



MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE ENGENDERING GOVERNANCE TO PROMOTE PEACE AND SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE

Final Report

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Names and/or organization/firm of evaluators	George Zimbizi
Name of the Evaluation Manager	Yeukai Huchu
Name of the Regional Evaluation Specialist	Kay Lau
Contact details for this report	gzimbizi@yahoo.com
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List of Acronyms

AWLN	African Women Leaders Network
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interview
MSC	Most Significant Change Story
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PACRWC	Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WILGF	Women in Local Government Forum
WILSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa
WPP	Women Political Participation
WPS	Women Peace and Security
ZUNDAF Zimbabwe	United Nations Development Assistance Framework

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report presents findings of a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the “*Engendering Governance to Promote Peace and Security in Zimbabwe*” project being implemented by UN Women Zimbabwe Country Office with funding support from the Irish Embassy in Pretoria. The MTE was conducted by an independent consultant in June and July 2022. The project has been implemented in two phases, with the first phase running from 2020-2021 and the second phase running from 2021-2022

Background and Context

Zimbabwe has ratified key international and regional human rights instruments that protect women’s rights and seek to address gender inequalities including: the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (PACRWC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol. Other international instruments of importance are the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (including resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960), which apply to all UN member states including Zimbabwe. At national level, Zimbabwe has a progressive national normative framework on gender equality in the form of the Constitution, The National Gender Policy (2017) and Implementation Strategy (2019), the National GBV Strategy as well as sectoral gender policies and strategies. All these instruments call for greater participation by women in all areas of decision-making, including peace processes and security matters, and for effective protection of women from all forms of violence. The country is however yet to fully domesticate these norms and standards into domestic laws¹. Moreover, knowledge and awareness of some of these instruments by government institutions, civil society organizations and citizens is limited. Further, despite having such a progressive normative framework, the major challenge has been the lack of effective implementation of the normative framework which has resulted in perpetuation of gender inequality in all spheres of the Zimbabwean society.

Women are still underrepresented in decision-making positions in the public despite constitutional provisions on gender parity in all decision-making positions. Women constitute only 31% of Members of Parliament (House of Assembly)². Women representation at local government level is at a low of 14%. More worrying is the fact that women representation has been decreasing over the last two election seasons despite special temporary measures implemented at national parliament level to have reserved seats for women. Participation of young women in political and leadership positions is also severely limited in Zimbabwe due to a myriad of barriers including gender-based discrimination, gerontocracy, lack of knowledge and awareness of political rights, lack of resources to fund elections, sexual harassment and exploitation, electoral related gender-based violence and patriarchal attitudes and practices of political parties. The decreasing trend in WPP needs to be arrested by supporting women so that they can participate competitively in the coming 2023 national elections.

Purpose and Objectives of the Project

Under this project, UN Women is working together with the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, the Women in Local Government Forum, the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, African Women Leaders’ Network (AWLN) and other national stakeholders to provide support to women political candidates and those in office through trainings, peer-support and high-level stakeholder engagements in addition to advocating for the full implementation of the Zimbabwean Constitution and regional and international frameworks that the state is party to.

The following are the project’s key **objectives**:

- (a) To support young and senior women, and particularly those left behind, to effectively and meaningfully participate in national processes
- (b) To sufficiently leverage the leadership of women in governance and peace building processes at all levels
- (c) To enhance the capacity of governance institutions to implement the WPS agenda

The expected outcome of the project is “*Strategies to promote women's participation in decision making processes and structures at national and local levels formulated, enforced, implemented and monitored in line with national, regional and international provisions.*”

Purpose and Methodology of the Evaluation

The overall purpose of the MTE was to assess progress towards achievement of goals and objectives of the project at national level against the standard DAC/OECD criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and outcome since its inception in June 2020. The evaluation further sought to identify lessons learned, good practices, and factors that facilitated/hindered achievement. The evaluation employed qualitative data collection methods namely desk review of project documents; Key Informant Interviews with project stakeholders including participating government ministries, UN Women, independent commissions, AWLN, media and CSOs; consultative workshops with AWLN members and other

¹ Ibid

² Zimbabwe National Gender Profile (2020)

project beneficiaries. The evaluation was guided at all times by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System. The main limitation of the evaluation was the unavailability of some of the key informants during the time the evaluation was being conducted and this constraint was addressed by inviting the stakeholders to a consultative workshop under one roof.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance: Overall, the project's goal of promoting women's participation in decision making processes and structures at national and local levels through ensuring that effective strategies are formulated, enforced, implemented and monitored in line with national, regional and international provisions was found to be highly relevant to the gender inequality context of Zimbabwe. Women are under-represented in the leadership, governance, peace and political structures and processes in the country. Women constitute only 34 per cent of Members of Parliament, 44 per cent of senators, 14 per cent of local government councillors and 36 per cent of permanent secretaries. The Gender Gap Index of 0.73 in 2020 shows significant gender equality gaps which will make it difficult for the country to attain the 2030 targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With women currently grossly under-represented and with limited reforms having taken place to promote the participation of women, more needs to be done to ensure increased women participation in the coming elections. The specific focus on young women and marginalised women by the project is also critically important as these groups have multiple and intersecting barriers that make them even more excluded than other ordinary women. All stakeholders that participated in the evaluation, including young and senior women, concurred that the project is highly relevant to their needs and aspirations in terms of political participation and leadership in governance and peace building. Further, the relevance of the project hinges on the fact that the project objectives and expected outcomes are in alignment with global, regional and national commitments on gender equality and women empowerment as well as with the institutional mandates of national institutions tasked with promoting gender equality and economic empowerment. The evaluation concluded that the project's Theory of Change (TOC) remains relevant given the gender inequality context in the country.

Effectiveness: The project design is based on a Theory of Change that recognises that having strategies that promote women participation in decision making processes that are implemented and monitored; leveraging on the leadership of women; and developing the capacity of relevant government institutions with the mandate to promote gender equality in governance, peace and security will lead to gender equality gains and significant improvements in women empowerment. The ToC and the project design remain relevant because studies have shown that women participation in decision making is hampered by a number of factors including lack of capacity, inadequate financial resources and weak support mechanisms from institutions mandated to spearhead gender equality initiatives³. By targeting to tackle barriers that impede women participation in decision making structures and processes, the project design was noted to be generally valid and effective. There is however scope to increase effectiveness of the project design by ensuring that: all stakeholders are consulted at all stages of the project lifecycle, including design; the project becomes more inclusive by reaching out to marginalised women in rural and non-urban areas and women with disabilities; and the capacity of AWLN is strengthened, particularly in terms of resource mobilisation, to enable the network to be gradually weaned from UN Women so that it can exist as an independent institution owned by its members,

The project has contributed significantly to the strengthening of the women's movement by facilitating the creation of the AWLN national chapter and the Bulawayo provincial chapter. Since the launch of the AWLN Zimbabwe Chapter in 2020, UN Women has continued to provide technical support to the national chapter and to the youth caucus to enable these arms to build a strong women's movement. As of April 2020, the network membership had expanded to 150, up from 123 in December 2021. Through UN Women support AWLN has managed to engage in a number of activities including Annual Retreat for the Zimbabwe Chapter in February 2022 where the roadmap for the organisation was charted and which was attended by UN Women HQ representatives; establishing a website for the network; training of media personnel on gender-responsive and sensitive reporting; and development of eight knowledge products to enhance the capacity of stakeholders. The training of media personnel has resulted in the trained journalists showcasing success stories of women in leadership and the capacity of the journalist to mainstream gender in their work has been greatly enhanced⁴.

Through AWLN, the project has also managed to bring together diverse groups of women from different political persuasions to work for a common purpose of empowering women so that they can participate meaningfully and effectively in leadership and political processes. Given the extreme political polarisation in the country, the project has played a critical role in bringing adversaries together, make them realise that they have common interests and that they are much stronger and will have more impact if they speak with one voice. The project has also done well in bridging the generational gap between older women and young women and has given young women the opportunity to express themselves through the Young Women Caucus within AWLN. The members noted that the network provides a safe space for young women in politics as some of them have been victims of political violence and cyberbullying while some have collapsed into depression. The project however needs to focus on WEE of the AWLN members so that they are able to

³ Zimbabwe National Gender Profile (2020)

⁴ KII with trained journalists

compete at the same level with men for leadership positions. More financial resources are needed for the movement-building component of the project to enable AWLN to establish the remaining four provincial chapters to widen the movement's reach of marginalised women in the country.

The capacity-building initiatives supported by the project included a mentorship programme for young women leaders; Support AWLN Zimbabwe representatives to attend the annual inter-generational regional and global retreats and to engage regional and international leaders on GEWE; Support participation of AWLN in dialogues and or initiatives on gender responsive strategies with duty bearers and policy makers; and training of women leaders in peace committees on Conflict Management, Prevention and Resolution. The training was described by participants as very useful as it has equipped them with skills to enable them to participate meaningfully in peace and security leadership processes and structures. However, although significant progress has been made in enhancing the capacities of women leaders to engage in conflict resolution, mediation and management, this capacity needs to be cascaded down to grassroots level through the establishment of more provincial chapters.

The project also sought to strengthen the capacity of decision-makers to formulate, review, and implement gender-sensitive policies, and protocols that promote women's rights in line with the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas. An assessment to identify barriers that women face in local governance participation was conducted. The assessment identified several barriers including: limited knowledge of electoral processes at local government level, lack of finances to fund participation in electoral processes, violence against women in elections and lack of confidence among women. Recommendations put forward to dismantle the identified barriers included the following: raising awareness among women on WPP; training and mentorship programmes; and networking and advocacy on WPP. The findings of the assessment were tabled, discussed and validated at a meeting attended by the Minister of Local Government, senior policy makers drawn from Government ministries, Local Councils, Councillors, CSOs, media and other stakeholders. The Foreword of the report was written by the Minister and this signified government recognition of the barriers identified in the assessment report and an endorsement of the remedial strategies proposed therein. A Pocket Guide for aspiring and elected women councillors was also developed to provide guidelines that will enhance the participation of aspiring women candidates at the local government level and strengthening the capacities of elected women Councillors to effectively discharge their mandates as Councillors. This is going to be a useful resource book for aspiring women leaders in general, including at grassroots and national levels.

The project re-ignited discussions and momentum around the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. An induction workshop to develop the Zimbabwe National Action Plan for the United Nations Resolution on Women Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) for the National Technical Committee (NTC) and stakeholders was conducted. This process enhanced the capacity and knowledge of the participants on the UNSCR 1325. A two-day drafting clinic on the NAP further enhanced the capacity of the National Technical Committee to draft national action plans and strategies as the draft NAP is now in place. The project provided technical capacity to the Women's Parliamentary Caucus for the domestication of UNSCR 1325, a resolution not well known by members of parliament and some government institutions responsible for operationalising it. With support from the project, a Handbook for Parliamentarians on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was co-developed by the UN Women and the Parliament of Zimbabwe. Members of Parliament and other stakeholders that participated in the development of the handbook confirmed that they have been empowered with knowledge and tools to spearhead the domestication of UNSCR 1325.⁵

Stakeholders were engaged, through a consultative process, to develop a costed roadmap for the development of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) strategy. The establishment of a roadmap towards the development of a National YPS strategy is a positive development in the quest for a National YPS strategy. There is however further need for mobilisation of stakeholders and resources to implement the agreed roadmap leading to the development and finalisation of the National YPS strategy during the last half of the project life cycle.

Efficiency: In terms of delivery of outputs, the project managed to implement most of the planned activities substantively, although there were delays in some cases owing to a number of factors including unavailability of stakeholders, by-elections that were conducted in some parts of the country and holiday breaks during the implementation period. The other delays were caused by coordination challenges between the two principal ministries and lack of understanding of the objectives of the project, particularly with regard to the security component which is considered sensitive.

The training workshops were conducted locally, and some were conducted virtually, which was cost-effective in that local resources and venues were utilised. In future, however, there is need to utilise government facilities or relatively middle of the range hotels that are cheaper than venues that were hired for some of the stakeholder engagement and training sessions at top hotels. The resources saved on top of the range hotel venue hires could then have been channelled towards, for example, establishing of AWLN the remaining provincial chapters or conducting consultative meetings in the remaining four provinces. Since four planned AWLN chapters are yet to be established, there is need to increase the

⁵ KIIs

budget allocation for this activity beyond the € 5,000 allocated for 2022 to enable a more inclusive and wide reaching movement building process.

The allocation of €50,000 to the new activity of capacity building for stakeholders is commendable given the role that these national stakeholders and decision makers play in the formulation, review, and implementation of gender-sensitive policies, and protocols that promote women's rights in line with the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas. The indirect costs of the project are now 52 per cent of total programme costs, while remuneration costs are now 40 per cent of the total budget and 84 per cent of direct costs. The EU and UNDP recommended ratio is that indirect costs (remuneration) should equal 7 per cent of the value of the direct costs⁶. While the need for additional human resources for the project is undoubted, the indirect costs in general and the remuneration costs in particular are too high compared to the direct costs, which ultimately affects implementation of some of the planned activities.

Sustainability: the project has built foundation for sustainability through: national stakeholder engagement and co-creation of interventions which promotes buy in, support and ownership; capacity building initiatives targeted at AWLN, Women Parliamentary Caucus Committee, decision makers in national institutions responsible for implementation of the WPS agenda and commitments, CSOs and media houses which equips these stakeholders with skills to implement commitments on WPS beyond the lifespan of the project. There is however need to enhance the capacity of AWLN to exist as an independent entity beyond UN Women technical and funding support. There is further need to ensure that all stakeholders are consulted and participate in all stages of the project lifecycle.

Integration of Gender Equality and Human Rights: The evaluation established that the whole project is centred and focused on promoting gender equality, women empowerment and women's rights in the realm of governance, peace and security through the operationalisation of UNSCR 1325 and 2250. The project sought to ensure that women, including those that are left behind and marginalised as well as young women are empowered to meaningfully participate in governance, peace and security. There is however need for the project to be more inclusive by ensuring that there is increased participation by women with disability and those from grassroots in rural areas as they are still less visible in the project compared to other groups of women.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- The project was found to be largely relevant to the gender equality and women empowerment in the realm of governance, peace and security in Zimbabwe.
- The project has generally performed well in terms of meeting its outputs and targets although there are areas needing more focus in the last half for the planned outputs and targets to be met.
- The project was managed fairly efficiently although there were some implementation delays caused by unavailability of stakeholders and inadequate coordination between partners. The indirect costs of the project (including remuneration costs) are too high relative to the direct costs and this might lead to non-implementation of planned activities owing to budgetary constraints.
- The prospects for sustainability are high if the capacity of AWLN is enhanced for the network to be able to exist as an independent entity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for further strengthening of the administrative, resource mobilization and movement building capacity of the AWLN secretariat (particularly the Young Women Caucus) to enable the network to be less dependent on UN Women and to work as an independent network for long term sustainability.
- AWLN needs further capacity strengthening to enable it to register itself as a legal entity, such as a Trust or PVO. Once formally registered the movement would then be formally recognized and be able to attract funding from donors.
- The project needs to be more inclusive by ensuring that more women with disabilities, rural women and other marginalized groups of women meaningfully participate in the capacity building activities of the project.
- Consider providing logistical and funding support to AWLN members, particularly those that are poorly resourced, to ensure that they attend capacity building trainings and meetings and participate in meetings conducted virtually.
- For ownership and long-term sustainability, stakeholders need to be engaged at all stages of the project life-cycle, including design.

⁶

https://popp.undp.org/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Design_Prepare%20Fully%20Costed%20Budgets%20for%20Projects_Guidelines_EU.docx

- There is need for the project to consider economic empowerment capacity building initiatives for AWLN members, particularly young women, to enable them to generate economic resources that are so critical in running a leadership campaign.
- To promote efficient utilisation of the limited resources, there is need to secure cheaper venues for workshops of the project by considering government institutions and middle of the table hotels so that funds saved can be used to support outstanding activities that could not be implemented due to resource constrains such as consultations in provinces and rolling out of provincial AWLN chapters.
- Although most outputs have been achieved, there is need to accelerate implementation of key outstanding outputs including: decentralization of AWLN chapters; rolling out of the mentorship programme for young women; support for the finalisation of the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 and the Youth Peace and Security Strategy.
- Changing mind sets, values, beliefs and practices takes a long time and hence there is need to continue with the capacity building and awareness creation initiatives beyond the coming elections next year in 2023.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the Report

UN Women Zimbabwe Country Office engaged an independent consultant to conduct a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the “*Engendering Governance to Promote Peace and Security in Zimbabwe*” project. The project was implemented in two phases: Phase 1: 2020 – 2021 and Phase 2: 2021-2022.

This report presents synthesised findings from this MTE as well as recommendations for improving implementation and effectiveness for the remaining life cycle of the project. The MTE was conducted in June 2022.

1.2 Women, Peace and Security Context

Zimbabwe has ratified key international and regional human rights instruments that protect women’s rights and seek to address gender inequalities including: the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (PACRWC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol⁷. However, Zimbabwe is yet to fully domesticate these norms and standards into domestic laws⁸.

Other international instruments of importance are the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (including resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960), which apply to all UN member states. It should however be noted that there is limited knowledge and awareness of these instruments by both government institutions and civil society organizations in Zimbabwe. This has resulted in little effort to mainstream and integrate these provisions in key national development strategies, policies and laws. All these instruments call for greater participation by women in all areas of decision-making, including peace processes and security matters, and for effective protection of women from all forms of gender-based violence.

At national level, Zimbabwe has a progressive national normative framework on gender equality in the form of the Constitution, The National Gender Policy (2017) and Implementation Strategy (2019), the National GBV Strategy as well as sectoral gender policies and strategies. Despite having such a progressive normative framework, the major challenge has been the lack of effective implementation of the normative framework which has resulted in perpetuation of gender inequality in all spheres of the Zimbabwean society. Women are still underrepresented in decision-making positions in the public despite constitutional provisions on gender parity in all decision-making positions. Women constitute only 31% of Members of Parliament (House of Assembly)⁹. Women representation at local government level is at a low of 14%. More worrying is the fact that women representation has been decreasing over the last two election seasons despite special temporary measures implemented at national parliament level to have reserved seats for women. At local government level, Section 277 of the Constitution has been amended through Constitution Amendment No. 2 in an effort to increase women participation at local government level. The amendment provides that “*An Act of Parliament may provide for the election, by a system of proportional representation referred to in subsection (5), of at least 30 per cent of the total members of the local council elected on ward basis as women*”. Whilst this amendment provision is progressive, it is still not definitive as it states that an Act of Parliament “*may*” and not “*must*” which leaves room for non-implementation of this provision.

The decreasing trend in WPP needs to be arrested by supporting women so that they can participate competitively in the coming 2023 national elections. Under this project UN Women will work together with the

⁷ National Gender Policy (2017)

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Zimbabwe National Gender Profile (2020)

Zimbabwe Gender Commission, the Women in Local Government Forum, AWLN and other national stakeholders to provide support to women political candidates and those in office through trainings, peer-support and high-level stakeholder engagements in addition to advocating for the full implementation of the Zimbabwean Constitution and regional and international frameworks that the state is party to.

Participation of young women in political and leadership positions is also severely limited in Zimbabwe due to a myriad of barriers including gender-based discrimination, gerontocracy, lack of knowledge and awareness of political rights, lack of resources to fund elections, sexual harassment and exploitation, electoral related gender-based violence and patriarchal attitudes and practices of political parties. Although in 2020 the Government of Zimbabwe gazetted Constitution Amendment Number two with a provision for special measures to increase youth representation in parliament by having ten reserved seats in the national assembly, there is scepticism if this provision will be implemented given challenges in the implementation of the women's quota. To address this lacuna of young women representation in the National Assembly, UN Women will support stakeholders including AWLN to engage in advocacy work and engagement of duty-bearers for increased representation of young women leaders through the development of a Youth Participation Strategy which will identify key entry points to address challenges hampering young women's leadership. UN Women will support the finalisation and implementation of the UNSCR2250 & UNSCR1325 by Government, CSO and Chapter 12 Commissions.

1.3 Project Background and Theory of Change

1.3.1 Background

With funding support from the Embassy of Ireland in Pretoria, UN Women is implementing the project entitled 'Engendering Governance to Promote Peace and Security in Zimbabwe,' broken down in two phases, namely Phase one: 2020-2021 and Phase two: 2021 -2022. The first phase focused on the establishment of a structured, coordinated and multi-stakeholder platform to facilitate women's leadership, voice, and agency at all levels and in all sectors. The Zimbabwe Chapter of AWLN gained traction in advocating for inclusion and meaningful participation for women in decision making within the country. The second phase built on the successes of the First Phase by furthering the work done and maximizing on strategic relationships with government, Chapter 12 Commissions and Key stakeholders. Emphasis on advancing women's leadership and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda through efforts towards the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

When the project started, it was aligned to the then Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF 2016-2021), which outlined development priorities of the development partnership between the Government of Zimbabwe and the UN System in Zimbabwe. ZUNDAF was subsequently replaced by the new development framework called United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) which was introduced to align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda 2030. The project was realigned with the UNSDCF, particularly with its pillar on Peace and Security. The project also contributes to the UN Women global Flagship Projects on Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership and Women Peace and Security, the Sustainable Development Goals, 5 and 16 and UN Security Council Resolution 1325, specifically the participation pillar.

Lessons from UN Women's previous work have shown that effectiveness in advancing the WPS agenda is hinged upon sustained engagement with and support to national stakeholders in the implementation of international, regional and national gender equality commitments coupled with knowledge generation and dissemination. It is in this context that the project is focusing on:

- Women’s leadership in decision making
- Capacity development of national institutions that are key in the implementation of the WPS agenda
- Providing continued support to the African Women Leadership Network (AWLN) Zimbabwe Chapter.

The support to the Engendering Governance to Promote Peace and Security in Zimbabwe from 2020-2022 has resulted in key positive results which include but are not limited to the following; i) the establishment of the AWLN Zimbabwe Chapter, ii) the localization of high-level regional and global processes on women’s rights and gender equality, iii) awareness raising on opportunities and gaps in women’s leadership as per the constitutional amendment and legislative reforms iv) the launch of an intergenerational mentorship project v) promotional segments on AWLN and gender equality on national radio and television vi) Implementation of activities under the 16 Days of Activism on Gender-Based Violence vii) support towards the development of a NAP on UNSCR 1325, viii) development of key knowledge products on gender equality and women’s empowerment, ix) development of a Roadmap for a Strategy on Youth Peace and Security, x) media training on women’s political participation and development of key media and WPP tools, and lastly xi) participation of AWLN members at regional AWLN Global Events.

The implementation of the project has ignited renewed commitments towards the finalisation and operationalisation of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the WPS agenda in Zimbabwe. During the commemorations of 20th and 21st Anniversaries of the UNSCR1325, the Ministry of Defence and War Veterans requested for UN Women support towards the operationalisation of the NAP through the drafting and the development of the NAP for UNSCR1325. The project also supported the development of a legislator’s guide or Handbook for Parliamentarians to promote an appreciation of the UNSCR1325 and created recognition for the roles of young people in peace processes by contributing to the development of a roadmap for the realisation of a strategy on Youth Peace and Security in Zimbabwe. The project also supported the assessment of WPP in local government by analysing the existing electoral system, use of special temporary measures and the issue of women’s local government quota.

The project has also facilitated the training of media personnel on gender sensitive reporting for women in politics to address the reporting biases that act as barriers to women political participation. The project aims to achieve its objectives through collaborations with UN agencies, particularly UNDP, government agencies, Chapter 12 Commissions, academic institutions, civil society and the private sector.

1.3.2 Stakeholders of the Project

The following were the key stakeholders of the project.

Table 1: Stakeholder of the project and their roles

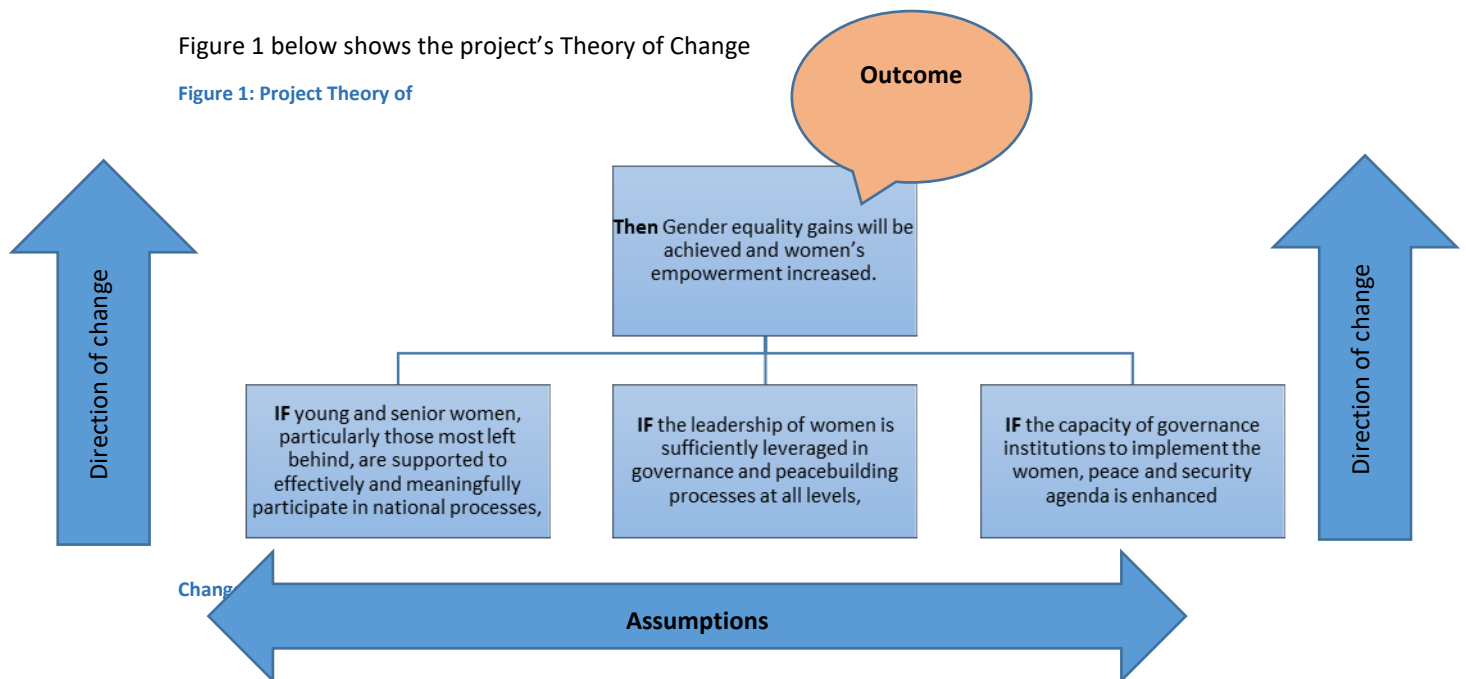
Name of Stakeholder	Description of role and function
Embassy of Ireland	Funding support and governance oversight

UN Women	Programme management and monitoring the performance of the project in accordance with the corporate requirements
AWLN	A network of women leaders created to galvanise action by women leaders in Zimbabwe to effectively engage in the country's development discourse, table solutions and hold leaders at various levels accountable to gender equality commitments
Media	Gender sensitive and gender responsive reporting around women's leadership as well as changing norms linked to subordination and women's inabilities to lead. Sharing positive messages on women's leadership as well as provide more positive examples of women leaders and role models to combat negative social norms and contribute to peace and social cohesion
Women in Local Government Forum (WiLGF)	Conduct research on barriers to women's leadership in local government and discuss ways to address these barriers to increase women participation in local government decision making structures and processes.
Ministry of Defence	Development of National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSCR1325
Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus (ZWPC)	Domestication of UNSCR1325 including the development of a user friendly "Legislator's Guide on Women Peace & Security"
Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC),	Promoting gender responsive and sensitive electoral processes and structures to achieve gender parity and equality in elections and in Peace and Security.
Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC),	
National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC)	To promote gender parity and equality in peace and reconciliation processes and structures in the country

1.3.2 Project Theory of Change

Figure 1 below shows the project's Theory of Change

Figure 1: Project Theory of



As reflected above, the project is premised on the Theory of Change (ToC) that **IF** young and senior women, particularly those most left behind, are supported to effectively and meaningfully participate in national processes, **IF** the leadership of women is sufficiently leveraged in governance and peacebuilding processes at all levels, **AND IF** the capacity of governance institutions to implement the women, peace and security agenda is enhanced **THEN** gender equality gains will be achieved and women's empowerment increased. The main expected outcome from the ToC is "Strategies to promote women's participation in decision making processes and structures at national and local levels are formulated, enforced, implemented and monitored in line with national, regional and international provisions."

1.3.3 Project Objectives

The following are the project's key objectives:

- (a) To support young and senior women, and particularly those left behind, to effectively and meaningfully participate in national processes
- (b) To sufficiently leverage the leadership of women in governance and peace building processes at all levels
- (c) To enhance the capacity of governance institutions to implement the WPS agenda

1.3.4 Project Results Framework

The project has one expected outcome, namely: *“Strategies to promote women's participation in decision making processes and structures at national and local levels formulated, enforced, implemented and monitored in line with national, regional and international provisions.”* The project has the following four outputs and activities.

- **Output 1:** AWLN is adequately financed to reach and galvanize women leaders and young women in diverse sectors of the country. The main activities being implemented include technical support to the national Steering Committee, Youth Caucus and the AWLN National Chapter; mobilizing women leaders from across sectors; Communication and Visibility; and Development of handbook on gender responsive media and conduct sensitization trainings with the media.
- **Output 2:** AWLN has capacity to promote evidence-based advocacy for a gender responsive National Development Strategy in Zimbabwe. Activities under this this output include: Generation of knowledge for gender-responsive National Development Strategy; AWLN Young Women Leaders mentorship programme; and supporting AWLN Zimbabwe representatives to attend the annual inter-generational regional and global retreats
- **Output 3:** Strengthened capacities of AWLN leaders to engage in conflict resolution, mediation, management and leadership processes. Under this output, activities being implemented include: Building capacity of AWLN provincial chapters in 5 provinces to contribute to subnational and national level conflict prevention mechanisms; and conducting conflict hot-spot mapping and analysis and develop gender-specific indices and measures for peace and development in collaboration with Women-Led Peace Committees, FemWise Africa and the NPRC
- **Output 4:** Strengthened capacity of decision-makers to formulate, review, and implement gender-sensitive policies, and protocols that promote women's rights in line with the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas. Activities include; Technical support to women in local governance including conducting an assessment of barriers to women's leadership in local government and convening consultative meeting with local government councillors, provincial ministers and AWLN provincial chapters on the findings; Facilitating high-level consultative meetings on NAP UNSCR1325 in collaboration with Ministry of Defence; Technical support to the Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus (ZWPC) for the domestication of UNSCR1325 including the development of a user friendly “Legislator's Guide on Women Peace & Security”; Development of a Youth, Peace and Security strategy for local government councillors, parliamentarians, and ministries informed by a consultative report; and Organising South-South and North-South exchanges of experiences with reference countries on the development of NAPs and the implementation.

The expected impact is *“Gender-inclusive governance and peace in Zimbabwe.”*

1.4 Project Design Changes

Phase two of the project sought to continue building on the achievement of Phase one (2020-2021). Realising the importance of national institutions as key drivers of the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, the project, in addition to supporting AWLN, also focused on capacity development of national institutions to enable them to uphold international, regional and national legal frameworks on gender equality which Zimbabwe is party to. The second phase also targeted the media as partners so that the media can report in a gender-sensitive and responsive manner in support of women leadership and participation. A new activity was added to develop a handbook on gender responsive media and to conduct sensitization trainings with the media. Another activity on conducting an assessment of barriers to women's leadership in local government was also introduced in Phase two to identify entry barriers and to come up with strategies, through a participatory process, to address the identified barriers.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women adopted virtual means of delivering on some of the outputs. For example, some of the trainings were done virtually, which enabled the project to meet its targets despite the operational constraints brought about by the pandemic.

The evaluation established that the changes made to phase two of the project strengthened the project in terms of establishing a long term foundation for sustainability of the project through capacity building of national stakeholders and engagement of a broad range of stakeholders in project activities.

2. MID-TERM EVALUATION

2.1 Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives

2.1.1 Purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The overall purpose of the MTE was to assess progress towards achievement of goals and objectives of the project at national level against the standard DAC/OECD criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and outcome since its inception in June 2020. The MTE further sought to adjust the result framework of the project based on concrete recommendations to respond to the changes in the context,

availability of funds and to ensure effective result measurement for the rest of the project implementation period.

The evaluation was also designed to identify lessons learned, good practices, and factors that facilitated/hindered achievement. Through this process, the MTE sought to contribute towards accountability and learning as well as decision-making including practical recommendations to inform the management and coordination of project implementation leading towards the final evaluation and other related initiatives on women's participation in leadership and governance.

2.1.2 Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation had a national level focus. Stakeholders of the project that participated in the MTE evaluation included UN Women, relevant government ministries and departments, Chapter 12 commissions, CSOs participating in the project and the direct beneficiaries of the project. The evaluation assessed the project outcome and all the four output areas as well as the activities planned for implementation.

2.1.3 Guiding Frameworks and Principles

The UN Women Evaluation Policies and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluation and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for evaluation were used as the guiding frameworks for the evaluation. The following principles were adhered to during the evaluation: Do No Harm, national ownership and leadership; fair power relations and empowerment; participation and inclusivity; independency and impartiality; transparency; quality and credibility; and innovation.

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

2.2.1 Evaluation Design and Approach

This evaluation was undertaken through a participatory and multipronged approach. Qualitative research methods were employed and both primary and secondary data were collected. The Project document and specifically the logical framework (outlining the key and intermediate outcomes, indicators/ baseline and targets, lead implementing agency, other implementing partners, activities and inputs) was the bedrock for this evaluation. The evaluation also made use of the Project Results and Monitoring Framework for clear indications on the expected results and indicators.

In line with the UNEG Handbook for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspectives in Evaluations in the UN System, a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach was applied throughout the evaluation process. This included analysing the extent to which the project's interventions and programming approach are based on international human rights standards (including CEDAW). The extent to which the project is operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights was examined, including the degree to which the project's strategies, design and implementation seek to analyse inequalities and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.

The evaluation was utilization focused and was conducted in a transparent, inclusive and participatory manner. Key stakeholders of the project (including direct beneficiaries such as young and older women, differently abled women, poor and marginalised women) participated at the data collection and validation phases of the evaluation process and were provided with an opportunity to express their perspectives about the project. At the national level, project stakeholders were actively involved in the evaluation as key informant interviewees and during the stakeholder consultative workshop.

2.2.2 Users of the Evaluation

The evaluation report will be used to inform the implementation of Phase 3 of the project and the design of future projects. The targeted users of the evaluation include:

- UN Women
- Relevant government ministries and institutions
- Independent Chapter 12 commission
- UN Agencies
- Implementing Partners
- Development partners

UN Women will be responsible for developing management responses and action plans to the evaluation findings and recommendations. The final evaluation report will be made publicly available on the UN Women Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation (GATE) System <http://gate.unwomen.org/>. It will also be disseminated during regional, national and district meetings.

2.2.3 Sources of Data and Collection Methods

Table 2 below shows a summary of the evaluation matrix that was utilised during the evaluation. The matrix shows the evaluation criteria used, key evaluation questions under each criteria, sources of data and data collection methods employed.

Table 2: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Sources of Data	Methods of data collection
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are the activities and outputs of the Project consistent with the intended impacts and effects? -How relevant is the project to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, national, regional and international priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Project Documents -National, regional and global literature on WPS and WLPP -Project stakeholders (relevant govt ministries, UN Women, Independent commissions, AWLN, SOs) -Direct & Indirect Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Literature Review -Key Informant Interviews (KII) -FGDs
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To what extent has the project made sufficient progress towards its planned objectives and results /has the project achieved its planned objectives and results within its specified period? -Has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country? - In which areas does the project have its least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome? -In which areas does the Project have the greatest achievements? How can UN Women build on or expand these achievements? -What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? -What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the Project objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Project Documents -Project stakeholders (relevant govt ministries, UN Women, Independent commissions, AWLN, SOs) -Direct & Indirect Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Literature Review -Key Informant Interviews (KII) -FGDs during consultative workshops -MSC/Impact Stories
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑☑Has the project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective? -To what extent does the management structure of the intervention support efficiency for project implementation? - Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? -Have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective? In general, do the results achieved justify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Project Documents, including financial reports -Project stakeholders (relevant govt ministries, UN Women, Independent commissions, AWLN, SOs) -Direct & Indirect Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Project documents review -Key Informant Interviews (KII) -FGDs

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Sources of Data	Methods of data collection
	<p>the costs? Could the same results be attained with fewer resources?</p> <p>-Have Project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?</p> <p>-Does Project governance facilitate good results and efficient delivery?</p>		
Sustainability	-How are the achieved results, especially the positive changes generated by the project in the lives of women and girls, going to be sustained after this project ends?	-Project Documents -Project stakeholders (relevant govt ministries, UN Women, Independent commissions, AWLN, SOs) -Direct & Indirect Beneficiaries	-Project documents review -Key Informant Interviews (KII) -FGDs
Outcomes and Impact	<p>What are the main effects of project activities? This should include positive and negative changes produced by the project's interventions, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.</p> <p>-To what extent can the changes/results that have been achieved be attributed to the inputs, strategies, actions and outputs of the project?</p>	Project Documents -Project stakeholders (relevant govt ministries, UN Women, Independent commissions, AWLN, SOs) -Direct & Indirect Beneficiaries	-Project documents review -Key Informant Interviews (KII) -FGDs -Stories of change
UN Women's technical and resource management, coordination role in the delivery of the Project	-To what extent is UN Women effective and responsive in achieving the technical and resource management role for the project?	-Project Documents -Project stakeholders (relevant govt ministries, UN Women, Independent commissions, AWLN, SOs)	-Project documents review -Key Informant Interviews (KII)
Gender Equality and Human Rights	<p>-To what extent has gender and human rights considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation?</p> <p>-How has attention to/integration of gender equality and human rights concerns advanced the area of work?</p>	-project documents -UN Women GEHRI guidelines --Project stakeholders (relevant govt ministries, UN Women, Independent commissions, AWLN, SOs)	-Project documents and literature review -Key Informant Interviews (KII)

The evaluation employed qualitative data collection methods to collect data for the evaluation from multiple sources. Data for the evaluation was gathered using the following methods:

(a) Desk/Literature Review

A repository of project documents was developed. The evaluation reviewed all project documents to have an in-depth understanding of the project background and context, goal and objectives, implementation framework and approach, expected outcomes and milestones that the project has achieved so far vis-à-vis what was planned as well as challenges encountered. The project documents reviewed included the following:

- Concept Note
- Project proposal
- Mid-Term Assessment Report
- Annual and quarterly reports
- AWLN background documents and reports
- Donor Reports
- Minutes of meetings
- Other relevant documents

(b) In-Depth Key Informant/Stakeholder Interviews

In-depth interviews with key stakeholders and key informants were conducted to solicit their views on key focus areas of the evaluation relating to relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impacts, inclusiveness and sustainability of the project. Interviews with key informants from key institutions assisted in institutional assessments to determine the extent to which the capacity of the relevant institutions to implement WPS obligations has been enhanced by the project. In-depth interviews further provided an opportunity for the stakeholders to propose recommendations for future interventions on WPS.

The purpose of engaging key stakeholders during the evaluation was to enable stakeholders to be part of the evaluation process as participants for ownership of results, validation and accountability. Key informants were selected on the basis of their strategic positions, participation and knowledge of the project and were interviewed using a semi-structured question guide. The sample selected for individual interviews adequately reflected diversity of stakeholders of the intervention. The key informants that were interviewed were drawn from AWLN (both senior and young women); relevant government departments; independent commissions; Irish Embassy as the donor; implementing CSOs and the media. A total of 14 stakeholders were interviewed during the evaluation (Please see the list of persons interviewed in the Annex of the report).

(c) Stakeholder Consultative Workshops and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Two stakeholders' consultative meetings were convened with ALWN members and with other participants and beneficiaries of the project. During these consultative workshops, participants engaged in group discussions to discuss the project's implementation processes, relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, main achievements, weaknesses, challenges and the impacts it has had on the participants and stakeholders in general and the WPS landscape in particular. After the group discussions, each group was provided with the opportunity to present its key findings during a plenary session where other participants from other groups provided further inputs and comments on the findings. The first consultative workshop with ALWN members was attended by 21 (2 males and 19 females) participants while the second with stakeholders and beneficiaries had 13 participants (males and 9 females).

2.2.4 Data Analysis

The evaluation gathered mostly qualitative data from desk review, key informant interviews and FGDs. Quantitative data mainly emerged from programme reports summarizing expenditure and programme quantitative results. Data analysis was continuously done throughout the data collection process, taking a sequential data analysis approach, as the consultants familiarised themselves with emerging research themes. A thematic framework, based on the evaluation criteria and the related evaluation questions was developed to identify key issues, concepts and emerging themes from the data. Data was then categorized according to the emerging thematic areas and analysed through content analysis. An assessment of the various aspects of the evaluation was based on a triangulation of the primary data, document and literature review as well as expert judgment.

2.2.5 Limitations of the Evaluation

The main limitation of the evaluation was the unavailability of some of the key informants by the time the evaluation was conducted. A consultative workshop, where stakeholders participated in FGDs, was convened to enable project participants and stakeholders to be in one room to participate in the evaluation as it proved difficult to secure individual interviews with some of the targeted stakeholders. This significantly increased participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders in the evaluation.

2.2.6 Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was guided at all times by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System. The evaluation team remained impartial and independent from UN Women and other key stakeholders of the programme at all times. Evaluation judgments were independent, based on clearly articulated reasons and supported by solid evidence.

The evaluation team respected stakeholders' right to provide information in confidence and made participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality. Evaluators ensured that sensitive information could not be traced to its source so that the relevant individuals could be protected from potential reprisals. Identifiers instead of real names were used during KIIs and FGDs to ensure confidentiality.

The evaluation team respected differences in political affiliation, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and was mindful of the potential implications of these differences when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluation findings. Care was taken during sampling to ensure that the diverse groups of participants were represented in the evaluation.

Before participating in KIIs and FGDs, the evaluation team explained in detail the purpose of the evaluation and the pros and cons of participating in the evaluation process. The participants were further informed that participation in the evaluation was voluntary and that they could decide not to participate if they so wish. After being satisfied that the participants had fully understood the evaluation purpose, they were requested to provide verbal informed consent if they wished to participate in the evaluation. Only after granting informed consent were the project stakeholders interviewed or participated in consultative meetings and FGDs. Data collected from the evaluation was securely kept in password protected computers to ensure that no one outside the evaluation team would access it for confidentiality purposes.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings of the MTE in terms of key thematic areas of the evaluation. The evaluation assessed the project in terms of Relevance, Performance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability.

3.1 Relevance

Project relevance and strategic fit with the development aspirations and needs of national governments, development partners, civic society and targeted beneficiaries is essential for programme sustainability, ownership and support for development initiatives. In this evaluation relevance was assessed in terms of (i) the extent to which project goal and objectives are in alignment with the gender equality context and the needs and priorities of the targeted beneficiaries in Zimbabwe; and (ii) the alignment of project goal and objectives to national, regional and international priorities, policies and frameworks on WPS and Governance; and (3) validity of project design.

3.1.1 Relevance to the gender equality context and needs of the targeted beneficiaries.

The project's goal of promoting women participation in decision making processes and structures at national and local levels remains valid and relevant to the current gender inequality situation in Zimbabwe. This project goal has become even more relevant given the national elections that are due next year in 2023. The main goal of the project is to promote women's participation in decision making processes and structures at national and local levels through ensuring that effective strategies are formulated, enforced, implemented and monitored in line with national, regional and international provisions. In line with the project's ToC, this outcome would be achieved through supporting young and senior women, particularly those that are marginalised or left

behind, so that they can effectively and meaningfully participate in national processes; leveraging on the leadership of women in governance and peace building processes at all levels; and capacitating governance institutions to effectively implement the peace and security agenda.

An analysis of the Peace, Security and Governance landscape in Zimbabwe shows that women are under-represented in the leadership, governance, peace and political structures and processes in Zimbabwe. The Gender Index Score for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Zimbabwe for 2020 shows significant gender equality gaps which will make it difficult for the country to attain the 2030 targets for the SDGs. The gender gap index for the country in 2020 was 0.73. Women are underrepresented in public service decision making bodies (e.g. only 36 per cent of Permanent Secretaries), Parliament (34 per cent), Senate (44 per cent) and local government (14 per cent)¹⁰. Women are still underrepresented in parliament and other decision-making bodies despite the existence of specific provisions in the constitution for 50:50 representation and the quota provision of 60 reserved seats for women. Although the quota system at national level has been extended by two terms at national level through Constitutional Amendment No.2 and has been extended to local government where a 30 per cent quota is reserved for women, it still remains to be seen if this will increase women participation and representation in elected positions at both local government and national level.

Women, youths and vulnerable groups are also largely excluded in the peace building process¹¹. The National Gender Profile Report further notes that there is a dearth of women's representation and participation in peace and security issues due to cultural and institutional barriers. During the Global Political Agreement in 2009, women did not play a significant role in the negotiations. A commission of inquiry set up to investigate the shooting of civilians in the post 2018 election period only had two women out of the seven appointed commissioners. Women are also under-represented in the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

With women currently grossly under-represented and with limited reforms having taken place to promote the participation of women, more needs to be done to ensure increased women participation in the coming elections. The specific focus on young women and marginalised women by the project is also critically important as these groups have multiple and intersecting barriers that make them even more excluded than other ordinary women. The project worked with the AWLN Youth Caucus and the Zimbabwe young Women's Network for Peacebuilding to strengthen the capacity of young women to participate in peace building and decision-making processes.

All stakeholders that participated in the evaluation, including young and senior women, all concurred that project is highly relevant to their needs and aspirations in terms of political participation and leadership in governance and peace building. Below are some of the direct voices of the participants and stakeholders captured during the evaluation:

"This project came at the right time for young women. We really want to participate and contest leadership positions, but we sometimes lack the clout and skills to do so. The project provided us with the tools and training for us to be effective in leadership and in creating space for ourselves in the highly contested arena. The project also helped in bridging the generational divide between senior women and young women. It was very relevant to us as young women." **Young woman, AWLN member**

"Before participating in the project, we did not really know what the UNSCR 1325 was all about, and yet it is one of our mandates as an institution to implement its provisions. Through training the project opened our eyes on our obligations with regard to this resolution, and hence the project was highly

¹⁰ Zimbabwe National Gender Profile, 2020

¹¹ Ibid

relevant to us as an institution” (Key informant from institution tasked with implementation of provisions of 1325).

“The project helped to reignite the passion around domesticating UNSCR 1325 and 2250, which had really died down among the responsible institutions in government” (Key informant from institution tasked with implementation of provisions of 1325).

The evaluation concluded that the project remains highly relevant to the current gender inequality context in the country in terms of women participation in governance, leadership and peace and security. The project has even become more relevant given the upcoming national elections in 2023 which require accelerated empowerment of women for them to participate meaningfully and effectively in the election.

3.1.2 Alignment of project goal and objectives to national, regional and international priorities, policies and frameworks on WPS and governance

The evaluation established the goal and objectives of the project were in strong alignment with global, regional and national commitments on gender equality. Zimbabwe, as part of the global community, has signed and ratified several international treaties, conventions and protocols that seek to promote gender equality and women empowerment. These include: the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (PACRWC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol. At national level Zimbabwe has adopted a progressive Constitution, The National Gender Policy (2017) and Implementation Strategy (2019), as well as sectoral gender policies and strategies, all with specific provisions on promoting gender equality and women empowerment. Although the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (including resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960), are applicable in the Zimbabwean context, there is limited knowledge and awareness of these instruments by both government institutions and civil society organizations.

The goal and objectives of the project seek to advance gender equality in governance, peace and security by empowering women, including young and marginalised women. The international, regional and national commitments cited above as well as the constitution all seek to advance gender equality and women empowerment using various strategies, including adoption of 50:50 gender representation at all decision making levels. The project is thus contributing towards the gender equality agenda that the global community and the government of Zimbabwe have committed to as it has strong alignment with the objectives of these commitments.

The objectives of the project are also strongly aligned to the institutional mandates of the key project stakeholders and partners. The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MWACSMED) is a primary partner in the project. The Ministry leads the National Gender Machinery. It is the agency mandated by the Government to coordinate, promote and lead the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Zimbabwe. It executes its mandate within the framework of the National Gender Policy.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), another key partner in the project, was established in terms of Section 246 of the Constitution in 2015. Its main functions are to monitor issues concerning gender equality as provided for in the Constitution. Its mandate is to investigate violations of gender rights, to receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate. It also recommends prosecution for criminal violations of rights relating to gender; conducts research into issues relating to gender and social justice and recommends changes to laws and practices which

lead to discrimination based on gender. The ZGC is mandated to be at the forefront in pushing for the alignment of laws, lobbying for and monitoring of the implementation of gender equality provisions such as appointments of females to boards and positions of decision making, provided for in the constitution, including change of attitudes so that men and women are not viewed as different but equal.

Another key partner in the project is the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). The Commission was established in terms of Section 251 of the Constitution. The functions of the Commission are to ensure post conflict-justice, healing and reconciliation; to ensure that persons subjected to torture and other forms of abuse receive rehabilitative treatment and support. Section 9 of the NPRC Act provides for the gender mandates of the Commission which include the establishment of a specific unit to develop guidelines and rules on how the Commission will incorporate gender into its work; the development of strategies to encourage women and girls and other marginalised groups to participate in the work of the Commission; ensuring gender equity in all structures of the Commission while at the same time ensuring that all organs of the Commission consider and address the gender implications of their activities. The Commission's 5-year Strategic Plan (2018 – 2022) demonstrates the intention by the Commission to support women affected by violent conflicts , including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence , include women in the peace and reconciliation process from the background that there have been insufficient platforms and opportunities for women to advance conflict transformation and peace building (there was one woman at the Lancaster House negotiations in 1979, women were marginally represented at the Unity Accord negotiations (1985-1987), and only one woman was part of the Government of National Unity's negotiating team).

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is another key partner in the project. ZEC was constituted in terms of Chapter 12 Section 238 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and is mandated to conduct and manage elections and referenda in Zimbabwe in a transparent, impartial and independent manner. There is a chairperson and a deputy chairperson both of whom are appointed on a full time basis. Four of the eight commissioners, other than the chairperson, must be women. Zimbabwe's Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13 Section 5 d[1]), requires the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to mainstream gender into electoral processes. Since its inception the Commission has endeavoured to mainstream gender in all its activities, including capacity building, research and knowledge management. ZEC has developed a Gender and Inclusion Policy (ZGIP) aimed at ensuring that the needs of women, men, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and other groups are fully taken into consideration during the conduct of the Commission's duties. It endeavours to ensure that the constitutional provisions that guarantee gender balance, equality, inclusion of all citizens to participate in all activities, be it political, economic, cultural, social etc, are fulfilled in electoral processes. UN Women is currently supporting the ZEC in the implementation of its Gender and Inclusion Policy.

Civil Society Organisations have played a very significant role in the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in Zimbabwe. These CSOs can broadly be categorised as those operating from a feminist perspective, women in development perspective and a gender and development perspective.

The goal and objectives of the project resonate strongly with the institutional mandates of these key partners of the project. The support and buy in that the project has gained over time from government institutions, independent commissions, CSOs and women's rights organisations, as evidenced by their participation in the different project supported activities, is an indication of alignment of the project objectives with those of the project partners. The selection of project partners by UN Women was thus strategic as it enhanced the advancement of the project objectives. The selection of partners was informed by the alignment of the mandate of the partner with the objectives of the project and the strategic location and positioning of the institution to influence the achievement of the desired outcomes of the project.

3.2 Project Performance and Effectiveness/Impact

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the programme is on course to achieving its set targets and the extent to which it is being effective in contributing towards the desired outcomes of the project. The assessment focused on effectiveness of project design and the extent to which the expected outcomes of the programme were being achieved in terms of improved capacity of young and senior women, particularly those most left behind, to effectively and meaningfully participate in national processes; leveraging on women leaders to spearhead women participation in governance and peacebuilding processes at all levels; and improved capacity of governance institutions to implement the women, peace and security agenda.

3.2.1 Validity and Effectiveness of Project Design

(a) Theory of Change

The key question in assessing the validity of programme design was: “*is the design and implementation strategy relevant and appropriate for achieving its objectives?*” The evaluation concluded that the project’s Theory of Change is still valid and will continue to be valid given the gender inequality context in the country. The ToC recognises that having strategies that promote women participation in decision making processes that are implemented and monitored; leveraging on the leadership of women; and developing the capacity of relevant government institutions with the mandate to promote gender equality in governance, peace and security; will lead to gender equality gains and significant improvements in women empowerment. The ToC remains relevant because studies have shown that women participation in decision making is hamstrung by a number of factors including lack of capacity, inadequate financial resources and weak support mechanisms from institutions mandated to spearhead gender equality initiatives¹². Discussions with AWLN members during the evaluation also confirmed that the main barriers that women in general and young women in particular face to participate meaningfully and actively in electoral processes include inadequate financial resources, lack of agency, limited skills for effective campaigning, hostile patriarchal norms and values that discourage women participation and a toxic masculine environment that subject women to politically motivated violence. Building the capacity of women; leveraging on the experiences, skill and tenacity of those women already in decision making positions and developing the capacity of government institutions to effectively deliver remain key in effectively addressing the gender equality gaps that currently exist. The leadership training that AWLN members have gone through has already resulted in members, in particular young women, expressing increased confidence to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes.¹³ The capacity-building initiatives targeting national institutions such as the Ministry of Defence and War Veterans and the Zimbabwe Women’s Parliamentary Caucus has led to reignited momentum on the development of NAP for 1325 and the domestication of UNSCR 1325¹⁴.

(b) Stakeholder Consultations

During the evaluation, some stakeholders felt that they had not been adequately engaged and consulted during the design of the project as they were only engaged towards the end of 2021. It however needs to be taken into account that, due to staff turnover, there are some institutional memory gaps in some of the stakeholder organisations with new staff members that joined after the programme had started not having adequate information regarding the start-up phase. Some of the stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation were not familiar with the project’s ToC and its results framework as noted below by one of the stakeholders.

“There was a results framework for the project? This is the first time to hear about it. The challenge is that we were not involved in the design of the project. We were only provided with a menu of

¹² Zimbabwe National Gender Profile (2020)

¹³ KII and FGDs with AWLN members

¹⁴ Project reports and KIIs

activities to be done when we came on board and had therefore little input into the form and shape of the activities.” (Project stakeholders, FGD)

Limited consultation and stakeholder participation in the design of the programme weakens stakeholder ownership of the project. Participatory consultative processes are key in ensuring that the programme remains relevant to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries and stakeholders and that a strong sense of ownership is entrenched for long-term sustainability of the project. Stakeholders noted that being unaware of the results framework of the project erodes their sense of ownership and direction in which the project is going.

(c) Marginalised and women left behind

The project’s focus is particularly on those women that are left behind and marginalised. This category would include women with disabilities and poor and socially excluded women including those in rural areas. The project is also focused on enhancing women’s participation at both local and national levels. While strategies for enhancing women participation at national level are well articulated, strategies for reaching grassroots women and for ensuring participation of women with disability in particular have not been well operationalised. During the first consultative meeting with AWLN members, only one woman with disability out of 21 participants participated and none participated in the second consultative meeting. Women with disabilities are thus underrepresented in the project. For increased relevance, more inclusive strategies, cascading down to grassroots level need to be developed and monitored.

(d) AWLN Positioning

Three out of four of the project’s outputs are focused on AWLN. While this is understandable given the strategic positioning of ALWN in the project and the need to leverage on the women leadership in governance and peace processes, this has given an erroneous perception that the project is an ALWN project instead of ALWN being perceived as a movement building component of the whole project. In the proposal documents of the project, the AWLN component is referred to as the “AWLN Project.” This perception eclipses the other components of the project, which are equally important in achieving the goal of the project.

UN Women is the secretariat for AWLN. This was done to ensure that ALWN has the necessary support to coordinate and implement its activities given the resource constraints that the network faces. The location of the AWLN secretariat in UN Women has also created a perception among some of the stakeholders that AWLN is a UN Women “project” instead of perceiving it as an independent network of leaders being supported by UN Women to achieve its objectives. This perception has led to the expectation that UN Women should provide financial support for all the activities of the network, including transport and DSA. There is thus little effort being done by the network to look for funding beyond UN Women, which is a threat for long term sustainability of the network.

There is a further perception among some AWLN members that the location of the secretariat in UN Women has led to UN Women directly implementing the activities of AWLN instead of providing coordination support. The members felt that the prioritisation of activities and implementation is done by UN Women instead of the network.

“As AWLN, what we do is determined by UN Women not us. We simply receive a list of things to do and the schedule for implementation. Whilst it is important for UN Women to provide us with technical support, I think they should leave it to the network to set its own agenda and set of activities. They should only provide us with financial and technical support on the things we want to do rather than being prescriptive” (AWLN member, FGD).

Members of the network were also concerned that since they were not involved in the planning process, some of the meetings were called at short notice which made it difficult for them to attend. In the process they lose out on some of the key activities of the network.

Despite the above perception, documents such as minutes of meetings show that AWLN members participated in planning meetings such as the 2021 year-end meeting and the February 2022 retreat meeting where they agreed on priorities and recommendations of activities to be undertaken, and these activities are being implemented by the project. However, although AWLN took responsibilities for some of the activities during the planning meetings, they did not follow up on the implementation of these activities resulting in the secretariat reaching out to the network to implement the activities that they had taken responsibility for.

Participation by AWLN members in project activities is sometimes limited owing to a number of reasons, the main one being inadequate resources for transportation and time poverty due to engagement in income generating activities. UN Women Policy does not allow for transport costs refund for local travel and the AWLN members have to use their own resources. The resource constraints also make it difficult for AWLN members to participate in virtual meetings hosted by the project as the data bundles are expensive and the members cannot afford the costs. The participation gap at times forces the secretariat to make follow ups with AWLN members to ensure implementation of planned activities and this often leads to the perception that the secretariat is “pushing” members to implement and that the project is being implemented by UN Women instead of AWLN. There is need to address the resource constraints facing AWLN which act as a barrier to participation in the implementation of the project activities and in the process forces the secretariat to intervene to ensure that the activities are implemented as planned.

The location of the AWLN network secretariat within UN Women needs to be re-examined, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities established between the two partners. AWLN needs further capacitation to wean it off from UN Women so that it can exist as an independent entity by fundraising for its activities from different sources. As it stands, some AWLN members have a limited sense of ownership for the network.

3.2.2 Capacity of young and senior women, particularly those most left behind, to effectively and meaningfully participate in national processes

The project sought to increase the capacity of young and senior women to effectively and meaningfully participate in governance and national structures process through a number of initiatives including establishment of strong accountability frameworks and evidence-based advocacy. UN Women is utilising the Zimbabwe Chapter of the African Women’s Leadership Network to foster an enabling environment for women’s leadership and participation. In this regard the project sought to ensure that: AWLN is adequately financed to reach and galvanize women leaders and young women in diverse sectors of the country; and AWLN has capacity to promote evidence-based advocacy for a gender responsive National strategy.

(a) Movement Building

The first thrust of the project was, through adequate funding, to strengthen the capacity of AWLN to be able to build a strong women’s movement from the diverse sectors of the country. This is to be achieved through reaching out and galvanising women leaders and young women throughout the country. A number of activities have been lined up to pursue this movement building mission. These include technical support to the national Steering Committee, Youth Caucus and the AWLN National Chapter; mobilizing women leaders from across sectors; improved communication and visibility; and media sensitisation trainings.

Since the launch of the AWLN Zimbabwe Chapter in 2020, UN Women has continued to provide technical support to the national chapter and to the youth caucus to enable these arms to build a strong women’s movement. The technical support has mainly been in the form of logistical and administrative support related to the implementation of the chapter’s activities. The support included coordination, communication and organisation of events and review of concept notes submitted by members.

UN Women supported the hosting of an Annual Retreat for the Zimbabwe Chapter in February 2022. The retreat discussed issues around the mandate, governance and vision of the network to provide the members

with a clear direction on how to grow the network and increase its advocacy influence on gender equality and women empowerment. The retreat attracted close to 40 participants, including the senior and young women steering committees, national chapter representatives, UN Women Global lead and Special Representative of the Executive Director on AWLN and two Representatives of AWLN co-ordination from UN Women New York Office. The participation by UN Women HQ representatives shows recognition of the AWLN Zimbabwe Chapter. Four working teams and an AWLYN desk were established to spearhead the activities of the national chapter and its arms.

The annual retreat was considered by AWLN members as crucial and strengthening the network's capacity for movement building.

"It was a great experience for some of us who were attending the event for the first time. For the first time we were able to rub shoulders with national leaders, we were able to establish a clear vision and road map for the network and it was at this meeting that the idea of opening the Bulawayo Chapter was mooted" (AWLN Youth Caucus Member).

As part of expansion efforts for the network, the Bulawayo Chapter was launched in April 2022 as a recommendation by AWLN members at the Retreat. The launch was attended by more than 70 participants from a diversity of sectors including media, academia, civil society, business, politics and faith based organisations. As of April 2022, the membership of AWLN Zimbabwe Chapter had reached 155 up from 123 in December.

In order to attract a large audience and membership, UN Women has supported AWLN in strengthening its communication and visibility. A website for the Zimbabwe Chapter has been established as well as a social media platform that will help the chapter to interact with members, prospective members and the public in general. Chapter members have also been contributing articles on international forums as part of the chapter's visibility thrust. A youth caucus member of AWLN submitted an article on Climate Change and Resilience which was featured on the UN Women Africa Regional Office website as a build up to the CSW meeting. Members of the Youth Caucus have also been participating in national shows where they have been articulating the vision and goals of the AWLN Zimbabwe Chapter.

Given the critical role played by the media in women's political participation, UN Women supported the convening of a training workshop for media personnel. A total of 13 media practitioners (6 female and 7 male) from print, television, radio and online media houses were trained on gender-sensitive and gender-responsive reporting particularly with regard to women leadership and political participation. UN Women also supported the development of: Media Handbook on Women Political Participation; Media Monitoring Tools and Media Guide/Checklist on WPP for editors. All these tools were developed with consultation, input and validation by media professionals.

Below, a media practitioner narrated how she participated in the project's activities and the significant changes and impact this had on her work.

I was engaged by UN Women this year when we were doing the evaluation Meeting in March this year (2022). I was invited as one of the speakers at the meeting and we shared what we do in our newsroom in terms of gender balance. Previously, I attended a meeting on gender and from then we agreed that we were going to incorporate gender issues in our newsrooms. We also agreed to take the gender checklist into our daily work. The checklist is a product of what they have been doing under this project where they have been engaging media, training them on gender issues and women's political participation. It covers a lot of themes on how the newsrooms can address the issues of gender balance in terms of staffing. It also covers the journalism part of it, how to balance sourcing and

making sure that women have a voice in the media. The checklist is wide and also talks of capacity building and policy making and making sure that media houses have gender policies and that they use them.

In our newsrooms we have managed to achieve the following: the company now has a gender policy in place. This came in in 2021. We are also working on a sexual harassment policy that we never had.. We also have an HR policy that is gender sensitive. When hiring new journalists it has to be 50/50. In positions where women were under represented we are recruiting female graduate trainees to fill up the positions. This started this year.

Coming up with the checklist has been an important tool in our workplace. We have been working without one and sometimes we would forget what we have to do and the proper gender sensitive procedures. It covers all the gender gaps that we had in the newsrooms.

In terms of gender sensitive reporting, it has improved relations with sources of information because our journalists have been trained on how to interact with female sources and make sure that they are confident enough to share their experiences with media. The model that has been used has been effective. As the leader in the news room, whatever training that I attend, I ensure that it has been cascaded downwards. It has forced us to review our policies and assisted in improving industrial/professional relations. There is guarantee that a female journalist has equal opportunity in the newsroom. It opened my mind in terms of things that we would generally ignore in the newsrooms. We never bothered if there was a gender policy or not. It makes business sense to us. We have also seen improvements in attracting wider audiences as we apply gender sensitive reporting”
(KII with female journalist)

The project has thus gone a long way in empowering media practitioners, both male and female, to report in a gender responsive and sensitive manner. Engaging with the media also sought to influence media houses to operate in a gender responsive and sensitive manner. This amplifies the voices of women and strengthens the AWLN network as its work will be clearly articulated in the media and more women leaders will be enticed to join the movement to further the rights of women in governance, peace and security. After the training, journalists wrote positive stories on WPP. Below are the views of a UN Women partner, who assisted in the training of journalists under the project:

“We have been partnering with UN Women to train media practitioners from different departments, including print and radio on reporting on Women’s Political Participation. This helped us realise a gap that we had been missing as in the media we had been experiencing negative portrayal of women in politics. Working with Journalist resulted in them writing stories focusing on women’s political participation. They have been sharing the stories with us and we now have many women coming out to be interviewed and their stories and journeys shared. Previously, women shied away from the media. Women in politics profiles have been shared through media. Journalists also had a negative attitude towards attending meetings that are chaired by women but attended in numbers when a

male was leading. There has been a shift since they were trained and they currently treat both fairly regardless of their sex. The Women Rise in Politics was also a key achievement as UN Women has been training women in all the provinces, encouraging them to assume political positions at all levels. They have also been training potential candidates to promote Women participation and Gender equality."

(KII with UN Women Partner)

The training of journalists has been key in highlighting gender issues around women political participation. There is however need to cascade the training to grassroots level to also ensure that community radio and newspapers journalist are also trained to report in a gender sensitive and responsive manner.

All the above efforts have gone a long way in building a women movement coalesced around AWLN. Through AWLN, the project has managed to bring together diverse groups of women together to work for a common purpose of empowering women so that they can participate meaningfully and effectively in leadership and political processes. Below is a reflection by one of the AWLN members:

"I have never seen two politicians from different parties, having tea and having a meaningful conversation together, without fighting. At first it was tense, but with time we later realised that we are all women fighting for a common cause of women empowerment. AWLN members from across the political divide now interact nicely and are networking and sharing ideas on how to empower women politically. We have become one big family with a common agenda" FGD, AWLN member

Given the extreme political polarisation in the country, the project has played a critical role in bringing adversaries together, make them realise that they have common interests and that they are much stronger and will have more impact if they speak with one voice. The project has also done well in bridging the generational gap between older women and young women and has given young women the opportunity to express themselves through the Young Women Caucus within AWLN. Zimbabwe became the first country within AWLN to establish such a caucus. Young women interviewed during the evaluation noted that their confidence has been boosted as they have been able to: interact with national leaders, articulate their views in national media and develop networks that are helping them to build their political and leadership careers.

"Our self-esteem as young women has been boosted through networking and having access to spaces where we make ourselves visible. These include presenting on radio, television, attending high level conferences and interaction with top women leaders. As young women we have come out to share our narratives and we are now in a position to lead better than we used to and we are more tolerant to each other regardless of political affiliations." (Young Women FGD participant)

AWLN members also noted that the network provides a safe space for young women in politics as some of them have been victims of political violence and cyberbullying while some have collapsed into depression. The network has been a source of support and a safe haven for them.

Although much progress has been recorded in building a strong women's movement through AWLN, more needs to be done in the remaining half of the project. The diversity in AWLN is welcome as women from different sectors including politics, business, media, CSOs, faith based organisations and academia are

participating, there is still a gap in bringing rural and marginalised women on board. There is also limited presence of women with disability in the movement. The project thus need decentralisation so that marginalised women can also actively participate in the movement.

AWLN members, particular those in the Young Women Caucus, appreciated the benefits that they have accrued from the trainings and technical support provided by UN Women. They however noted that there has not been corresponding economic empowerment initiatives to enable them to effectively pursue their leadership potential. Without being economically empowered, the young women in the movement are unlikely to realise their dreams.

“Leadership without money is nothing. As young women, we have been brought to a spotlight which has helped our profiles grow and become more visible but our lives do not reflect such. The platform has not provided us with opportunities that are aligned to what is reflected by our profiles. Beautiful stories have been written using the profiles of the AWLN members but we remain more or less the same in terms of being economically empowered to grow out of poverty” (AWLN Young Women Caucus members, FGD)

“It has been a great platform to build my name, but what do I do with a name?” (KII, AWLN member)

The AWLN members believed that the lack of economic empowerment initiatives and inadequate funding is making it difficult to build a bigger women’s movement as recruiting new members and retaining those that are already members is becoming a challenge. Given the difficult economic environment obtaining in the country, some members highlighted that they do not have enough resources to meet costs related to ALWIN activities such as transport costs. Young women facing such challenges end up not attending all the set AWLN activities. Limited resources will also be a great barrier for women in rural areas to attend AWLN activities because they have a poor resource base.

One of the thrusts of the project has been to embark on resource mobilisation initiatives to support AWLN programmes. To date, funding of the project and AWLN activities has mainly been from UN Women and Irish Embassy. There have been limited initiatives to resource mobilise from other sources. This is partly as a result of the perceived identity of AWLN as an institution. During interviews, it was apparent that some of the members perceived AWLN to be a UN Women project because of the location of the secretariat in UN Women and the fact that UN Women was perceived to be taking a lead in implementation of the movement’s activities. AWLN is therefore not perceived as an independent entity, which is being supported by UN Women for capacity-strengthening purposes. Because of this perception, little efforts have been made to fundraise outside UN Women. Sense of ownership of AWLN by some members is limited and this has implications for long-term sustainability of the movement.

“Decision making remains in the hands of UN Women, the network does not plan or decide on anything and this has rendered it irrelevant and moving in the vision of UN Women instead of moving in our own” (AWLN Member, KII)

Funding constrains have also limited the expansion of AWLN chapters into other parts of the country. Out of the planned five provincial chapters, only one has been established in Bulawayo. Chapters are also still to be cascaded down to districts and grassroots. The expansion and decentralisation of AWLN will therefore require more resources. A vibrant women’s movement needs representation and structures from grassroots to national level. There is need therefore for increased resource mobilisation efforts by AWLN. The current budget of USD5, 000 allocated for mobilising women leaders across sectors in five provinces will not be enough to support the creation of AWLN structures across the country. The budget for communication and

visibility is also not enough to create presence and adequate visibility of AWLN across the country. During the retreat, a recommendation was put forward to intensify the resource mobilisation efforts of AWLN so that the network is not dependent on a few funders.

(b) Capacity for Evidence Based Advocacy

The project sought to build the capacity of AWLN to promote evidence-based advocacy for gender-responsive National Strategies. This capacity is to be built through generation of knowledge for gender-responsive National Development Strategy; AWLN Young Women Leaders mentorship programme; and supporting AWLN Zimbabwe representatives to attend the annual inter-generational regional and global retreats.

Knowledge Products

The project targeted to develop four knowledge products to inform the development of gender responsive National Development Strategies. A total of eight knowledge products have been developed to date. These include the Beijing Platform for Action Commemorative Handbook, which highlights the work of 25 Zimbabwean women in advancing gender equality and women empowerment after attending the Beijing Conference in 1995. The book showcases good practices by Zimbabwean women in advancing the BPfA agenda and helps in creating awareness on the priorities of this women empowerment global agenda among women and in particular, among young women. The handbook is however yet to be printed and disseminated to AWLN members and stakeholders.

The second knowledge product developed with support from the project is the Booklet on the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA). The book articulates how the continental trade agreement relates to Zimbabwe women involved in trading. Two thousand copies of the booklet were printed and half of them are in vernacular languages of Shona and Ndebele. The copies were distributed to women traders during a workshop convened by the MWACSMED. The aim of the booklet is to enhance women's economic awareness, leadership and participation in regional frameworks on international trade.

An assessment of barriers affecting women's political participation at the Local Government was conducted and finalised. The Assessment identified barriers that hinder women's effective participation, highlighted their level of participation and identified possible action points to improve status quo and further explored implementation of the new Local Government quota. The findings highlighted barriers which include but not limited to the following: limited knowledge of electoral processes at local government level, lack of finances to fund participation in electoral processes, violence against women in elections and lack of confidence among women. A Report recommending strategies to address these barriers including awareness raising, training and mentorship programmes and networking and advocacy on WPP was produced.

Other knowledge products developed include the following:

- Pocket Guide on WPP for Aspiring candidates and elected female Councillors
- Handbook on Media and WPP
- Media Monitoring tools on WPP
- Checklist for Editors on WPP
- Handbook for Parliamentarians on UNSCR 1325

The project has thus already surpassed its set target of knowledge products.

AWLN Young Women Leaders mentorship programme

An inter-generational mentorship programme launched in the first phase of the programme was to be expanded in year 2022 in five provinces. During the annual retreat, recommendations were made on the structure of the mentorship programme, including on the need to develop a fully-fledged manual. The manual has since been developed and awaiting finalisation and validation and thereafter the launch of the

programme. There is need to launch the mentorship programme in the last half of this phase to improve the advocacy capacity of the young women in AWLN.

Support AWLN Zimbabwe representatives to attend the annual inter-generational regional and global retreats and to engage regional and international leaders on GEWE.

The project sought to enhance the capacity of AWLN members to engage in evidence-based advocacy through supporting their attendance at national, regional and global intergenerational dialogue meetings where they could interact and learn from colleagues across the globe. An AWLN Youth Caucus member scheduled to attend the side event for the CSW66 in New York was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances although an invitation had been extended by AWLN Coordination in New York. The member was thus unable to benefit from this global event. However despite this setback, UN Women supported CSOs, including AWLN members, to draft and submit a Stakeholders Report to the Human Rights Council on the progress made by Zimbabwe in implementing its recommendations under the Universal Periodic Review process. In this report CSOs and AWLN members put across recommendations that included GEWE issues that the Government of Zimbabwe should accept. The UPR CSO report was translated into Shona and Ndebele and disseminated widely to stakeholders. Following the review of the Government of Zimbabwe under the UPR process, UN Women further supported two workshops in Harare and Bulawayo for CSOs and AWLN members to review the outcome of the UPR process and lobby the Government on recommendations that they had not accepted.

Support participation of AWLN in dialogues and or initiatives on gender responsive strategies with duty bearers and policy makers

The project plans to support AWLN members to participate in three dialogues and initiatives on gender-responsive strategies with duty bearers and policy makers. The annual retreat provided a platform for AWLN members to interact with each other and share experiences. A decision to develop a Mentorship Manual for use both at AWLN and in universities was made at this retreat meeting and has far-reaching implications on engendering the university curriculum for improved gender responsiveness by the universities if adopted.

The second platform through which AWLN members interacted with CSOs during two meetings convened in Harare and Bulawayo to review the outcomes and recommendations on Zimbabwe's UPR process that was undertaken by Human Rights Council in January 2022. The participants agreed on the way forward for CSOs action and advocacy before the 50th session of the Human Rights Council scheduled for June/July 2022. The participants, including AWLN members, agreed to engage in advocacy to encourage the state to accept outstanding 39 noted recommendations and 98 deferred recommendations and in terms of monitoring the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

Although various initiatives have been implemented to improve the advocacy capacity of AWLN members, there is still need to implement the inter-generational mentorship programme which will provide a platform for practical learning for the young women caucus members. The first cohort of 18 AWLN members has completed the mentorship programme. The mentees noted that the mentorship programme has empowered them and built their capacity to effectively participate in leadership structures and processes. The mentees recommended that more young women should go through the mentorship training to create a critical mass of empowered young women leaders. Given the impact of the mentorship programme on young women, the mentorship programme for the second cohort needs to be rolled out as soon as possible so that the young women can engage in effective advocacy particularly as we move towards elections in 2023.

3.2.3 Strengthened capacities of AWLN leaders to engage in conflict resolution, mediation, management and leadership processes.

Strengthening the capacities of AWLN leaders to engage in conflict resolution, mediation and management and leadership processes was one of the key objectives of the project. Five provincial chapters were to be established and their capacities were to be strengthened in order to contribute to subnational and national level conflict prevention mechanisms. Learning visits by AWLN members were also to be undertaken to learn from regional and global good practices in conflict prevention. There was also a plan to conduct conflict hot-spot mapping and analysis and develop gender-specific indices and measures for peace and development in collaboration with Women-Led Peace Committees, FemWise Africa and the NPRC.

The project targeted to train 10 AWLN leaders in conflict resolution and mediation. A Gender-Sensitive Conflict Management, Prevention and Resolution Training was conducted for Zimbabwean Women in March 2022. The training, which was conducted virtually, was attended by 39 participants (37 female and two males) and was conducted by UN Women in collaboration with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). The training targeted the Women Peace Committees under the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZ) Peace Cluster and the AWLN Network. The training also focused on raising awareness on the women, peace and security agenda in light of ongoing efforts to develop a NAP on the UNSCR1325. The project thus achieved its target of conflict resolution training.

The target of establishing five Provincial Chapters of AWLN and training chapter members in conflict resolution is yet to be achieved. Only one Provincial Chapter has been established in Bulawayo due to limitations in funding. More funding support is needed to reach the target before the end of the project.

The project planned to conduct conflict hot-spot mapping and analysis and to develop gender-specific indices and measures for peace and development in collaboration with Women-Led Peace Committees, FemWise Africa and the NPRC. This activity was mainstreamed into the ongoing NPRC online platform Zimbabwe Conflict Early Warning and Early Response system (CEWER) developed with the support of multiple stakeholders and agencies. This decision was made during the development of the NPRC's work plan on conflict hotspot mapping to avoid duplication of efforts. Women Peace Led Committee Members under the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and the AWLN Network were able to participate in the trainings on CMPRT in collaboration with ACCORD which also focused on the prevention of conflict as well as early reporting of potential conflict within localities.

Leaders trained in conflict management and resolution acknowledged during interviews that they have greatly benefited from the training as they now have the skills to analyse conflict and come up with tools to resolve and manage conflicts in communities.

Although significant progress has been made in enhancing the capacities of women leaders to engage in conflict resolution, mediation and management, this capacity needs to be cascaded down to grassroots level through the establishment of more provincial chapters. Currently, only one chapter was opened in Bulawayo and this leaves a huge gap in other parts of the country. The planned three learning and sharing visits at regional and internal levels by AWLN representatives are yet to be undertaken and this needs to be prioritised in the last half of the project to enable AWLN members to learn from good conflict management and resolution practices in other countries.

3.2.4 Capacity of governance institutions to implement the women, peace and security agenda is enhanced

One of the key objectives of the project was to strengthen the capacity of decision-makers to formulate, review, and implement gender-sensitive policies, and protocols that promote women's rights in line with the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas. This was to be achieved through: (a) Technical support to women in local governance including conducting an assessment of barriers to women's leadership in local government and convene consultative meeting with local government councillors, provincial ministers and AWLN provincial chapters on the findings; (b) Facilitating high-level consultative meetings on NAP UNSCR1325 in collaboration with Ministry of Defence; (c) Technical support to the Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus (ZWPC) for the domestication of UNSCR1325 including the development of a user friendly "Legislator's Guide on Women Peace & Security"; (d) Development of a Youth, Peace and Security strategy for local government councillors, parliamentarians, and ministries informed by a consultative report; and (e) Organising South-South and North-South exchanges of experiences with reference countries on the development of NAPs and the implementation of the UNSCR1325 and UNSCR2250.

(a) Technical support to women in local government and assessment of barriers women face in local government

Providing technical support to women in local government required an in-depth understanding of the barriers that hinder women's participation in leadership positions. In this regard, an assessment to identify barriers that women face in local governance participation was conducted. The assessment identified several barriers including: limited knowledge of electoral processes at local government level, lack of finances to fund participation in electoral processes, violence against women in elections and lack of confidence among women. Recommendations put forward to dismantle the identified barriers included the following: raising awareness among women on WPP; training and mentorship programmes; and networking and advocacy on WPP. The findings of the assessment were tabled, discussed and validated at a meeting attended by 45 participants (31 female and 14 male) drawn from Government ministries, Local Councils, Councillors, CSOs, media and other stakeholders. The Minister responsible for local government, his deputy and senior directors attended the meeting which indicated high level significance of the meeting. The minister wrote a foreword for the assessment report while the permanent secretary weighed in with a statement of support. This signified government recognition of the barriers identified in the assessment report and an endorsement of the strategies proposed therein.

A partner who participated in the assessment noted:

"The research they (UN Women) conducted is very key in understanding women participation in Zimbabwe. It makes us understand that we have a gendered gap in Zimbabwe where women participation and representation in politics is lagging behind. Conducting such a research to understand the barriers to women participation was very important. A document was produced and it helps us and other stakeholders to continue focusing on the key issues that hinder women to participate in politics. The issue of gender has been neglected for a while, so if we keep on working with partners and engaging with decision-makers, it gives them the pressure to keep on supporting us" (KII with UN Women partner)

A Pocket Guide for aspiring and elected women councillors was also developed to provide guidelines that will enhance the participation of aspiring women candidates at the local government level and strengthen the capacities of elected women Councillors to effectively discharge their mandates. The guide was validated, and a foreword was provided by the Chairperson of the Women in Local Government Forum (WILGF). The foreword encouraged women to participate in leadership elections at local government level.

The pocket guide will provide a quick reference guide for both aspiring and elected female councillors. It will also be a useful resource book for aspiring women leaders in general, including at grassroots and national levels.

(b) Facilitating High-Level Consultative meetings on NAP UNSCR1325 in collaboration with Ministry of Defence

Re-igniting discussions and momentum around the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 is one of the key focus areas of the project. A request was made by the Minister for Defence and War Veterans Affairs to support in the drafting of a NAP. This is to be achieved through engaging in high-level consultative meetings with the Ministry of Defence and War Veterans Affairs and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, on the development and implementation of the NAP for the UNSCR 1325. To achieve this output, an induction workshop to develop the Zimbabwe National Action Plan for the United Nations Resolution on Women Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) for the National Technical Committee (NTC) and stakeholders was conducted. The exercise was led by key government ministries, Ministry of Defence and War Veteran Affairs and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small Medium Enterprises, who co-chaired the development of the NAP on the UNSCR1325 in Zimbabwe. The workshop was attended by 48 participants, comprising 32 females, 16 males and one woman with disability. A technical consultant was outsourced by UN Women to assist in the process of developing the National Action plan. The following UN Resolutions were also shared and articulated to the participants as a basis to the development of the NAP, UNSCR1820, UNSCR1888, UNSCR1889, UNSCR2106 and UNSCR2467.

During the consultations, participants were familiarised with the contents of UNSCR 1325. This process enhanced the capacity and knowledge of the participants on the UNSCR 1325. A two-day drafting clinic on the NAP further enhanced the capacity of the National Technical Committee to draft national action plans and strategies. The draft NAP however still needs to be subjected to further consultations and validation before the document is finalised. This is planned to happen in the next quarter.

While the key Government ministries were involved in initiating the development of the NAP, they are all not aware on who is leading the process and at what stage the Development of the NAP was during the time of the Midterm Evaluation. The draft plan that had been developed had not been validated during the time of the evaluation (June 2022). More so, representation of the people with disabilities remain low as only one person with disability attended the session.

The first draft of the UNSCR 1325 NAP is now in place following a highly participatory process spearheaded by the Ministries of Defence and War Veterans and Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development in partnership with key stakeholders with technical support from the national consultant. The draft NAP outlines the key actions around the four key pillars of UNSCR 1325 on Prevention, Protection, Participation and Relief and Recovery.

The process leading up to the first draft NAP included the following.

- i) The establishment of a National Technical Committee composed of Government Ministries and Departments and Independent Commissions and the key Stakeholder's Forum composed of Parliament, CSOs, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and other stakeholders.
- ii) Facilitation of enhanced Understanding on the substantive content of UNSCR 1325 and the process of developing a NAP among 48 members of the National Technical Committee and stakeholders through a two-day induction and orientation workshop that was held on 2- 3 February 2022. The Outcomes included the roadmap for developing NAP and the identification of priority areas. Understanding of the development of the NAP process was further enhanced by the Webinar on sharing best practices detailed in section below.
- iii) A half day Webinar on South-South and North-South exchanges on sharing experiences, lessons learnt and best practices in developing NAPs on 1325 attended by the National Technical Team. Experiences were shared by Government representatives from Ireland, Kenya, Namibia and Sweden and CSO representatives from South Africa, as well as a representative from UN Women Regional Office for East and Southern Africa.

iv) A two-day physical drafting clinic held in Kadoma on 2nd-3rd March with 26 participants (four male, 22 female) from the National Technical Committee and Key Stakeholders to draft the NAP. The meeting was used as a platform for the National Technical Committee and Stakeholders to co-draft the NAP. The Draft NAP will be subject to national stakeholder consultations which will be held next quarter drafting of the NAP

v) Six Provincial Sensitisation and Consultative Meetings on the development of the NAP conducted in Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Masvingo, Midlands, Matebeleland South and Bulawayo on 2nd to the 3rd of June 2022. A total of 310 (195 female and 115 male) stakeholders from the communities were consulted. The results of the consultations were enhanced awareness among Peace Committee Members and key community actors on the women, peace and security agenda, inputs from sub national level stakeholders on the issues, interventions and strategies for accelerating the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, partnerships with stakeholders and buy-in and collaborations in strengthening women's participation in peace building and promote and awareness on the prevention of Conflict related Gender Based Violence and Promotion of Gender inclusive peace building. The consultations were facilitated by three teams composed of representatives from NPRC, WCOZ, Ministry of Defence and the Consultant.

vi) A half-day Consultative Workshop with Parliamentarians on Developing a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 held on 17 June 2022. The outcomes of the consultative meeting achieved the following results;- input from Members of Parliament on the issues, interventions and strategies for Women, Peace and Security to be included in the NAP and clearly defined roles of Parliament in the Process of developing and implementing the NAP.

(c) Technical support to the Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus (ZWPC) for the domestication of UNSCR1325 including the development of a user friendly "Legislator's Guide on Women Peace & Security"

The project provided technical capacity to the Women's Parliamentary Caucus for the domestication on UNSCR 1325, a resolution not well known by members of parliament and some government institutions responsible for operationalising it. A Handbook for Parliamentarians on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was co-developed by UN Women and Parliament of Zimbabwe with participation by the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST). Awareness creation among 48 stakeholders on the substance of UNSCR 1325 was also undertaken.

The Handbook articulates the roles and functions of parliament, provides an overview of Women, Peace and Security, unpacks the UNSCR 1325, relevance of the resolution to the Zimbabwe context and the Zimbabwean position and commitments to the resolution. The Handbook also identifies gaps and challenges in the implantation of UNSCR 1325. The goal of the handbook is to enhance capacities of Parliamentarians in their legislative, oversight and representative role to facilitate the domestication and implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Zimbabwe.

The development of the handbook was done through consultative workshops, involving 48 participants (29 females and 19 males), 24 of whom were members of parliament. The project surpassed its target of 30 decision-makers being empowered with greater knowledge, capacities and tools to formulate, review, and implement gender-sensitive policies, and protocols that promote women's rights in line with the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas. The Handbook was endorsed by the Speaker of Parliament through a foreword, which outlines the critical role parliament needs to play in the operationalisation of UNSCR 1325 in Zimbabwe.

The Handbook is however yet to be disseminated to members of parliament. At the time of the evaluation, the handbook was being finalised with the printers and dissemination is planned for the coming months.

Members of parliament and other stakeholders that participated in the development of the handbook confirmed that they have been empowered with knowledge and tools to spearhead the domestication of

UNSCR 1325. Below is an excerpt from one of the members of parliament who participated in the development process of the handbook.

“We went through a number of participatory processes in developing the handbook. We learnt a lot during this process. Speaking for myself, I did not know much about the UN resolution 1325, and I am sure this is the same for my colleagues in parliament. It was unpacked for us, its relevance to the Zimbabwean context was articulated and the role of parliament in domestication of the resolution and oversight was also well explained. I now feel well empowered to be able to play my role as an MP in domestication of the resolution.”

(KII with Member of Parliament)

“Personally, this project helped me regain my confidence. It is not easy being a woman in politics but now I can confidently speak to my peers, be visible on media and interact with different women”

(Female MP, KII).

Significant progress has been made in building the capacity of members of parliament and other stakeholders on the UNSCR 1325. More efforts need to be directed towards the finalisation and operationalisation of the National Action Plan.

(d) Development of a Youth, Peace and Security Strategy for local government councillors, parliamentarians, and ministries informed by a consultative report.

The development of a Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Strategy for local government councillors, parliamentarians, and ministries was one of the targets for the project. The development of such a strategy is meant to enhance the active and meaningful participation of youth in the peace and security agenda of the country.

Stakeholders were engaged, through a consultative process, to develop a costed roadmap for the development of the YPS strategy. In developing the roadmap, a National Consultative and Engagement Workshop on YPS was convened April 2022. The workshop was jointly convened by UN Women and the NPRC. The 60 participants for the workshop (36 females and 24 males) were drawn from Government Ministries, Independent Commissions, CSOs, African Union, youth and youth-led organisations. Workshop participants discussed key barriers to youth participation in the peace and security processes of the country. The finalised roadmap will be used as an advocacy tool to facilitate the development of the National YPS Strategy and to mobilise resources.

The establishment of a roadmap towards the development of a National YPS strategy is a positive development in the quest for a National YPS strategy. There is however further need for mobilisation of stakeholders and resources to implement the agreed roadmap leading to the development and finalisation of the National YPS strategy during the last half of the project life cycle.

(e) Organize South-South and North-South exchanges of experiences with reference countries on the development of NAPs and the implementation of the UNSCR1325 and UNSCR2250

UN Women convened a webinar for members of the UNSCR 1325 National Technical Committee and Key-stakeholders in February 2022 which was attended by 18 participants (14 females, four males). During the webinar, the participants were able to learn and share experiences with colleagues on best practices in the development and implementation of UNSCR1325 and UNSCR2250 National Action Plans. Countries that shared

experiences included Namibia, Kenya, South Africa, Ireland and Sweden. The UN Women Regional Office also shared regional perspectives on the development of NAPs in the East and Southern African Countries.

The experience sharing and learning that occurred during the webinar session will go a long way in capacitating the National Technical Committee as well as other participants to draft the Zimbabwe NAP. Key learning points included composition of technical teams, structuring of the consultative processes and resource allocation for the strategy development process.

Conclusion on Effectiveness

The project has had its greatest achievement to date in capacity building of the different stakeholders of the project. Key stakeholders that have benefited from the capacity building initiatives include AWLN members and in particular young women's caucus; Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus; Ministry of Defence and War Veterans' Affairs; and Women in Local Government Forum. The capacity building initiatives have led to reignited focus and dialogue by national institutions and CSOs on development of NAPs and strategies for the domestication of the UNSCR 1325. The project has also facilitated the production of knowledge products to support the domestication process of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the country. Capacity building was thus key in building the achievement of the project.

To date, the project has had the least achievements on movement building. While the National and Bulawayo Chapters of AWLN have been established, the other four targeted provincial chapters are still to be established owing to financial constraints. This has put constraints on the ability and capacity of AWLN to spread its influence and recruit new members from across the country and from the diversity of sectors. The establishment of other provincial chapters has been slow due to resource constraints. This has implications on the inclusiveness of the AWLN movement. Rural women, women with disability and women in hard to reach areas have thus far been largely excluded from the movement building process owing to capacity constraints of AWLN.

Participation in national AWLN chapter activities by members has also been constrained by a lack of economic empowerment particularly for young women. This has made it difficult for the members to come for meetings and to participate in all the planned activities as they face challenges such as lack of transport money. Some also prefer focusing more on income-generating activities than on AWLN activities which do not bring direct economic benefits to them. UN Women policy does not provide for transport money for local travel and this has put constraints on the ability of AWLN members to participate in the network's meetings. This gap has forced UN Women to spearhead some of the planned AWLN activities by supporting its secretariat which it has provided with offices within UN Women. This has led to a reduced sense of ownership of AWLN by its members as the movement entirely depends on UN Women for all its activities which threatens the sustainability of the movement. UN Women needs to gradually wean off AWLN after capacitating the movement in resource mobilisation to enable it to survive beyond the support of the project.

3.3 Efficiency

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the project's outputs were efficiently delivered during implementation period, focusing on how economically the project resources/inputs were converted to results, considering inputs and outputs and assessing value for money and management of the budget.

In terms of delivery of outputs, the project managed to implement most of the planned activities substantively, although there were delays in some cases owing to a number of factors including unavailability of stakeholders, by-elections that were conducted in some parts of the country and holiday breaks during the implementation period. The other delays were caused by coordination challenges between the two principal

ministries and lack of understanding of the objectives of the project, particularly with regard to the security component which is considered sensitive. One of the key informants noted;

“When we started participating in the project, we did not know nor understand what the project was all about or intended to do especially as it relates to security. Some did not know about UNSCR 1325, so it needed back and forth meetings for everyone to be on the same wave length. What should happen in future is that there should be adequate sensitisation and consultation of stakeholders during the design stage so that people can understand from the very beginnings what the project intends to achieve because if stakeholders do not understand, it will delay project take off. We were engaged quite late in the project instead of being engaged from the very beginning” (KII with stakeholder).

Several engagements were made with the key stakeholders for them to understand what the project was all about and this also caused delays in implementation of planned activities.

Some of the stakeholders pointed out that they were engaged late in the project when the project had already started. In order to catch up with the planned activities, the stakeholders had to implement some of the activities hastily, which they feel effects implementation. In some cases, the funding was regarded as insufficient, resulting in, for example, national consultations being undertaken in six provinces instead of all the ten Provinces.

UN Women conducted some of the trainings virtually in the context of COVID 19. This showed innovation and flexibility in the delivery of the programme as it enabled project outputs and activities to be delivered despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic. It was also cost effective to convene virtual meetings that physical meetings given the COVID-19 The project’s implementation strategies hinged on building the capacities of AWLN, national stakeholders/decision makers of the project and CSOs to enable them to effectively implement the Women Peace and Security agenda in the country in line with the UNSCR 1325. This was done through holding training, orientation and consultative workshops with the stakeholders. The training workshops were conducted locally and some were conducted virtually, which was cost-effective in that local resources and venues were utilised. In future however, there is need to utilise government facilities or relatively middle of the range hotels that are cheaper than some of the top of the range hotels venues that were hired for some of the stakeholder engagement and training sessions. The resources saved on top of the range hotel venue hires could then have been channelled towards, for example, establishing of AWLN the remaining provincial chapters or conducting consultative meetings in the remaining four provinces.

Output 1, which focuses on movement building through strengthening AWLN, was allocated €29,000 in 2022 down from € 78,000 in Year 1. The specific activity of mobilising leaders across sectors received € 5,000 in 2022, which is less than the € 10,000 allocated in the previous year. Given the critical importance of movement building and the need to include women in all their diversity from across all corners of the country in the movement and the fact that four other provincial chapters are still to be established, this budget allocation is inadequate. The budget deficit has contributed to delays in meeting the target of provincial AWLN chapters.

The allocation of €50,000 to the new activity of capacity building for stakeholders is commendable. Given the role that these national stakeholders and decision makers play in the formulation, review, and implementation of gender-sensitive policies, and protocols that promote women’s rights in line with the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas, it is imperative that these national stakeholders be equipped with the technical capacity to execute their mandates. The capacity development support of these institutions also enhances the long-term sustainability of efforts to domesticate UNSCR 1325.

To improve efficiency in implementation of the project, a programme coordinator and programme assistant have been engaged on 100 per cent effort basis while the Programme Manager is on 20 per cent and finance associate is on 9per cent. This has increased remuneration costs from €20, 869 in Year 1 to €100, 474 in year 2. The indirect

costs of the project are now 52 per cent of total programme costs, while remuneration costs are now 40 per cent of the total budget and 84 per cent of direct costs. The EU and UNDP recommended ratio is that indirect costs (remuneration) should equal 7 per cent of the value of the direct costs¹⁵. While the need for additional human resources for the project is undoubted, the indirect costs in general and the remuneration costs in particular are too high compared to the direct costs, which ultimately affects implementation of some of the planned activities.

3.5 Sustainability

In assessing sustainability, the evaluation looked at the likelihood of project benefits and activities continuing after donor funding has ceased. The evaluation also analysed the major factors that are likely to influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability potential of the programme. The project embarked on several initiatives to build the foundation for sustainability. Programming is anchored in, and contributes to existing UN, GEWE goals and objectives as enshrined in international, regional and national frameworks. The project has also embarked on strategic stakeholder engagement informed by principles of co-creation, ownership, oversight and leverage. Capacity building and strengthening institutional mandates rather than individuals has strengthened the sustainability potential of the project. The involvement and participation of key government stakeholders in the project including the ministries of MWACSMED, Defence and War Veterans Affairs; independent commissions and CSOs ensured buy-in and political support for the project. All these stakeholders were interviewed during the evaluation and they expressed support for the project initiatives as these were seeking to empower women to participate in governance structures and processes. Their buy-in and support from stakeholders is key for fostering a sense of ownership of the project, a key ingredient for sustainability. Interviews with government stakeholders revealed that institutions tasked with the gender equality and women empowerment mandate such as the Ministry of Women Affairs; Zimbabwe Gender Commission; and NPRC have started conversations on how to mainstream UNSCR 1325 provisions within their work and these efforts will continue beyond the lifespan of this project.

The project also embarked on capacity building for the key stakeholders through: training and awareness programmes on UNSCR 1325; participatory development of the NAP; conducting research on barriers to political participation and leadership for women in local government and disseminating and discussing the results with policy and decision makers on the way forward; participatory development of strategies to enhance women and youth participation in governance, peace and security structures and processes; and development of knowledge products. Interviews with government stakeholders revealed that institutions tasked with the gender equality and women empowerment mandate such as the Ministry of Women Affairs; Zimbabwe Gender Commission; and NPRC have started conversations on how to mainstream UNSCR 1325 provisions within their work. The knowledge and skills generated through these capacity-building processes will continue to be utilised by the stakeholders after the end of the project life-cycle.

The project also capacitated women leaders, including young women, through training on conflict management and resolution, mentorship programme and participatory development of strategies on governance, peace and security. The programme took cognisance of the demographic dividend and invested in developing the leadership capacity of young women. Investment in youth ensures long term sustainability of project benefits and activities.

Although the project has managed to build a sustainability foundation by investing in capacity-building initiatives, the AWLN network needs to be strengthened to enhance its long-term sustainability. The evaluation established that the network, in its current format, is strongly intertwined within the structure of UN Women to an extent that it is perceived by some AWLN members as a UN Women project or department. The technical support provided by UN Women and its hosting of the network secretariat has resulted in the

¹⁵

https://popp.undp.org/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Design_Prepare%20Fully%20Costed%20Budgets%20for%20Projects_Guidelines_EU.docx

network being heavily reliant on UN Women for planning, technical support and funding. More efforts are needed to gradually wean off the network from UN Women by strengthening the secretarial capacity of AWLN particularly in terms of resource mobilisation, project management and movement building. The network needs enhanced capacity to exist as an independent entity capable of existing beyond UN Women technical and funding support.

For long-term sustainability there is also need to ensure that stakeholders participate at all stages of the project lifecycle. During the evaluation, AWLN some members noted that they were not involved in the design of the programme and therefore they have no clarity on the project's goals, outputs, targets, outcomes and expected results. Limited participation in some elements of the project cycle, particularly design stage, limited sense of ownership of the project by stakeholders and objectives that might not be in alignment with the needs of the targeted beneficiaries.

3.6 Integration of gender equality and human rights

The evaluation assessed the extent to which gender and human rights considerations have been integrated into the project design and implementation. The evaluation established that the whole project is centred and focused on promoting gender equality, women empowerment and women's rights in the realm of governance, peace and security through the operationalisation of UNSCR 1325 and 2250. The project sought to ensure that women, including those that are left behind and marginalised as well as young women are empowered to meaningfully participate in governance, peace and security. The project's entire focus was thus on gender equality and women empowerment. There is however need for the project to be more inclusive by ensuring that there is increased participation by women with disability and those from grassroots in rural areas as they are still less visible in the project compared to other groups of women.

4. KEY CONCLUSIONS

The following are the key conclusions of the Mid-Term Evaluation:

Relevance: the project was found to be largely relevant to the gender equality and women empowerment in the realm of governance, peace and security in Zimbabwe. There was consensus among stakeholders interviewed that despite constitutional provisions and a gender equality policy and legal framework advocating for 50:50 gender equality representation and participation in governance, peace and security, women are still largely marginalised in decision making structures and processes. UNSCR 1325 and 2250 were also largely unknown among policy and decision makers. The project's focus on creating awareness on these resolutions; empowerment of women leaders; development of a NAP for UNSCR 1325; and capacity development of decision makers for effective operationalisation of UNSCR 1325 in the Zimbabwean context is in alignment with the country's national, regional and global commitments on gender equality and women empowerment. The project is thus still relevant and will remain relevant to the context of the country.

Performance and Effectiveness: the project has generally performed well in terms of meeting its outputs and targets although there are areas needing more focus in the last half for the planned outputs and targets to be made. Areas needing more effort include resource mobilisation for AWLN as most of the funding support is coming only from UN Women; capacity strengthening of AWLN and its secretariat to make it less dependent on UN Women both in terms of technical support and funding; rolling out of the mentorship programme; establishment of four AWLN provincial chapters; and finalisation of the NAP for UNSCR 1325. There is evidence of enhanced capacity as stakeholders that went through capacity building training could clearly articulate provisions of UNSCR 1325 and the rationale for gender equality and women empowerment in governance, peace and security. Young women who participated in the project's activities also feel "empowered and confident" to participate in governance and leadership. With more efforts towards addressing the identified areas that need more support, the effectiveness and impact of the project is going to be significant by the end of its lifecycle. For increased impact however, there is need for adequate funding to ensure that all the planned activities are implemented. Some of the planned activities, for example consultative meetings planned in all 10 provinces were only conducted in six provinces, due to inadequate funding.

Efficiency: although the project has managed to implement planned substantive activities, there were delays caused by several factors including unavailability of stakeholders; lack of understanding of the UNSCR as well as the objectives of the project and coordination challenges between the two principal ministries in the project. The indirect costs of the project (including remuneration costs) are too high relative to the direct costs and this might lead to non-implementation of planned activities owing to budgetary constraints. Despite these challenges, the project was executed fairly efficiently.

Sustainability: the sustainability potential of the project has been enhanced through involvement and participation of key government ministries and departments, independent commissions and CSOs which promoted buy-in and political commitment; capacity building training and the development of knowledge products and investment in young women. There is however need to strengthen the technical, administrative, resource mobilisation and movement, building capacity for AWLN for long term sustainability of the movement.

5. LESSONS LEARNT

The following are the key lessons learnt from implementation of the project:

- Creating buy in and support for a project focusing on issues that are not clearly understood or considered sensitive by stakeholders such as peace and security, requires adequate time for stakeholder orientation and engagement so that there is full appreciation of the purpose and objectives of the project.
- While it is important to provide funding and technical support to the AWLN, there is need for the support to be structured in a way that does not create dependency and thereby strip the network of sense of ownership
- Women Economic Empowerment initiatives are critical in enabling women, and in particular young women, to utilise their acquired skills and capacity to effectively participate in decision-making processes. The participation in leadership processes requires financial resources that most young women lack.
- Capacity strengthening of national stakeholders and decision makers creates strong allies and partners of the project which is key to successful implementation of a project and long-term sustainability of the interventions.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS







The evaluation generated recommendations on the way forward from analysis of data from project documents, interviews with key informants and FGDs with project participants and stakeholders during consultative meetings.

The following are key recommendations for the project

Strategic Area	Recommendation	Responsibility
Capacity Strengthening of AWLN	There is need for further strengthening of the administrative, resource mobilization and movement building capacity of the AWLN secretariat (particularly the Young Women Caucus) to enable the network to be less dependent on UN Women and to work as an independent network for long term sustainability. Currently the network is entirely dependent on UN Women for technical and funding support, a situation that is not tenable or sustainable in the long term. This also erodes the sense of ownership of the network by members.	UN Women AWLN
	AWLN needs to be further capacitated to enable it to register itself as a legal entity, such as a Trust or PVO, so that the movement can be formally recognized and be able to attract funding from donors. As currently structured as an informal entity, it will be difficult for the movement to attract long-term funding from donors who traditionally prefer supporting formally registered CSOs for purposes of accountability.	AWLN MWACSMED
Inclusiveness and Leaving No One Behind	The project needs to be more inclusive by ensuring that more women with disabilities, rural women and other marginalized groups of women meaningfully participate in the capacity-building activities of the project. This can be enhanced through rolling out AWLN provincial and District Chapters that will connect with grassroots women. Capacity building training also needs to be decentralized to grassroots level (e.g. training of journalists from community newspapers and radio stations). Currently in the project there is limited reach and participation of marginalized groups of women such as those with disability and those living outside urban areas.	AWLN UN Women
	There is need to provide logistical and funding support to AWLN members, particularly those that are poorly resourced, to ensure that they attend capacity-building trainings and meetings and participate in meetings conducted virtually. Such members need bus fare, accommodation and communication to effectively participate in the project activities. Some of the AWLN members failed to	

Strategic Area	Recommendation	Responsibility
	consistently attend the network activities due to lack of funds for transport or due to the need to engage in income generating activities. UN Women needs to review its policy in order to support local travel for resource constrained project participants.	
Stakeholder engagement, participation and awareness creation at all stages of the project cycle	For ownership and long-term sustainability, stakeholders need to be engaged at all stages of the project life-cycle including design. There is need to develop a stakeholder engagement strategy informed by stakeholder mapping to ensure that no key stakeholders miss out at any point of the lifecycle of the project. Partners and stakeholders need to be identified and engaged at the beginning of the project. Some partners complained that they were not engaged throughout the project cycle and hence were not aware of some critical components of the project such as the results framework.	UN Women
Economic Empowerment	There is need for the project to consider economic empowerment capacity building initiatives for AWLN members, particularly young women, to enable them to generate economic resources that are so critical in running a leadership campaign. Without financial resources, it is difficult for AWLN members to translate the gained capacity and skills into reality. Though capacitated, some of the AWLN members noted that they would not be able to participate in elections due to resource limitations.	UN Women AWLN
Improving Efficient utilization of Resources	There is need to secure cheaper venues for workshops of the project by considering government institutions and middle of the table hotels so that funds saved can be used to support outstanding activities that could not be implemented due to resource constrains such as consultations in provinces and rolling out of provincial AWLN chapters. Though procuring workshop venues at top quality hotels was understandable during the pick period of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure maximum protection of participants from quality services, cheaper options need to be considered as the pandemic has waned and restrictions have been eased. The proportion of indirect costs is higher than direct costs. More resources need to be channeled towards direct costs to ensure implementation of all planned activities.	
Key Outstanding Outputs	Although most outputs have been achieved, there is need to accelerate implementation of key outstanding outputs including: decentralization of AWLN chapters; rolling out of the mentorship programme for young women; support for the finalisation of the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 and the Youth Peace and Security Strategy.	
Project support beyond the forthcoming elections	Changing mindsets, values, beliefs and practices takes a long time and hence there is need to continue with the capacity building and awareness creation initiatives beyond the coming elections next year in 2023. The project also needs to reach grassroots level as well and hence it needs a longer implementation period beyond the current 2-4 years.	UN Women Irish Embassy

7. ANNEXES

Evaluation Matrix	
	<p>Evaluation Matrix.docx</p>
Terms of Reference	
	<p>TORs Irish aid project Mid term EvaluationS</p>
Data Collection Tools	
	<p>KII Tool.docx</p>
	
	<p>Focus Group Discussion.docx</p>
	
	<p>MSC Story Guide.docx</p>
List of Key Informants Interviewed	
	<p>List of KII.docx</p>