

"FROM STRESS TO STRENGTH"



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROJECT

Submitted by:

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1.1 Project Context

Sierra Leone is a signatory to most international and regional human rights instruments that support protection and safety for women (e.g. UDHR, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Declaration on Gender equality in Africa, African Union Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa, etc). Despite these declarations, in reality, Gender Based Violence (GBV) remains an endemic problem through out Sierra Leone; and has potentials far-reaching debilitating consequence on the population with specific reference to women, girls and children in terms of educational setbacks, health risks, and underdevelopment to name but a few.

According to the 2004 Population and Housing Census, women constituted the majority of the population (51.3 per cent) of the Sierra Leonean population. About 10 per cent of these women live below the poverty line (defined as living on less than \$ 1 a day), and 74 per cent of these live on less than 50 cents a day. Women spend long hours in farming, petty trading, other economic activities and household chores. Most (89 per cent) lack access to education and gainful employment.

The severity and frequency of violence against women (also referred to as Gender-Based Violence) are difficult to measure. Gender-Based violence in Sierra Leone takes many forms and of varying intensity. The situation is compounded by the mutually construed factors of: illiteracy, acute poverty amongst women, the recognition of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a war weapon during the ten years war and even today; the non-acknowledgement of Domestic Violence (DV) as violence against women/young women particularly in the rural areas and the lack of commitment by authorities to domesticate/implement protective laws on violence against women and girls,

It is clear that above mentioned factors that lead to/sustain gender-based violence during conflict and post-conflict era reflect traditional gender values, roles and responsibilities, influenced by respective cultural dictates and misguided assumptions.

Both men and women in Sierra Leone take the traditional patriarchal value system for granted. As a consequence, people equate gender equality with peaceful conformity to socially prescribed gender roles, and an improvement in a woman's status is one that helps her fulfill this traditional role better. The failure to question gender stereotypes allows domestic violence to continue occurring as a "normal" and accepted part

of spousal relations. Given the deep-rooted nature of these perceptions, it is not surprising that institutional actions perpetuate the existing status quo. The range and complexity of the afore mentioned factors make GBV a difficult issue to address.

It is for this purpose that WPJP presents this proposal in order to strengthen its commitment by creating and strengthening the GBV reporting centres in the two districts and by building the capacities of rural/Community-based organisations/groups to contest GBV matters.

1.2 Objectives of the project:

We strongly anticipate achieving the following at the end of the project:

- In-depth understanding of the root causes and needs related to Gender-Based violence in these communities and Sierra Leone at large.
- Heightened public awareness on issues of Gender-Based Violence and its implications for sustainable peace and justice.
- Well established district (Bo and Moyamba) GBV/WHR centres for reporting, counseling of survivors/those at risk and for prosecution of cases of gender-based violence.
- Existence of social networks and advocacy teams comprising of community-based organisations, NGO and other related agencies/institutions with capacity to respond/prevent gender-based violence in the two districts and southern region at large.
- Emergence of men action groups to raise awareness and advocate for prevention of Gender-based violence in communities.

1.3 Expected Results

i) Expected Outputs:

- a. Document profiling CBOs working on gender-based violence and/or Women's Human Rights Issues in the two districts and the southern region at large.
- b. Establishment of two ideal psycho – Social centers with facilities such as —Drop-in room, Games, Equipped News Network, and other attractions that stimulate trauma healing and confidence building for Survivors in each district.
- c. Minimum of two gender-based related trainings organised for one hundred and fifty women and few men in the two districts.
- d. Through the training workshops and animation exercise, there will be heightened awareness on GBV issues evidenced by increased debates on GBV in communities and existence of GBV action groups/Teams.

- e. Emergence of community and traditional lead structures and mechanisms to protect, defend and prosecute GBV cases in their communities.
- f. A well structured communication and information system would be generated that would enhance a fast- track report of any GBV occurrence at both chiefdom and district levels.
- g. Reduction on time/length between event and reporting of cases to the centre/police.
- h. Willingness on the part of survivors to come forward to report and take legal actions against perpetrators
- i. Willingness on the part of men to listen to and support women/men for safe GBV environment.
- j. Less stigmatization and institution of favourable traditional laws/customs that protect survivors.
- k. Existence of contract agreement between, WPJP, Police, Health agencies, Family support unit etc in the two districts on responding to GBV issues.

ii) Expected Outcomes:

- a) Available information on Sexual and Gender Based Violence at the district levels Community.
- b) An integration of sexual and gender-based violence response and prevention into all WPJP operations.
- c) There would be a significant reduction in the prevalence and occurrence of Gender –Based Violence and Sexual Exploitation in the targeted communities evidenced by the number of reported cases reported, cases in court, and the multiplicity of Gender-Advocacy Groups.
- d) There would be an ideal psycho – Social center reflecting the basic necessities—Drop-in room, Games, Equipped News Network, and other attractions that stimulate trauma healing among the Survivors and promotes the ideals of confidentiality, Convenience and confidence building among the Survivors in each district.

- e) A well structured communication and information system would be generated that would enhance a fast-track report of any GBV occurrence at both chiefdom and district levels.
- f) Effective structures/ systems/ mechanisms for the prevention and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence procedures and coordination would be enhanced to provide proper legal, psychological, medical and social support to Survivors.
- g) Men would be fully integrated into the prevention drive through effective awareness creation and capacity building exercises that would render them fully mainstreamed into the gender advocacy promotion.
- h) An extended monitoring and follow-up procedures would be established that would enable WPJP staff to carry out cross-district coordination, monitoring, and follow-up activities to ensure and help facilitate the introduction of GBV prevention machinery and enhance the strengthening of WPJP certificated staff in Sierra Leone.
- i) Existence of Youth Peer Group Educators, Groups of Child Mothers, Traditional Birth Attendants, and other stakeholders as new category of Sensitizers on the concepts of Gender and Gender-based Violence so that they can serve as a strong Advocacy unit for their contemporaries. Training would be conducted to support their concise reporting and advocacy potentials.

1.4 Project activities:

1. Mass Awareness Raising Campaigns

Although gender equality is guaranteed by the “law”, many women are deprived of the fundamental right of being respected and physically protected. Women continue to endure violence in silence, in part because of a lack of knowledge about their rights as well as a lack of public condemnation of all forms of violence.

Until now, many men and women accept gender-based violence as the norm. Solving family conflicts by compelling the woman (wife/mother) to plead guilty is still considered justified even if the woman is not “at fault”. Hence the creation of a new environment in which all forms of violence against women are condemned would require numerous measures.

Awareness raising campaigns will be the backbone of this project. The campaigns will be implemented using multi-media approaches and channels e.g. school visitations, radio discussion programmes, rallies, drama, radio jingles etc.

In addition, other GBV service providers from multiple sectors, including police, health ministry, judiciary, other related NGOs, chieftdom authorities, education ministry, social welfare, gender and children affairs ministry etc will be encouraged to be involved in the implementation of the campaigns.

2. Trainings

Although community groups exist at different levels of the Sierra Leonean society but there is a general lack of gender sensitivity and knowledge of women’s human rights, counselling knowledge and skills, thereby limiting the effectiveness of community institutions. An integrative approach will be adopted in the areas of human rights, gender and gender-based violence, counselling and advocacy skills mainly targeting potential trainers and activists comprising: women, men, youths, from women friendly organisations/institutions and some community leaders.

3. Construction/Establishment of GBV/WHR Centres:

From WPJP’s two years experience in handling GBV cases, it is a well expressed fact that women who are survivors of violence value counselling services. There is however GBV activists in most communities lack counselling services i.e. conducive space, skills and materials to undertake the work. WPJP in this light will retain and

improve on the services of the Women Human Rights and Peace Centre (WHRP) in Bo and construct another in Njala in the moyamba district.

4. Advocacy and Lobbying

Despite the widespread prevalence, gender-based violence has not yet received priority attention from policy makers. And for gender-based inequality and violence to be adequately addressed by policy makers, fundamental changes must be made in the way people view gender roles and gender equality in Sierra Leone.

In this light, an effective advocacy engagement is, therefore, needed to heighten the awareness of policy makers at local, district and regional levels and to create a favourable institutional environment for combating gender-based violence.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting:

At various trainings, participants will be provided with simple reporting formats to supply data GBV incidences in their environments and adequate ways of getting this information to the appropriate authorities at Women's Human Rights Centre will be established.

In addition, WPJP and community representatives will conduct knowledge, attitude and practices survey before and immediately after the implementation of the project to describe the extent to which planned project activities were carried out, the outputs/outcomes realized, the constraints encountered and way forward.

Progress and end of project reports will be submitted to Lenten Campaign and copied to the Stitching Taiama Andreas through its chair: Fr. G. Bles based on agreed reporting format and dates.

2 Project Target and Location:

a) Target Beneficiaries:

The project will directly benefit survivors of GBV, those at risks and leaders of Community-based Organisations and institutions focused on or concerned with gender equality/women's human rights in Bo and Moyamba districts.

Indirectly the project will be beneficial to the entire womanhood and organizations/institutions striving for justice and peace in the country.

b) Location:

For a year, the project activities will be restricted to Kori and Kowa chiefdoms in Moyamba

District and Kakwa chiefdom in Bo district but training and advocacy engagements will cover

the entire southern region

The selection was made because of the following reason:

- Non-visibility of organisations to responds to SGBV incidences
- Prevalence of sexual offences against women and girls in these chiefdoms during and after the war.
- The prevalence of SGBV e.g. domestic violence, high school drop out amongst girls, increased incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse in schools, prostitution and girl trafficking etc..
- Physical situation of the women and young girls and their willingness to participate in the transformation process
- Relative peace and existence of the rule of law as manifested by police (and the Family support unit in particular) presence and a magistrate.
- Existence of WPJP operational structures in the region e.g. Head office, resource centre and bank account in Bo, land, buildings and field officers in Kori chiefdom and GBV partnering organizations
- Collaborative linkage with other related agencies/organisations/institutions in the two districts.

2.3 Sustainability of the project after the financing period

The project is intended to spread over a period of two years but will continue even after the project period/donor withdrawal. To achieve this, the project will put in place:

a. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Creating self-financing mechanism. This self-financing system will be achieved by:

- Encouraging in-kind contributions from members and friends.
- Creating a capital reserve/seed bank at local and organisational levels and encouraging the groups to make conscious efforts to allocate at least 15% of their total income to the fund.
- Encouraging the usual fund raising activities e.g. rendering expertise and other facilities to other organisations on contract basis, allocating some of the proceed to the organisation.
- Negotiating long-term, flexible programme/project grants from external donors and using this money for meaningful investments and saving the interest from the investment in the reserve fund.
- WPJP will also research and institute other income sustaining/staff motivating income generating initiatives; and Stimulate members to initiate other creative/community owned income generating initiatives

Consequently, the project will become an asset to the organization and the answer to donors, who aim at temporary support.

B. MANAGERIAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Self - Management Mechanism:

The project target beneficiaries and WPJP assigned staff members will be the main actors through out the project cycle and will remain in control even after the project period. Beneficiaries will be encouraged to actively participate in the planning, implementation, management and evaluation of the project.

To strengthen this participation, continuous in-service training for capacity building will be held. This will enable them to remain the main actors and owners of the project during the project period and after donor withdrawal.

C. TECHNICAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Considering the technical sustainability of structures and proceeds, the project will mobilize, strengthen and make maximum use of indigenous knowledge. The target participants and staff will be encouraged to provide technical input (skilled and unskilled) for the project during and after donor withdrawal.

2.4. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is to assess progress and impact of the GBV Prevention and Response project on beneficiaries and the larger community.

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In addition, WPJP and community representatives will conduct knowledge, attitude and practices surveys before, during and immediately after the implementation of the project to describe the extent to which planned project activities were carried out, the outputs/outcomes realized, the constraints encountered and way forward.

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Realistically, WPJP will do pre-assessment of GBV cases in each location. When the project commences, target participants will undertake on-going and activity level monitoring of the project, supervised by the concerned staff. On monthly basis, the resident animator and social worker will do follow-up exercises to assess progress/challenges.

Further more half yearly evaluation exercises will be undertaken by the programme co-ordinator and other assigned staff to assess progress, problems/constraints and document new/emerging paradigms/initiatives.