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EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF-GAM-09-293 – Enhancing Women's Participation in Democracy
in The Gambia**

Date: 24 April 2014

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Background

The project ran from 1 February 2011 – 31 January 2013, with a total grant of USD 175,000. It was designed by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in The Gambia, and was implemented in all five regions (Upper River Region, Central River Region, North Bank Region, West Coast Region, and Lower River Region) of the country. It was implemented in partnership with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWEGAM) and Pro-Hope International (PHIN). The target population consisted of community-based organizations (CBOs), women's groups, representatives of local government authorities (LGAs), as well as committees and members of political parties. As defined in the Project Document, the overall objective was to enhance the involvement and participation of women in political processes and democratic governance in The Gambia. Accordingly, WANEP's strategic approach aimed for four key outcomes:

- The identification and analysis of the various legal, cultural and religious norms and values critical to the participation of women in politics and governance;
- The promotion of a better understanding of electoral processes and democracy among rural women;
- Capacity building for women provided to encourage them seeking electoral offices and organizing election campaigns;
- Improved capacity of women to actively participate in governance.

(ii) Assessment of the project

The approach to raise awareness among the wider population and to build the capacity of hard to reach women was adequate to facilitate open discussion and motivate rural women to become engaged in electoral processes and democracy. The design of the project's advocacy component served to deepen the understanding of strategies to overcome the impediments limiting the participation of women. Awareness-raising methods and material used by facilitators were educative, while fully taking into account the high levels of illiteracy among the beneficiaries. Capacity building measures finally meant to ensure women obtain a through insight into the details involved in candidature and responsibilities once holding office. Given that the selection of candidates is a politically driven, male-dominated process (and the subject of entrenched cultural norms and pervasive religious beliefs), it was appropriate to include a pilot-mentoring scheme for women in the project's design. It is therefore our view that the **overall design of the project was relevant** to promote the involvement and participation of women in electoral processes and democratic governance.

Following the decision of all but one of The Gambia's opposition parties not to participate in the National Assembly elections, the grantee expanded the project to the local government elections. This caused variations to the initial activity plan, but had no negative effects, as the project in most cases exceeded the targeted outputs. Focus groups informed about women's rights to actively represent the community in decision-making processes. Open forums and regional radio programmes generated knowledge and vibrant discussion among the wider public. A capacity building scheme combined training, mentorship, and experience sharing. It relied on the project's manual, which was praised both by trainers and trainees for

being a comprehensive introduction to the principles of democratic governance. Considering the fact that 80% of the country's female local government election candidates were former project trainees, evaluators conclude that **the project was still effective**, as it successfully contributed to the promotion of women's involvement in local decision-making.

Claiming almost one third of the budget, WANEP's administrative expenditure for human resources and project management reached a relatively high budget share. The necessary establishment and transfer of the required knowledge was achieved at acceptable prices: 35 trainers were trained at a cost of USD 423 each, the cost of the training manual amounted to USD 30 per copy, and the average training cost per beneficiary was approximately USD 87.31. In view of the social and cultural challenges that the project's beneficiaries needed to overcome, evaluators are of the opinion that the project, **while not particularly efficient, represented a necessary first investment** to work in a comprehensive way towards enhanced involvement and participation of Gambian women in democratic governance.

Weaknesses in the design of outcome indicators limited the grantee's analysis of impact. Those indicators allowing for a partial assessment show that the impact in respect of the project's ultimate objective was rather limited. While this was mostly owed to a development outside the control of the grantee (i.e. the opposition's election boycott), evaluators on the basis of independently gathered first-hand evidence still established that the project generated **some positive impact**. Most importantly, former beneficiaries displayed improved self-esteem and empowerment, and a few women have become effective leaders and agents of change. Evaluators, however, have also noted that more intervention will be needed to address continued signs of low-level argumentative and campaigning skills among former beneficiaries, who did not emerge successfully from past elections.

Despite positive results there are some **shortcomings, which risk limiting the sustainability** of the project's outcome. Many of the former beneficiaries either displayed or explicitly admitted a lack of preparedness, and expressed their expectation that the grantee will play a lasting key role in providing access to continued mentorship. In addition, the observed unchanged attitudes of the political parties' selection committees rather worsen the prospects for women to access electoral processes in 2016. Finally, the grantee could have invested more concrete efforts to lobby government towards the introduction of legislative changes supporting a minimum representation of women in National Assembly and local government.

(iii) Conclusions

- The fact that WANEP's approach included the conduct of baseline research and the use of output indicators is highly commendable, as it confirmed the project's **relevance** and facilitated the evaluators' favourable **assessment of the effectiveness** of the grantee's contribution to female participation in the local government elections. The grantee's reporting, however, often failed to compare outcome with (often not existing) baseline or target indicators, and at times did not clarify how the outcome of specific project activities contributed to achievements claimed by the project.

- Given the extent to which the grantee managed to disseminate information on the rights of women to participate in electoral processes and democratic

governance, there is little doubt that the project **effectively questioned** entrenched cultural norms and pervasive religious beliefs. It is, however, also a fact that despite this promotional effort and the provision of training and mentoring the turnout of female candidates in the local government elections was lower than during the previous 2006-2008 cycle.

- Continued lobbying of government structures, political party stakeholders and more mentoring will be needed to ensure enhanced involvement and participation of women in electoral processes and democratic governance. To overcome the currently **limited effect and sustainability of the project's outcome** WANEP's future efforts should focus on (1) a re-launch of its mentorship programme to maintain and ameliorate women's preparedness; (2) undertaking targeted lobbying to push political parties to oblige their selection committees to affirmative action; and (3) maintaining close cooperation with the IEC to advocate legislative changes in favour of women's representation at all levels of governance.

(iv) Recommendations

- In accordance with our **observations on impact, we recommend to UNDEF** to emphasize vis-à-vis applicants not only the importance of generating comparative data (baseline vs. outcome), but to also provide guidance about its effective use. **We encourage the grantee** to cover project achievements systematically, as this will enable WANEP to improve its current assessment in qualitative terms and thus enhance the organizations' strategic objectives. This may also help to attract new donors and implementing partners for an expansion of the original project. We therefore also **suggest that UNDEF considers** that applications including solid outcome survey approaches will be given preference.

- **Based on our comments on sustainability, we recommend to the grantee** to consider an extension of the project for the upcoming election cycle, which is scheduled for launch in 2016. Future project proposals would ideally include initial findings based on advanced monitoring indicators, in order to provide potential donors with evidence of WANEP's ability to improve beneficiaries' access to enhanced participation in electoral processes and democratic governance. We also suggest to:

- Engage successfully elected women representatives previously trained by the project as new mentors for still hopeful and new motivated women candidates;
- Make use of the internet to expand the communication of purpose, activities and achievements of the former and future projects, in particular to inform previously not targeted female graduates, e.g. by disseminating the project's main outputs and selected excerpts of the UNDEF-funded documentary video via the WANEP website;
- Intensify lobbying efforts vis-à-vis (the ruling, but also relevant opposition) political parties for a change of their statutes, by capitalising on the example and current work of former women trainees now holding office;
- Continue and deepen the cooperation with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), to advocate the introduction of legislation securing a minimum representation of women in National Assembly and local government. Expand cooperation with the Women's Bureau, to facilitate the countrywide communication of such an effort.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

i. The project and evaluation objectives

This report contains the evaluation of the project entitled “Enhancing Women's Participation in Democracy in The Gambia”. The project ran from 1 February 2011 – 31 January 2013, with a total grant of USD 175,000 (out of which UNDEF retained USD 17,500 for monitoring and evaluation).

The project was designed by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), The Gambia, and was implemented in all five regions (Upper River Region, Central River Region, North Bank Region, West Coast Region, and Lower River Region) of the country. It was implemented in partnership with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWEGAM) and Pro-Hope International (PHIN). As defined in the Project Document, the overall objective was to enhance the involvement and participation of women in political processes and democratic governance in The Gambia. The target population consisted of community-based organizations (CBOs), women's groups, representatives of local government authorities (LGAs), as well as committees and members of political parties.

UNDEF and Transtec have agreed on a framework governing the evaluation process, set out in the Operational Manual. According to the manual, the objective of the evaluation is to “undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved”.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international expert, working with a national expert, under the terms of the framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec. In accordance with the agreed process, the evaluation aimed to answer questions across the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability*, as well as the additional criterion of *UNDEF value added* (see Annex 1).

The evaluation took place from March – April 2014 with the fieldwork in The Gambia conducted from 4 - 8 March 2014. The evaluators reviewed available project documentation and contextual / background materials on reform issues surrounding the involvement and participation of women in political processes and democratic governance in the Gambia (Annex 2). Initial and final interviews were held at WANEP's office in Banjul, involving the organization's Acting National Network Coordinator and Project Officer. Other meetings focused on interviews and exchanges with the project's staff and resource persons (focal points, mentors), stakeholders (including implementing partners), and with representatives of the target groups from all of The Gambia's regions, to confirm the project beneficiaries' experiences and to obtain updates of their most recent activities. These interviews and group meetings were carried out in Banjul, involving 6 project staff, 7 stakeholders, and 14 project beneficiaries, comprising of women who took the challenge to stand for elections.

(iii) Development context

Increasing women's political participation is a Millennium Development Goal (MDG 3, target 4, indicator 12)¹. Its introduction is based on the global understanding that the empowerment of women in the political arena can help bringing positive changes to society. Their involvement in governance, no matter whether at local or national level, has led to policies and legislation focusing on women, children, families and peace-building.

A minimum female participation of 30% in representative assemblies is also the target of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action², an agenda for women's empowerment, which aims at removing all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat in 1997 demanded an accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision making at all levels³.

Like in many other African countries, the equal and active participation of both women and men remains an unresolved issue in The Gambia, in particular with respect to decision-making in governance and nation building, and this despite commitments made by the country's constitution of 1997, which states⁴ in its foreword: "The fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the constitution will ensure full respect for and observance of human rights of the people at all times without discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, language or religion". The foreword also guarantees participatory democracy, effective governance and peace and stability in The Gambia. While the document's foreword is not considered as a substantive part of the constitution, it serves as an important tool for understanding the history and context of its provisions. According to these, women are treated equally with men, when it comes to their participation in the political affairs of the Gambia. Section 28 accords women full and equal dignity of person with men and lays down that they shall be treated equally with men, including equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities. Section 26 states that every Gambia citizen of full age and capacity has the right to take part in the conduct of public office, to vote and be voted for in public office, and to have equal access to public service without unreasonable restrictions.

This legal framework has, however, proven insufficient, as The Gambia retained a highly traditional patriarchal society, in which male supremacy has been reinforced by both culture and religion. In such an environment, the political involvement of women is actually often limited to cheering, mobilizing, and campaigning for male candidates and their motivation to stand themselves for elections is low⁵.

¹ Source <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm>

² Paragraph 182 of its declaration reinforces this target, which was originally endorsed by the Economic and Social Council. Source <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

³ Source: Agreed conclusions 1997/2 (women in power and decision-making) of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/agreedconclusions/Agreed-Conclusions-English.pdf>

⁴ Source: <http://www.accessgambia.com/information/constitutiongambia.pdf>

⁵ Source: UNDEF project document.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

(i) Project strategy and approach

The overall objective of the “Enhancing Women's Participation in Democracy in The Gambia” project, as defined in the Project Document (UDF-GAM-09-293) in January 2011, was to enhance the involvement and participation of women in political processes and democratic governance in The Gambia. More specifically, the project aimed to raise capacity, by providing skills training, piloting a mentorship programme for prospective women leaders and election candidates, and by engaging local communities in broad-based sensitization and advocacy.

Accordingly, WANEP's strategic approach aimed for four key outcomes:

- An identification and analysis of the various legal, cultural and religious norms and values critical to the participation of women in politics and governance;
- The promotion of a better understanding of electoral processes and democracy among rural women;
- Capacity building for women provided to encourage them seeking electoral offices and organizing election campaigns;
- Improved capacity of women to actively participate in governance.

At the project's outset, under the influence of social, cultural and religious aspects, the participation of women in National Assembly elections was limited – and literally absent as far as rural women are concerned. In view of a general trend of increasing voter apathy, the grantee saw a need to promote a change towards active participation of women in electoral processes and governance. According to the grantee's initial analysis, women represented more than half of the country's population (recently confirmed at 50.5%, according to the 2013 census)⁶, and 54% of all registered Gambian voters. Therefore the grantee intended to work with women at all levels in preparation for the election cycle expected to commence in 2011.

WANEP's chapter in The Gambia, a non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) established in the capital Banjul since August 2003, has a membership of 20 civil society organizations (CSOs). Together, these are working towards strengthened capacity of peace building practitioners, governmental and non-governmental institutions, in order to develop conflict prevention networks and mechanisms promoting a culture of peace.⁷ The NGO is committed to the vision of a country characterized by just and peaceful communities, where the dignity of individual persons is respected and sustainable livelihoods are realized. Accordingly, the organization's mission is to facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among stakeholders in The Gambia, thus working towards the achievement of sustainable peace through the promotion of human rights, governance and justice.⁸

⁶ Source: <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/more-women-than-men-in-gambia>

⁷ Source: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=50&Itemid=90

⁸ Source: Vision and mission statement plaque at the offices of WANEP's The Gambia chapter.

(ii) Logical framework

The Project Document translates WANEP's programmatic approach into a structured plan of project activities and intended outcomes, including the achievement of the project's overall and specific objectives. The framework below aims to capture the project logic systematically, also attempting to eliminate confusion between activities, intended outcomes and impacts, which evaluators at times observed in the Project Document's result framework.

Project Activities & Interventions	Intended outcomes	Medium Term Impacts	Long Term Development Objectives
<p><u>1. Targeted Advocacy</u></p> <p>Consultation of stakeholders (Ministries, LGAs, community leaders) & launch event</p> <p>Conduct baseline study and organize validation workshop</p> <p>Development of training manual, materials and training of trainers</p>	<p>The project's objective is understood and supported</p> <p>Legal, cultural and religious aspects of relevance to the participation of women in politics and governance identified, analysed and validated</p> <p>Training & advocacy materials are available; regional focal points and their regional sensitization teams (RSTs) are trained</p>	<p>Key project messages communicated</p> <p>Knowledge and awareness about project objectives increased</p>	
<p><u>2. Awareness Raising about Electoral Processes & Democracy</u></p> <p>Open Forums for members of the community and political parties</p> <p>Programmes aired via regional community radio stations</p> <p>Focus groups for community-level women's groups, village and district committees</p>	<p>Focal points and/or RSTs throughout the country's five regions have ensured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues around the participation in electoral processes and democracy were understood by rural women - Knowledge and awareness about the possibility of women's participation and representation in decision-making processes has increased at all levels 	<p>The wider society, and LGAs in particular, support the implementation of a policy enabling the participation of women</p>	<p>Enhanced involvement and participation of women in The Gambia's political processes and democratic governance</p>
<p><u>3. Capacity Building for Women seeking Electoral Office</u></p> <p>Training aspiring candidates for National Assembly / local government elections</p> <p>Pilot electoral process mentorship programme</p> <p>Sharing circle meetings with mentors, mentees and regional focal points</p> <p>Post-experience sharing forum</p>	<p>Mentors and mentees have received capacity building and skills training</p> <p>Progress of women electoral candidates monitored, their experience shared, new targets set and cross-learning between participants generated (incl. documentary video on women candidates produced)</p> <p>Issues leading to low levels of female participation discussed, capacity for effective campaigning and active participation in governance built</p>	<p>Awareness of the responsibilities involved in holding elected office raised</p> <p>With self-confidence improved, women successfully seek and win elected positions</p> <p>Elected women have become effective leaders and agents of change</p>	

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) Relevance

Baseline Situation

WANEP assigned an individual consultant with the project's initial assessment of the baseline situation, in order to establish the participation of women, and particularly rural women, in the democratization and political processes in The Gambia. The baseline study considered all regions covered by the project (West Coast, North Bank, Lower River, Central River, Upper River). Findings were based on (a) a literature review, (b) 20 focus group meetings involving discussions with 261 participants, which represented the diversity of the country's rural communities and women, and (c) interviews with 20 key persons in community leadership positions, which were guided by key-informant questionnaires. These inputs confirmed that the participation of women in democracy remains low. Therefore, the study, which was validated in a dedicated workshop by local institutions, women's groups and other civil society organizations, concludes that: "[...] equality by law is not a sufficient condition for active participation, because informal issues embedded in tradition, beliefs and practices are stronger than formal matters in the daily dealings of society".⁹ While most of the actions, which the study suggested in order to fast track the participation of women, were in line with the grantee's initial plan of project activities, some others were, however, outside the scope of the project document approved by UNDEF.¹⁰

The project response

In order to strengthen the involvement and participation of women in the country's political processes and democratic governance, the grantee's project design aimed for a comprehensive approach. Expanding beyond the lobbying of central and local actors involved in the implementation of government policy, and actions raising people's awareness about electoral processes and democracy, it was WANEP's expectation that capacity

Selected baseline findings

Obstacles to women's political participation in governance include, among others, religious beliefs and socio-cultural practices:

- An obligation to very heavy (and mostly non-mechanized) work;
- The low level of education (however, as women's participation despite proportionally higher levels of education is also low in urban centres, illiteracy is not considered to be the sole reason why rural women do not have equal opportunity to participate in governance);
- In the absence of education, low levels of lobbying and negotiation skills;
- The male dominance of the political structures responsible for the selection of representatives, which will be supported to stand for election;
- The low level of political awareness, and the lack of courage and confidence for women to actively participate in political contest.

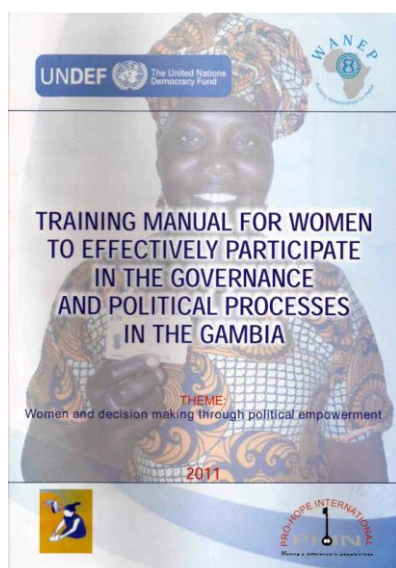
⁹ Baseline Study, Women in the Democratization and Political Process in Rural Gambia, Section 5, Conclusions, p. 53.

¹⁰ E.g. the baseline study's conclusion section recommended the project could (a) introduce labor-saving devices to reduce women's domestic chores; (b) build capacities of organizations bridging the gender gap in empowerment and public decision making; and (c) establish a national network of institutions/organizations involved in gender equality and empowerment.

building for women in the form of (i) training for aspiring candidates for National Assembly and local government elections, and (ii) a pilot mentoring scheme for women seeking electoral office, would ultimately lead to an enabling environment in which empowered women can become effective leaders and agents of change. Accordingly, evaluators found various examples of relevant project design, addressing the baseline aspects and involving a variety of relevant stakeholders:

1. Targeted Advocacy

The purpose of *initial consultations with stakeholders and the organisation of a project launch event* at national level was to pledge for support by senior government officials (notably, both the position of Vice President and of National Assembly Vice Chair are held by women) and accordingly involved initial advocacy missions to relevant government bodies. Thereafter, consultation was practiced on the basis of a memorandum of understanding with the Women's Bureau, a government-mandated body coordinating all policy and programme oriented matters relating to the development and advancement of women in the country. Given the project covered the entirety of The Gambia, the grantee's implementation approach was based on the operation of Focal Points in each of the countries six regions. Therefore, the consultation of local government and community representatives and their inclusion in the project's steering was ensured by means of community-led progress monitoring, undertaken by the Focal Points and their Regional Sensitization Teams (RSTs) with regards to the project's outputs and results.



Training manual development was informed by the baseline study and a dedicated workshop

The *training manual* was designed to enable women to effectively participate in governance and political processes. It was informed by the results of the project's *baseline survey*, and the results of discussions and group work undertaken in *separate development and validation workshops*, to which the grantee invited its implementation partners, government stakeholders and non-state actors, and a sample of grass-roots women beneficiaries. Organised into four main chapters, it was designed to introduce women to the basic principles of governance, gender, electoral processes, and all aspects of organizing election campaigns. Intended for use by trainers, the manual includes methodological guidance notes, and technical suggestions how to involve women trainees, e.g. by means of discussion, brainstorming, case study analysis, group work, as well as role plays and simulation exercises.

Purpose of the *training of trainers* was to introduce the newly developed training manual and method to the future trainers' and to deepen their understanding of strategies to overcome the impediments limiting the participation of women in leadership. The project's regional focal points were expected

to identify trainers to ensure adequate community representation and advocacy (i.e. CBOs, CSOs, teachers, opinion leaders, local women's groups and LGA institutions).

2. Awareness Raising about Electoral Processes & Democracy

By organising *focus group meetings for grassroots-level women's groups* the RSTs targeted those women hardest to reach in the rural communities. Inviting representatives of village and district committees was meant to facilitate open discussion and to increase their knowledge and awareness about the support needs of women interested to participate in local governance and to raise a better understanding of the benefits of their participation in local decision-making processes. Given the high levels of illiteracy, *picture boards* were used during the interactions to educate and to provoke reactions and statements of the focus group participants. The picture boards' series of images was designed to explain the different stages of the electoral process:

- Family Gathering: a woman informs her family members about and asks for support to her intention to stand for election;
- Party Committee Selection: the same woman successfully overcoming irrelevant arguments and stereotypes expressed by a male-dominated party committee;
- Nomination: an image displaying community support as the women candidate exits an election nomination office;
- Campaigning: explaining the need to elaborate a campaign strategy and to convince the wider community of the benefits linked to female representation in governance;
- Election Day: clarification of the importance of women executing their right to vote;
- Elections Victory: celebrating empowerment as a benefit for whole community;
- Parliamentary Sitting: displaying women as equal agents of change in governance.

The main objective of the *open forum meetings* was to provide a platform for open discussion between members of the community and representatives of the country's political parties (more specifically: members of the different parties' selection committees in charge of nominating their election candidates), in order to raise the issues and challenges women interested to engage in politics typically face.

Programmes aired via regional community radio stations aimed to ensure outreach to and sensitization of the wider communities living in The Gambia's rural towns and villages. The design of the weekly radio programme foresaw live introductory panel-type discussions, during which focal points served as moderators alongside two pannelists (often involving the participation of IEC representatives) followed by phone sessions during which the radio audience was given opportunity to ask questions and express opinions as regards the state of women's participation in the country's electoral processes. Once more the regional focal points and their RSTs were expected to identify knowledgeable and experienced panellists from the local communities and, more specifically, from among the participants of the different project activities.

3. Capacity Building for Women seeking Electoral Office

In order to enhance the understanding of factors relevant for the participation in electoral and democratic processes, the grantee foresaw to invite aspiring female candidates, which were identified during the open forum meetings, to participate in *women mentorship training*. It was to be based on the training manual, which covered the country's historical background of women in politics and details of the electoral process (constitutional requirements, party primaries, candidature). Each successful participant became a mentee and was paired with a mentor from the respective region, who is experienced in electoral processes. Therefore, the training was also designed to inform about the role of mentors, the duties and

responsibilities of mentees, and to guide the management of the mentor/mentee relationship. The subsequent *pilot mentorship programme* was developed for mentees to hold bilateral meetings with their mentors during the period preceding the elections, in order to prepare the presentation of their candidacy to the selection committees of the political party they wish to become a candidate for. In addition, the grantee also planned regional *sharing circle meetings*, which were quarterly networking and exchange events among mentors, mentees and focal points. As the name suggests, their objective was to share experience, by establishing individual and overall progress achieved, transfer of knowledge and the agreement of new targets for the period remaining up to the respective elections.

A *post-experience sharing forum*, the project's concluding event, aimed to capture the experiences, challenges and lessons learnt by the project's beneficiaries during the past election cycle (i.e. both National Assembly and LGA elections).

(ii) Effectiveness

The non-participation of all but one of the country's opposition parties in the National Assembly elections prompted the grantee to expand the project to the subsequent local government elections. Evaluators accordingly noted variations at the level of the initially planned output indicators. Their assessment, however, is that the project in most cases exceeded the targeted outputs.

1. Targeted Advocacy

As foreseen in the project document WANEP sought *consultation with stakeholders* by means of eight advocacy missions, introducing objective, scope, activities, and intended outcome. Interactions involved the Vice President of The Gambia, the Speaker of the National Assembly (including assembly administrative staff), the Assembly's majority leader, Members of Parliament, and officials of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Women's Bureau, the Ministry of Local Government, as well as the five regions' Governors. As the project was



Representatives of women's groups, CBOs and political parties reviewed the project's training manual in a workshop

geared towards engendering electoral processes and the empowerment of women in governance, the grantee attempted to provide leverage by highlighting its partnership with UNDEF. This, however, produced a rather modest response¹¹. In comparison to the above, the project's official *launch event*, which assembled 50 participants comprising of the same group of stakeholders and other key actors (i.e. ambassadors, WANEP network partners,

¹¹ Only two of the initially addressed eight stakeholders provided substantial feedback: while Members of Parliament commended the capacity building activities of the grantee and the long-standing collaboration, (1) the National Assembly's Vice President stressed that her office was ready to collaborate with organizations, which in the spirit of the 2010 Women's Act work towards the advancement of women, and (2) the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government, offered technical and other types of concrete support to the grantee, ministries and regional Governors.

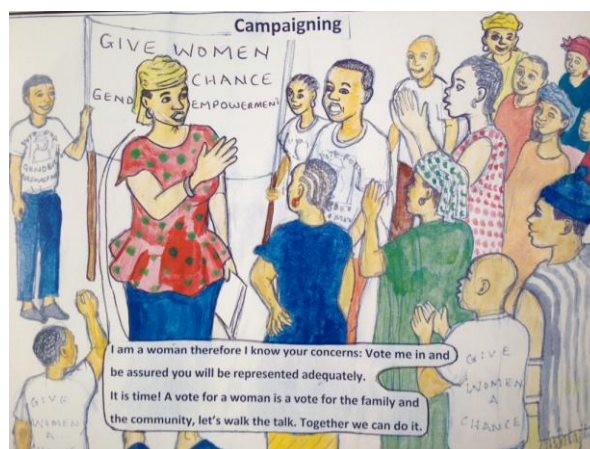
representatives of CBOs, CSOs and the media) contributed more effectively to the communication and understanding of the project's objective: participants witnessed the first comprehensive public presentation of the training manual for women, copies were disseminated, and the event achieved nation-wide coverage in the country's electronic and print media¹².

Prior to the above mentioned public presentation, the *Training Manual for Women to effectively participate in Governance and Political Processes in The Gambia* was the subject of two *separate development and validation workshops*, each of which were attended by 35 representatives of the grantee's implementation partners, government stakeholders and non-state actors, and a sample of grass-roots women beneficiaries. Following approval by the 20 female and 15 male workshop participants, the manual was disseminated to and used by the participants of a four-day *Training of Trainers workshop*. Giving 28 female and 7 male trainees (i.e. another 35 participants, as planned), including CBO and CSO members, teachers, opinion leaders, and representatives of local women's groups and LGA institutions not only the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, but also to interact across their different community roles and regardless of political party lines, was an unprecedented and highly effective approach to prepare selected stakeholders for their future roles as multipliers in their working environment. The trainees then conducted numerous informal trainings for grass-roots women, applying the methods and contents available to them through the manual, either in preparation for, or during the project's activities aiming to raise awareness about electoral processes & democracy.

2. Awareness Raising about Electoral Processes & Democracy

The grantee's RSTs conducted 3 (planned:5) *focus group meetings for grassroots-level women's groups* in each of the country's 5 regions, involving 18 women and 7 men. Applying both the manual's methodological guidance and the picture boards' image series, they effectively questioned entrenched cultural norms and pervasive religious beliefs, by clarifying that women have the right to actively represent the community and participate in decision-making processes. During their visit evaluators met many female grass-roots

beneficiaries, who actually confirmed that prior to the project's intervention it used to be common belief that a woman¹³ could not contest an election, and that doing so would mean to break with the tradition and culture



An image of the 9-picture-board series conveys the message: "A vote for a woman is a vote for the family and the community"

¹² For examples of media coverage see the online edition of the Daily Observer newspaper <http://observer.gm/africa/gambia/article/wanep-wants-women-to-play-greater-role-in-decision-making> and NGO News Africa <http://ngonewsafrika.org/archives/9154>

¹³ Evaluators also noted a variety of more specific but unjustified arguments used to prevent women from standing for election, such as (1) not being married, (2) not belonging to a clan already involved in politics, or (3) absence of the husband's / family eldest' approval.

of society.

A wider circle of community members also benefitted from 4 *open forum meetings* from in each of the country's 5 regions, which were attended by 47 female and 86 male (i.e. more than the planned total of 125) participants. While the events brought members of 127 (planned: 40) women and youth community groups together with male-dominated political party (selection committee) representatives, these were not necessarily meant to instigate female participants to promptly become election candidates. Instead, they aimed to rather educate and pave the way for the future empowerment of younger women. Exposing a substantial number of men to these meetings, they effectively generated knowledge and vibrant discussion among the wider public about the issues faced by women interested to practice their constitutionally guaranteed right to contest and get involved in politics.

Despite recurrent power cuts and shortages, which required focal points to agree new transmission schedules, the frequency, extent of territorial coverage, and outreach achieved by the project's radio programme campaigns were impressive. *Six community radio stations broadcasted 16 programmes* (planned: 5 stations, 14 programmes) each in The Gambia's West Coast Region (120 villages, population 30,000), North Bank Region (125 villages, population 31,250), Lower River Region (100 villages, population 25,000); Central River Region (350 villages, population 75,250), and Upper River Region (300 villages, population 75,000). Given that a great number of radio listeners reportedly called into these live shows (over time, the average phone discussion time increased from initially 25% to 60%)¹⁴, it must be assumed that they effectively provided rural communities with crucial information about democratic governance.

In view of the results of the grantee's awareness raising activities, evaluators are of the view that the project's focal points and RSTs effectively generated a better understanding of electoral processes and democracy, both among women and the wider rural population.

3. Capacity Building for Women seeking Electoral Office



Evaluators meet former trainees, mentees and mentors of the capacity building project component

To ensure that women exercise their rights, i.e. understand the political process and recognize their potential as an influential group of voters, the project plan foresaw the conduct of pre- and post-election capacity building activities. Following the decision by 5 of the country's 6 opposition parties to boycott the National Assembly elections (March 2012), the grantee suggested and UNDEF agreed to expand the project's scope onto the subsequent local government elections (April 2013). Duration and frequency of training interventions and mentoring were adapted accordingly. During two separate *women capacity building / mentorship training* sessions for National Assembly and local government elections 54 women and 11 men

(planned: 50 mentors and mentees) were trained on the basis of the project's manual. As planned, 50 persons (43 women and 7 men, compared to the original plan of 6 women

¹⁴ In some cases *open forums* were also broadcasted live via community radio station programmes.

mentees and 4 women mentors from each region) participated in the *pilot mentorship programme*. The quarterly *sharing circle meetings* were attended by a total of 256 women and 44 men, which corresponds to an average of 10 women (as planned) per meeting and region. Involving the participation of 30 women and 5 men, the female ratio of participation in the *post-experience sharing forum* fell only slightly short off target (planned: 35 elected women trained).

Both the fact that the elections boycott reduced the number of political options for the mentees intended to contest for National Assembly seats, and the problem that the selection committees of the two political parties participating in the elections went about their business largely unimpressed by the grantee's efforts to raise the female candidate ratio, led to little opportunity for the project's mentees to actually participate in electoral and democratic processes. Accordingly, at the national level, only two of the project's former trainees were successful, with one candidate retaining her mandate, while the second became MP for the first time. In comparison, the turnout related to the local level though was remarkable, with a larger sample of rural women empowered through knowledge about participation in democracy, as 12 of the 15 Gambian women, who successfully passed the selection committees and stood as a candidate at the local government elections, were trainees of the UNDEF-funded pilot electoral processes mentorship training programme (4 were unopposed, 4 won and another 4 lost the elections).¹⁵

(iii) Efficiency¹⁶

In addition to the project's awareness raising campaign, which achieved an impressive output (c.f. section on effectiveness) by expending just 5% of the project's budget for focus group meetings and open forums and about 8% for advocacy and outreach materials¹⁷, capacity-building activities represented the project's principal focus. Accordingly, 26% of the budget was reserved for expenditure related to training aspiring female candidates for National Assembly / local government elections, subsequently leading them towards the election process by means of a pilot mentorship programme, and for the sharing of experience pre- and post elections. Breaking the amount spent for these activities (USD 39,288)¹⁸ over the reported total number of 450 trainees of the capacity building component provides an average cost of approximately USD 87.31 per beneficiary. For awareness raising via focus groups and open forums a total expense of USD 7,035 was committed (5% of the budget). Considering that 158 participants have reportedly benefitted from these, an average of approximately USD 44.53 per participant was spent to clarify that women have

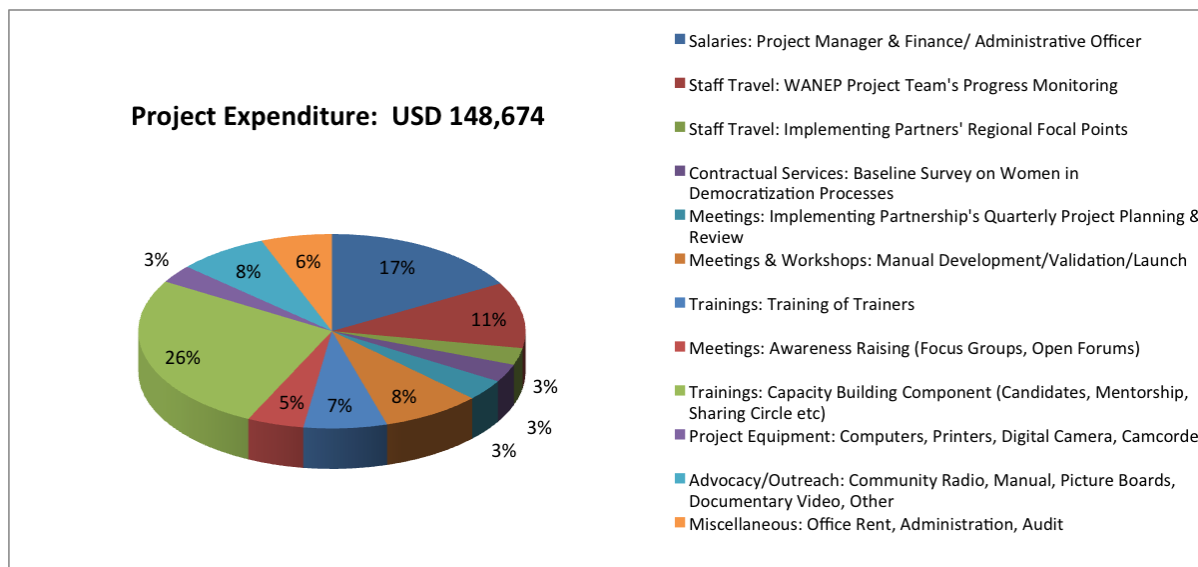
¹⁵ Detailed information about women, who following the UNDEF-funded training decided to face political party committees to stand for local government elections: West Coast Region: 11 women wanted to contest, 8 were nominated, 6 won (of which 3 unopposed) and 2 lost. North Bank Region: 5 wanted to contest, only 1 was nominated and lost, while 1 stood as independent candidate and won. Lower River Region: 6 wanted to contest, 1 was nominated and succeeded unopposed. Central River Region: 2 women wanted to contest, only 1 was nominated, but lost. Upper River Region: 3 women wanted to contest, but none was nominated.

¹⁶ Quantitative assessments made in this section are based on the total amount of project expenditure, which excludes the budget amount reserved for evaluation by UNDEF.

¹⁷ Apart from the project's training manual (detailed assessment follows), advocacy and outreach materials included: 1,000 (planned: 149) project brochures, 200 (planned: 20) picture boards, 200 (planned: 290) T-Shirts. Mostly higher output variations (except for T-Shirts) were still to the advantage of the project, as overall material costs remained below the planned budget ceiling.

¹⁸ Training costs include expenditure for event logistics, including catering, and the fees paid to resource persons. Expenditure budgeted for project management (i.e. salaries of administrative staff), training of trainers or manual development are not included in these percentages/amounts.

the possibility to actively represent the community and participate in decision-making processes. The necessary establishment and transfer of this knowledge, was achieved at acceptable prices: 35 trainers were trained at a cost of USD 423 each¹⁹ and the overall cost of the training manual amounted to USD 30 per copy.²⁰



Spending USD 25,000 for salaries of administrative staff (WANEP's project manager and finance/administrative officer), the project's nominal staff costs amount to 17% of the total budget. Adding the expenses for project monitoring (11% for the grantee's staff), and for the implementation partnerships quarterly progress meetings (3%), the level of administrative expenditure for human resources and project management reaches a relatively high budget share of 31%. With 6% and 3% respectively, the grantee's budget allocations for running and administrative costs, as well as for equipment (IT & photo/film equipment) were modest.

Taking into account the unit costs for (i) the training of trainers and (ii) the trainees, evaluators are of the opinion that the project, while not particularly efficient, still represented (in view of the social and cultural challenges that the project's beneficiaries face) a necessary first investment to work in a comprehensive way towards enhanced involvement and participation of women in The Gambia's political processes and democratic governance.

(iv) Impact

Weaknesses in the design and reporting of most of WANEP's outcome indicators limit the analysis of impact. In order to assess the potential impact of projects, and to identify remaining (and new) needs it is necessary to define indicators, which are more elaborate

¹⁹ The amount spent per trainer results from breaking the amount of trained trainers over the total expense incurred for the training of trainers event and the baseline study, which informed both the project's capacity building and methodological approach.

²⁰ The production of training manual copies involved not only printing, but also a whole series of meetings and workshops for manual development, validation and launch, all of which has been factored into this assessment. The associated unit costs, however, turned out significantly lower than anticipated, as the grantee's printing budget was sufficient to produce 500 instead of the 61 planned manual copies.

than a simple listing of outputs and quantities²¹. The grantee's reporting to UNDEF also failed to clarify how activity outputs link to certain of the achievements claimed, which appear to be rather beyond the project's influence²².

Some of the project's quantitative indicators, however, allow for a partial²³ assessment:

- *Numbers of trainees seeking elective position²⁴ in local government:* based on their interviews with former mentees evaluators assume that WANEP made a difference, as a good part of the 27 women, who decided to face the selection committees, would probably not have done so without participation in and encouragement by the pilot mentorship programme.
- *Numbers of trainees who won the elections:* at least 12 of these mentees must have improved their self-confidence, as they passed the selection committee interviews, and went on to stand for local government, with 8 of them (i.e. 4 elected, 4 uncontested = two thirds) successfully emerging from the elections.
- *Numbers of women candidates winning the elections of the 2011-2013 cycle, compared to the 2006-2008 cycle:* 15 of the 20 women, who contested for local government, won the elections which took place during the 2006-2008 cycle. As back then 5 more female candidates participated²⁵, and ultimately 7 more women won, the project during the 2011-2013 election cycle actually failed to achieve an enhanced involvement and participation of women in political processes and democratic governance.

While the above establishes that the project's impact in respect of the ultimate objective was rather limited, one must not forget the major challenge that WANEP met due to the non-participation of all but one of the country's opposition parties in the National Assembly elections, a development which was beyond the control of the grantee. On the basis of interviews held with 6 project staff, 7 stakeholders, and 14 project beneficiaries, evaluators have independently formed the view that the project generated some positive effects.

Selected anecdotes are provided below²⁶. They are grouped along the key issues identified at the outset of the project (= baseline, cf. section on relevance), in order to demonstrate if and how the project contributed towards a situation in which women become effective leaders and agents of change. These examples show that the grantee has indeed managed to provide a first appropriate response to address the baseline situation.

²¹ E.g. the "level of participation" in project activities does not necessarily enable a qualitative assessment of the extent to which knowledge and understanding of electoral processes among rural women has improved, as will be shown in the following.

²² While the project's advocacy may have effectively contributed to an improved female voter turnout, it is impossible to verify the extent to which it can be linked to an increase of more than 20% above the 2006-2008 election cycle levels. The same applies to the extent to which female members engage in parliamentary debates, and the extent to which women have achieved leadership positions in parliament, central and local government. In addition, evaluators noted in all cases an absence of pre-project baseline reference or target data.

²³ This considers only the impact on local government elections, as WANEP failed to provide evaluators with data on participants, who following the training preparing for National Assembly elections attempted to face the political parties' selection committees.

²⁴ The absence of target data or of a pre-project baseline reference (2006-2008 election cycle) for women seeking elective positions renders quantitative assessments rather speculative.

²⁵ Twelve of the fifteen women selected to contest the local government elections were trainees of the pilot mentorship programme.

²⁶ In line with current development practice, an effort was made to identify recent anecdotes or to obtain, where possible, details of relevance complementing the grantee's available report documentation, to conduct an independent assessment of impact.

Male dominance of the political structures responsible for the selection of representatives supported for standing as candidates for election

“At the local level in the selection committees misinformation led to the exclusion of women for reasons that have nothing to do with the provisions of the electoral code”, said **Siaka Marong, Assistant Director of the Women’s Bureau**, providing an example: “The fact that a women is not married, does not disqualify her from contesting elections.” It is his view that, despite the project’s efforts, these committees remain the central issue: “More focus on working with their members at ward, district, regional, and national levels will be needed.” His colleague **Fatou Sey, Training Officer**, also highlighted that while most political parties have introduced a women’s wing, their respective party statutes have never undergone a review to define the roles and thus secure the participation of women in the parties’ decision-making processes.

Many beneficiaries described their struggle to overcome political parties’ male dominated selection process: **Fatou Sonko (North Bank Region)** was the first woman of her area trying to contest the National Assembly elections, but APRC’s committee did not consider her, claiming her application file was incomplete: “Although my file must have been tampered with, the party’s women mobiliser did not support me!” She still felt strong solidarity with other women participating in the project: “I have made phone calls to encourage other mentees not to give in to male pressure. I think that women could still do more to support each other”. Should community members ask her again to stand for elections, Fatou considers to become an independent candidate, provided she would experience sufficient female solidarity and support from the wider local population. The political engagement of **first-time elected independent councilor Ami Jobe (North Bank Region)** was encouraged by locals, who were unhappy that their former councilor did not make efficient use of a community-owned tractor and other agricultural machinery. As he was a protégé of the chief and of a Member of Parliament, she had to avoid the ruling party’s selection committee. Ami therefore applied as an independent candidate to the IEC and members of the community financially supported her campaign. Today she has proven her abilities: “My contestants said I wouldn’t be able to provide a cup of rice to my people. I obtained council support for the repair of two wells, and also established a community farm, the proceeds of which will be used to support other community projects.”

Low level of political awareness, and lack of courage and confidence of women to actively participate in political contest

Although her candidacy was unopposed within the ruling party, ward councilor **Kady Camara (West Coast Region)** had to overcome male chauvinism during the nomination process. Accordingly, she also does not lack confidence to express her political concerns. During a reception she spoke up to inform The Gambia’s President about irregularities preventing her from progressing local development for the benefit of her community. She provided the information on the basis of an existing audit report, prompting the presidential office to launch a new investigation. Due to her persistence and her determination not to give in she has become widely known and among the male is often referred to as the “iron lady”. **Majula Joof-Sanneh, an elected LGA vice-chairperson (Lower River Region)**, said: “I was unopposed, had no rival candidates, but I met challenges when I held office and tried satisfying the expectations of my community. The UNDEF project, however, strengthened my confidence to push for the interests of my ward. I found a local NGO, which helped me to develop proposals for a 5-year development strategy, and was successful in obtaining funds for cattle, agricultural equipment, and the opening of two local community shops. Due to these achievements I have won a lot of trust in my constituency.”

An obligation to very heavy work and a low level of education

In the discussion with evaluators, **Kajali Sonko, Deputy Executive Director of the Women's Bureau** stressed that the government has made significant progress improving access to education in rural areas, but expressed his concern about continuing societal and economic factors, which impede women: "Male candidates often indirectly, but very effectively, attack their new competitors, by charging female members of their families 'to pull down' (i.e. harass) those women challenging their position." As this reportedly involves the exposure of family and privacy, women often hesitate to become a candidate. In addition, many women lack support in terms of the human and financial resources needed to conduct an effective election campaign. This is even more relevant to independent candidates, who – other than those supported by a political party - have to pay IEC's mandatory registration fee out of their own pocket.

Even if educated, evaluators though noted that a number of former trainees failed to comply with the rules governing the election process: **Mariama Camara (Upper River Region)** was disqualified by the IEC during local government elections due to her outdated voter card. However, when outlining her ambitions, she showed competence to convert personal experience into political agenda. Should she be given another chance she "[...] would advocate for the construction of a household water supply system in my local community. There are only two wells, to which women have to walk a very far distance".

The above demonstrates that the grantee managed to bring about change, since (1) some of the interviewed beneficiaries of WANEP's training displayed clear signs of improved awareness of the responsibilities involved in holding elected office, which in turn (2) supported the development of their self-esteem and empowerment, with (3) some of these (elected and not elected) women having become effective leaders and agents of change. However, when it comes to the political parties' selection committee's attitude vis-à-vis the female candidates, the beneficiaries' experience shows that more intervention will be needed to promote an enhanced involvement and participation of women in political processes and democratic governance. To be most effective, such additional intervention could comprise of enhanced coaching to address the continued signs of low-level argumentative and campaigning skills, which evaluators have observed among the women they interviewed.

(v) Sustainability

While evaluators do not dispute the project's achievements (cf. sections on effectiveness and impact), it is also a fact that at the time of the evaluation visit (a) many of the grantee's former mentees lacked preparedness, either displaying or explicitly stating their need for continued mentoring, (b) due to an unchanged attitude the political parties' selection committees are likely to remain a major obstacle for women to become involved in political and governance processes, and (c) there was no evidence that the grantee successfully attempted to lobby the government of The Gambia to encourage the introduction of legislation to secure a minimum representation of women in National Assembly and local government.

a. Many former mentees still lack preparedness

Despite the grantee's commendable awareness raising and training efforts, and the

development and use of excellent training materials (mainly in the form of the picture boards and training manuals) the former mentees require further training. Anecdotes in this report's impact section, which show that mentees based their candidature mainly on the conviction that women should be equally represented, without considering the importance of making themselves and their political programme known to the inhabitants of their constituencies, are representative for many interviews that evaluators conducted. In view of the upcoming general elections in 2016 it will be therefore important to improve and consolidate their argumentative and negotiation skills. In addition, evaluators also noted quite a few candidatures, which failed at early stages due to non-compliance with formal election process requirements. Taking into account that more intervention will be needed to enhance the involvement and participation of women in The Gambia's political processes and democratic governance, and given the fact that the project's initiative has created an expectation among the project's target group that the grantee will play a lasting key role in providing access to continued mentorship, it is of utmost importance that WANEP reviews its strategic approach towards the donor community. It is regrettable that WANEP's reporting failed to recognize the importance of a more advanced assessment of the project's achievements (c.f. impact section, on indicators). Results of such an exercise could have been presented to potential donors as evidence of WANEP's ability to continue the facilitation of access to participation in democratic governance for its female beneficiaries. It is understood that the temporary absence of the Network Coordinator and the departure of the previous Project Officer made it difficult for the grantee to follow-up on the project results. It should, however, not prevent current staff from the performance of targeted donor screening, to secure timely financing for continued mentoring in preparation for the next evaluation cycle.

Low levels of lobbying and negotiation skills

Evaluators asked the project's **former mentees** to explain their motivation for contesting elections. **Ida Jagne (Lower River Region)**, a government-employed social worker, whose family supported her plan to become a National Assembly candidate for the country's ruling party (APRC), said: "I believe that my experience and professional background qualifies me for National Assembly work. The current Members of Parliament are neither more educated nor better connected to their local communities. I know I can drive change best in the National Assembly." However, she also admitted that she previously had no significant involvement in and had missed many of the party's community meetings, and that she therefore probably wasn't very well known. Ida was never given opportunity to meet APRC's selection committee.

In the case of **Fatoumatta Juwara (Upper River Region)**, a hearing before APRC's selection committee took place. However, it rejected her application as a candidate for the National Assembly, suggesting that she should gain more experience. During her discussion with evaluators it did not occur to her that, prior to meeting the selection committee, pre-campaigning among party members and collecting voter card numbers of supportive local residents could have helped her to gain reputation. When asked why she did not try contesting local government elections she argued this would not match with her intention to pursue university studies in the country's capital.

b. The attitude of the selection committees vis-à-vis female candidates has not changed

Women continue to cheer, mobilize, and campaign for male candidates, but they are still rarely selected as candidates for the political party of their choice, and hence their motivation to stand themselves for elections remains low. It appears that the inclusion of member of selection committees in the project's Open Forum meetings was insufficient to reverse this trend, and that continued advocacy targeting the leadership of The Gambia's political parties is required to improve their internal democracy. As both former project mentees (e.g. Mariama Ceesay from the Lower River Region, who intended to candidate for the opposition party PDOIS) and the Women's Bureau's Fatou Siy (training officer) highlighted, the statutes of political parties require review to ensure internal affirmative action: "While most political parties have established their women's wing, nothing has been done to ensure the consideration of female positions in their internal decision making".

c. Need to encourage government to introduce legislative changes

From discussions with representatives of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) evaluators understand that the country's leadership is likely to consider the possibility of electoral reform. The IEC therefore intends to elaborate a concept paper, which among others may also consider the introduction of guaranteed quota to secure a minimum representation of women in governance. The concept paper will be the subject of consultations, and evaluators noted that the IEC was looking forward to involve the grantee and the Women's Bureau, both to obtain their input and to undertake a joint advocacy effort to raise awareness among the wider population. With respect to the latter IEC representatives highlighted that the work and achievements of women currently holding elected office could become useful showcases providing justification for such electoral reform.

Observations from the IEC

"There are a lot of graduates among the women, but they are not seen anywhere in the electoral process. This needs to change."

"We have minimum legal standards, but have ended up with embarrassing results, which will need to be addressed timely to improve the representation of women."

**Joseph Colley, Director of
Training & Communications**

Given the above, it appears appropriate to continue with the training of female candidates, and with the lobbying of policy makers and government structures, in order to secure the introduction of lasting changes.

(vi) UNDEF Value Added

The grantee's attempt to provide leverage by highlighting WANEP's partnership with UNDEF produced a rather modest response by the government (cf. section on the project's effectiveness).

V. CONCLUSIONS

i. The project's initial approach was reconfirmed by the findings of an externally conducted baseline study. Accordingly, it was designed to lobby central and local actors involved in the implementation of government policy, and to subsequently raise people's awareness about electoral processes and democracy. While this supported the creation of an enabling environment, there was an even more important need to empower women and raise their capacity so they can become effective leaders and agents of change. Therefore, the grantee foresaw the provision of training for aspiring candidates, and the piloting of a mentoring scheme for women seeking electoral office. It is therefore our view that the project represented a **relevant effort** to contribute to enhanced involvement and participation of women in political processes and democratic governance in The Gambia. Our findings related to the project's advocacy component show that the design was adequate to deepen the understanding of strategies to overcome the impediments limiting the participation of women. Aiming for local ownership, local government and community representatives were included into the project's steering and community-led progress monitoring. To facilitate open discussion awareness raising activities brought together hard to reach women from rural communities and representatives of party committees in charge of nominating their election candidates. Methods and material used by facilitators to educate and to provoke reactions and statements took into account the high levels of illiteracy. Capacity building finally meant to ensure women obtain a through insight into the details of the electoral process and are prepared for presenting their candidacy to the selection committees of the political party they wish to become a candidate for.

ii. The project's advocacy and awareness raising activities significantly improved the availability of information and effectively questioned entrenched cultural norms and pervasive religious beliefs. Smaller focus groups adequately informed grass-roots women about their right to actively represent the community and participate in decision-making processes. Larger open forums and radio programmes in all of The Gambias regions effectively generated knowledge and vibrant discussion among the wider public. A capacity building scheme combining training, mentorship, and experience sharing relied principally on the project's manual, which was particularly appreciated both by trainers and trainees for being a comprehensive introduction to the principles of democratic governance. While the absence of support of party selection committees for women candidates during the National Assembly elections was disappointing, the fact that 80% of the country's female local government election candidates were former project trainees represents an effective contribution to the promotion of women's involvement in local decision-making. For these reasons, evaluators are of the view that **the project was still effective**.

iii. Weaknesses in the grantee's design and reporting of most of its outcome indicators limit the analysis of impact. Some indicators allowing for partial assessment, however, show that impact in respect of the project's ultimate objective was rather limited. While this was mostly owed to the opposition's non-participation in the National Assembly elections, a development outside the control of the grantee, evaluators

on the basis of independently gathered first-hand evidence still established that the project generated **some positive impact**. Many former women candidates displayed clear signs of improved awareness of the responsibilities of elected representatives, developed self-esteem and empowerment, and a few (elected and not elected) women have become effective leaders and agents of change. The evaluators' interviews, however, have also shown that more intervention will be needed to address continued signs of low-level argumentative and campaigning skills among the former beneficiaries, so that they will be better prepared for their encounters with the political parties' selection committees.

iv. Capacity-building activities represented the project's principal focus. Accordingly, more than a quarter of the budget was reserved for expenditure related to training of aspiring female candidates for National Assembly and local government elections, a subsequent election process mentorship programme, and for the sharing of experience pre- and post elections. The necessary establishment and transfer of the required knowledge was achieved at acceptable prices: 35 trainers were trained at a cost of USD 423 each, the cost of the training manual amounted to USD 30 per copy, and the average training cost per beneficiary was approximately USD 87.31. Adding WANEP's nominal staff costs (17% for salaries of administrative staff, project monitoring (11% for the grantee's staff), and for the implementation partnerships quarterly progress meetings (3%), the level of administrative expenditure for human resources and project management, however, reaches a relatively high budget share of almost one third. In view of the social and cultural challenges that the project's beneficiaries need to overcome, evaluators are of the opinion that the project, **while not particularly efficient, represented a necessary first investment** to work in a comprehensive way towards enhanced involvement and participation of women in The Gambia's political processes and democratic governance.

v. Despite positive results evaluators have come across a number **shortcomings which risk to limit the sustainability** of the project's outcome: (1) Many of the grantee's former mentees either displayed or explicitly admitted a lack of preparedness. They mostly justified their candidature with the conviction that women should be equally represented, without considering the importance of campaigning as a way of demonstrating competence and winning votes; (2) Due to an unchanged attitude the political parties' selection committees are likely to remain a major obstacle for women to become involved in political and governance processes. Without targeted lobbying for a review of political party statutes, internal affirmative action is unlikely to be achieved; (3) There was no evidence that the grantee successfully attempted to lobby the government of The Gambia to encourage the introduction of legislation to secure a minimum representation of women in National Assembly and local government. It will therefore be important that WANEP maintains close consultations with the IEC, as the organisation envisages the drafting of a concept paper for electoral reform.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen the outcome and similar projects in the future, evaluators recommend to UNDEF and project grantees:

i. The fact that WANEP's approach and methodology included the conduct of baseline research and the formulation of outcome indicators is highly commendable, as this usually enhances a project's **relevance** and significantly facilitates the **assessment of impact**. Measuring of impact, and the identification of remaining (and new) needs, however require more than just the reporting of outputs and quantities. Ideally, the grantee would have reported instead the project's outcome by comparing outcome with (unfortunately often not existing) baseline or target indicators, and by clarifying how the measured outcome of specific project activities contributed to the achievement of the project's objectives. Based on the above **we recommend to UNDEF** to emphasize vis-à-vis applicants not only the importance of generating comparative data (baseline vs. outcome), but to also provide guidance about its effective use. **We encourage the grantee** to cover project achievements systematically, as this will enable WANEP to improve the current assessment in qualitative terms and thus enhance the organization's strategic objectives. This may also help the grantee to attract new donors and implementing partners for an expansion of the original project. We therefore **also suggest that UNDEF** considers that applications including solid outcome survey approaches will be given preference.

ii. Given the extent to which the grantee managed to elaborate more and improved sources of information on the rights of women to represent their community and to participate in governance, there is little doubt that the project effectively contributed to the generation of knowledge and the animation of informed discussion. Despite this effort and the provision of training as well as mentoring it is, however, also a fact that the political parties' selection committees gave fewer than expected beneficiaries the chance to participate in electoral and democratic processes. **Based on our observations on effectiveness, we therefore recommend to the grantee (WANEP)** for the future to reconsider the engagement of non-remunerated mentors. There is a likelihood that this may have somewhat limited their availability and motivation, which in turn may have affected the beneficiaries' preparedness to file applications compliant with the electoral code and to adequately present themselves to selection committees as competent election candidates.

iii. In relation to our conclusion that shortcomings risk to limit the sustainability, it is our strong belief that continued lobbying of political stakeholders, government structures, and more mentoring will be needed to ensure enhanced participation of women in electoral and governance processes. In view of the upcoming election cycle, and as far as the grantee's future contribution to such effort is concerned, we believe that it is of utmost importance that WANEP (1) re-launches its mentorship programme to maintain and ameliorate women's preparedness; (2) undertakes targeted lobbying to push political parties to oblige their selection committees to affirmative action; and (3) maintains close

cooperation with IEC to advocate legislative changes in favour of women's representation at all levels of governance. **Based on our comments on sustainability, we therefore recommend to the grantee** to:

- Perform donor screening in preparation for a proposal suggesting an extension of the project for the upcoming election cycle, which is scheduled as of 2016. Include in future project proposals findings based on advanced monitoring indicators, in order to provide donors with evidence of WANEP's ability to improve beneficiaries' access to enhanced participation in electoral processes and democratic governance;
- Engage successfully elected women representatives previously trained by the project as new mentors for still hopeful and new motivated women candidates;
- Make use of the internet (e.g. via The Gambia section of WANEP's website), to expand the communication of purpose, activities and achievements of the former and future projects: intensify awareness raising, in particular among female graduates (previously not a specific target), by disseminating via the WANEP website the UNDEF project's main outputs, e.g. offer the training manual and the flyer presenting the project for download; and consider to upload (e.g. via links onto YouTube) selected excerpts of the UNDEF-funded documentary video to improve its outreach;
- Consider the dissemination of the highly effective picture board also online and as hardcopy in brochure format, to equip illiterate persons with a permanently available reference document;
- Intensify lobbying efforts vis-à-vis (the ruling, but also relevant opposition) political parties for a change of their statutes, by capitalising on former women trainees now holding office: promote the principle of internal affirmative action, by exposing party stakeholders to concrete examples of elected women representative's capacity to deal with and solve issues of local and national scale;
- Continue and deepen the cooperation with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which in 2014 intends to develop a concept paper on electoral reform, to advocate the introduction of legislation securing a minimum representation of women in National Assembly and local government. Expand cooperation with the Women's Bureau, which has signalled interest to participate in the countrywide communication of such an effort.

IX. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value-added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

UNDEF

- Final Narrative Report
- Mid-Term/Annual Progress Report
- Project Document
- Milestone Verification Reports
- Financial Utilization Report
- Project Officer's Evaluation Note

WANEP – The Gambia

- Internal Mid-Term Progress Report
- Baseline Study Report
- Training Manual for Women to effectively participate in the Governance and Political Processes in The Gambia
- Picture Board explaining the different stages of the electoral process (9 images)
- Flyer, Enhancing Women's Participation in Democracy in The Gambia
- Open Forum Discussion Guideline
- Mentorship schedule & agreement sample templates
- WANEP – Focal Point Sample Memorandum of Understanding template
- Images: trainees, stakeholders

Laws, conventions:

- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>
- Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia (1997), <http://www.accessgambia.com/information/constitutiongambia.pdf>

Other sources

- Agreed conclusions 1997/2 (women in power and decision-making) of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/agreedconclusions/Agreed-Conclusions-English.pdf>
- Millennium Development Goals, Targets and Indicators, 2002-2006 Millennium Project commissioned by the UN Secretary General and supported by the UN Development Group (note: since 2007 is being continued by an MDG Support team integrated under the United Nations Development Program), <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm>
- More women than men in The Gambia, Provisional Results of the 2013 Population Census, (The Point, March 2014), <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/more-women-than-men-in-gambia>

ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

Banjul, March 4th, 2014 (am): Grantee's Project Briefing

- Francis Mendy, Acting National Network Coordinator, WANEP The Gambia
- Anna Jones, Programme Officer, WANEP The Gambia

Banjul, March 4th, 2014 (pm): Implementation Partners

- Yadicon Njie-Eribo, National Coordinator, FAWEGAM
- Michelle Demba, Programme Officer, PHIN

Banjul, March 5th, 2014 (am): North Bank Region Focus Group

- Haruna Kuyateh, Focal Point
- Fatou Sonko, National Assembly candidate (rejected by APRC selection committee)
- Amie Jobe, successful independent National Assembly elections candidate

Banjul, March 5th, 2014 (pm): Lower River Region Focus Group

- Buwa Kinteh, Focal Point
- Mariama Ceesay, National Assembly candidate (PDOIS, opposition boycott)
- Majula Joof-Sanneh, elected vice chairperson of a local government authority (APRC)
- Ida Jagne, National Assembly candidate (rejected by APRC selection committee)

Banjul, March 6th, 2014 (am): Visits to Women's Bureau & Independent Electoral Commission

- Kajali Sonko, Deputy Executive Director, Women's Bureau
- Siaka Marong, Assistant Director, Projects and Programmes, Women's Bureau
- Fatou Sey-Training Officer, Women's Bureau
- Joseph Colley, Director of Training and Communications, Independent Electoral Commission

Banjul, March 6th, 2014 (am & pm): West Coast & Central River Region Focus Groups

- Bintou Cham, community radio moderator (family did not allow her to stand for elections)
- Fama Barry, National Assembly candidate (attempted three times)
- Awa Bah, local government administration candidate (NRP, opposition party)
- Kady Camara, elected ward councilor (APRC, unopposed)
- Amie Sabally, mentor (NRP, opposition party)
- Aya Fatou Sonko, mentor (politician since the 60s)
- Jimbi Ceesay, mentee
- Hajara Mbakeh, mentee
- Jonsaba Jawla, mentor

Banjul, March 7th, 2014 (am): Upper River & Lower River Region Focus Group

- Musa Sanneh, Focal Point
- Fatoumatta Juwara, National Assembly candidate (rejected by APRC selection committee)
- Mariama Camara, local government elections candidate (APRC, disqualified by IEC)
- Menata Njie, successful independent National Assembly elections candidate

Banjul, March 7th, 2014 (pm): Evaluator's Debriefing

- Identical to March 4th, 2014

Banjul, March 8^h, 2014 (am): Stakeholder Meeting

- Hon Fatou Mbye, Deputy Speaker of National Assembly, and Chairperson of National Women's Council

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat
FAWEGAM	Forum for African Women Educationalists
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
LGA	Local Government Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PHIN	Pro-Hope International
RST	Regional Sensitization Team
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
USD	United States Dollar
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding