

Summary Final Evaluation Report

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sought to support activities and programmes to reduce violence to and against women, children, and society's vulnerable in Southern Sierra Leone.

This project aimed to provide a gender inclusive approach to preventing and addressing SGBV in highly affected communities through developing a structure of women action groups (WAGs) and male support groups (MSGs) with training in disseminating advocacy messages and E-alert support to report issues of violence and abuse in their various locations. The project was designed to provide continual engagement of community stakeholders to mainstream gender into community actions and activities while also providing survivors of abuse, psychosocial and welfare support including transportation to and from Family Support Units (FSUs) of the Police and to court sittings, medical support and access to safe space centers.

is implemented by Caritas Bo through its partners:
(WiCM), (CWA),
(WAVES).

Implemented in Southern Sierra Leone, the project targets areas are in the 4 districts of Bo, Bonthe, Pujehun and Moyamba across a total of 20 communities in 20 chiefdoms and directly benefited 600 people.

The PBF funding to Caritas and its implementing partners sought to deal with issues of SGBV, peace building and sustainable peace. It was expected that at the end of the project (18 months) SGBV, and conflicts would have reduced by 30%.

The project Theory of Change (ToC) is on the assumption that: *" IF women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence and its threats, THEN tackling sexual related conflicts; its prevention and management efforts by government and local civil society will be sustainable BECAUSE structural changes would have been functional to support peaceful co-existence of women, men, boys and girls"*.

To achieve the change envisaged in the ToC, Caritas and partners worked with 20 women and 20 men in 20 communities across 4 districts in the project catchment areas and by training both men and women (including youth and adolescents) on SGBV, human rights and reporting pathways when there are violence in the communities.

Further, government in partnership with other stakeholders have established a one-stop-centre for victims of SGBV; a centre where they can access all necessary support – police, social services (counselling and psychosocial services) and medical services. To make the programme sustainable, the project established Women Action Groups (WAG) and Men Support Group (MSG), aka 'Male Champions' to facilitate dialogue, mediate in conflicts and in extreme cases facilitate, arrest, overnment in partnerm0 g0 G(ext)4(r)-7(e)

WAG/MSG were supported with funds as business development seed money for the group and the community in general to invest in profitable ventures and the returns used to support SGBV victims. Both WAG and MSG received 9.5 million leones¹ per group.

Women Action Groups (WAG) are women collectives that were formed to protect women, girls and other vulnerable people within their communities.

Male Champions/Male Support Groups also received micro credits that they (MSGs) use for business and use the returns to support women that have suffered SGBV.

Two hundred and eighty-

In all, ten (10) which is half of the 20 communities were selected and projects beneficiaries selected and interviewed.

Figure 1: Gender Distribution. Source: Field work

Figure 2 gives a graphical representation of age distribution of respondents.

Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Age of Respondents. Source: Field Data

51.6% (143 of 277) reported no domestic abuse or violence (SGBV) in the past 18 months which is the project period, while 134 (of 277), 48.4% said they had suffered some abuse.

Further, for the 48.4% (134) respondents who had suffered SGBV in the past 18 months, 45% (61 of 134) said they had suffered a SGBV at least once in the last 18 months which is also the project period. 23.9% (32 of 134) said they had suffered SGBV at least twice while 8.2% (11) said they had suffered SGBV 3 times in the last 18 months. 30 respondents representing 22.4% of the 134 respondents said they had suffered SGBV 4 times or more during the last 18 months.

We were able to categorise types of abuse suffered by the 48.4% who reported being abused during the project period into 6 categories.

Twenty-six (26) out the 134 respondents, representing 19.4% said they experienced physical abuse. 25.4% said they experienced

and

However, the Project Coordinator, Precious Lamin says, " the biggest problem with the IPs is quality of staff of some partners, especially WAVES". The human resource quality of WAVES was below par. Internally, Caritas was struggling to manage WAVES and this impacted the quality of delivery in the communities where they (WAVES) worked.

While Caritas Bo included a capacity building activity for the IPs, we do not feel WAVES took the lessons seriously to want to implement them.

Given the local context and the general low quality of project staff outside of the national capital, Caritas Bo did a good job with the partners they had and worked fairly well with other institutions and agencies to effectively and efficiently use the resources allocated to the project. They signed various contracts with organisations such as the Legal Aid Board (LAB) – mostly tied to individuals rather than LAB and with their implementing partners. We think that for efficient use of the funds, future projects should look at the contracts/memorandums of understanding/agreements signed. Especially we think those documents should be drafted by persons with the proper know-how such a lawyer.

Based on the above, we believe an extension of the project should necessarily include reviewing the project partners, their contracts and MoUs around those relationships and those that have not been efficient such as WAVES should be replaced or heavily supervised.

We also recommend training of core project delivery team in Project Management prior to the start of the project and the middle of the rollout.

Since the project targets attitudinal and cultural change, and as Momo L of WAVES puts it, "*...18 months is a short time to measure impact*" and we agree with him. However, the project has brought about some differences in the beneficiary communities. We recorded reduced rape and other violence against women and girls during the project lifetime. Progress has been made.

We fear however that this progress will roll back as the issues the project seeks to address are cultural -

about a holistic change – or “knowledge shedding” where old attitudes are dropped, and new ones picked.

It is important to note that the 2020 Afrobarometer reports shows an increase in awareness levels of people on the sex offenses act (as amended) but not necessarily on crimes committed.

We maintain that adding financial reward to the Male Champions takes power from women and further perpetuates subjugation and dominance of men over women. Caritas Bo counters that that decision was taken with the WAGs and local authorities and was designed to include men in the project. Respondents (WAG leadership) have showed their displeasure and while we agree to the reasoning behind the decision, we suggest for a case study to be conducted to see the effect and or benefit to the communities and the project. The result of such study could serve as learning for future work.

To achieve the goal of beneficiary communities being able to continue the project with little or no external support, the project set aside for each WAG unit and a “ Male Champions (MC) ” 9.5 million leones. The money is a non-repayable credit intended to be used as capital for the WAG or the CM to trade and percentage of the profits used to pay for costs around the issues the PBF project sought to eliminate – safehouses (now the running of them), transportation to and from police or court, general mobilisation during an outbreak of a case, etc.

We found that the responsible ministry – the Ministry for Children, Women and Gender is not able to stock medication and the local partner to the project WiCM has had to rely on Caritas Bo, to sometimes stock the unit dispensary.

We recommend a deepening relationship with CSOs and government to help fulfil the states’ social contract with the people by guaranteeing them access to fair and equitable justice during cases of SGBV, social and community conflict and development in general.

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worked with women and men to complement women and support the fight against to reduce Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) cases and conflicts.

Hence, apart from just working with women, this project created men groups to complement and use the men’s groups to bring change.

In getting men to support women and society fight SGBV and related cases, we feel Caritas Bo and partners may have inadvertently continued to perpetuate patriarchy by awarding money to male champions with the notion that as business seed capital men in their

communities would use the money to support women. This takes power from women as they go back to the dominant sex – men, to be supported in cases of violence².

The consultants note the very difficult terrain Caritas works and without certain inducements, men would not support women, children, and girls in GEWE programmes across the communities the project is implemented. We will recommend specifically for Caritas Bo and the PBF to *conduct a case study activity around the Male Champions and the awards given to learn lessons about the project communities.*

In general, however,

has ticked many of the indicators leading to providing protection to women, girls and the most vulnerable in the project communities.

Large and well-funded organisations alone cannot do all the work needed in the provinces and backroads of Sierra Leone where not only is access to justice difficult but so also is access to roads, communication, health, security etc. Thus, Caritas Bo recognising and working with local organisations helps to build capacity at different levels and to support organisations with the right agency and background to support their bigger visions while they (Caritas Bo) provide leadership and support.

The project and partners also supported underfunded state institutions such as the social welfare, FSU (Police) among others to effect arrest, investigate or prosecute cases that without such support would be impossible to deliver service to victims. Specifically, we will recommend the following:

1. A sustained advocacy to have the police, social welfare and other agencies resourced in other for them to render the services for which they exist. It is clear PBF, Caritas Bo and its partners cannot perform state designated roles more than they have done as it is not sustainable and builds a culture of neglect by government.
2. We recommend that the community sensitization, trainings, and other activities be

justice for local people, and this is directly tied to projects like “the Promoting the Safety and Security of Women for Sustainable Peace in Southern Sierra Leone” project – social welfare, local health, local security and policing, roads, to mention a few.