁶² Gen-CAP Advisor

⁶³ RWEE Programme Document & JP SGBV Programme Document

Finding 15: The balance of work is more in the coordination and normative areas compared to programming work. There was coherence between normative, coordination and programming work.

The DRF SN 2016-2017 indicated more focus on programme work than the normative mandate in terms of outcomes and indicators though there were variations between each DRF area. DRF 1 had most of its work focused at the normative level, compared to DRF 2 and 4 whose outcomes and indicators showed more work in the programming area and less focus in the normative area. The SN OEEF indicated several outcomes and indicators in the operational and coordination area. A review of the budget indicates that DRF SN 2016-2017 had a budget of 10 130 000 USD, the OEEF 2014-2017 had a budget of 11 054 359 USD which was revised to 3 679 000 USD in SN 2016-2017. The evaluation team could not however, ascertain the financial expenditures across the 3 mandates of UNW-LBR. According to information provided by UNW-LBR staff, the reporting does not distinguish the 3 mandates.

A review of the annual reports for 2015-2017, shows that most of the outputs reported upon are in the normative area. All legislative or normative reforms were captured under the respective impact area. The UNW-LBR annual report template outlines 23 mandatory areas to report upon. In 2017, for example, 13 areas were reported upon were in the normative area⁶⁴, 5 areas where in the coordination area, 2 in the program area, whereas the others were not applicable.

All work undertaken in the normative, programming, coordination and operational areas has synergies. UNW-LBR used evidence available from the programming work to inform its work in the normative and coordination area. On the other hand, UNW-LBR conducted several interventions in programming that involved awareness raising, consultation with women groups, men's groups, faith-based organisations and community levels concerning the legislative reforms that were undertaken during the evaluation period⁶⁵. Considering the evidence available, there was more focus in the normative, coordination compared to programming and operational area.

4.3.3 Evaluation question 3: How can the workload across mandates be prioritised most effectively?

Finding 16: -LBR can consider having more senior level staff to be focused on collecting evidence across the DFR areas, while engaging in coordination and normative areas. These would be supported by a thin programme staff in the CO, but a stronger presence of programme staff in the field (counties).

In this way, UNW-LBR will strengthen programme service delivery by focusing on areas suggested by stakeholders as having more impact towards GEWE. Some of the areas mentioned include: focusing on sustainable economic empowerment that gives women a secure livelihood; participatory planning and M&E with communities so that they can see that the programmes address their needs; providing technical assistance to CSOs on sexual and gender-based violence; enhancing male involvement, and the role of duty bearers; providing alternative livelihood opportunities to traditionalists who perpetuate harmful practices; and creating platforms at all levels for gender policy dialogue among stakeholders. Through these and other field-level interventions, UNW-LBR will create more impact in the field. The suggested approach of senior staff, thin CO but field-based staff could also address the challenges experienced by Programme Managers in terms of the work-load. Interviews with Programme Managers indicated that they worked long hours trying to balance work

⁶⁴ According to UNWLLBR staff, this area was previously captured in the OEEF and in the 2018 it was singled out as a separate area of intervention.

⁶⁵ UNW-LBR Annual Reports 2015-2017

across the 3 mandates. This also implies that a programme review and alignment need to take place within the broader scope of enhancing UNW-LBR's leadership and coordination role on gender equality and women empowerment to avoid adopting a piecemeal approach. A stronger coordination of these three mandates will increase effectiveness and efficiency and improve stakeholder relations. The GTG does not have its resources nor the visible or transparent budget. It is comprised of the gender focal points who are in most cases the staff to whom "gender" is added on the top of their "ordinary job duties. The expertise in gender and gender analyses is often limited and GTG needs to have its budget and to stimulate and "reward" the staff at least by learning and certification programmes.

4.3.4 Evaluation question 4: What is UNW-LBR's comparative advantage over other UN entities and key partners?

Finding 17: UNW-LBR is positioned to offer expertise in gender analysis across a range of sectors and it is able to mobilise women's groups across all levels; national, county, district and community.

Each UN agency has its own comparative advantage based on its areas of competence. UNW-LBR has created a niche because it gets involved in raising awareness about gender equality and rallying efforts towards achievement of gender equality in Liberia. It is able to mobilise women and gender focused CSOs at all levels (national, county, district and community) and is recognised as an authority in the area of Women, Peace and Security. For example, UNW-LBR's role in the JP was to mobilise women groups and support awareness raising interventions that focused on several issues and advocate for women's participation in land committees⁶⁶.

UNW-LBR can leverage on the work that other UN agencies in Liberia are currently doing in the joint programmes. As an example, WFP has built green reserves where the women can grow their produce. WFP also trained rural women on how to process and add value to their produce into finished products through activities such as packaging. UNW-LBR can use this platform for advocacy on gender equality and women empowerment in order to fulfill its mandate.

One staff member noted as follows:

"... on this whole idea of access to land for women for agricultural production ... the men want to say that the land is for me, yeah, he is married to the woman, but he says that the land is for him and not his wife. So, the woman says that the land is for her husband and she can only use it if she gets permission from him ... through this project we have got women to be involved in land committees and to be involved around men making decisions around other natural resources. So there has been this whole work around working with women and getting them involved so I think the fact that we have been able to give the women that building capacity. And I think the other aspect is ensuring that we get both the men and women involved so no one feels left out."

Documents on JPs indicated that these kinds of interventions have not only targeted women. Even men and boys have been trained as male champions who then go on to advocate for gender equality⁶⁷. Through their involvement with UNW-LBR, communities now understand that gender equality is about both women and men. While participating in land committees is a step towards real empowerment, unfavourable practices exclude women from land ownership. Documents reviewed showed that harmful ideas, norms and practices exclude women from the ownership and control of land. Women remain largely users of land and not the owners.

⁶⁶ RWEE Programme Document

⁶⁷ JP SGBV

Furthermore, women continue to use rudimentary methods in the production, processing, storage and marketing of agricultural produce.

While UNW-LBR is well positioned to lead gender equality and women's empowerment issues and provide adequate analysis of these gender issues across sector, this can be strengthened by an increase in the focus on the underlying causes of gender inequality. In order to provide sufficient and authoritative analysis, UNW-LBR should increase its advocacy actions for the provision of quality education to women and girls to ensure effective and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia.

4.3.5 Evaluation question 5: What are the strategic directions UNW-LBR should undertake, in line with transition process of UNMIL and the political transition to the new Government, to successfully achieve sets targets and responsibilities?

Finding 18: To assert itself as the leader of gender issues on the UNCT, DFoG and the GTG, UNW-LBR needs to consider an-ongoing GEWE trends analysis to strengthen its evidence base in the normative and coordination areas, coupled with detailed implementation plans, monitoring and data collection and presentation tools and use of online event management tools.

The exit of UNMIL in Liberia provides a perfect opportunity for UNW-LBR to assert itself as the leader in gender equality and women's empowerment issues. Developing timeframes for gender coordination meeting and a list of the legislative framework that needs to be reviewed to enhance gender equality and women empowerment will enhance monitoring of results in the normative area. UNW-LBR can work with already identified champions to develop weekly, fortnightly and monthly updates on gender programming to be compiled into a country gender monitor/profile. The Country Gender Profile would be a synthesis and analysis of GEWE trends that is released quarterly. It would also serve the purpose of informing reporting annual reporting as it would provide a comprehensive GEWE context of Liberia.

To ensure effective coordination of this work, UNW-LBR should make use of online event management tools such as the google calendar reminders, WhatsApp groups and group emails to effectively coordinate its work. A small coordination secretariat within UNW-LBR complimented by a Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG) comprising of senior members from key stakeholders from the government, UN agencies, CSOs and implementing partners will make this successful. The GTWG should have set meeting dates throughout the year with key deliverables for each sitting. The frequency of the sittings can be determined by the members of the GTWG but for a start meeting fortnightly is recommended. This group can review progress achieved with programme implementation within the gender sphere and recommend remedial actions to be taken to meet set targets. The coordination function of the GTWG should also include resource mobilisation, effectiveness and efficiency enhancement and UNW-LBR capacity building to improve programming and internal systems.

The UNW -LBR Result and Resource framework shows a number of funding gaps per result area and the RA 2016 evaluation noted that UNW-LBR had insufficient budgetary resources to achieve its results. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that late disbursement of funds, coupled with the amount of funds provided, affected programme delivery.

4.3.6 Evaluation question 6: Are the interventions achieving synergies within the UNW-LBR portfolio and the work of the UN Country Team?

Finding 19: UNW-LBR interventions complement the work of UNCT in reaching the gender equality goals in Liberia. The role of UNW-LBR as the lead on GEWE is reflected in the UNDAF 2013-2017.

UNW-LBR programmes contribute to the overall work of the UNCT through the coordination of the GTG. The GTG was set up by the UNCT in order to coordinate gender mainstreaming within the UN system and also to provide a coordinated approach to partners. UNCT has delegated the leadership authority of GEWE to the GTG which is being chaired by UNW-LBR to ensure synergies and complementarities within UN agencies.

UNW-LBR contributed to the four pillars outlined in the UNDAF 2013-2017, which are the critical areas for UNCT. For example, in 2014, UNW-LBR supported women groups as part of the working group on energy and infrastructure⁶⁸. Interventions advocated for the Women's Minimum Agenda in the Constitution review process undertaken in DRF 1 are in line with the UNCT agenda for advancing gender equality in the legal and policy arena. UNW-LBR supported consultations with various stakeholders (religious leaders, traditional leaders, political parties, members of the Parliament and youth)⁶⁹. Our perspective is therefore that UNW-LBR work contributes to the overall UNDAF in Liberia.

UNW-LBR utilizes peace huts as the entry point for their interventions in the communities. From this pool of beneficiaries, other interventions such as women political participation, gender equality and women empowerment, ERAW and peace, security and humanitarian action draws their participants. This creates synergies within the whole UNW-LBR programmes to ensure multiple interventions on beneficiaries.

4.3.7 Evaluation question 7: To what extent (and how regularly) are the UNW-LBR programmes and initiatives subjected to cost effectiveness measures?

Finding 20: UNW-LBR's programmes have not been subjected to cost effectiveness analysis before.

According to WHO (2003), cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) is used to evaluate the costs and effects of specific interventions. Under normal circumstances, costs and effectiveness of all possible interventions are compared in order to select the mix that maximises benefits for a given set of resource constraints. The estimated cost-effectiveness of a single proposed new intervention is compared either with the cost effectiveness of a set of existing interventions reported in the literature or with a fixed price cut-off point representing the assumed social willingness to pay for an additional unit of service.

Cost effectiveness analysis is important to determine whether there is value for money in the implementation of these programmes by comparing resources expended, results and impact. The documents provided by UNW-LBR, including the Regional Architecture Evaluation report did not include any cost effectiveness analysis of UNW-LBR programmes.

⁶⁸ United Nations in Liberia (2015). Annual Progress Report 2015 retrieved from <http://lr.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/liberia/docs/UNDAF/2015%20One%20UN%20Annual%20Report%20Final%202015.pdf> on 23 April 2018.

⁶⁹ Interviews with several stakeholders

4.3.8 Evaluation question 8: How do financial forecasts compare to actual expenditure? If costs are off track, how robust are the remedial actions?

Finding 21: Based on the variance analysis over 4 years, of the budget vs. actual expenditure; there was a trend of very high variance in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and improved through 2017.

Table 11 below summarises the variance analysis based on the financials reviewed:

Table 11: budget vs actual expenditure comparison-variance analysis

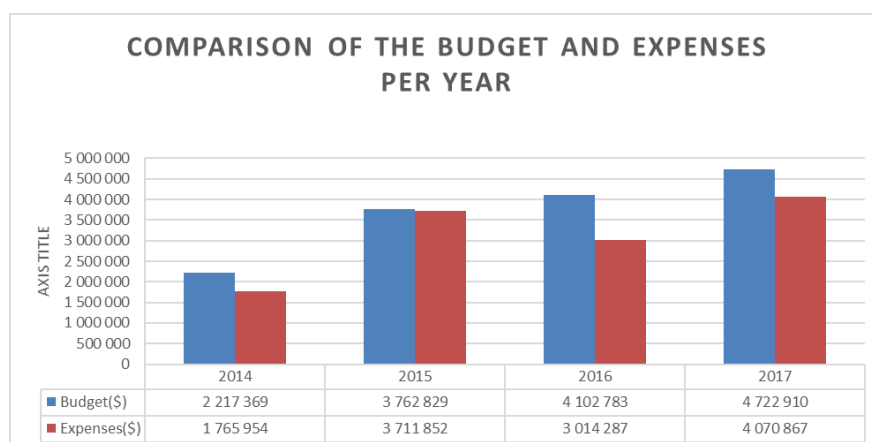
Year	Cumulative variance Excluding Advances	Cumulative variance Including Advance
2014	40%	36%
2015	96%	94%
2016	63%	59%
2017	22%	13%

Source: UNW-LBR Finance dash boards 2014-2017. The table is showing a comparison of the original budget/s and actual expenditure in the categories expenses excluding advances and actual expenditure including advances. i.e. the analysis is showing that in 2014 40% of the was not spent (this is excluding advances) and in that same year 39% of the budget was not spent (including advances). The inverse is that we only spent 60% of the budget in 2014 excluding advances and we spent 61% of the budget including advances paid.

Forecasts were off track, budget and prediction of costs and upcoming events were not aligned to the implementation plan and the realities. The interpretation of the above variance needs to take into account the contextual and organisational challenges that UNW-LBR experienced during the evaluation period, which have been discussed earlier in this report⁷⁰. It seems forecasting at intervals was not conducted when UNW-LBR was faced with challenges and as a result, these high variances occurred. There was low delivery in 2014-2016. There was an improvement in burn-rate from 2016-2017.

The evaluation team sought to compare budgets, actual funds received and expenditure for each DRF area as reflected in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Budget and expenditure per year



⁷⁰ EVD leading to programme implementation, staff turn-over etc

Figure 9: Budget and expenditure per area

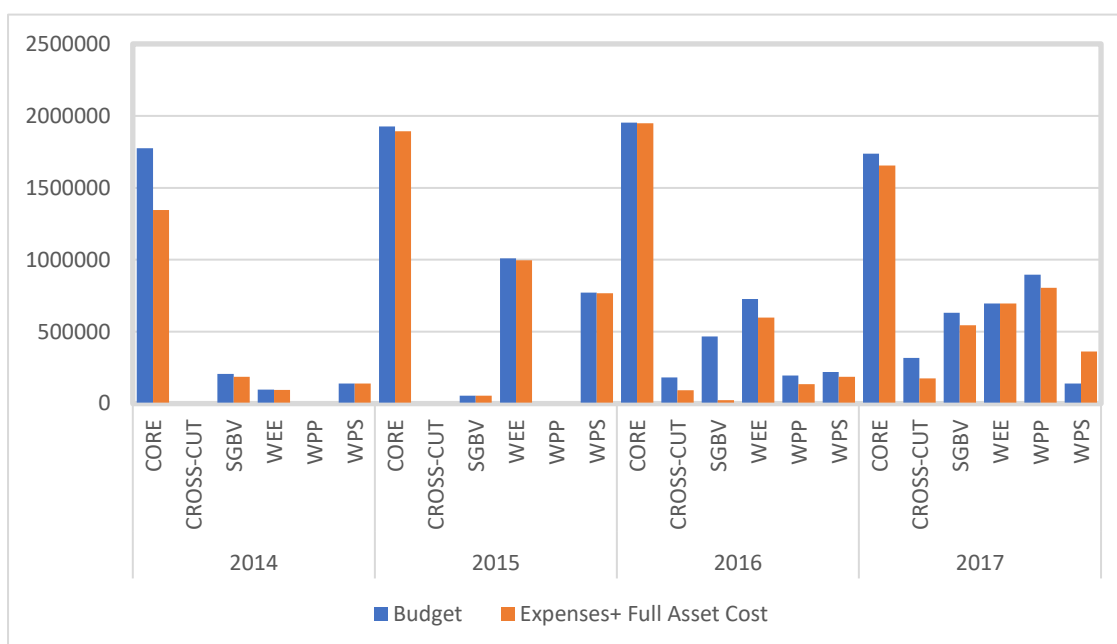


Figure 9 above shows that the Core spend in 2014 was 75% of it in 2014, while it was only 50% of the money allocated in 2016 and 2017. SGBV has been spending money allocated in its budget except for 2016 where only 5% was spent. WEE has been utilizing all the money allocated in its budget over the four years. WPP spent most of the money allocated in 2017 but only 70% in 2016. WPS has been spending all money allocated in its budget in 2014, 2015 and 2016. In 2017, expenditure on WPS was double the money allocated in its budget. Interview sources made lot of reference to the role of UNW-LBR in peace and security, and WEE. This is an indication that UNW-LBR has managed to curve itself an identity as the lead on women’s rights issues in peace and security.

4.4. Sustainability

Sustainability according to the Guidance on Country Portfolio Evaluations in the UNW-LBR document is the extent to which positive outcomes can be maintained and advanced independently by local actors.

4.4.1 Evaluation question 1: To what extent does UNW-LBR pay sufficient attention to strengthening the enabling environment for sustainability, including sufficient capacity-building activities so that national stakeholders can continue their activities without UNW-LBR support?

Finding 22: UNW-LBR provides technical capacity building to the PMUs and implementing partners to ensure sustainability. However, continued sustainability of these PMUs beyond elections is difficulty as there is staff turnover after each change of government and the lack of multi-year funding is a major drawback.

The SN 2014-2017, recognised the need to strengthen the PMUs, implementing partners and women’s organisations, to enhance sustainability of interventions. Several documents reviewed confirmed that several capacity building interventions and the procurement of TA and materials had been provided to government ministries. UNW-LBR enhanced national capacity in international treaty reporting, including the Convention

Against Torture, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (UNW-LBR Annual Report, 2017).

The implementation model of UNW-LBR programmes ensures sustainability of results. UNW-LBR trains people in the communities on issues affecting women. This also includes men and other opinion leaders within the community. Evidence suggests that when women are able to speak for themselves, where they understand issues and where they can make changes in their lives⁷¹, and then the sustainability of results can be guaranteed. UNW-LBR uses the government ministries as its primary implementing partner together with other non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations. These are home grown indigenous organisations whose origin and future are cemented in Liberia. With a strong capacity building component afforded them by UNW-LBR, there is no doubt that they will be able to continue advocating for gender equality and women empowerment with or without UNW-LBR.

Peace huts as physical infrastructure developed by UNW-LBR will always provide a platform for communities to dialogue in the advancement of women participation in the various sectors of the economy. Programme management units (PMU) set up in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and MGCSP provide technical assistance to government – placement of experts in the government ministries. Government stakeholders indeed appreciated UNW-LBR support and contribution to the establishment of PMUs.

Some CSOs indicated that they had used funding and skills gained from UNW-LBR to leverage resources from elsewhere. Some of the NGOs mentioned that they had not had funding from UNW-LBR for over a year but had been able to mobilise resources from elsewhere. The Annual reports reviewed show that UNW-LBR worked closely with a wider range of community stakeholders to inform the design and implementation of future programmes to ensure effective delivery as well as national ownership and the sustainability of impacts.

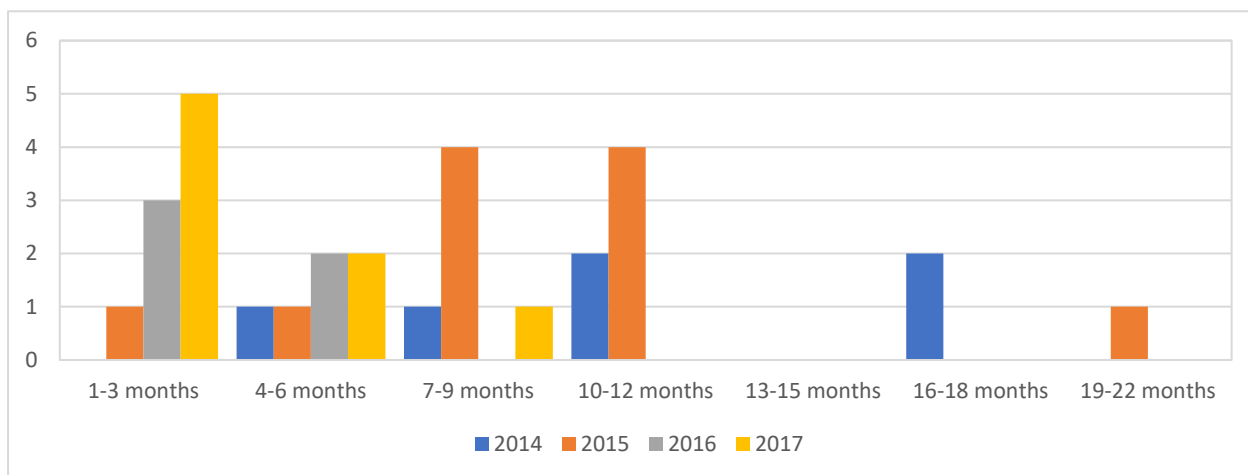
However, the challenge raised is that government cannot afford them once the funding runs out Liberia's elections lead to changes of government civil service. Moreover, civil servants are affected by the change of government with wholesale movement of people who would have been trained and capacitated to move on, thereby undermining sustainability efforts. Beyond funding and civil servants' turnover, some respondents noted that direct implementation of programmes by UNW-LBR was perceived as weakening the sustainability of interventions. The UNW-LBR 2016 Annual Report noted that the CO opted for direct implementation and work with trusted old and new partners.

The lack of multi-year funding for programmes for implementing partners was not sustainable. CSO stakeholders noted that they had good relationships with UNW-LBR. However, like government, interviews with CSOs showed that they shared similar concerns with government, in terms of ad hoc and short-term interventions⁷². Addressing long-term causes of poverty requires long-term interventions. A review of the Project Cooperating Agreement (PCA) monitoring template for UNW-LBR between 2014-2017 shows confirmed that UNW-LBR offered short term funding. Figure 4 (section 4.1.3) shows that during the reporting period, 50% of the funding to partners was between 1-6 months, 40% was between 7-12 months and 10% of the funding was for a duration of 16-22 months. Figure 10 below shows the duration of funding awarded to partners from 2014 to 2017.

⁷¹ Nussbaum, M. (2000). Women's Capabilities and Social Justice. *Journal of Human Development*, 1(2), 219-247.

⁷² As noted in Finding 2 of this report, 50% of the interventions consisted of 3-6 months grants.

Figure 40: Duration of Funding per year to Partners



4.4.2 Evaluation question 2: Is there national ownership and are there national champions for various parts of the portfolio?

Finding 23: UNW-LBR build national champions in the three areas of its work.

Both the SN 2014-2017 and the revised SN 2016-2017 aim to work within the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness⁷³ to support national ownership and accountability.

By working to strengthen national institutions, UNW-LBR enhanced national ownership of the interventions. Implementation through partners contributes to skills transfer, building of systems within partner organisations and shared responsibility for programme results. Examples were cited, where UNW-LBR support to partners contributed to the strengthening of financial systems within implementing partners.

The SN 2014-2017 indicated that the theory of change coupled with increased voice from rights-holders and strengthened mechanisms for accountability from duty-bearers at both the national and local levels contributes to national ownership and sustainability. UNW-LBR encouraged stakeholders to contribute towards interventions. For example, in its peace and security programme, UNW-LBR worked with the government and other stakeholders to ensure that the community provided land for the establishment of peace huts⁷⁴. The system is organised because the leaders are there, and the women trainees are trained on how to organise themselves and maintain the peace huts. These are the same women who also benefit from the economic empowerment programmes. For example, in Gbarpoluo, UNW-LBR supported several interventions in the peace huts including business skills and literacy training. It was in the peace huts that the training on women’s political participation was launched through the National Rural Women Structure, which is a registered NGO. As part of promoting and strengthening grass root women groups, UNW-LBR contracted the National Women Rural Structure to go out to the communities and conduct awareness programmes on the importance of leadership. This was done shortly before the national presidential elections.

⁷³ The Paris Declaration outlines five principles that inform delivery of development aid. These include country ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and accountability. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>

⁷⁴ Focus Group Discussions with women in the communities

Both SNs 2014-2017 and the revised SN 2016-2017 are not explicit on national champions for the different result areas. However, documents reviewed imply that UNW-LBR identified and worked with different champions at various levels as summarised in Table 12:

Table 12: National champions

DRF	Interventions	Champions
DRF 1: Women in Liberia lead and participate in decision making processes and national governance (SP DRF 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional reform and decentralisation • Participation of women in electoral processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
DRF 2: Liberian women and girls, especially the poorest and most marginalised, are economically empowered (SP DRF 2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic security and sustainable livelihood opportunities • National and regional trade policies and their implementation • Management and oversight of community land, natural resources, and the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Rural Women Structure • Association of Women in Cross-border Trade (AWCBT)
DRF 4: Women’s leadership and agency influence peace, security and humanitarian actions in Liberia (DRF 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability frameworks • The Liberia Security sector • Participation of women and their networks • Rejection of gender stereotypes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gender Security Sector Taskforce (GSST) among three key ministries; Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Defence • Women’s in Peace Hut Network
DRF 5: Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities outlined in the Agenda for Transformation and the Liberia National Gender Policy (SP DRF 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Responsive Accountability and oversight mechanisms • National gender architecture • Liberian gender equality advocates and civil society organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Units at the Governance Commission and at the Independent Human Rights Commission • Ministry of Finance for rolling out GRBP in sector ministries

4.4.3 Evaluation Question 3: What local accountability and oversight systems have been established to enhance local knowledge development and support sustainability of results?

Finding 24: UNW-LBR set up PMUs in selected government ministries and makes use of locally based implementing partners. UNW-LBR supported the National Rural Women’s structure and the Women’s Legislative Caucus. More broadly, monitoring and reporting systems for accountability have been set up though with gaps as discussed earlier in this report.

UNW-LBR implements gender programmes through the PMUs that have been set up in the different ministries. It also uses implementing partners to implement its programmes across the country. The implementing partners and PMUs are locally based entities which are reporting programme activities to UNW-LBR. UNW-LBR

focuses on capacity building of the PMUs and the implementing partners to ensure sustainability of results beyond UNW-LBR funding.

UNW-LBR supported the establishment of a cross-border women association, known as the Association of Women in Cross-border Trade (AWCBT). This platform gives women a voice and an opportunity to speak out and contribute to decisions that affect them. As a decentralised platform, this forum consists of national leadership structures within member counties which go right up to the district level. The women do not only just talk about these issues, but they also provide solutions that should be implemented to deal with their problems. Through the women's association, UNW-LBR has been building capacity of women's groups on economic empowerment through trainings such as: entrepreneurship, leadership skills, decision making skills, and peace building. These trainings empower women to engage policy makers on some of the issues that they are facing. Every year, the women's association holds a general assembly where government officials from the key line agencies such as Ministry of Internal Affairs and relevant security and cross border institutions, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Commerce, are invited to speak and address women's concerns and clarify related border procedures and documents.

UNW-LBR supported community dialogues as one of the ways to build the capacity of rights holders to demand accountability from the duty bearers in the decentralisation process. Supporting women's participation in the decentralization has been a critical mechanism for engaging communities and ensuring more transparent governance.⁷⁵ UNW-LBR supported the Women's Legislative Caucus to lobby for gender sensitive laws in Parliament⁷⁶.

4.5. Human Rights and Gender Equality

The evaluation criterion 'Guidance on Country Portfolio Evaluations in UNW-LBR' seeks to establish whether the UNW-LBR portfolio sought to address the structural causes of gender inequality in Liberia.

4.5.1 Evaluation Question 1: Has the portfolio been implemented according to human rights and development effectiveness principles; participation/empowerment, inclusion/non-inclusion, national accountability, transparency?

Finding 25: UNW-LBR portfolio identified gender and human rights barriers and designed interventions to address these during implementation of the Strategic Note 2014-2017.

The design of the SN 2014-2017 not only integrated the participation of different women and men, but more importantly, it identified constraints that could occur throughout the implementation of SN 2014-2017 and outlined measures of how these could be addressed⁷⁷. Documents reviewed showed the participation of duty bearers and right holders in the design and implementation of the SN 2014-2017 and the Revised SN 2016-2017⁷⁸. Strengthening the link between the rights holders and duty bearers was recognized as integral to promoting human rights and gender equality.

⁷⁵ 2015 UNW-LBR Annual Report

⁷⁶ 2016 UNW-LBR Annual Report

⁷⁸ Minutes of meeting, monitoring reports, SN MTR report and attendance registers

Consequently, during the implementation of SN 2014-2017, UNW-LBR supported several interventions that aimed to promote a legislative framework that promotes human rights and gender equality, promoted accountability of duty bearers to citizens, strengthen rights holders to demand for their rights and promoted rights holders to access services⁷⁹. For example, under DRF 2 (WEE), the challenges faced by rural women⁸⁰ to access productive resources, such as land, agricultural inputs, finance and credit, extension services, and technology and their impact on agricultural output was recognized. Consequently, DRF 2 sought to implement interventions that promoted rural women’s productive capacities through promotion and improvement of food processing and storage, using innovative, productivity enhancing and culturally and ecologically acceptable technologies.

The implementation of the SN 2014-2017 was done through a participatory approach, ensuring effective stakeholder engagement and the inclusion of all sectors involved in GEWE through various platforms such as the GTG and the DPFoG⁸¹. This ensured shared responsibilities of both challenges and outcomes, ensuring transparency in resource allocation and programme implementation. While there were challenges with aid effectiveness, as mentioned by findings from the field, UNW-LBR is committed to improve aid effectiveness and harmonise its work with that of UN Agencies.

Section 4 discussed the findings based on evidence, triangulating the different sources of information. Section 5 that follows discusses the conclusion.

3. Conclusions

This section presents the conclusion of the CPE. The process to convert the raw data into conclusions and recommendations involved several processes summarised in Figure 11 below:

Figure 5: Data collection, processing and analysis process leading to conclusions and recommendations

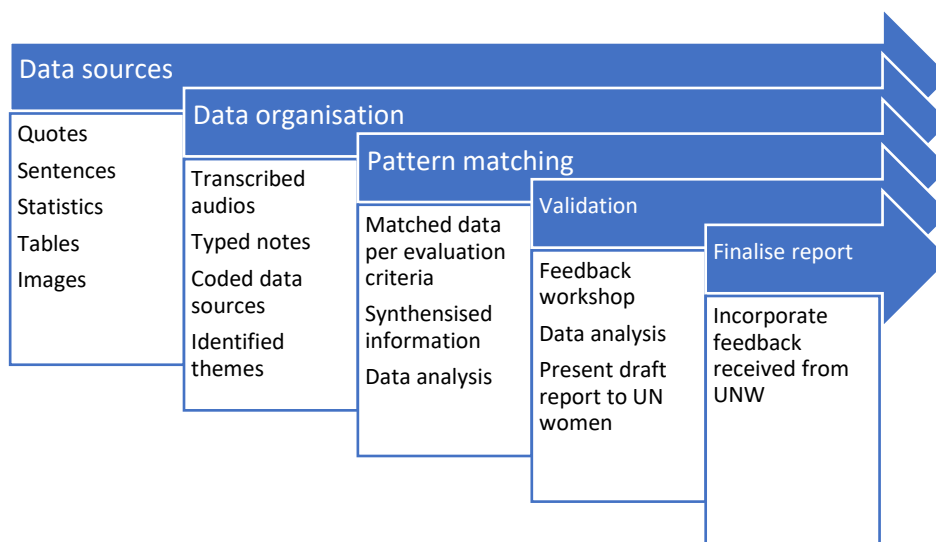


Figure 11 above shows interlinked processes where data sources included; quotes, sentences, tables and images. Interview notes were typed. Audio sources were transcribed. The typed information, audio transcripts and

⁷⁹ UNW-LBR Annual Reports, 2015-2017

⁸⁰ UNW-LBR Strategic Note 2014-2017

⁸¹ UNCT Liberia Strategic Summary of Coordination results 2016

secondary data sources were coded, as per sources of information. Themes were identified from the data and were grouped together and matched to each evaluation question. Similarities and differences in data sources were identified. Findings were synthesised, comparisons were made between primary and secondary data sources per evaluation question, before conclusions were drawn. Preliminary impressions were presented to stakeholders at workshops for their input and where possible, causal links were identified to determine areas of congruence and divergence. Conclusions focused on major findings identified, our interpretations of the findings and existing information relevant for GEWE. Draft reports were prepared and sent to UNW-LBR for comments, and additional information collected before the report was finalised.

5.1. Relevance –UNW-LBR strategic positioning in terms of the whole portfolio

5.1.1 Conclusion 1: UNW-LBR is well positioned to lead, coordinate, advocate and implement gender equality, women empowerment and human rights programmes in Liberia.

UNW-LBR is the lead agency for gender and women’s economic empowerment issues in Liberia. As the Co-Chair of the Development Partners Forum on Gender and the Chair of the Gender Thematic Group, UNW-LBR is strategically positioned to influence policy change, coordinate resources and implement gender responsive programmes in Liberia. This it has done with some success, as witnessed by legislative reforms, bills passed in parliament; the coordination of UNCT on gender issues and programme implementation.

However, UNW-LBR needs to strengthen its role in the portfolio by ensuring the presence of senior leadership at the coordination meetings, effective stakeholder engagement to improve stakeholder relationships and timely disbursements of funds for programme implementation.

5.2 Effectiveness- Were the theories of change in the DRF appropriate and do they hold true or need to be adjusted?

5.2.1 Conclusion 3: The theories of change did not address the underlying causes of gender inequality and women empowerment

The core element of UNW-LBR’s theory of change focuses on capacity building and skills building for women with the ultimate impact of moving Liberia into a mid-income country economy by 2030. The focus on capacity building and skills building is not addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality and women empowerment in Liberia which is the lack of education among women and girls. For UNW-LBR to improve gender equality and empower women and girls, it is important that they focus on advocating for the education of women and girls, for education has been seen to be a great stepping stone for empowerment and emancipation of women.

5.2.2 Conclusion 4: The theories of change did not hold true and therefore need to be reconfigured. This was as a result of the changes in the operating environment particularly EVD, Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and UNMIL withdrawal.

UNW-LBR’s theory of change’s impact aim to ensure Liberia will be able to more quickly recover from war and Ebola and to prosper into mid-income country economy by 2030. It is difficult to link this impact with the activities implemented by UNW-LBR under this theory of change. A country can have women in political leadership, but that does not necessary mean once a country has women in political leadership it will then move into mid-country economy. Likewise, a country can have empowered women and a gender equal society but that does not necessarily mean it moves to be a mid-country economy. There are other economic indicators that

need to be taken into consideration in addition to gender equality and women empowerment for a country to progress economically. So the theory of change need to be reconfigured and focus on UNW-LBR's mandate which is to ensure effective and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia.

5.3 Efficiency- How did the organisation perform in terms of implementing the strategic note OEEF?

5.3.1 Conclusion 5: UNW-LBR performed well on the implementation of OEEF Strategic Note on coordination and partnership, gender mainstreaming, and resource mobilisation but poorly in results based management, organisational effectiveness and resource management.

As the chair of the Gender Thematic Group and co-chair of the Development Partners Forum on Gender UNW-LBR worked with various stakeholders including implementing partners, CSOs, private sector, government and other UN agencies for programme planning and implementation. The GTG was effective in ensuring gender issues are mainstreamed in the various sectors within the Liberia. UNW-LBR also increased its resource base through mobilisation of resources from an initial \$3.4 million annual budget in 2014 to a \$4.3 million annual budget in 2017.

However, UNW-LBR did not do well on results based management as reporting was not aligned to the different outputs in the different impact areas. The direct implementation of programmes by UNW-LBR reduces its effectiveness in advocating for an improved legislative framework and coordination of gender issues in Liberia. The short-term nature of UNW-LBR's funding reduces its effectiveness in attaining long term impact on gender equality and women empowerment. There were also delays in the release of resources for implementation impacting greatly on programme delivery.

5.4 Sustainability- Has the process of implementation established local ownership and capacity?

5.4.1 Conclusion 7: UNW-LBR's implementation model promotes local ownership and has built capacity for both government and implementers.

UNW-LBR's implementation model is consultative and brings in different stakeholders at the formulation of the Strategic Note level. It also uses local implementing partners such as Educare, the government of Liberia and civil society organisations for the implementation of their programmes. This consultation and use of locally based organisations ensured capacity development and local ownership which is important for sustainability. The government of Liberia, being the custodian of women in Liberia is being capacitated, through receiving financial resources, implementation and technical capacity building from UNW-LBR, which ensures continuity and sustainability of results beyond UNW-LBR funding.

However, UNW-LBR is also implementing some of the programmes directly. This is not good for local capacity building and sustainability as the expertise will go with UNW-LBR.

5.5 Human Rights and Gender- What contribution UNW-LBR making to realising the rights of women and socially marginalised groups?

5.5.1 Conclusion 8: UNW-LBR's contribution to the human rights and gender of the socially marginalised is centred on the legislative framework review, coordination of support and programme implementation targeting the socially marginalised.

UNW-LBR is bringing to the fore the human rights issues faced by the socially marginalised groups through legislative reforms of laws, coordinating efforts for support and implementing programmes targeting them. The human rights of the socially marginalised are a key area that UNW-LBR is focusing on through advocacy and support to the normative area and implementation of programmes. UNW-LBR's work on gender and human rights also saw the passing of the Affirmative Action Bill and the Domestic Violence Bill which seek to protect the marginalised.

Section 5 discussed the conclusion reflecting on the major issues that came up during the evaluation. Section 6 that follows provides the major recommendations to the report.

4. Recommendations

This section discusses the major recommendations. After a careful analysis of documents availed by UNW-LBR staff, the inputs from the interviews and focus group discussions from the field, feedback workshop of the gender reference group, the literature available on gender equality and women empowerment and the changing environment in Liberia, recommendations were formulated.

6.1 Organisational – recommended decisions about organisational capabilities and structures

6.1.1 Recommendation 1: UNW-LBR should work with the Government of Liberia as an entity and not separate Ministries

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Medium

UNW-LBR should establish government ministries Technical Working Groups (TWGs) with specialised sub-committees on legislative review, political participation, gender responsive budgeting, women empowerment and monitoring and evaluation. Each sub-committee will be responsible for programme formulation, budgeting, programme implementation and monitoring and reporting.

6.1.2 Recommendation 2: UNW-LBR should streamline its internal reporting structures to increase efficiency

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

The M&E position plays a critical role in the planning, implementation and monitoring of programme results. Therefore, it should be positioned close to the programme work and report to the Head of Programmes (Deputy Country Representative) to ensure consistent progress review and reporting.

6.1.3 Recommendation 3: UNW-LBR should strengthen the M & E unit's capacities and position to develop implementing partners' targets, coordinate data collection, synthesis and analysis and reporting to provide a link between programme implementation and results.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

Implementing partners and Programme Managers should prepare quarterly programme progress reports which are aligned to the outcomes in the theory of change to effectively and timeously measure progress towards the outcomes. These reports should be submitted to the M&E Specialist who should collate them by DRF,

accompanied by a detailed narrative of programme activities, targets versus achievement, challenges and mitigating measures.

6.1.4 Recommendation 4: UNW should increase its operational presence in the counties.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Medium

UNW-LBR should have gender focal persons in the counties as this will allow them easy access to their beneficiaries, close monitoring of implementing partners and closer collaboration with local gender focal person within the government structures.

6.2 Programme Design

6.2.1 Recommendation 1: UNW-LBR should utilise implementing partners for implementation while it focuses on the legislative framework review and coordination.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

Utilising implementing partners for programme implementation will ensure local ownership and capacity building while freeing a lot of UNW-LBR’s time to concentrate on higher level outcomes such as legislative reform and coordination.

6.2.2 Recommendation 2: UNW-LBR should advocate for civil service reform to ensure sustainability of results beyond change of government.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	High

UNW-LBR implements its programme through PMUs within the government. With each change of government civil servants are also affected and this affects the continuous implementation of UNW-LBR programmes. UNW-LBR should advocate for a static civil service which is not affected when governments change.

6.2.3 Recommendation 3: UNW-LBR should provide long term funding for programme work to make an impact.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

Gender inequality, women empowerment and political participation are long term issues which cannot be solved in a few months. **Implementing partners need assurance of continuous funding for them to be innovative to design implementation strategies that address underlying causes of these issues.** UNW-LBR should consider a five-year funding cycle which is being implemented by other donor organisations such as USAID and Global Fund or consider supporting implementing partners for the lifespan of the Strategic Note. This will ensure long term impact and sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia.

6.2.4 Recommendation 4: UNW-LBR should ensure alignment of its planning and implementation cycle with the implementing partners

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

UNW-LBR planning cycle begins in May for the following year when implementing partners have already decided on their annual workplans. The Government of Liberia’s budgetary allocations is from July to June the following year. This makes it difficult for partners, for Government of Liberia partners to align with the UNW-LBR implementation cycle. With long-term funding, UNW-LBR can lobby its partners to adjust their planning cycles.

6.2.5 Recommendation 5: UNW-LBR needs to link budgetary control, expenditure management, and achievement of programmatic results across the portfolio.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

UNW-LBR needs to link budgetary control, expenditure management, and achievement of programmatic results across the portfolio. Doing these kinds of analyses helps UNW-LBR to not only determine whether resources are being put to the right use, but also whether the burn rate of resources is in tandem with the rate at which the results are being achieved. By doing this, UNW-LBR can identify areas of real, or potential, excessive spending, areas where value for money is not being achieved, and areas where expenditure is not necessarily contributing to desired results.

6.3 Coordination

6.3.1 Recommendation 1: UNW-LBR should strengthen its coordination role in the GTG, Liberia Multi-Partner Trust and DPFoG.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

UNW-LBR should assert its role in the coordination of gender issues with a strong focus on resource coordination and management, gender analysis, UN agencies collaboration on gender issues and government stakeholder management. This can be done by consistently having high ranking UNW-LBR officials at these meeting, developing year calendars for the sitting of these group and increasing efficiency in resource mobilisation and management for gender programmes.

6.3.2 Recommendation 2: UNW-LBR should create an online dashboard for timely reporting of Joint Programmes

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
Medium	High	Low

With challenges in receiving reports on time from other UN agencies, UNW-LBR should consider developing and online dashboard to ensure timeous reporting of Joint Programmes.

6.4 Partnership

6.4.1 Recommendation 1: UNW-LBR should strive to provide timely communication to its partners particularly the Government of Liberia, implementing partners and the private sector.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Medium

Data from the field shows that some UNW-LBR partners are not happy about the level of consultation and decision making within this partnership framework. Stakeholders mentioned that UNW-LBR changes decisions agreed upon without consulting them. This can be solved by utilising the Partnership and Coordination Officer to communicate any changes to decisions made.

6.4.2 Recommendation 2: UNW-LBR should seek to create long-term partnerships with key stakeholders

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Medium

UNW-LBR provides short-term funding to implementing partners. This does not provide for long-term partnerships, so UNW-LBR should move to a 5-year funding cycle to ensure long term partnerships.

6.5 Normative

6.5.1 Recommendation 1: UNW-LBR should continue to focus on the legislative reform process so as to create a conducive environment for gender equality and women empowerment.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Medium

UNW-LBR should have a timetable for the reform of laws and regulations that still perpetuates gender inequality and prohibits women empowerment. UNW-LBR should target legislation review as the most critical element required to have sustainable gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia. This can be done through the sub-committees of the Technical Working Groups.

6.5.2 Recommendation 2: UNW-LBR should build the internal capacity of the government of Liberia, particularly ministries that influence budgeting, laws, decentralisation, gender mainstreaming and women economic empowerment.

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

The capacity building should take the form of secondment of a gender budgeting expert to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. The gender expert (full-time in house) would assist with gender analysis across government sectors, assist with the development of gender budgeting tools, provide technical assistance for their use, and also assist in producing gender-disaggregated data to support programme and policy decisions. Training and capacity building should be strengthened especially of the staff in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection for gender mainstreaming and women economic empowerment, Ministry of Internal Affairs, for decentralisation, Ministry of Education, for education provision and Ministry of Justice, for legislation reforms. This will strengthen embedding gender equality in all policy making, in all ministries and all levels of government

9.5.3 Recommendation 3: UNW-LBR should support the government of Liberia to collect gender -trends analysis disaggregated data

Urgency	Impact	Difficulty
High	High	Low

Given the opportunity created by the UNMIL transition, the setup of the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust and the need for UNW-LBR to align its indicators to those of the government, the country gender monitor/profile can be used to support evidence building in the normative area.

In conclusion, the 6 sections present the CPE report. Sections 1 and 2 provided the contextual information for the CPE, while section 3 outlined the process and section 4 discussed the major conclusions of the evaluation. Lastly section 6 suggested recommendations in several areas; organisational capabilities, programme design, coordination, partnerships and the normative area. The annexures to this report have been presented separately.