

# FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation of Strengthening Women's Rights and  
Participation in Peacebuilding

EDUCARE -Liberia



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**DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of EDUCARE Liberia as implementing Agency.

**Cover photo:** Members of the Concession Community Women Development Structure of Gio's Town, Grand Bassa County. Photo courtesy of Dorothea Solomon-Team member

## **Executive Summary**

EDUCARE Liberia has worked and collaborated with several governmental agencies, United Nation agencies, USAID and other partners. EDUCARE leads and coordinates the efforts building people and communities to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout Liberia. She hold herself to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and ethical behavior by building effective partnerships with communities, civil society and other relevant actors.

As lead agency, EDUCARE responsibilities was to coordinate and implement the project, as the recipient organization for the “Strengthening Women’s Rights and Participation in Peacebuilding” and will be accountable for its overall implementation and results. Working with the project implementation committee, she collaborated fully with the PBSO as well as the Ministry of Internal affairs and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection at both County and National Levels.

The project aimed at strengthening women’s rights and addressing barriers to peacebuilding participation, which is critical to achieving gender equality and female empowerment; women’s capacities in leadership roles and promotes their participation as key stakeholders in the development of their communities focusing resource management strategies with concession companies operating in their communities.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability were used to measure project achievements towards impact.

This report documents key findings of a one month Monitoring and Evaluation activity implemented in twelve of the twenty-three communities covering EDUCARE’s target for the project, “Strengthening Women’s Rights and Participation in Peacebuilding” implemented in five counties for eighteen months. These counties were selected from three of the five target counties to ensure a rational blend of the concession activities therein. The project targeted 1,150 persons; women predominance with 10% of men participation. A vital sample size of 243 respondents was considered across the twelve communities in the three counties.

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### **Relevance**

All respondents 100% 243 indicated that EDUCARE women project was very timely and relevant; it filled peacebuilding gaps and addressed unmet needs especially amongst community inhabitants. The Project intervened and solved potential conflict in the communities, it restored and promoted social cohesion amongst the community dwellers, CCWD structures are recognized and trusted by inhabitants; these added significant worth to the work of the women in the communities.

However, 70% also agreed that the project was semi-perfect in its to amicably resolve tensions between concessions and inhabitants; notwithstanding corridors for briefing through meetings was established with the concessionaires.

### **Efficiency**

It was indicated by 75% of respondents that the project provided and demonstrated a considerable degree of flexibility and adaptability in responding to major changes in its operating environment and showed willingness to recognize local community culture and traditions, which made it acceptable by the locals.

Nonetheless, 80% said the project had narrow operational time (18 months); EDUCARE on ground presence and national staff, as well as having an Animator in each project community, enabled the kind of patient, careful work on stakeholder engagement and priorities needed for project development. The field presence was then needed for working with partners and continued attention to the most effective way to implement activities for maximum results.



of activities specifically targeted women and community development, while 32% were used on creating awareness and advocacy. These efforts improved women understand their legal rights and participation in community decision-making process, land issue, sexual gender-based issues, community, and personal development. They also had unanticipated positive results, such as empowering women to advocate more effectively for themselves and their children. Constructing women hall where as central points for decisions making.

## **Sustainability**

The 18-

## **Lessons Learned**

One visible and most significant lesson learned from the EDUCARE project relates to building critical capacity of local uneducated women to intervene in high level political decision making to improve the lives of community members needs to be researched further. Provision of land to concession companies originate and are







## **Overview of Peacebuilding Fund**

The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), a multi-year trust fund was designed to address immediate needs in post-conflict countries. Its intended strength is to catalyze donor support to create a pool of complementary and independent initiatives to expand nationally-owned peacebuilding efforts. It is meant to serve as a flexible tool to support the UN's broader peacebuilding objectives in countries at risk of relapsing into conflict.

It is “a catalytic fund, driven by existing planning, coordination and monitoring mechanisms to support the peacebuilding strategies of in-country UN-Government leadership. “It is expected to prioritize interventions that demonstrate direct and immediate relevance to peacebuilding, serve as a catalyst for kick-starting peacebuilding interventions, and engage UN agencies, funds and programs, and bilateral donors to support implementation by national entities and thereby strengthen national capacity.

## **Liberia Conflict Context and the PBF**

History of conflict in Liberia dates back to the origin of the state when the settlers debated and agreed to exclude the indigenous people in the territory; they declared a state from citizenship and all the rights associated with it. This exclusive politics had serious implication for property rights, the acquisition of, and entitlement to land, as well as access to and the exercise of political rights. Most critical was the deliberate exclusion from the identity of the state and erasure from the society the identities including symbols, cultures, and languages of the diverse ethnic groups that inhabit the territory. Aside from the exclusive politics, poor leadership and crisis of governance are among the many structural root causes of conflict and polarization in Liberia.

Overall, a total of sixteen conflict factors are identified across seven key policy related documents. Of these, seven conflict factors are identified by a majority of the papers: ‘land conflicts’, ‘condition of youth, especially with regard to employment’, mismanagement of natural resources’, ‘relationship between the state and its citizens’, a ‘weak and dysfunctional justice system’, the ‘lack of shared [national] vision’, ‘poverty and food insecurity’, and the ‘regional dimension’. Additionally, most of the documents identified gender issues, and particularly gender-based violence (GBV), as a crosscutting issue for peacebuilding, although it is unlikely to be a direct or primary driver of conflict in and of itself. Last, each of the

documents reviewed acknowledges most if not all of the sixteen factors listed as potential sources of conflict, and are distinct in determining emphasis, priority, and definition of terms, rather than substantive analysis.

In Liberia, UN Women leads the United Nations Country Team on gender equality and the empowerment of women with over seven years managing programming in Liberia. In line with the implementation of the UN One Programme in Liberia, UN Women aims to

The project has the following components:

1. Capacity building of women to understand available policy around concessions as well as the community land rights
2. Link women development structures with relevant bodies including concession companies, government agencies that are existing in their communities
- 3.

## **Methodology**

PBF evaluation in Liberia had followed a qualitatively-dominant performance evaluation approach utilizing the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Thus, the evaluation focused heavily on gender to reflect EDUCARE's commitment to understanding and promoting women's active participation in peacebuilding and recognize the primacy that gender issues play in Liberia's ongoing peacebuilding process.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The evaluation achieved a 100% response rate (243) and covered 117 persons in focus group discussions (FGDs) and 126 key informants. Together, the evaluation represents the views of 450 women and men from 12 of the 23 target communities. Evidently, the report of the evaluation is based on the data collection techniques using both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate 243 respondents from FGDs and KIIs complementing the hard data by exploring contexts and giving more meaning to the evaluation findings.

Data collection was focused on both qualitative and quantitative methods to enable the evaluation to corroborate better and understand the context within which EDUCARE activities were implemented and explored the nexus in the experience and perceptions of different stakeholder groups. It relied on an in-depth desk review of primary and secondary documents, key informant and small group and round table discussions. It substantiated supplementary qualitative data collection derived from EDUCARE's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) documents, and triangulate findings from the quantitative baseline and endline surveys.

Semi-structured guidelines tool was used to facilitate FGDs and KIIs to ensure consistency, continuity, and quality while allowing flexibility, progressive probing, and greater linkages of analysis.

about six KIIs per day and switched with the



development. Nevertheless, 70% of respondents indicated that the project was limited in its capacity to resolve tensions between concessions and inhabitants amicably; notwithstanding corridors for briefing through meetings was established with the concessionaires.

### **Evidence**

There are still looming tensions concerning lack of employment opportunity, health related issues, irresponsible fulfilment of concessions to deal directly with the communities concerning social cooperate responsibilities; and the lack of grievance redress mechanism for the communities to cultivate.

### **Efficiency**

Efficiency is an important hall mark of any project when asked if the project was efficient and well organized and that the communities embraced it, it was indicated by 85% of respondents that project provided and demonstrated a considerable degree of flexibility and adaptability in responding to major changes in its operating environment and showed willingness to recognize local community culture and traditions which made it acceptable by the locals.

### **Evidence**

In spite traditional African norm of men are the heads and are responsible for making decisions at every level of the society, under the project, women were allowed to make decisions that improved the welfare of communities.

A key issue stressed during the evaluation surrounded various stakeholders and their

**Evidence:**

Even though the project document outlined roles and responsibilities for various partners including Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, UN Women, National Bureau of Concessions, etc., but not many visible signs of such collaboration were visible, especially on the national scene.

**Effectiveness**

When asked if the project responded to the needs of the community in solving problems that emerged in the community and who did solve the problems.

It was indicated by 88.9 % of respondents that the project took commensurable risks; it was innovative and filled important peacebuilding gaps in the communities and strengthened the resolve of women to play important roles especially in making critical decisions and participation in leadership. The women have easy access to see and negotiate with higher ups decision makers at the concession. The Project helped in making progress on achieving higher level results in addressing root causes of conflict in the communities.

When asked also if the women had the capacity to negotiate with the concessions in a way that made them change some of their policies in favour of the community, 90.1% of respondents admitted that many of the changes and reforms were structural and that progress toward addressing the root causes of conflict needed to be seen as a long-term rather than a short- or even C





## **Sustainability**

The 18-month project implemented by EDUCARE with financial support from UN Peacebuilding Fund and technical support from UN Women-Liberia was developed on the gains of the work already undertaken by both UN Women and Liberia's Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection in building peace and promoting prosperity to support women's rights and participation in peacebuilding.

The Project builds capacity of the target groups and supports strategic networking between the women groups and other existing functional Peace Huts to create a foundation for the emergence of a network of mutually supportive women-led and gender responsive community-based mechanisms in each of the 5 targeted counties. These women will proactively and positively engage communities, authorities and other stakeholders to demand for delivery of services; dividends from the private sector investments

- Develop women mediation groups into micro-scale joint business cooperatives;
  -

culture and traditions, but key issues in the relationship, roles, and responsibilities between different actors need to be improved on in future endeavours. The project took risks, and it was innovative in filling important peacebuilding gaps in the communities and strengthened the ste

are women of ages 35 or above. Although the project exceeded the target for the inclusion of women, their presence did always translate into women having a meaningful voice in discussions and decision-making.

## **Challenges**

In the relations to the unforeseen, transitional period of new government taking over power posed a serious challenge to the interviewing process if the endline evaluation of the project. Most of the new local authorities interviewed did not have enough insight on the project and its successes.

The issue of heavy down pour of rains impaired mobility; especially given the poor state of roads which slows down project implementation.

## **Recommendation**

The next project scope of operations should be increased from 18 months to at least two to three years to afford the with full participation of concessional main heads to finally resolved issues that can be resolve with the participation community leadership who are the direction beneficiaries and victims of the concessions.

There should be an increase in women's knowledge and capacity to demand respect of their rights, engage in effective advocacy and community conflict mediation in the management of disputes around the use of natural resources and land from 23 to 80 selected communities within the fifteen counties of Liberia.

More young women age 20-40 plus, should be inclusive in the next project design because they are considered as the future leaders of every society. Once they are trained in governance and community leadership processes, they will bring foster peace to their society.

The number of women-led Concession Community Women Development Structures formed should also be

2. How good is this project to you?
  1. Do you really need it? Why
  2. Name few good things that the project did for you first and the other people
  3. How sure are you that this project really help you

**Effectiveness:**

3. Has anything changed in your community as a result of the project activities? (Probe for evidence of attitude or behaviour change).
  1. How is the relationship between you and the concession companies in line of communication?
  2. How do you solve the conflict between you people and the company?
  3. What happens after the conflict is solved
  4. How do you if the conflict is solved
  5. Has this project helped you to work with other people? How
  6. Was the project useful in its intervention, how

**Gender:**

4. Who got the chance to participate in the project?
  1. Was any group left out? (Probe by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, former combatant, etc.)
  2. How did the project address issues concerning women?
  3. What specific issues for women were addressed the Liberian action plan
5. Have you seen any changes in how groups interact as a result of the project?

**Sustainability:**

6. Are any activities from the project still going?
  1. Do you think these activities/remmpns wia4he ctin\*nyh.54 reW\*nBT/F2 12 Tf1 0 0 1 124.5