

UNDP GUINEA-BISSAU GENDER ANALYSIS GUINEA-BISSAU

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UNDP-Consultant: Dr. Birgit Embaló, PhD
bembalo@gmx.net

Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMAE	<i>Associação/ Confederação das Mulheres com Atividades Económicas</i> (Confederation of Women with Economic Activities)
AMIC	<i>Associação de Amigos das Crianças</i> (Friends of Children Association)
ANP	<i>Assembleia Nacional Popular</i> (National Popular Assembly – Parliament)
CAJ	<i>Centro de Acesso a Justiça</i> (Centre for Access to Justice)
CC	<i>Código Civil</i> (Civil Code)
CCA	<i>Common Country Analysis</i>
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CMGFD	<i>Conselho das Mulheres Guineenses Facilitadores de Dialogo</i> (Guinean Women Council of Facilitators for Dialogue)
CNAPN	<i>O Comité Nacional para o Abandono das Práticas Tradicionais Nefastas à saúde da mulher e da criança</i> (National Committee for the Elimination of Harmful Practices and Women and Child Health)
CNMT	National Commission of Working Women of the National Union of Workers
CPD	UNDP Country Programme Document
CO	Country Office
CRGB	<i>Constituição da República da Guiné-Bissau</i> (Constitution)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DENARP II	<i>Segundo Documento de Estratégia Nacional de Redução da Pobreza</i> (Second National Poverty Reduction Strategy)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECREE	ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
EU	European Union
EWS	Early Warning System
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEEW	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
GEM/GEN	Gender Marker
GICJU	<i>Gabinete de informação e consulta jurídica</i> (Office for Legal Information and Consultation)
HDI	<i>Human Development Index</i>
HR	<i>Human Resources</i>
IBAP	<i>Instituto da Biodiversidade e Áreas Protegidas</i> (Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas)
ILAP	<i>Inquérito Ligeiro para Avaliação da Pobreza</i> (Light Survey for Poverty Assessment)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMC	<i>Instituto Mulher e Criança</i> (Women and Child Institute)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INASA	<i>Instituto Nacional de Saúde Pública</i> (National Institute of Public Health)
INE	<i>Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas</i> (National Office of Statistics)

INEP	<i>Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa</i> (National Research Institute)
LGDH	<i>Liga dos Direitos Humanos da Guiné-Bissau</i> (Guinea-Bissau Human Rights League)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEN	<i>Ministério de Educação Nacional</i> (National Education Ministry)
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OGE	<i>Orçamento Geral de Estado</i> (General State Budget)
PAIGC	<i>Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde</i> (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PNIEG	<i>Política Nacional da Igualdade e Equidade de Género</i> (National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity)
PONGAB	<i>Plataforma das ONG de Gabu</i> (NGO Platform Gabu)
PPM	<i>Plataforma Política das Mulheres</i> (Women's Political Platform)
RE	Renewable Energy
RENAJ	<i>Rede Nacional das Associações Juvenis</i> (National Network of Youth Organizations)
RENLUV	<i>Rede Nacional de Combate à Violência baseada no género e criança</i> (National Network for the Fight against Gender Based Violence and Child Violence)
RMM	<i>Rede de Mulheres Mediadoras</i> (Women Mediator Network)
REMPSECAO - GB	<i>Rede Paz e Segurança das Mulheres do Espaço CEDEAO</i> (ECOWAS Women's Peace and Security Network)
RESEN	<i>Relatório sobre Sistema do Ensino Nacional</i> (Report on the National Education System)
RGPH	<i>Recenseamento Geral da População e Habitação</i> (General Population and Housing Census)
RNDDH	<i>Rede Nacional dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos</i> (National Network of the Defenders of Human Rights)
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
SAB	<i>Sector Autónomo de Bissau</i> (Bissau Autonomous Sector)
SEN	<i>Sistema Estatístico Nacional</i> (National Statistics System)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SWOT-Analysis	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats-Analysis
UEMOA	<i>Union Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest</i> (West African Economic and Monetary Union)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNIOGBIS	United Nations Integrated Office for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNS	United Nations System
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
UN-SWAP	United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WPS	Women, Peace and Security Agenda
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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Executive Summary

The need for a comprehensive analytical study on gender equality in Guinea-Bissau is huge. The core objective of this study is to support the UNDP Country Office with an objective analysis and in-depth view on gender discrimination and gender inequalities in Guinea-Bissau, demonstrating underlying root causes and their linkage to socio-cultural norms, the dominance of patriarchal power and of traditional (rural) settings.

This report presents the baseline gender status in Guinea-Bissau and proposals for UNDP how to design tailored, country contextualized strategies for the upcoming UN Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and new UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) that can bring forward the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in Guinea-Bissau.

Gender Analysis is a very valuable tool to build consistency between the analysis of the gender status and programmes for the promotion of gender equality. Gender analysis directs us to understand what are the best strategies and approaches to address harmful norms, structures, behaviors and other constraints and how to transform existing gender relations. The information and complex multiple related contents we can derive from gender analysis provide guidance for the design of programmes and the elaboration of objectives, outcomes and activities (UNDP, 2016: *Gender Analysis*).

A story of discrimination, inequalities and women as agents of social change

Exclusion and discrimination of women in Guinea-Bissau are most visible in the high incidence of female genital mutilation and domestic violence, limited access to land and credit, poor institutional representation and inequalities in justice, law, education and health. Years of political stagnation which have resulted in collapsing state structures and severe dysfunctions in governance have additional negative impact.

Beside the root causes and socio-cultural norms of gender discrimination, the gender analysis also identifies positive drivers of change, describes local socio-economic networks and livelihood strategies of women in Guinea-Bissau that are capable to trigger economic empowerment. Gender equality has gained a certain attention in the social discourse, through the growth of women's organizations and networks of the Civil Society that advocate for women's rights, political participation and against gender based violence. Women are engaged in the electoral processes, as conflict mediators in the political crises that rock the country and pushed forward the legislation of the "Parity Law" in 2018. In midst of the Corona crisis, a first national digital platform for gender equality has been created, supported by UNDP. The revision of the constitution through a gender perspective is on the way. These are promising developments, most of them co-initiated and supported by the UN, that hint to the tireless commitment of Bissau-Guinean women to raise gender equality and women's empowerment high on the national policy agenda. They demonstrate women's agency and potential as catalysts for social change.

But too many structural barriers against gender equality persist. Women and girls are disadvantaged in many areas and do not enjoy the same opportunities and rights as their male counterparts. This is true for almost all public sectors, ranging from unequal access to basic social services, unequal property rights, to persistent gender gaps in the labor market and gender disparities in the public administration and in decision-making. To combat gender based violence, early (forced) marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) improved services in the justice sector and innovative approaches, based on local solutions and cooperation between the formal and informal justice systems (state and non-state), will have to be explored. Thus, legal mechanisms will be enhanced and complementary measures built up that allow to better address gender based violence and achieve more progress towards gender justice.

The impact of climate change on human life in Guinea-Bissau is severe. As women make up a large number of the poor communities that depend on natural resources for their livelihood, they face

higher risks resulting from the impacts of climate change (extreme weather conditions and related hazards/disaster, sea level elevation). Gender inequalities most likely will further exacerbate with climate change and women will have a higher time, stress and work burden than men. Women and children in Guinea-Bissau also suffer from high health risks of indoor pollution through cooking with solid biofuel and invest a lot of unpaid work in searching wood and water, both scarce resources in many rural regions.

Interlinkage of the Sustainable Development Goals and UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions a world in which “every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed”¹. Gender equality as fundamental human right and foundation of peace, prosperity and sustainability is central to UNDP support to countries to implement and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2018: *Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021*). *Attaining gender equality is critical both as an important goal in itself and for the achievement of all 17 goals of sustainable development.*

Gender equality is essential for “leaving no one behind,” one of the guiding principles of the 2030 Agenda, as women often belong to the poorest and marginalized and are over-represented among those furthest behind. *In the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy gender equality is defined, at the same time, as precondition and an accelerator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals* (UNDP 2018: *Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021*).

This study introduces the conceptual framework of UNDP Gender Equality Strategy and the priority setting at international level, focusing on innovative approaches and the dialectical linkage between SDG 5 and other SDGs for the achievement of gender quality. Based hereon, tailored solutions for Guinea-Bissau in UNDP’s new Country Programme Document are to be developed for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To achieve gender equality throughout its programmes and interventions, UNDP pursues integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to address interconnected development challenges. The *UNDP Strategic Plan* (2018) identifies six cross-cutting signature solutions, one of which, *signature solution 6*, is to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The *UNDP Gender Equality Strategy* designs the following ***four priority areas for signature solution 6***

Removing structural barriers to women’s economic empowerment, including women’s disproportionate burden of unpaid care work;

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence;

Promoting women’s participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making;

Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis (conflict and disaster) prevention, preparedness and recovery;

and ***provides entry points for gender equality*** in the development settings detailed in the Strategic Plan. As each outcome indicator of the Strategic Plan addresses a range of SDGs, this strategy goes beyond Goal 5 on gender equality to drive achievement across all 17 Goals.

The signature solution 6 focuses attention on the deep-rooted structural barriers that perpetuate gender inequality and hinder sustainable development. With the key priority areas which have been identified under *signature solution 6*, UNDP can achieve the transformational change that will advance gender equality and accelerate the path to accomplish sustainable development.

UNDP’s Gender Equality Strategy (2018-21) has fulfilled a conceptual shift from engaging primarily in programmes focused on women as beneficiaries and their practical needs to strengthening

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>, retrieved on 10 October 2020.

interventions that tackle structural changes for the acceleration of gender equality and women's empowerment (UNDP, 2018: *Gender Equality Strategy*).

Gender mainstreaming capacities at UNDP Guinea-Bissau

The gender capacities at UNDP Country Office Guinea-Bissau have improved significantly over the last two years. The recently elaborated *Gender Strategy* is in line with UNDP corporate Gender Strategy and comes close to the intervention priorities for the promotion of gender equality defined in UNDP's *signature solution 6*. It takes over the key message that a holistic approach to gender equality needs to be adopted which aims at transforming the structures that create and perpetuate gender inequalities rather than implementing separate piecemeal interventions. The UNDP Country Office has advanced in the preparation of its candidature for UNDP *Gender Equality Seal* and started implementation of its *Gender Action Plan (2020-2022)*. A gender programme analyst is now pushing forward the gender equality agenda systematically, but more qualified personnel and inputs for gender transformative programming and financing are needed to meet the *Gender Equality Seal* standards and be at full capacity for the elaboration of the new Country Programme Document. The greatest challenge ahead is to design and implement programmes which are marked with Gender Marker 3 (the highest score), meaning that the budget should be fully allocated to gender specific activities under a comprehensive gender transformative approach.

Strategy for UNDP Guinea-Bissau how to best promote gender equality and women's empowerment in programme design

This study proposes the following strategy for UNDP Guinea-Bissau to achieve best results towards the fulfillment of gender equality and women's empowerment in its future work, based on the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and UNDP's own new Country Programme Document (CPD):

1. Adaptation of the *four thematic priority areas of signature solution 6* to the Guinea-Bissau context which would allow to create (at least) minimum conditions for achieving gender equality in all its dimensions in Guinea-Bissau. Chapter 4.3.2 correlates the priority areas of *signature solution 6* with those of UNDP Guinea-Bissau *Gender Equality Strategy* and the objectives of the *National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity* (PNIEG) and develops common key pillars and entry points. They can be converted directly into results and outputs in the two strategic policy documents.
2. Policy recommendations for placing gender equality at the center of national development planning: UNDP should assist national partners in making national planning inclusive and gender responsive, strictly linked to the *National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity* (PNIEG) and the SDGs, through a systematic review and gender mainstreaming into development plans, foremost the National Master Development Plan "Terra Ranka", followed by the national education plan and environmental plans, including Disaster Risk Reduction, and local development plans.
3. Integration of best practices for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment from West Africa and beyond into UNDP programme design. A pool of inspiring programmes and projects is presented in this study, listed according to the four priority areas of *signature solution 6*.
4. Gender transformative programming and project implementation need to be based on innovative tools and approaches. New, non-conventional data, such as micro narratives, quick surveys, big data and qualitative studies, should be used/produced for closing the gaps in gender data. A range of innovative approaches, such as smart phone technology for learning and cash transfer or technological innovations in the energy and agricultural sector should be used to overcome structural gender inequalities. The new Accelerator LAB at UNDP offers

innovation through local solution approaches, exploring local insights and the knowledge of the people closest to the problems.

5. ***The key strategic recommendation for mainstreaming gender equality into the new programmatic documents is to engage for the implementation of the signature solution 6 and to integrate innovative tools and approaches into the programme/project design, particularly solutions unfolding from the local conditions.***
6. In compliance with the Guidelines of the UNSDCF, this study recommends that UNDP (and all other participating UN entities) selects the promotion of gender equality and the protection and empowerment of the (most) vulnerable as one of the overarching priorities in the outcome design of the new Cooperation Framework. The centrality of gender equality in the Cooperation Framework is reinforced in the implementation mechanism through the priority specific results groups (one for every priority area) that elaborate joint work plans and are responsible for adaptive programming throughout the programme cycle.
7. The UNDP Country Programme Document should equally have a standalone Gender Equality/Empowerment outcome, based on the adaptation of the priority areas of *signature solution 6* and derived directly from the Cooperation Framework. Through focusing the attention on gender in a standalone outcome, both documents have a strong upscaling effect for the promotion of gender equality.
8. The mainstreaming of Human Rights into the CPD is guided by the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Development. HRBA requires focus on capacity development of both 'duty-bearers' to meet their obligations and 'rights-holders' to claim their rights and recognizes people as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients. This approach amplifies the promotion of gender equality at programme design level in various ways: it underlines local ownership of the development process and relies on programmes that aim to reduce disparity and use both top-down and bottom-up approaches in synergy.
9. Given the magnitude of the macro-economic and livelihood crisis in Guinea-Bissau, UNDP programming faces demanding challenges to stimulate women's economic empowerment after the pandemic shock which has hit women the hardest. This situation should be addressed with quick win projects, mainly in the agricultural sector, based on adjustable programming, adaptable to the COVID-19 aftermath and the worrying economic outcomes projected for the time ahead. On the other hand, UNDP efforts to support women's economic empowerment should be linked to transformative approaches in economic recovery. These include the promotion of enabling environments, boosting income and productivity of rural women and the integration of young women and girls in economic recovery programmes.

To rapidly reduce female poverty, this study proposes projects that benefit from new technologies (smart phone) to crack the technology divide, transform women entrepreneurs from informal to formal business operators and support women farmer's productivity and skills. These projects would showcase the benefits of technological innovation, the potential of adding value to the traditional "*bideira*" – one woman micro-enterprise, and the advantages of a bundled approach for stimulating transformative change in gender relations at village level through empowering rural women with saving schemes, technical training and an innovative childcare component. The projects could be implemented as pilots and under programmes for local development in the regions of Guinea-Bissau, and scaled up, if the prototypes achieve good results.

1. Introduction

1.1 Gender equality and sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau

The need for a comprehensive analytical study on the status of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau is huge. This report pursues the core objective to support the UNDP Country Office with an objective analysis and in-depth view of the status of gender equality, focusing on innovative approaches capable of stimulating gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the upcoming UN cooperation framework (UNSDCF) and UNDP country programme.

This study presents the baseline gender status in Guinea-Bissau and proposals for the design of tailored, country contextualized strategies that can drive positive change in the promotion of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions a world in which “every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed”². Gender equality as fundamental human right and foundation of peace, prosperity and sustainability is central to UNDP support to countries to implement and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2018: *Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021*). Attaining gender equality is critical both as an important goal in itself and as an effective means to achieve sustainable development. It requires that the needs, capabilities, experiences and contributions of both girls and boys, women and men are taken into consideration while acknowledging their diversity (UN-Women, UNDP, 2019: *Gender Equality as an Accelerator for Sustainable Development Goals*, p. 10).

Gender disparities constitute one of the most profound sources of exclusion globally. The best way to gender equality is **a gender inclusive approach**. Based on the analysis of gender norms, roles and relations as well as resilience capacities, strategies are developed and implemented to address specific gendered vulnerabilities and sources of exclusion and marginalization. A gender inclusive approach deliberately creates opportunities for meaningful participation, changes in power dynamics and influence on decision-making.³

Gender equality can be an accelerator that triggers positive multiplier effects across the spectrum of development. A body of evidence shows that investing in expanded opportunities for women and girls by promoting their economic, social and political participation and improving their access to social protection, employment and natural resources result in a more productive economy, reduced poverty and inequalities, enhanced human capital and ecosystem, and more peaceful and resilient societies (UN-Women, UNDP, 2019; UNDP 2016a).

In Guinea-Bissau large gender inequalities persist, depriving women of rights and opportunities and hampering progress in the development setting. The reality of living conditions indicates severe discrimination of women and violation of their human rights although the Constitution (1996) prohibits all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, race or religion (Art. 24). Women are suffering most from gender and political violence and the breakdown of state and community structures in the country (see Balde, 2018; consultations with RENLUV and Ana Pereira Foundation, Access to Justice Center, Bissau – Bairro Militar).

According to the standards of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)⁴, women in Guinea-Bissau experience manifold violation of their human rights:

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>, retrieved on August 7 2020.

³ Definition of gender inclusive approach according to Interpeace, 2020, “Ten Foundations for Gender Inclusive Peacebuilding”, www.interpeace.org, retrieved on October 5, 2020.

⁴ CEDAW Committee, 2009, *Concluding Observations on Guinea-Bissau*.

threats to their physical and psychological integrity, genital cutting and other forms of gender based violence, discrimination at the work place, underrepresentation in political and public life, limited access to property and restriction of economic activities (see chap. 2.3). Women's labor participation in Guinea-Bissau is highly informal, without social protection, and women and girls are disproportionately burdened by unpaid care and domestic work (estimated between three and five times more than men and boys).

Women and girls are disadvantaged in many areas and do not enjoy the same opportunities and rights as their male counterparts. This is true for almost all public sectors, ranging from unequal access to legal rights and basic social services, including health care and education, unequal property rights, persistent gender gaps in the labor market (formal and informal), gender disparities in the public administration and in decision-making.

In recent times, some progress has been achieved – backed by technical assistance and advocacy of the UN-system and Guinea-Bissau women's organizations - with the laws that criminalize FGM (2011), Human trafficking (2010) and Domestic Violence (2014). The access to Justice has been improved through the installation of seven Access of Justice Centers (2011-2018) in the frame of a joint UNDP/ Ministry of Justice project. Nevertheless, complaints and trials against gender based violence crimes' are still quite rare in Guinea-Bissau.

Men and women who have not had opportunities to question gender roles, attitudes and beliefs, cannot change them. Women who are unaware of their rights cannot claim them. Civil Society organizations and public institutions without access to standards, guidelines and tools cannot adequately address these issues. Once evidence accumulates and awareness grows, the potential for stopping gender based violence and women's discrimination does too.

Political engagement, electoral observation and conflict mediation by Guinean women activists have shown first fruits. Networks of women activists were founded, such as the PPM (*Plataforma Politica das Mulheres*) and the Women Mediator Network (RMM - *Rede de Mulheres Mediadoras*). They strive for full political participation of women, engage in national dialogue, peace and stabilization in Guinea-Bissau. In response to the post-conflict crisis that shakes Guinea-Bissau for almost twenty years, women started to advocate for women rights and social justice, protection against violence and activities to assure peaceful coexistence in the country. Women are often the first to notice rising tensions that can escalate to violence, be it at home or in society. They mediate and resolve problems quicker and respond first to conflict conditions, restore social peace, do the bulk of care work for families and step in to repair shattered relations and structures. (see chap. 2.9, Interpeace & Voz de Paz 2019 on local conflict settlement).

At national level, awareness on gender inequalities and its intersectional nature was raised systematically since 2010, with the "National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda" (NAP, 2010), the DENARP II (2011) – the "Second Poverty Reduction Strategy" - and through the PNIEG (2012/2017), the "National Policy for Gender Equity and Equality".

The PNIEG takes into account the role of women in the different sectors of the society as well as in the decision-making spheres. The document which also emphasizes the priority of sustainable development is the most important roadmap for gender equality in Guinea-Bissau, providing thorough and comprehensive analysis and recommendations.

With the emergence of NGO networks and civil society platforms in recent years that campaign for the political, social and economic rights of Guinean women the institutional capacity of the Civil Society has enhanced and awareness on gender equality and women's political and human rights increased.

Nevertheless, the challenges are huge, given the country's chronological instability and very restricted public resources in financial and institutional terms and in human capital. The PNIEG now needs to be operationalized and prioritized, with resources and targets.

At the international level, UNDP, UN-Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, the EU and other partners engaged considerably for progress towards gender equality, particularly regarding the legal and socio-economic situation of women and girls and gender based violence.⁵ All agree that programs and activities for the promotion of gender equality should boost efforts to address the manifold barriers that stand against gender equality in Guinea-Bissau, rooted in the socio-cultural realm and the dominant masculinities.

Gender equality is essential for "leaving no one behind," one of the guiding principles of the 2030 Agenda, as women often belong to the poorest and marginalized and are over-represented among those furthest behind. In the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy gender equality is defined, at the same time, as **precondition** and an **accelerator** for achieving the SDGs (UNDP, 2018: *Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021*).

This study will introduce the conceptual framework of UN gender equality strategies and the priority setting at international level, focusing on innovative approaches and the dialectical linkage between SDG 5 and other SDGs for the achievement of gender quality. Based hereon, tailored solutions for Guinea-Bissau can be developed for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The three development settings, prioritized in the *UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, eradicating poverty in all forms, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to shocks and crises offer entry points for mainstreaming gender equality. Each outcome indicator of the Strategic Plan addresses a range of Sustainable Development Goals and identifies six cross-cutting signature solutions, one of which, *signature solution 6*, is to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Signature solution 6 focuses attention on the deep-rooted structural barriers that perpetuate gender inequality and hinder sustainable development. Key priority areas have been identified under *signature solution 6* that enable UNDP to achieve the transformational change that will advance gender equality and accelerate the path to accomplish sustainable development:

1. ***Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work;***
2. ***Preventing and responding to gender-based violence;***
3. ***Promoting women's participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making;***
4. ***Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis (conflict and disaster) prevention, preparedness and recovery.***

These priority areas respond to a great extent to the main phenomena of gender inequalities and the gender status in Guinea-Bissau, as analyzed in this study and prior studies/reports (see Literature).

The ***adaptation of the four thematic priority areas of Signature Solution 6 to the Guinea-Bissau context will*** enable to create minimum conditions for the achievement of gender equality in all dimensions in Guinea-Bissau, including at least the creation of employment opportunities for the most vulnerable population, guarantee of political participation of women in decision-making bodies, access to justice and land and prevention of gender-based violence.

New sources and diagnostic tools, for instance, national surveys and community assessments, or targeted surveys using mobile technology enrich the gender analysis and allow the production of

⁵ See UNDP website, projects: www.gw.undp.org/content/guinea_bissau/pt/home/projects.html.

greater granularity of data and more qualitative analysis in order to design evidence-based interventions that identify, empower and support the most vulnerable girls and women, boys and men and address root causes of overlapped vulnerabilities.

The study proposes to integrate innovative UNDP approaches and acceleration tools **to support gender-transformative programming and results**. These include on the one hand technical innovations, for example in the energy and agricultural sector, and on the other hand, innovative approaches based on local solutions, informed by insights originating from local knowledge, built on grassroots solutions for addressing gender inequalities with the objective to stretch their potential for accelerating development. This includes the newly launched **Accelerator Lab of Guinea-Bissau** and the **Na No Mon** platform.

1.2 Catalytic interlinkage of the Gender Equality Goal with all other SDGs

Gender equality cannot be separated from actions to tackle poverty, hunger, poor health and wellbeing, maternal death, climate change adaptation, energy and environmental burdens, economic hardships, and societal insecurity. There is growing recognition that gender equality can be an accelerator—or a catalytic policy intervention—that triggers positive multiplier effects across the spectrum of sustainable development (UN-Women /UNDP, 2019, *Gender equality as an accelerator for achieving the sustainable development goals*, p. 9). Thus, SDG 5 and its specific targets may serve as a catalyst for the entire 2030 agenda. Women and girls are affected by each of the 17 SDGs, whereas they can — and will — be key to achieving each of these goals.

SDG 5 reflects nearly all the SDGs from the gender perspective (for the specific targets, see annex) and thus mirrors the whole sustainable development agenda. Conversely, improving on the SDG 5 front means progressing in all goals: for at least half of the world's population livelihood, social, economic and political conditions improve. With the advancement of gender equality through SDG 5, more women are entering into an enabling environment towards full participation in sustainable development. With progress on this pathway, the costs of gender inequality, the losses in GDP, in education etc. can be significantly reduced and redirected into the 2030 agenda to the benefit of all people, women and men, girls and boys alike.

Several goals in the SDGs include at least some mention of gender under their associated targets. This is true of the goal on poverty (goal 1), nutrition (goal 2), education (goal 4), water and sanitation (goal 6), employment (goal 8) and cities (goal 11).⁶

However, a number of the SDGs make no reference to gender: goal 7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all) makes no mention of the gender dimensions of energy whereas it has been acknowledged that energy policy is not gender neutral; SDG 9 (build resilient infrastructure and promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization) does not take account of the fact that poor infrastructure exacerbates the gender gap; goal 12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) is silent on gender; the adaptation target in goal 13 (climate change) is not linked to gender, and goal 16 (peace and inclusive societies) lacks gender specific language.⁷

Perspectives of gender inclusion in the goals related to the eradication of extreme poverty, economic growth and climate change

⁶ Josephine A. Odera and Judy Mulusa , "SDGs, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: What Prospects for Delivery?", in M. Kaltenborn et al. (eds.), Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights, Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Rights 5,https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30469-0_6, pp. 95-118.

⁷ Josephine A. Odera and Judy Mulusa, ibid.

UN-Women in its publication “Women and Sustainable Development Goals” (2015) has demonstrated with data and stories which impact the SDGs have on women and their scope of gender inclusiveness. Whereas SDG 1 on the eradication of extreme poverty is fully gender inclusive, SDG 8 on economic growth and decent work is gender inclusive in its main targets. In the combat of climate change (SDG 13), women voices, needs and interests are hardly reflected, except in the special target on LDCs and SIDS. There is a lot of potential in women’s commitment for climate and a need to build successful gender approaches for resilience strategies.

Poverty can only be eradicated (SDG 1) with the end of gender-based discrimination. Gender inequality makes and keeps women poor, depriving them of basic rights and opportunities for well-being. Women are included and equally considered in all targets of SDG 1.

Target 1.b “Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions” and its indicator, 1.b.1 „Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups” call for special affirmative measures to eradicate poverty among women and vulnerable groups (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal1>).

Women make significant contributions every day from bringing an income to their household to caretaking of her family and elders and performing domestic work. However, a woman farmer, for instance, has not the same access to seeds, credit, technology and extension services as her male counterpart and rarely owns her own land. Poverty comes with many risks; discrimination leaves women less resilient to these. In an economic crisis, poor women are less likely to make up for lost income through savings or otherwise. Poor girls are more than twice as likely to marry early in childhood as non-poor girls. They are exposed to health risks of early pregnancy which also constrains education and hope for a better income.

SDG 1 can only be achieved when women have equal access to all solutions to end poverty, from social protection nets and decent jobs to the use of the latest technology (UN-Women, 2015: Women and Sustainable Development Goals, p. 5)

Economic growth (SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all) can only be inclusive and fair when women do not have to work at lower rates than men.

Out of 12 targets of SDG 8 only 8.5. on “full and productive employment for all and equal pay for work of equal value” and 8.8. on “protection of labor rights and promotion of safe and secure working environments (...), including for women migrants and those in precarious employment” are particularly and explicitly gender inclusive (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>).

Gender stereotypes often define what “women’s work” is. The promotion of gender equality implies equal access to decent work, productive resources and financial services, as well as an equal voice in economic decisions. Legislation on equal pay for equal work, better access to employment opportunities and safety from sexual harassment in the workplace, are main conditions to enable women decent work. To measure and redistribute women’s unpaid care work and domestic work and to take actions, in the sense that women and men can more readily combine unpaid care and domestic work with paid employment, is another critical issue for the promotion of women’s equality (UN-Women, 2015: Women and Sustainable Development Goals, p.17-18).

Climate change (SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact) can only be fought effectively when adaptation and mitigation measures consider gender equality in all aspects and programmes.

Only target 13.b, which means only one out of five specific targets, the one relative to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Development State (SIDS), under both of which Guinea-Bissau falls, mentions gender and LNOB groups: “promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management (...) including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities” <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>

This target contains a strong contribution to gender inclusive combat of climate change impact and an acknowledgement on the importance of women and local communities in the realization of SDG 13.

Rural poor women and girls are more vulnerable than men and boys to many effects of climate change, as they are more dependent on local natural resources that are threatened by climate change. For them, the impacts of CC are already a daily reality. Many spend increasingly long hours hunting for food, fuel and water, or struggling to grow crops. Due to existing gender inequalities, women and girls are also most at risk in the detrimental short-term effects of climate change, such as landslides, floods, droughts and storms. Through their experiences and traditional knowledge as stewards of many natural resources, women can offer valuable insights into better managing the climate and its risks. Women's participation at international climate negotiations has improved over recent years, but women remain significantly under-represented. Besides being an issue of women's basic right to representation, it is also an important way of bringing the lived experiences of women dealing with climate change into formal climate negotiations (UN Women, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf).

There are clear synergies between climate change and gender inequality, and as the group most affected by climate change, women need to be heard. Yet, climate change responses and disaster risk reduction strategies are often “gender blind”.

1.3 Structure of the Study

After outlining key steps and principal results in the *Executive Summary*, **Chapter 1 consists of a thematic introduction and presentation of the methodology and core approach used in this study – the gender analysis.** It further describes the stakeholder inclusive participatory approach and its advantages, the tools for data collection and its appropriate adaptation to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions on mobility/social contacts.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the elaboration of the baseline study; it is focused on the gender situational analysis. This in-depth view of the gender status in Guinea-Bissau presents different sectors and aspects, such as the economy, political life and decision-making, the justice sector and gender justice, gender discrimination in law, gender based violence, traditions and cultural gender norms, women's empowerment and particular engendered vulnerable groups. It identifies the gaps to gender equality in Guinea-Bissau and discusses the results of crosscutting and intersectional gender inequalities. On the other hand, the baseline study analyzes potential for change and the positioning of women as drivers of transformation and agents towards gender equality.

The in-depth **situational analysis** of gender relations and gender inequalities in Guinea-Bissau will bring to the surface social, cultural and economic perspectives of gender relations and the conditions of gender discrimination at the structural level. Understanding the intersectionality of the gender status and related multilayered vulnerabilities through the roll out of the situational analysis, we will, at the same time, discover women as social actors, perceive their agency and identify drivers for women's empowerment. The situational analysis also looks into the implementation status of national gender commitments and policies (PNIEG 2012/2017) and the needs for gender mainstreaming into key national legislation.

Chapter 2 is the key chapter of this study which provides the baseline for addressing the question of gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality in the upcoming UNDP country programming, corporate planning and interventions.

Chapter 3 develops the global and regional context of gender equality as core principle of human development and UNDP engagement. It **presents the current UNDP gender equality strategies, its principles and priority intervention areas and discusses the centrality of gender equality in the SDGs and the UNDP concept of signature six solutions.** Furthermore, this chapter introduces some best practices for the promotion of gender equality which appear appropriate and applicable to the Guinea-Bissau context. Chapter 3 provides the current conceptual frame of the UN-system/international development agencies and globally recognized strategies for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. It is the other side of the coin, or the broader picture at the international level to be combined with and to complement the insights of the gender analysis of Guinea-Bissau.

In **Chapter 4 the results of the gender status analysis and the international strategies and priority intervention areas for achieving gender equality are merged into proposals for the promotion of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau, appropriate country strategies and programme design of UNDP.**

This chapter consists of an **assessment** of the current UNDP Country Programme with the objective to inform about the gender commitments and progress achieved so far in gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality through UNDP projects /CPD under the current UNDAF (2016-2020). This assessment utilizes **SWOT Analysis** to generate insight into the challenges, positive experience and difficulties UNDP faced in gender-mainstreaming programming and the implementation of gender-responsive/gender transformative projects (gender-marker).

The assessment includes the analysis of UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Equality Strategy and a look at the gender architecture of the UNDP Country Office.

Key importance has been given to the identification of priority areas for project design and the recommendation to closely follow on UNDP signature solution 6 and its priority areas for Guinea-Bissau's strive for gender equality.

The chapter also presents policy recommendations for UNDP how to support the mainstreaming of gender equality into national development planning. Finally, new mapping and analytical tools for the gender analysis and programme evaluation are discussed and the applicability of UNDP innovation and acceleration tools for programme design related to gender equality and women's empowerment is explored.

Chapter 5 contains ***strategic recommendations*** for the upcoming ***UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)*** and ***the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (UNSDCF)*** for Guinea-Bissau on how to best promote gender equality and women's empowerment in and through these key documents, which will guide UNDP's work in the country for the coming years. Moreover, this chapter elaborates concrete proposals for quick win /catalytic projects for the economic empowerment of women, including the furthest behind, and discusses the opportunities and challenges for UNDP programming in the economic sector, also considering the Covid-19 context. As a final step, strategies for the creation of an enabling environment and intervention areas for the economic empowerment of women and the transformation of gender relations are proposed.

This study closes with ***conclusive remarks and recommendations*** for UNDP on the way forward in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Guinea-Bissau towards the fulfillment of the 2030 agenda.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the methodological tools of Gender Analysis, the main objectives of the present study are:

- 1) to dig into and uncover the deep structures of persistent gender inequalities in Guinea-Bissau and their anchoring in the norms of traditional and ethnic shaped societies of the country;
- 2) to identify and analyze the challenges and constraints of women empowerment and gender equality within the specific national and regional (West African) context of Guinea-Bissau;
- 3) to grasp the intersectional nature and overcrossings of gender inequalities; identifying the barriers that limit progress and the triggers that can input positively towards gender equality;
- 4) to develop comprehensive solutions for the promotion of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau, capable to transform women's empowerment from predominately rhetoric to real outcomes which can help to build and support a resilient, inclusive and gender equal society with no one left behind.
- 5) to elaborate recommendations for a gender inclusive approach and the promotion of gender equality in the upcoming UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Guinea-Bissau, 2021-2025, and, in fulfillment of the LNOB strategy, present concrete proposals for quick win/ catalytic projects on women's economic empowerment which reach the poorest and most vulnerable in a gender inclusive manner.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Analytical Framework and Building Blocks

The methodological approach of this study is built on various blocks which merge together to provide the framework for the gender analysis with the ultimate goal of stimulating gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in upcoming UNDP and UN country programs/frameworks that can drive positive change in the promotion of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau.

This approach is based on:

- Baseline study "Gender Status", identification of crosscutting and multidimensional gender vulnerabilities and inequalities of gender in Guinea-Bissau;
- Insights and innovative approaches derived from UNDP/UN-Women gender equality strategies and gender mainstreaming knowledge products (2018-2021);
- Centrality of gender equality for the achievement of the SDGs and its multiplier effect through combination of different SDGs and the UNDP signature solution 6;
- Adaptation of the priority areas of the UNDP signature solution 6 for the promotion of gender equality to the country context of Guinea-Bissau;
- Analysis of gender mainstreaming programming and projects from the region and inspiration from best practices.

1.5.2 Gender Analysis as core approach

Gender analysis belongs to the genre of policy and socio-economic analysis but is itself a quite specific analytical tool as it includes a range of concepts and methods used for systematically examining the differences between the roles that women and men play, the different responsibilities they have, the different levels of power they hold, their differing needs, constraints and opportunities, and how all these differences impact their lives (Hunt 2004).

It is a tool to assess the differences in the lives of women and men, girls and boys and the relationships between and amongst them, taking into account the heterogeneity among and between the different groups.

Gender Analysis consists of different frameworks, such as the "Harvard and Moser frameworks" which shed light on the division of labor between men and women in agricultural and in more urban settings; the "GAM" (Gender Analysis Matrix) which measures gender differentials in the impact of projects at the community level; the "Women's Empowerment Framework" (Longwe) that assesses the contribution of interventions in all sectors to the empowerment of women, or the "Capacities and Vulnerabilities Framework" (CVA) that deals with humanitarian and disaster preparedness issues. This study is inspired by the Moser and Longwe frameworks and the CVA.

The gender analysis serves to develop a comprehensive **situational analysis** of a given context, to increase our understanding of gender issues and challenges in the country and to identify concrete development challenges.

We will analyze, just to mention some areas, the gender division of labor and patterns of decision-making and uncover its relatedness to access to and control over resources, assets and benefits. Through identifying and becoming aware of women's/girls' and men's/boys' different needs, priorities and strengths, we will dig into the complexity of gender relations and different norms and beliefs about gender. This will allow us to shed light on the barriers and constraints in women and men participation.

Gender Analysis helps to uncover the evidences of systemic causes of gender inequalities. Through gender analysis, levels of participation and involvement of women and men, e.g. in the labor market, community decision-making, and use and control over natural resources can be identified; or different

experiences of specific development challenges such as poverty, migration, violence and social cohesion can be brought to light.

Different outcomes from the same intervention, e.g. education, health services, land titling, can be measured through gender analysis which also is used to point out the barriers and constraints to full participation by different groups in decision-making.

It is further applied to evidence specific vulnerabilities and inequalities, for example, of single-female headed households, rural women, victims of GBV etc., or behavior patterns that stand in stark opposition to the interests of certain individuals and groups, for instance, taking girls out of school earlier than boys (UNDP, 2016, *How to conduct a Gender Analysis*).

At policy level, the analysis of the gender situation includes a holistic perspective of human rights, and related obligations of Governments, international human rights standards, and recommendations made by CEDAW and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Gender Analysis is a very valuable tool to build consistency between the analysis of the gender situation and the proposed gender mainstreaming programme. Gender analysis directs us to understand what are the best strategies and approaches to address harmful norms, structures, behaviors and other constraints and how to transform existing gender relations. At the level of interventions, the information and complex intersectional and multiple related contents we can derive from the gender analysis, provide guidance for design of programmes and the elaboration of objectives, outcomes, target audience and planned actions.

1.5.3 Data Collection

Desk Review: In the Desk Review existing secondary sources, such as official national statistics, gender analysis and studies by donors, NGO partners, academics, UNDP country office documents, UNDP Human Development reports, UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy documents, reports of other Inter-governmental agencies are analyzed, mostly via online sources and material from UNDP CO and the consultant's rich gender library. The desk review is based on online research and includes national/ regional / international comparative perspectives.

Primary sources are collected through focus groups with the *djumbai* method (informal group discussion based on a specific local communication technic), key informant interviews, brainstorming and informative talk instead of standardized questionnaires.

Due to Covid-19 confinement and social distancing, the collection of primary sources has taken place through WhatsApp calls/ video conferences and questionnaires sent out by e-mail, adapted to the individual interview partner. The consultant has been able to gather the relevant primary sources, mostly working remotely, due to previous contacts, good networks and long working experience in Guinea-Bissau.

1.5.4 Integration of stakeholders - participatory approach

This study follows a participatory approach in which relevant stakeholder, especially women as professionals, experts, women's NGOs and associations as well as women from targeted communities may raise their voices, contribute to the situational analysis, including the assessment of ongoing/recent interventions of UNDP and other programmes for gender equality. Their contributions can also be considered for the elaboration of recommendations for upcoming/ future UNDP programming and project design.

Men, particularly those in influential positions – politicians, managers, public prosecutors and community leaders - take part in the analysis of the gender situation in Guinea-Bissau and the

identification of gender inequalities and gender based violence, including within the public administration, the justice systems and at family level.

Community consultations: Gender analysis includes reaching out and directly involving potential beneficiary communities or groups of the intervention and conducting gender analysis in a participatory manner. To make the gender analysis as participatory as possible, individual interviews are conducted with members of the community who best represent their peers; information is verified through group discussions with the different parties involved. The significance and reliability of community consultations is ensured through discussions with a sufficient number of participants who reflect a considerable variety of socio-economic situations and ethnic and religious identities within a given community.

National experts consultations: To enrich the gender analysis and gain more experience from the field, expert interviews with national experts are held, among others, with the Women and Child Institute, Access to Justice Centers, magistrates and lawyers, economists and legal experts, Ministry of Economy, the Institute of Social Protection, Women Parliamentary Commission and leading NGOs (RENLUV, Casa de Direitos, Comité de Luta contra práticas nefastas, AMAE, PPM) as well as the gender office of UNDP and other relevant UN-experts.

Consultations with key actors of the traditional / informal justice system: Interviews with representatives of the informal/traditional legal system on gender discriminatory practices of customary law and possible improvements (regarding inheritance, land tenure, early and forced marriage, domestic violence etc.) provide important inputs, including on the implementation of ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms) in Guinea-Bissau for achieving gender justice.

2. Baseline Study of Gender Status

2.1 Key Insights and Gender Inequality Matrix

Main constraints to gender equality in Guinea-Bissau

Inclusive participation of women in Guinea-Bissau remains an ongoing challenge. Gender inequality persists, as women are under-educated and generally have a lower socio-economic status, with inadequate access to basic social services and reduced economic opportunities compared to men. Less literate and less educated, more exposed to health risk factors and with less access to means of production and decision making, women in Guinea-Bissau are more exposed to poverty and not able to fully participate in the development of the country (for data refer to the Gender Inequality Matrix below).

Structural inequalities between men and women in Guinea-Bissau are rooted in specific socio-cultural norms, the dominance of patriarchal power and of traditional (rural) settings. Decades of political conflict and stagnation have resulted in collapsing state structures and severe problems in governability with additional negative impact.

Exclusion and discrimination of women in Guinea-Bissau are most visible in the high incidence of female genital mutilation and domestic violence, limited access to resources, land and credit, poor institutional representation and inequalities in justice, health and education. (PNIEG 2017, Gender Profile 2015, Interpeace & Voz de Paz 2018, Mendes 2018, Embalo/UNDP 2020).

Gender inequality is ongoing throughout the nation, especially in rural areas, where customary and religious practices tend to supersede state policies and laws.

Women are most affected by the impunity that prevails in Guinea-Bissau's fragile state characterized by inoperative institutions. Despite the existence of instruments aimed at protecting and defending the rights of citizens, namely women, the results fall far short of what would be satisfactory (PNIEG 2017).

The disparities that will be discussed in this chapter by sector reveal the precarious situation of women and the interdependence of inequalities. They demonstrate the intersectional nature of gender and other parameters of marginalization, such as poverty, illiteracy, poor health etc. As the main restrictions and barriers to women's equality and empowerment those listed here have been identified. All of them play a role in the disadvantaged position of women in socio-economic and political terms, the high vulnerability to sexual and gender based violence, severe violation of women's human rights and their marginalization as well as overall poor resilience capacities of women to conflict, climate change and disasters, including the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

- *Lack of institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming;*
- *Discriminating policies and laws, partially gender blind and obsolete;*
- *Stark underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions, from the family up to the public administration and the government level (men occupy at least 70% of senior (leading) positions in key ministries;*
- *Dominance of traditional gender roles and relationships where the man decides for the family and the woman is subordinated;*
- *Severe lack of formal education, high illiteracy rates, particularly among rural women;*
- *Lack of basic health: critical rates of maternal and under 5 year mortality;*
- *Limited access of women to courts and to justice centers (CAJs), especially in cases of gender based violence and sexual abuse due to structural barriers: fear, lack of knowledge of their rights, traumatization, lack of information and dissemination of support offered by CAJs, lack of operational protection structures for victims of SGBV;*
- *Women's property rights are limited, inheritance laws are discriminatory;*

- *Women as the main producers of food for families, responsible for domestic work, caregivers for children, the elderly and the sick, do not make equal decisions about access and management of household goods, despite their growing contribution to family income;*
- *Low efficiency of domestic work and subsistence, due to the lack of basic infrastructure, sanitary and electricity;*
- *Inequality in agricultural production and marketing where women occupy positions at the low end of the value chain.*

Economic and demographic background

In Guinea-Bissau, rural livelihoods are characterized in large part by their dependence on the cashew and rice sectors and subsistence agriculture. Rice remains the most widely grown staple crop in the country. Rainfall, cashew nut terms-of-trade relative to rice, and food prices are main factors influencing food security. Dependence on cashew nut as the primary source of economic sustenance exposes two-thirds of the population to serious consequences from price shocks. Political instability constrains government progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals related to achieving zero hunger (SDG 2), poverty (SDG 1), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5) and ecological limits and degradation (SDGs 13, 14, and 15).

Ethnic groups that traditionally grow rice and practice traditional African or Christian religions are concentrated on the coast, such as Balantas, Mancanhas, Manjacos and Pepel, the latter predominating in Bissau. In the north, Mandingas, known for their reputation as traders and farmers, are the majority group and, in the east, the Fulas predominate who traditionally practice pastoralism and who, like Mandingas, are commonly referred to as Islamized groups. In this way, the spatial distribution of ethnic groups establishes a certain dichotomy between coastal, Christian and animist groups, and those from the interior, Islamized groups, which is an important factor in the structuring of the Bissau-Guinean society.

Gender Inequality Matrix

Gender gaps exist in almost every sector of society in Guinea-Bissau. Although gender disaggregated data do by fare not cover all relevant indicators / areas (see below), we can note significant differences.

Demographics	Male	Female	Observation / Source
Population Share	48.57%	51.42,0%	MICS 6 (2020), Population Total: 1.968.000 Population in Bissau : 492.000 (2015 Census) (https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/guinea-bissau-demographics/)
Rural population below poverty line	33 /69 %	33 / 69 %	Total: 75,6 % (GP) Extreme poverty: less 1 USD 33%, nationwide, ILAP (2010)
Medium household composition	6.8 (persons)	6.8 (persons)	MICS 6 (2020)
Population and age			MICS 6 (2020)
0-17	51.2%	46.9%	
18 +	48.7%	53.1%	
Urban	42.9%	40.9%	
Rural	57.1%	59.1%	
Life expectance at birth in years (2018)	55,9 67,7 60,4	59,9 69,6 63,2	Guinea-Bissau Senegal Gambia https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations
Elderly Population: 60+	5.2%	5.4%	5.4% (MICS 6) 65+ = 2.9 % (UNFPA.org/data/world-population/GW)
Household heads	77.3%	22.7% 31% in Bissau, 20% rest of country	MICS 6 (2020) ILAP, 2010
Married / in union	39.6%	58.3%	MICS 6 (2020)
Poligamic relations (15-49)	21.5%	39.2%	MICS 6 (2020)
Men of couple +10 y (wife 20-24)		42.2%	MICS 6 (2020)
Health	Male	Female	Observation/Source
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate: Age 15-49	1.1%	2.1%	WB (2018)

HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate: Age 15-49, case distribution	37.2%	62.8%	Total: 3.4% of population (2019), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.AIDS.ZS?locations=GW
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate: Pregnant Women		4.5%	MICS 6 (2020)
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate: Female Sex Workers		Ca. 25%	Lindman, 2020, Study on HIV among female sex workers, chap. 2.9
Knowledge on prevention measures (Age: 15-24)	30.7%	12.5%	MICS 6 (2020)
Discriminative Attitude against HIV/AIDS people	77.7%	75.4%	MICS 6 (2020)
Contraceptive Prevalence Rate in case of multiple partners	50.0%	26.6%	MICS 6 (2020)
Use of contraceptive for family planning		21.2%	MICS 6 (2020)
Assisted birth in health center/hospital		50.4%	MICS 6 (2020)
Fertility Rate, total birth pro woman (Age: 15-49)		4.3% (Total) 5.3 % rural areas 2.7% (urban areas)	MICS 6 (2020)
Maternal Mortality Rate		667/100.000 birth	WB, (2017) macrotrends.net, one of the highest worldwide
Children under 5 mortality rate	59/1000	53/1000	General: 56/1000 birth MICS 6 (2020)
Sex beneath age 15	43.7%	13.8%	MICS 6 (2020)
Early mother/fatherhood Age: 15-19 beneath age 18 (age group: 20-24 years)	0.5% 3.4%	19.1% 27.0%	MICS 6 (2020)
Death after clandestine abortion	n/a	Elevated	(Ministerio Publico, Interview with.....)
Health insurance adults (15-49)	1.8%	1.0%	MICS 6 (2020)
Gender Based Violence	Male	Female	Observation/Source
Female Genital Mutilation	n/a	52.1 %(15-49 y) 29.7% (0-14 y)	Disparities in distribution, more in the East (Fula 93,7%, Mandinga 89,7%), less in the coastal region (1.3%) MICS 6 (2020)
Against FGM		75.8	(85,8 urban vs. 68,6 rural)
Pro FGM		13.3	(5,8 urban vs. 18,7 rural) MICS 6 (2020)
Early union or marriage	0.8% under 15	8.1 % under 15;	MICS 6 (2020)

	2.2% under 18	25.7 % under 18	
Domestic Violence Attitude to Domestic violence: Okay to beat wife for 5 reasons	37.0	No national statistics available 36.4	See chapter 2.8 for partial data. Cases brought to public light mainly by NGOs, few formal accusations and trials, see below cases at Access to Justice Centers MICS 6 (2020)
Intimate partner violence	No national statistics	No national statistics	See Domestic Violence
Education	Male	Female	Source/Observation
Basic competencies (in children 6-14) Reading Mathematics	12.4% 8.1%	12.4% 7.0%	MICS 6 (2020)
Net (adjusted) participation rate for girls divided by participation rate (adjusted) net for boys <i>Primary School</i> <i>Lower Secondary Education</i> <i>Secondary Education</i>		1.03 0.88 1.28	MICS 6 (2020)
School final year entrance and completion rates			MICS 6 (2020)
<i>Primary School</i>	<i>entrance</i> <i>completion</i>	73.9% 29.2%	61.5% 25.1% Total: entrance 67.2% , completion: 27.2% Urban vs. rural entrance: 90.1% vs. 54.9% Urban vs. rural completion: 47.3% vs. 14.3%
<i>Lower Secondary School</i>	<i>entrance</i> <i>completion</i>	44.9% 17.8%	38.5% 16.4% Total: entrance 41.9% , completion: 17.1% Urban vs. rural entrance: 75.1% vs. 22.0% Urban vs. rural completion: 30.8% vs. 6.7%
<i>Secondary School</i>	<i>completion</i>	13.7%	8.1% Total completion: 10.8% Urban vs. rural completion: 19.8% vs. 4.0%
Adult Education Parameters (15-49) <i>No formal education or pre-primary</i>	19.8%	40.2%	MICS 6 (2020)

<i>Primary School Literacy rate</i>	50.7% (22.9%)	44.1% (16.8%)	
<i>Secondary School Technical School High School / University</i>	20.5% 4.0% 4.8%	11.7% 2.0% 2.1%	
Children working 12-14 years 15-17 years	53.0% 68.7%	59.5% 63.7%	MICS 6 (2020) 85% in families without remuneration, in agriculture and food preparation (INE 2015)
Illiteracy Rate (15-49) Literacy Rate Age 15-24 Age 15-49 Urban Rural	47.8% 56.5% 52.3% 79.9% 32.4%	67.4% 45.6% 32.6% 56.0% 16.3%	MICS 6 (2020) Women with up to 90% illiteracy in rural areas, east and south of Guinea-Bissau (DENARP II, 2011) MICS 6 (2020), can read a simple sentence MICS 6 (2020)
Socio-economic data	Male	Female	Source/ Observation
IT – Basic skills	14.4%	4.1%	MICS 6 (2020)
Internet use (at least once a week)	31.2%	9.5%	MICS 6 (2020)
Mobile Phone owner (15-49)	87.2%	60.7%	MICS 6 (2020)
Mobile Phone user (15-49)	92.3%	89.4%	MICS 6 (2020)
Economically active (15-49)	90.0%	80.0%	ILAP II, Gender Profile (2015), women mainly in informal sector
GDP per capita	1.593 USD	1.135 USD	UNDP Human Development Report (2015)
Proportion of women in informal sector/ agriculture		96% / 80%	ERI-ESI, Guinea-Bissau (2019)/ Gender Profile (2015)
Formal occupation (non agriculture)	11.3%	3.6%	ERI-ESI, Guinea-Bissau (2019)
Vulnerable employment rate, part of self-employed and family workers	33.4%	51.9%	ERI-ESI, Guinea-Bissau (2019)
Formal remunerated work in the agricultural sector	27.5%	9.7%	ERI-ESI, Guinea-Bissau (2019)
Social Security and Pension	Only civil servants	Only civil servants	Small percentage, only 3.9% of 60+ receive a pension, www.africaneconomicoutlook.org (Guinea-Bissau 2017)
Land property		Less than 2.5%	SIGI INDEX West Africa, OECD; FAO (2013), Land data base

Self-employment and entrepreneurship/ Percentage of informal production units lead by women	Mixed	Predominantly micro enterprise, „bideira“ model, and in food production 61.4%	High percentage of female micro and small enterprises, few formal business creation (Interview with Center for Business Formalization) ERI-ESI, Guinea-Bissau (2019)
Electricity Supply urban vs. rural	35.7% vs. 23.6%	35.7% vs. 23.6%	MICS 6 (2020), public and private providers
Water Supply, clean and always available In walking distance (30 min)		9.7% 59.8%	MICS 6 (2020)
Decision-making	Male	Female	Source/Observation
Political representation, MPs in (Parliament)	88 89	14 13	2014-2018 2019-2022 (election after coming into force of “Gender Parity Law” which fixes parity at 36% of Parliament seats for female MPs (PNIEG 2017, own observation)
Leadership positions in key ministries (mean) Head of Political Parties Judges Lawyers (Bar Association) Civil Society Leadership	69% 100% 79% 84% 65%	31% 0% 21% 16% 35%	Ministers, Senior Civil Servants (Gender Profile, 2015) Own observation UNDP Guinea-Bissau, 2019, Estratégia de Género dos Centros de Acesso a Justiça (CAJ Gender Strategy) Own observation, estimative number
Conflict Mediation and peacebuilding		Growing influence of women mediators and facilitators	No statistical data available, see chap. 2.10
Justice/human rights	Male	Female	Source/Observation
Citizen does not feel safe in reporting and testifying to state justice	54%	54%	Interpeace, Voz de Paz 2020, “Sintidu di justisa Barómetro participativo sobre a percepção e experiência da população: Como melhorar a governação da justiça na Guiné-Bissau”
Citizens think that conflicts are better resolved in traditional courts	90%	90%	Interpeace, Voz de Paz 2020
Number of cases at Access to Justice Centers (CAJ)	79%	21%	Cumulative cases from September 2011 to February 2018, total of cases: 10.590, resolved 7.998, by Coordinator of GICJU, Juliano A. Fernandes, internal statistics, (Office for Legal Information and Consultation), 2018

		30%	In 2019, www.gw.undp.org/content/guinea_bissau/pt/home/news-centre/GenderEquality.html
Case Typology - Violence (no of cases)			
Physical Agression	593	189	Cumulative cases from September 2011 to February 2018 at CAJ, Office for Legal Information and Consultation, 2018
Sexual Violence	76	74	
Forced Marriage	25	79	
Domestic Violence	27	72	
Climate Change, Resilience, Disaster	Male	Female	Source/Observation
Cooking with clean energy sources and technologies: urban vs. rural		3.7 vs. 0.2	MICS 6 (2020)
Cooking with other sources (solid fuel)		92.3 vs. 98.2	MICS 6 (2020), indoor pollution: leading to severe respiratory diseases of women and children
Farmers etc. using techniques and methods adapted to climate change (people)	8.957	25.431	Affirmative action to promote women in UNDP projects, www.gw.undp.org/content/guinea_bissau/pt/home/news-centre/GenderEquality.html
Affected by climate change, short and long time effects		significantly more than men	GEF-UNDP Projects, Gender Analysis: women suffer more from lack of water and solid fuel, from climate induced hazards, such as floods, droughts, landslides, destruction of habitation as they work closer to natural resources, cannot swim or climb on trees etc.
Participation in Climate Change, Clean Energy and Disaster Risk Management	Low	very low	GEF-UNDP Projects, Gender Analysis, women do have significantly less opportunity to participate in the decision-making, planning, technical capacity-building, community driven resilience building, DRR measures, clean energy for sustainable development projects despite increasing awareness.

Lack of gender disaggregated data

Overall, there is a lack of reliable statistical data in / for Guinea-Bissau (see also chap. 4.3.3). The lack of gender disaggregated data in all relevant sectors for this project, i.e. limited availability and poor accuracy/authenticity of sex (and age) disaggregated data for nearly all social, economic and political parameters in Guinea-Bissau hamper a profound gender analysis (www.genderindex.org/country/guinea-bissau). Systematic collection of comprehensive data, disaggregated by sex, age and social status and measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women and progress towards gender equality and equity are rare. Only 40% of SDG indicators are measurable in Guinea-Bissau, most of them do not have baseline information (IE, 2020, p.25).

It is noted with concern that Guinea-Bissau until now is not ranked, neither in the World Economic Forum Global Gap Report (2018) nor in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index (2018)⁸, as part of the Human Development Index, due to lack of sufficient significant statistical data.

Therefore it is a challenge and an urgency to systematically collect more sex and age disaggregated data in Guinea-Bissau and elaborate gender statistics that can inform gender baseline assessments viably and effectively and measure change and progress in the gender status.⁹ Hence, the regulations for the production of national statistical data should integrate gender sensitive components and indicators. Besides traditional data, new ways of gathering data need to be explored (big data, citizens' generated data, etc.), which will be discussed in chap. 4.3.3.

The National Statistics Institute (INE) should encourage practices of collecting and analyzing gender disaggregated data whenever possible. The government has to value the data to improve decision-making. In order for government officials to fully address gender inequalities and the government to improve decision-making based on data evidence as well as understand the results of chosen policies and programs, more robust systems of data collection and monitoring are needed.

⁸ The GII measures gender inequalities in three important aspects of human development—reproductive health, measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates; empowerment, measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females and proportion of adult females and males aged 25 years and older with at least some secondary education; and economic status, expressed as labor market participation and measured by labor force participation rate of female and male populations aged 15 years and older.

⁹ The problematic of good gender disaggregated data is mentioned in the UNDP *Gender Equality Strategy* (2018); many developing countries suffer from insufficient gender disaggregated data. The statistical situation in Guinea-Bissau seems to be particularly aggravated and worrying due to huge lack of data and many contradictory data at the same time.

2.2. Main socio-cultural factors that perpetuate gender inequality

Gender analysis can help us understand complex relationships, power relations and roles in society. In Guinea-Bissau, gender-based violence is a reflection of the patriarchal model that legitimizes traditional cultural practices on which various ethnic groups in the country build their behavior and attitudes. Domestic violence, early and forced marriage, levirate marriage and female genital mutilation as well as deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life in Guinea-Bissau continue to shape gender relations. Socio-cultural norms justify discrimination and harmful practice against women that threaten their health, violate women's human rights and hinder the proper development of the country (Mendes, 2018). Sustained and systematic action has to be taken to modify or eliminate these discriminating practices. Socio-cultural practices that follow the patriarchal model limit the effective application of various conventions ratified by the State of Guinea-Bissau and also the national legal instruments aimed at promoting women's rights and gender equity. As these instruments emerge from a modern western worldview, instead of being interpreted as instruments for the integration of women in society, they are considered by a significant part of actors from local communities as instruments of social disintegration. *Therefore, there seems to be a huge gap between these instruments and their application, reflected in lack of national appropriation and low efficiency of the programmes/implemented actions* (Djau & Mendes, 2014: 13). Despite recent gender-responsive and gender protective legislation, namely the laws against domestic violence, FGM, human trafficking, and the promotion of reproductive health, customary law continues to be applied in detriment of positive law, particularly in family issues.

The culture of matchundaadi

Gender and power relations in Guinea-Bissau are characterized by the *culture of matchundaadi*. This type of "hegemonic masculinity"¹⁰ manifests itself in different phenomena of violence that penetrate and cause the weakening of institutions and prevent the normal functioning of the State, in politics and economy. At the family and individual level the *culture of matchundaadi* feeds those traditions and customs that guarantee the submission of certain individuals - essentially women - within ethnic patterns, religious identities and family. Thus, for understanding the social practices it is crucial to analyze the mechanisms through which the *culture of matchundaadi* are materialized (Moreira, 2017, p. 9).

Matchundaadi culture consists of a set of values, behaviors, symbols and practices guided by a world view based on characteristics understood as typical of men and masculinities, in which the following stand out: exercise of strength (physical strength and symbolic strength), exaltation of courage and rebellion, intimidation (through fear and repression) and the exercise of violence (physical, institutional, political, social and symbolic). All these function as measures of power and influence of individuals or groups before their peers and society. *Matchundaadi culture* is based on repressive hierarchies of control and domination and guarantees men the top places in society and participation in the main decision-making processes, likewise giving rise to the masculinization of the institutionalized power (Moreira, 2017, p. 16).

In the logic of *Matchundaadi* men feel above the law, and impunity is, in addition to the exercise of violence, one of the main characteristics of this culture. It is precisely in this violence-impunity

¹⁰ Hegemonic masculinities refers to societal notions of what is perceived as the 'ideal man'. While this ideal varies in location and time, it is usually associated with heterosexuality, marriage, fatherhood, authority, professional success and physical prowess, see: Connell R.W. 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept' (Gender & Society 2005).

correlation that the *culture of Matchundaadi* expands and reproduces itself in the struggles for political and economic power where the protagonists of this form of hegemonic masculinity meet and challenge each other (Moreira, 2017, p. 16).

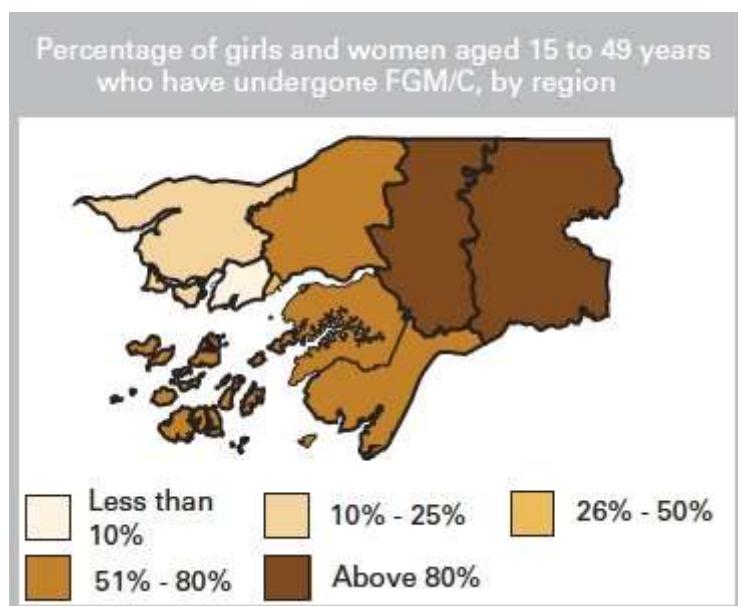
The symbols of matchundaadi: Violent gender relations and “Fanadu di mulher” (FGM)

Gender violence includes, but is not limited to, any act in public or private life perpetrated or tolerated by the State (eventually) resulting in physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, psychosocial or economic violence or suffering, based on discrimination of gender, or stereotypical perception of gender.

The acts of the GBV include:

Domestic violence, sexual abuse and / or rape, including marital rape; gender-specific traditional and cultural practices that cause harm, including FGM, sexual exploitation and forced prostitution; intimidation and sexual harassment at the workplace and in public; violence in schools and bullying, among male and female students, trafficking in human beings, especially women and children.

In Guinea-Bissau, female genital mutilation primarily serves to prepare for marriage, both physically and spiritually. An uncircumcised woman is considered unclean and may even be prohibited from preparing and serving food. FGM not only increases the bride's price, but is intended to ensure the virginity of a woman. It is also believed that genital mutilation increases fertility, whereas an intact vulva is perceived as unaesthetic. Without circumcision, social exclusion threatens, and many people also believe that their religion requires this human rights violation (Balde, 2018).



UNICEF Data: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. 2019. Country Profile: Guinea-Bissau

Awa Thiam, a well-known Senegalese feminist and scholar, explains FGM as a self-enforcing social system that African women execute for males' benefits (Thiam, 1978, 1986). FGM establishes and maintains gender hierarchy within a double domination context of colonial/neo-colonial and traditional patriarchy. It has become the cultural norm that regulates the female body, shapes women's behaviors and increases their chances of marriage (Shell-Duncan, 2008).

The “fanadu di mindjer” is a good example of how the concept of femininity, of being a woman and being female in Guinea-Bissau is instrumentalized, to the extent that this practice, although packed with religious and traditional meaning, constitutes above all the search for control over women, over their bodies and their expectations in society (Moreira, 2017, p. 16) and expresses the power relations

established in the society of Guinea-Bissau. The elimination of the clitoris is also part of the logic of understanding gender relations and sexuality itself, in the perspective of a confrontation in which the woman, far from being a partner on an equal footing, is dominated, reified and possessed. It is this possession that substantiates and manifests male power (Moreira, p. 98).

Fanadu, with or without cutting the genitals, reproduces and reinforces gender stereotypes, using the ethnic identity of individuals as legitimization for inequalities and social differentiation while reinforcing male hegemony and female subordination. Ending excision means changing the conceptions of masculinity and femininity in the traditional societies of Guinea-Bissau and establish a new social order (Moreira, p. 99).

The concept of Fidju-Matchu (male children)

The popular saying “Guiné-Bissau padi só Fidju-Matchu” (Guinea-Bissau only gives birth to male children) is used by women to explain the causes of suffering, poverty and difficulties of daily life, and permanent conflicts at different levels and scales in an environment of constant social and political upheaval. This saying shows the absence of women as protagonists of social dynamics and the violent and virulent nature of a society composed of *fidjus-matchus* (Moreira, 2017, p. 100).

Regardless of the country's different ethnic identities, there is a whole symbolic universe built around the *fidju-matchu* in Guinea-Bissau, who are generally preferred by both men and women within the family. This preference naturally downgrades girls and women, very visible, for example, when poor families have to choose whom to send to school, with boys being seen as those who are naturally more likely to have access to top places in society.

A woman who is unable to give birth to a boy child sometimes feels guilt and frustration in her relationship, and it is not uncommon that men seek the fulfillment of this achievement by finding other partners. *Fidju-matchus* also function as a kind of extension of the father figure who replace the latter in their absence (physical or temporal), placing on them the burden to protect, unite and improve the lives of their families. As an emanation of the figure of the head of the family, boys are also under pressure of affirmation outside the house. Physical strength which characterizes the symbolic construction of *matchus* as well as virility in general are the combat weapons in the public arena (Moreira, p. 101).

The logics and strategies of conquering power are based on violent competition and can cause social turbulence of different degrees. They are socially and culturally legitimated by the idea that in the fight between *fidju-matchus*, “the best” - the most violent and the most feared or respected - will win, regardless of the weapons he makes use of in combat. The *matchu* therefore enjoys a certain amount of impunity with regard to the means of conquering power, provided that he emerges as the winner of the competition and effectively captures power and resources.

Fidju-Matchu presents a concept of violent masculinity where values such as courage, strength, determination, the exercise of violence and revenge are praised as ways of affirming the masculinity of individuals as well as the ability of self-defense in the competition between *matchus*.

This conception draws on the legitimacy that fidjus-matchus have in the private sphere, namely within families and in ethnic structures – which test the degree of masculinity of individuals through initiation rituals. The construction of gender identity, masculinities and femininities in the private sphere figures as pre-demarcation of social parameters of behavior and identity in the public sphere (Moreira, 2017, p. 102).

An essential feature of violent masculinities in Guinea-Bissau is ***insubordination*** as an element of affirmation and resistance to the power of other *matchus*, thus perpetuating the environment of social and political tension. In the order of this idea, many *matchus* who rival in one territory cannot give way to a stable and peaceful society (Moreira, 2017, p. 102).

Dominance of traditional norms and values in social and family life

In many rural communities in Guinea-Bissau, and to a lesser extent in the few urban centers of Guinea-Bissau, traditions and customs still guide social and family life. The principal ethnic groups, Fula, Balanta, Mandinga, Manjaco and Pepel all have traditional beliefs and practices that restrict women's roles and rights. The Bijagó group of the Bijagos Archipelago in the Bolama region are an exception as they have a uniquely matrilineal structure (Fernandes 2012).

Women do not always choose when and whom to marry. Marriages are generally not registered. Although the legal age for marriage in Guinea-Bissau was raised to 18 for women and men (from 14 for girls and 16 for boys) in 2010 by the Law on Reproductive Health, there are *de facto* no sanctions underway to punish those who force minors to marry. (www.genderindex.org/country/guinea-bissau/).

37% of girls marry before they are 18 years old, a fifth of them even before reaching 15 years of age, while only 3.7% of boys marry before reaching 18 years of age. Early marriage is predominantly a rural phenomenon, with 47% of women between 20 and 49 years of age getting married before the age of 18 compared to 26.8% of women in urban areas married before the age of 18 (MICS 2014, WB, 2019 Manual). Numbers slightly decreased according to MICS 6 (2020), as more girls may refuse early marriage (Focus Group Gabu).

From a cultural point of view, **early marriage** continues to be a recurring practice in almost all ethnic groups of Guinea-Bissau. This custom of forced marriage and the use of the bride's price to pay off family debts takes away the power to choose the husband freely and deprives girls and young women of opportunities to complete school education.

With regard to the security and protection situation in the face of exclusion and violence, 60% of Guinean women are married or live in a *de facto union* with men who are at least 10 years older. **Polygamy**, as one of the factors that generates gender inequality, is mainly practiced in rural areas and still a common feature in the Bissau-Guinean society. Polygamy has to be seen as the "legalized" form of boosting men's masculinity along the lines of the culture of *matchundaade*, subordinate and dominate more than one woman at the same time and give proof of masculinity through elevated numbers of children. Women have more difficulties than in monogamous relations to influence household decisions, to get a share in land property or at least access to sufficient fertile land that would allow for some economic independence (Focus Groups Gabu and Bafata). Among individuals aged 15 to 49 who live in polygamous union, 39.2% are women and 21.5% are men (MICS 6, 2020).

Customary Laws and traditional gender roles and expectations dominate gender and family relations. The roles and responsibilities ascribed to the women and men in the domestic domain have common features among most ethnic groups in the country.

Reproductive tasks are generally considered as female activities. Traditionally, men in all ethnic groups have the responsibility of providing the staple food, rice, for the household and women are expected to provide the other ingredients that are eaten with rice, locally called *mafe*. There are, however, signs that this division of responsibilities is changing (see more on this in the coming section: socio-economic situation of women).

When women marry and move to their husbands, their provisioning becomes the responsibility of the husband and his kin. Her kin ceases to have any obligations towards her. When they separate from their husbands, women lose some rights. In practice, however, and depending on the circumstances surrounding the separation, these women may gain assistance either from their own family or the husband's family. Female-headed households living in a compound will still be subject to the patriarchal authority in the compound and cannot demand to be given a rice field for the sustenance of their households. It is only male heads who have the right to make such claims. The children of separated couples have the right to the contribution of their fathers for their sustenance (Pepel and

Fula). Access to such rights is, however, often denied and may precipitate numerous forms of conflict (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, p. 190).

Single mothers, i.e. mothers who did not go through the customary wedding ceremony, have no right to demand any contribution from the father towards the provisioning of the children. Unmarried fathers have no rights to their children. Single mothers and their children remain the responsibility of their parents until they marry. The division of obligations in these cases is unclear (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, p. 191).¹¹

In most ethnic groups separation and divorce can be demanded by the wife and cannot be denied if the woman has strong arguments (domestic and sexual violence, bad treatment). All properties of the couple remain with the husband who normally has to be the owner of the family house; women in some cases have the right to minor domestic goods (Barros, Semedo, 2013, pp. 22-23). Any conflict in this respect has to be regulated by traditional authorities at village level as well as questions concerning child upbringing and the father's financial obligations, if not consensual.

Strong appreciation of gender stereotypes by both sexes

Women are relegated to a domestic role, while men are valued in the public and political spheres. The social preference for having men in decision-making bodies is particularly reinforced by women themselves who accept and contribute to strengthen their role away from decision-making.

Many women understand their role in supporting the rise of men to their own detriment. This attitude of submission and self-exclusion is highly valued in the Guinea-Bissau society, mirroring all the complexity of gender relations and its transposition in all domains of society, including in decision-making spheres (Interpeace & Voz de Paz, 2018).

The basis of these inequalities is fostered by gender stereotypical roles since childhood and the obligation of the woman to submit to her husband, the obligation of the woman and the child to follow the religion of the husband / father and adopt his surname, the insufficiency and ineffectiveness of institutional promotion of gender equality and the lack of a legal framework to regulate figures such as sexual harassment and pedophilia (Mendes 2018).

On the other hand, the idea that lack of education is the main cause of the exclusion of women from decision-making spheres is widespread. But often it is, in the first place, women's self-esteem and self-confidence that are lacking and not school education or guidance at home. As we can find quite some poorly educated men in decision-making posts in Guinea-Bissau, it is evident that the problem is rooted in the educational models in force, both formal (school) and informal (parents, community). These models do not encourage girls and young women to develop the necessary self-esteem to engage against the "fidju-matchu-mentality" for their own rise (Interpeace & Voz de Paz, 2018).

¹¹ Childbirth outside of marriage is something not considered in Pepel law. In the old times, pressure was exerted on the future father to marry the pregnant girl or else he would die by way of sorcery. Today such threats have ceased.

2.3 Socioeconomic situation and discrimination of women

Women play a crucial role in the country's economy

A key feature in Guinea-Bissau's economy is the ***high rate of women involved in predominately informal economic activities***. About 80% of women over 15 are economically active compared to 90% of men (ILAP II, Gender Profile, 2015). In comparison to men, women generally have a lower socioeconomic status, with inadequate access to basic social services and reduced economic opportunities regarding formal employment and the occupation of higher value chains and capital intensive business in the informal sector (Interview INEP Director). Gross national income per capita of women in Guinea-Bissau was estimated at 1.135 USD against USD 1.593 for men, meaning ***women earn only 65% of the income of men*** (UNDP Human Development Report, 2015).

Nowadays, women play a crucial role in the informal economy which is a large and highly important sector in the local economic structure. Women in Bissau as well as in the regions are involved in small-scale trade, market sales and services. Accurate data are lacking, but PNIEG estimates that women make about 51.6% of the people involved in the informal sector, with women heads of households as particular relevant group with 62.2% (Gender Profile, 2015, p. 32).

Guinea-Bissau's ***economy is based on the subsistence agriculture*** of small-scale farmers who also produce cashew nuts (in small orchards of less than 1 ha, or 1-3 ha), the main export product in monoculture, involving the entire rural labor force (foremost women and adolescents, seasonally) and providing ca. 90% of exports (WB 2018, Gender Profile, 2015).

Only 10 % of the total workforce, predominately male, are salaried employees of the public or private sector (Gender Profile, 2015). The private sector consists mainly of some finance, trade, transport and services companies, mostly located in Bissau.

Industrial production is small-scale and largely limited to the processing of agricultural products where men represent owners and managers while women are positioned at the bottom of the value chain, doing the collection, manual selection and peeling of cashew nuts.

There are significant differences in socioeconomic conditions between regions and especially between regions and the capital. All regions are poor and lack resources and services, while poverty is particularly marked in the northern and eastern regions with major population and women concentration and a lower literacy level.

A full gender analysis of women's roles in the informal sector is still to be undertaken, especially regarding the degree of hardship induced by the type of work undertaken in the informal sector combined with the pressures linked to their household duties. As by the time of writing the present study, sufficient data are not available (ERI-ESI, 2019, provides some basic data on informal sector).

The inability of the formal sector of the economy to provide enough salaried jobs and / or sufficient income, has made activities in the informal sector the main alternative to ensure the survival of women and their families. Economic and social crisis and policies to contain public spending increased income generating activities of women out of economic necessity and the historical/ pre-colonial habitus of the productive role of women. In turn, the growth of the informal sector was favored by the liberalization policies from the mid 1980ties that particularly benefited trade, significantly increasing the participation of women in the retail sector (Borges, 2000, pp. 289 ff., Monteiro, 1996: p. 100, Cardoso & Imbali, 1996).

This increase in income generating activities has resulted in a profound transformation of the notion of the family, particularly in the urban areas of Guinea-Bissau. ***An inversion of gender roles can be noted, leading to more independence for some women within the household based on their access to economic resources and autonomy over income. On the other hand, this challenge of predominately patriarchal family structures causes situations of instability within the family,***

sometimes resulting in separation and divorce, putting a further strain on households' capacity to cope with socio-economic hardship (Borges, 2000).

Background: Women's productive role in pre-colonial and colonial time

There is a notable scientific production on the achievements of women in West African trade, centered on the figures of women traders, descendants of alliances of European traders with African women, who became known as *Nharas* in Guinea and *Signares* in Senegal (Havik, 1995, 2004; Brooks, 1993, (cultural brokers).

Benefiting from the cultural heritage of both cultures and often from the social status and prerogatives of mothers, these women occupied advantageous positions as commercial agents, manipulating African and European commercial networks, and played an important role from the 17th century until the beginning of the 20th century (Brooks, 1993, p. 188). They knew how to take advantage of the new opportunities opened up by the Atlantic trade to extend their economic and political power. Often married with colonial agents, the women traders benefited, in the development of their economic activities, from their marginal situation, which allowed them to bypass patriarchal gender relations, having the right to market, to enter into contracts and manage their businesses without the explicit authorization of the husband. They acquired wealth and prestige through trade and even challenged the Portuguese authorities.¹² However, the powerful *nharas* constituted a peculiar category of women, living in, and of, the confluence of two civilizations, European and African (Havik, 2004).

While trade had been important in pre-colonial West Africa, as an income earning opportunity for women (Brooks, 1993), long distance trade in gold, ivory, kernel and slaves was generally, even with the exceptions mentioned above, dominated by men.

However, the historical phenomenon of these powerful and prestigious female traders demonstrates that women are social actors capable of taking advantage, in an opportunistic way, of different historical situations. The conception of the sexual division of labor and the reproductive roles of women as wife and mother, - the European family model exported by colonial agents - , was confronted in Guinea-Bissau and neighboring countries with the pre-existence of a productive tradition of African women.

The colonial administration compelled men to enter the labor market, namely through the introduction of taxes (hut tax), and women to limit their activities to the domestic sphere and to the roles of sister, wife, and mother, subordinated to the male breadwinner. Family authority within the framework profiled by colonial authorities was masculine and informed discriminatory practices against women, such as, for example, the application of the "hut tax", on the male "head of the family". Conferring the status of head of household exclusively to adult men, the status of women deteriorated during colonialism.

Nevertheless, female economic activities did not decrease during colonialism, as subsistence agriculture started to fall mainly on women who also engaged in other income-generating activities, in order to meet the new demands of an increasingly monetized society. Among the economic activities in which women engaged, the trade in agricultural products is one of the most widespread, since the fact that they controlled agriculture production was an important advantage for women in controlling the food market.

¹² It is reported that Bibiana Vaz, a Portuguese-African woman who ran an extensive commercial network between Gambia and Sierra Leone, between 1670 and 1680, held Cacheu's Portuguese commander captive for fourteen months (Havik, 2004, p. 164).

Discrimination of women in the formal and informal labor market

*Women have inferior occupational and commercial status in the formal as well as in the informal labor market; labor rights are rarely respected and women often work without social protection, and, generally, subordinated to men. Social protection mechanisms so far exist only for civil servants of the public administration in Guinea-Bissau. There is no social safety net to protect against social marginalization, extreme poverty and unemployment. **The country still lacks a modernized system of social protection which would encompass all employers, cover women and men equally, including of the informal market.***

The *General Labor Law of 1986 (GLL) guarantees equal work opportunities and equal pay for women and men*. Some restrictions concern dangerous and heavy work, night work and workplaces which are considered harmful to the reproductive health of women. The Public Administration Regulations' (1994) follow the General Labor Law in all key aspects on gender equality, including legal provisions on the protection of pregnant women, maternity leave, breastfeeding, etc.

On the other hand, these labor laws do not promote any specific mechanism that favor women's participation in decision-making bodies or women's recruitment and career development that could serve as instruments to reduce disparities between men and women.

Although women are legally protected against certain occupational hazards (like men), few women are aware of their rights under this law. Thus, the law is not used to protect female workers from discrimination or as a means of demanding better working conditions, for example, improved sanitary conditions. A specific challenge is the definition of appropriate measures to prevent and punish sexual harassment at the workplace.

Maternal / paternal / parental, paid and unpaid leave for extended periods of child education have to be introduced into the GLL and adapted according to international standards, including as well public support for the care and education of young children and nurseries integrated in the company. Women's return after maternity to equal work (in terms of quality and payment) are not fully guaranteed, there are no regulations for mothers' part-time work or extended periods for educational objectives (with/ without remuneration) without losing the right in the work contract.

To make the GGL more gender sensitive, i.e. to ensure that it really reflects the needs and conditions of women, either as employees or as women and mothers, it needs a more positive language and dissemination / application to gender.¹³

No recognition and regulation of informal work of women

There are no laws in place to recognize and regulate rights and protection of women engaged in informal and domestic work, including unpaid domestic care work (for the elderly, sick household members and children). In this sense, the overwhelming majority Guinean women work without any legal basis and protection of their labor rights and social security. Men working in the informal sector are also not covered by social protection.

The percentage of women in the informal non-agrarian sector is higher than that of men and characterized by major gender imbalances. As a general rule, women receive less remuneration than men for jobs of similar value and qualification. A housemaid earns less than a simple / auxiliary worker at a construction site, although their jobs are comparable in terms of needed qualification, hardness of work etc. Sectors dominated by women with requirements and skills comparable to male workers

¹³ The draft of the new General Labor Law (Ministry of Public Service, Work and State Modernization, 2012) has been elaborated eight years ago, its approval is pending in ANP; contains improvement on gender and children's work and work conditions.

receive lower wages. This highlights the underestimation of women as work force compared to men and points to the entrenched discrimination of gender in the labor market (Ulrichs, 2016, p. 13; ERI-ESI, 2019, data on unequal pay in Gender Inequality Matrix).

Women remain concentrated in "invisible" areas of informal work: they compose the vast majority of workers or self-employed persons at home; street vendors, domestic servants in the urban environment and all women who do unpaid work in the family sphere / domestic area. Women are almost absent from the other large areas of the informal non-agrarian sector, such as informal civil construction work, transport activities, larger commercial establishments and far distance and regional trade (Ulrichs, 2016).

Women's participation in the labor market is determined by social norms that identify them as the main caregiver of the home and family. This explains the high levels of informality and concentration on low quality jobs. The lack of social protection, including against accidents at work and health care protection, means that small shocks in health can have drastic economic consequences for informal workers, considering the high expenses (out of pocket money) with health in Guinea-Bissau and the gender specific health care needs.

Vulnerabilities related to pregnancy and maternity, the risk of losing employment or receiving lower pay during or after pregnancy force women, in many cases, to return prematurely to work, which puts at risk the own health and that of their children. For this reason, women need specialized provision of social protection (Ulrichs, 2016, p. 16).

On the other hand, the weakness or absence of workers' organizations (unions) in the informal sector, limits their collective negotiating potential and ability to hold employees and the government accountable for the application and amplification of legislation and social protection.

There is an urgent need for the regulation of the informal sector in Guinea-Bissau that integrates the principle of equal pay for work of equal value of work, and gender positive language to emphasize the full recognition and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work in the legislation. Very pertinent is also the integration of social protection strategies for the vast informal work sector.

ILO Convention No. 189 on domestic workers came into force in 2011. Until now, this convention has been ratified only by South Africa, Guinea-Conakry and Madagascar on the African continent. The convention contains important legislation regarding all labor and human rights of domestic workers, who are primarily women and girls, often with migrant status. The adoption of **ILO Convention No. 190** (2019) recognizes the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.

The "**Social Protection Framework Law**", Law 4/2007, defines the conditions for mandatory protection of male and female workers in the formal market. It does not contain specific protection rights beyond maternity leave or other positive gender considerations. Nor does it provide social protection regulations for the informal labor market; recognizing only the figure of the self-employed person whose contributions do not automatically cover all items (sickness, accident, old age, maternity etc.) but are conditioned.

Even if expanded to integrate the informal sector, the social security coverage rate for informal and self-employed workers would probably remain very low because of its high cost and lack of understanding about the system. Its advantages have to be well explained and disseminated. The creation of more flexible social protection schemes that adjust to the needs of women in informal work requires careful assessment of obstacles they face in accessing social protection (Ulrichs, 2016).¹⁴ Any

¹⁴ The pension scheme in Guinea-Bissau consists of three branches: i) a mandatory contribution scheme for civil servants; ii) a non-contributory regime for former combatants; and iii) a contributory regime covering workers from private and public companies. Coverage is very low: only 2.8% of workers participate in contributory schemes. Only 3.9% of the elderly (over 60) receive a pension. However, total

formal social protection should consider the possibility of voluntary contributions. These could help to respond to a series of challenges: access of these populations to health treatments, better quality jobs and more effective support in the face of shocks.

Significant gender disparities in land access and land tenure

Land in Guinea-Bissau, as elsewhere on the African continent, is a crucial and critical asset, with economic, social and cultural functions. 75-80% of the population are earning their living directly from agricultural activities. Land is central to combating poverty, hunger and deprivation, as it provides families in rural communities with the means of subsistence and agricultural production for sale. Studies have shown that women who have secure access, control and / or ownership over land are able to manage their lives better and are less vulnerable (WB 2018, Doss et al, 2015, 2017).

Women's right to land is buried in a complex cultural web of norms that throughout the customary systems existing in Guinea-Bissau deny them outright ownership. Especially in the rural areas, women are confined to economic insecurity and dependency. The percentage of women landholders across the ECOWAS region is very small, for example, in Senegal 10%, in Mali 5%, for Guinea-Bissau exact figures are not available but are similar (FAO, 2013, "Gender and Land Rights database").

Women's access to land, land property and inheritance are generally restricted by state laws, obsolete discriminatory articles of the Civil Code and customary provisions of ethnic groups that exist in parallel and normally regulate land distribution and rights of use land for agricultural purposes in rural areas. Women are rarely landowners, despite being responsible for most agricultural work. This gender bias holds true also for other assets and properties in general (Codigo Civil, No 1674-1678 etc.).

Access to land and land ownership (land tenure) is a key indicator for equality because it allows for expansion, is an asset in the event of divorce and provides a location or asset to run business, as well as it functions as collateral for credits etc. for the women. Temporary access and user rights to agricultural land are regulated for women under customary law (Embalo 2010; Barros/Semedo 2013).

Safe land tenure rights have a strong effect on women by reducing dependence from male partners and relatives. Thus, economic and decision-making power in household management can increase, including women's opportunities to access to agricultural extension services and credits. The confidence gained can encourage women - small subsistence farmers - to participate in agricultural investments and to join producer organizations (FAO 2016).

Women rarely have direct land tenure rights. Among the Pepel group less than 20% have been donated land by their fathers and grandfathers; none of the Fula women of the same survey had own land property. More than 50% work on the land of their husbands; land borrowing (*kibini*) is another common practice for temporary accessing agricultural land (Embalo, 2010, pp. 78-80).

The project of a new "Lei de Terra" (Land Law) had been on the hold since 1998. The reviewed law and further regulations have been promulgated only in 2018. According to the new version of the land law, women have the same and equal property rights as men; they can possess land based on a state concession; community members also can now hold agricultural land as individual property under customary law. The implementation of the new Land Law will take some time and may create further economic inequalities as the land register process is quite complicated and costly.¹⁵

expenditure on the three schemes were of the order of 1.6% of GDP in 2015. (Demographic pressure in the public sector will oblige the State to reform the system in the medium term. In the next fifteen years, more than 13,000 people in the civil service will exceed the statutory retirement age, i.e. double the number of current beneficiaries. (Guinea-Bissau 2017, www.africaneconomicoutlook.org, p. 13.).

¹⁵ Gender disparities in land access remain significant in most states of the ECOWAS region, regardless of their level of development.

However, the new Land Law has introduced legal measures to help communities and all individuals - men and women - to gain the legal right to land ownership without a mandatory written proof of the actual use of the land. The law thus gives women full tenure rights and control over land, that is, agricultural land, the most important natural resources in Guinea-Bissau's subsistence economy.¹⁶

The implementation of the Land Law in Guinea-Bissau is essential to guarantee food security and income of the population that depends directly on the resources from the land, especially the most vulnerable strata, women and young people (<https://www.radiojovem.info/securanca-alimentar-na-guine-bissau-depende-aplicacao-dalei-of-land-government/>).

The regulation of the Land Law embodies the idea that communities have access to land and can give economic utility to the land, stimulating investment and creating value market share for it. At the same time, the customary land regime is integrated into national law, together with the institutions that represent the customary law (see Preamble and article 2 of the Land Law).

This new legislation could create tension that affects gender relations as it recognizes the equality of land ownership rights for women and men and to this extent is based on the assumption of gender equality while it integrates at the same time customary patriarchal systems of land ownership into state legislation. In the customary regulations, rights and duties are distributed differently, based on gender differentiation and discrimination of women.

This tension creates uncertainties regarding the correct interpretation and application of the state law, and results in insecure ownership conditions for woman. While the Land Law does not insist on formal registration of private land ownership on the basis of customary regime, the discriminatory practice of various ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau regarding land to the disadvantage of women, including on the inheritance of property, can continue under the auspice of the new legislation.

The coexistence of several normative systems is especially challenging for the creation of an integrated, coherent and equitable system of protection of land rights.

The “Regulations of the Land Law” foresee the establishment of land commissions at national, regional and local level that are responsible for the prevention and mediation of conflicts related to private land use rights (Art. 14). Of the 29 representatives 6 must be women, that is, representatives of the IMC, PPM, RNMT, AMAE, Association of Women Lawyers, National Forum of Women Rural; other institutions can still be represented by women. This is a clear attempt to establish a certain balance in the sphere of decision-making in terms of gender with mandatory opposite sex between the posts of president and executive secretary of the commissions. The same alternation mechanism is also applicable at regional and local level, including representations of at least 25% women in the committees. This representation and female influence will certainly help to assure a more equal distribution of agricultural lands.

¹⁶ Article 4 (On Land Use) guarantees all citizens “the right to private land use, without discrimination of sex, social origin or origin within the territory”(4.1). Private use rights will be conferred through customary use or by concession (4.3). Article 6.4 reinforces local land management according to customs: “The Local communities exercise management powers according to their respective customs and practices, throughout the area located within its historical and territorial limits”(...). Private use rights land in the customary regime are of a permanent nature (Article 16.2) and transmissible by hereditary succession (Article 18.3).

The Land Law, in providing formal procedures for obtaining land titles and also strengthening traditional informal land distribution mechanisms, shows the intention to cooperation of the legislator (state) with local institutions, to take advantage of their legitimacy on the ground and gradually put local institutions under the aegis of state law. Such approach has the advantage of promoting better coherence and continuity between formal and informal legal systems (FAO 2016, p.33).

Feminization of Poverty – cycle of gender inequality

Although both women and men suffer from the effects of poverty, the **feminization of poverty in Guinea-Bissau is highly visible**. Men control whatever scarce resources are available and women's income-producing labor becomes more arduous and less productive. Women's gender specific roles are also more burdensome under poverty: domestic work, which keeps women from income-producing activities and girls from school. Women's reproductive roles, for which poverty increases risks of malnutrition, illness and maternal mortality. Young girls are also at greater risk of early/forced marriage to relieve family economic burdens.

Rural poverty and female poverty have increased in recent years due to chronic instability and general decline in the economy, including poor cashew harvests and low prices. The quality of life of the most vulnerable segments of the population, especially women and young people, is dependent almost entirely on the cashew export, providing 90% or more of exports. Poor harvests such as occurred in 2012, 2013 and/or low producer prices, as happened in 2016, 2018 and 2020, have a negative impact on rural poverty and particularly female poverty, plunging significant part of the population into a state of under-nutrition. Especially the most vulnerable - women and children in the northern and eastern regions – are targeted (African Development Bank: 2015-2019 Strategy, p. 5).

In recent times, the **economic role and responsibilities of women have increased at the productive level, without a parallel decrease in domestic obligations**. This is due to the scarcity of services and social infrastructures; the emigration of men who often definitely leave their home (de facto separate), once abroad; the early widowhood of women and the absence of traditional mechanisms of social regulation. Thus, women end up being responsible for most of the family's life obligations, cooking and domestic work, with no real counterpart in terms of access and management of household items, but increasingly contributing to family income. They generally resort to informal low-income work as a farmer, small trader (*bideira*) and domestic worker (PNIEG, 2012).

Exacerbation of income and gender inequality through time consuming resource collection of biomass (solid fuel) and water

The combined burden of household chores and agricultural work is particularly severe. According to the PNIEG, women are responsible for the care of the home and family and 89% of households are in precarious conditions. 98.2% (rural) and 92.3% (urban) cook with firewood or charcoal, 90.3% obtain water from external sources and 65% use latrines in precarious conditions (PNIEG 2012, 2017, MICS 6, 2020). Resource collection tasks are traditionally gendered in West Africa.

Without access to modern energy services, women and girls spend most of their day performing basic subsistence tasks. It is almost exclusively women and children who have to collect *lenha* (wood for cooking) in the rural areas of Guinea-Bissau.¹⁷ It is estimated that the time spent for wood collection varies between 2 to 3 hours per woman per day in Guinea-Bissau (Embalo, 2018, GAP/GEF). Men participate in this task only with the objective to sell the wood at local markets. Deforestation in Guinea-Bissau obligates women to overcome increasing distances from their home village to collect firewood and “illegal cutting” of wood frequently occurs (in protected areas and beyond) because the need for *lenha* is increasing every day with population growth.

Beside the time-consuming and physically draining tasks of collecting biomass fuels, women and girls are exposing themselves to the grievous health effects of cooking with biomass energy which is

¹⁷ Data from 13 countries showed that girls in sub-Saharan African homes with polluting cook stoves spend about 18 hours a week collecting fuel or water, while boys spend 15 hours. In homes mainly using cleaner stoves and fuels, girls spend only 5 hours a week collecting fuel or water, and boys just 2 hours (ECREEE, 2015, p.41ff).¹⁷

particularly detrimental to the respiratory system. Solid fuel use constraints women from accessing decent wage employment, educational opportunities and livelihood enhancing options. Candles and LCD torch lamps are used at night for lighting by the majority of the population who have no access to central electricity supply or independent minigrid solutions (ILAP II, 2014). With adequate management of firewood and improved cook stoves, this time window for *lenha* collection could be reduced to only 2 or 3 hours per week, while significantly reducing the firewood and toxic smoke due to more energy efficiency (more than 50%). All these energy related gaps/ constraints limit women's options for economic, social and political interaction outside the household (UNIDO-UN-Women, 2016).

Water collection is the most gendered task, with women, but also children, most involved in its collection. 66.8 % of households in Guinea-Bissau do not have on-site drinking water, and women over 15 years old typically spend at least 30 minutes per day to get water, according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 6, 2020). Only 18% of the population has improved sanitation facilities for human waste; in rural areas this number is as low as 3%.

Women are active agents in biomass management: they are the primary household cooks and they participate in many biomass-intensive processing sectors at the subsistence and income generating level (charcoal production, fish smoking, street restaurants). ***As such women can and will play a key role in shifting the country onto a cleaner development pathway.***

Gender biased labor in agriculture and fisheries

Gender-specific cultural norms define the roles that women and men play in the management of rural and natural resources. Women in Sub-Saharan Africa have the highest average rates of participation in the agricultural labor force in the world. As mentioned above, cultural norms in the region encourage women to be economically self-sufficient and traditionally have given women substantial responsibility for agricultural production for themselves. They produce up to 80% of basic foodstuffs for home consumption and sale. This is also the case in Guinea-Bissau where women farm on their own fields (for which they have user rights, not land tenure rights) and sell their own agricultural products; normally to invest in the family household (food, school, medicine, and other purchases).

In Guinea-Bissau, cashew nuts are grown exclusively for export, while rice, millet, cassava, vegetables and fruits (fresh and dried) are grown for own consumption and sale (of surpluses) at the national market. Despite the importance of agriculture for the national economy and livelihood of most people, small-scale farmers - especially women – lack adequate equipment and tools, sufficient access to clean water, irrigation and rural (secondary) roads to facilitate the transport of local products to local/regional markets. Since men control decisions about land and resources and often attribute them first to their own work, women farmers are especially disadvantaged (Gender Profile, 2015).

Women in Guinea-Bissau - as is usual within the West African region - are more responsible for family food production and preparation, while men are more involved in market-oriented production. Gender-differentiated work in agriculture, fishing, and household subsistence economy is the rule in Guinea-Bissau.

Roles in agriculture work are clearly gendered with men performing much of the land clearing while women primarily process crops, transport them, hoe and weed (ECREEE, 2015, pp. 38-39). Women's roles are concentrated at the low end of the value chain. For example, the farming and harvesting of cashew nuts is done largely by women (peak season March to May), whereas the land of the cashew orchards is owned by husbands or fathers. The nuts are sold by male farmers to a trader, exporter or processor (also male), or stored for later sale or exchange for family income and consumption items as decided by men (Gender Profile 2015). Women also work in drying, peeling and sorting nuts. The

cashew stem or fruit ("apple") is only processed on a very small scale, almost entirely by women. Continuous dependence on cashew monoculture brings high economic and food risks.

Some crops in West Africa are culturally determined to be "male" or "female," others are logically difficult for women to grow because of the expensive inputs needed, particularly irrigation, seeds, and fertilizer, or larger fields. Peanuts and millet, for example, in the east of Guinea-Bissau are only cultivated by men (Embaló, 2010).

Rice, the staple base of household consumption, is farmed by both women and men. Among most ethnic groups clear labor division is the rule. Rice farming is labor intensive and most work burden lays on women's shoulders. In rice cultivation, men dig the fields, while the women sow the seedlings and do most of the harvest. They are also the ones who must peel the rice, usually done entirely by hand. Families have converted fields to the low labor-intensive cashew crop, trading cashews for rice through a bartering system rather than producing it, with the result that families often do not have enough rice throughout the year. The continued reliance on mono-culture cashew crop bears high economic and food risks.

Horticulture (vegetables) is a smaller sector of Guinean agriculture, directed to subsistence production and small business at the regional markets. It is done exclusively by women with an overall weak level of organization and lack of marketing strategies. *Badjiki* (roselle leaves), *djagatu* (African eggplant), *kandja* (okra), *malagueta* (chilli) and *sukulbembe* (West African pepper) – as well as palm oil and groundnuts – are used to prepare the sauces for Guinean *bianda* (rice meal). A few larger production units exist with some NGO projects and associations. This activity could significantly support the economic empowerment of rural women, if technical and financial means, irrigation by solar pump systems, storage by cooling and marketing strategies were improved.

Trade with local agricultural and forest products, such as *yam/cassava*, palm oil, fruits (orange, lemon, banana, mango, ananas), dried fruits from the forest, such as Guinea gumvine (*fole*), baobab fruit (*kabasera*), néré (*faroba*) and velvet tamarind (*veludo*) and their transformation at the local, national and regional level are practiced by women and men. The sector is underdeveloped due to dominance of commercialists from neighboring countries and lack of appropriate technical equipment, primarily electric oil pressing and conservation through electric cooling systems (AMAE, Interview).

While women's work is essential for agricultural production, it is also significant in artisanal production, whether of forest and agricultural products, or of river and marine resources and even minerals. The gender division of artisanal work takes place essentially on the basis of the type of product to be processed, and not according to the different tasks of its processing (Borges, 2000, p. 289 ff.).

With regard to agricultural and forestry products, women are responsible for husking rice, maize and sorghum, threshing maize and beans, making palm oils, peanut oil and paste, drying fruits, and processing fabrics, such as spinning, dyeing and embroidery. On the other hand, weaving is essentially a male activity.

Marine products are also processed by women, such as drying and smoking of fish, mollusks and crustaceans. With regard to mineral products, it is women who extract and manufacture salt and make soap.

This gender division of labor according to products has some advantage for women, insofar as the processing of certain products allows them, downstream, also to ensure the commercialization of these products. Women are often the producers of the goods that they later trade, as in the case of rice and vegetables. This aspect of the gender division of labor which imposes restrictions on the entry of men, is used strategically by women to ensure control and profits from the sale of certain goods (Borges, 2000, p. 289 ff.).

Fishing and gender

Guinea-Bissau has highly productive fishing waters, and fish and other seafood are a second principal export good and an important local protein resource. Fishing is the second leading occupation after agriculture, although political instability over the last years increased illegal fishing (by international companies and neighbors) as well as corruption, and as consequence resulted in the diminishing of fishing activities by the population.

Besides mangrove¹⁸, the coastal ecosystem offers, at low tide, a favorable soil where shrimps, clams - *combé*, *lingron* - and crustaceans - *cacri*, crabs -, oysters and some fish species are collected. It is here that most artisan fish capture is done.

Most of the moranças (households) of the coastal area practice subsistence fishing, only the surpluses are marketed.

They use traditional means, different types of traps, hand nets or "baskets". Women fish mainly in mangrove areas, in river estuaries and their tributaries and lakes, in *bolanhas* and in slippery lands between two low tides. Women are present at all stages of the fish catching process and have local knowledge essential to the sustainability of this ecosystem on which adult species depend in the open ocean, where men catch adult fish.

This particularity, the presence of women in all phases of fishery, so far has not been properly analyzed; studies are more concentrated in the activities of processing and marketing fish as women activity (Fernandes 2012). The non-recognition of fish capture by women means to undervalue female local know-how.

Bideiras - woman vendor and trader- in the informal sector

Bideiras are women farmers, fish sellers and intermediaries who buy the products from the farmers/ fishers and resell them in the food markets of Bissau, other larger markets in the provincial capitals or export to neighboring countries. "Bideira" refers not only to women farmers or vendors of small foodstuffs in markets, but to women who search for or make life ("fasi bida" in creolo), i.e. gain some independent income for their household and improve their living conditions.

There even exists an export chain to the large Guinean community in Lisbon, organized completely through informal channels on the basis of traditional African market exchange structures by these *Bideiras*. Women's small but regular income from farming, trading and fishing is mainly invested in basic supplies for children and to help each other and the elder generation (mothers), following practices of female solidarity commonly found in West Africa (Abranches, 2013).

Two groups, one male and one female, have (re)gained visibility in small-scale trade activities in Guinea-Bissau, both of them having historical skills in trade. These are the locally designated *djilas*, i.e. male itinerant traders usually belonging to Eastern ethnic groups (Fula, Mandinga, etc), and the *bideiras*, referring to female traders, a large share of whom belong to coastal ethnic groups , i.e. the Pepel, Mancanha, Manjaco and insular Bijagos groups. Long distance, medium scale and cross-border trade is an activity where Fula and Mandinga men predominate. The marketing of vegetables is dominated by the Mancanha women, that of rice by Balanta women and that of fish by Pepel women etc. (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, p. 76)

¹⁸ The coastal ecosystem of Guinea-Bissau is covered by Mangrove which is the origin of an alimentary chain that reveals all the vulnerability of this system. Rich zooplankton that emerges there feeds young shrimps, crabs, oysters and some fish, before they become adults and move into high sea. In turn fish predators, birds and men feed from these species.

Bideiras and *Djilas* are part of a marketing system, in which traders are linked by shifting and flexible ties into a decentralized and unbounded network that connects markets located in different areas. These include *lumos*, i.e. weekly rotating markets and cross-border trade. Traders keep a diversified portfolio of products that they carry in small quantities, allowing for a rapid turnover and for rapidly changing routes, markets and products.

Different ethnic or religious groups and different genders tend to perform certain types of trading activities and control certain sectors of the economy. Although a correlation between ethnic identity, gender and economic activities can be noted, this relationship is in most cases not normative or exclusive. Ethnic/ religious identity are not necessary requirements for the initiation and progression of different activities. Gender, on the other hand, seems to be a constraint to the entry and expansion of commercial activities, referring women to smaller scale operations, and predominantly dealing with food products. However, the social differences translated by these identities/conditions can be advantageous in some cases and limiting in others for the performance of individual economic activities (Borges, 2000).

From the 1980s (economic liberalization, structural adjustment reforms), many women in Guinea-Bissau began to trade, some of them on a larger scale, most of them in small businesses. Despite cultural constraints, economic circumstances have boosted women's access to the labor market. The fundamental contribution of women to the economy is correlated to the job crisis in the formal sector which resulted in decrease of the income of men.

Bideiras operate informally and their activity is largely exempt from tax (but paying something for transport to the traffic police and fees for the market stall). These contemporary merchant women face several hierarchical hurdles, such as social inequality based on the homogeneity of the formal markets and political rules mainly inherited from colonial and patriarchal norms. *Bideiras* transcend these structures by building new forms of everyday exchange. They take advantage of the decentralization and multi-dimensionality of their practices of daily entrepreneurship (Lundy et. al, 2016).

Women work in fish and mollusks transport and dominate the fish selling and commerce. Fishing is an important source of economic activity for women who work conserving, cleaning and selling fish at the markets, particularly in Bissau. The commercialization of fresh or frozen fish, mainly oriented to urban markets, is dominated by women wholesalers who gather together from small producers the goods that they may or may not process. Different types of fish origin, from the Islands, near Bissau, frozen, all are commercialized by *bideiras*. The group of fish traders brings together women from various religious denominations and is multi-ethnic, even if the most represented ethnic group are the Bijagos (island inhabitants) and the Pepel group whose traditional settling territories are in Bissau and in the nearby Biombo region.

Among the *Bideiras*, there is a hierarchy expressed in the different scales of commerce, sources of supply and access to sales' sites. Women with higher status, with more years of activity in the retail sale of fish, work with frozen fish and sell more than two hundred kilograms of fish a day. Those with lower status, without access to specific covered places for selling fish in the markets, buy twenty to forty kilograms of fish daily, which are transported to the market in rental cars. Even smaller women retailers can sell five to fifteen kilograms of fish from artisanal fishing on market access roads or on the streets. Finally, other women sell fish from their own catch in the "mangrove", very small and cheap fish, and market it sporadically (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, p.158).

According to the studies of Borges (2000), Achinger (1992), Lourenço-Lindell (2002) the maintenance of the family largely lays on women's shoulders for different reasons: because the practice of marriage with a much older man causes a large number of widows; furthermore due to unemployment or the husband's insufficient salary, to ensure the domestic economy, and also due to the fact that women

are divorced, are abandoned by their husbands or fathers of their children etc. and are single (Borges, 2000, pp. 351-360).

The Criolo saying "men give rice and women the accompanying ingredients" ("matcho pati bianda ku mindjer pati mafe"), reflects the ideal conception of gender roles in the domestic economy. But this is no longer the current daily practice. Culturally, it is up to the woman to collect the ingredients of the *mafe* (vegetables, oil, fruit or fish) that are served with the *bianda* – rice or millet which are the food base (Achinger 1992: 69).

Intervening at different levels and stages of the marketing chain, women who dedicate themselves to trading (mainly of food) obtain very unequal incomes, depending on the functions they fulfill in the marketing chain and the profit margins allowed by the various traded goods and access to markets.

Bissau is characterized by a mushrooming of Informal market places; particularly those of spontaneous variety are the ones offering the low quality, cheap and portioned goods that are in greatest demand. Small-scale trade in the city of Bissau shows signs of the gender-ethnic specialization found at the national level - although women of Eastern groups and the younger male generation of coastal groups also participate. With the migration of young men in large numbers from the Eastern provinces, since the economic liberalization, they have become numerous in urban trade activities, principally in the sale of imported foodstuffs and rice. In Bissau, three areas can be distinguished - urban, suburban and rural - where market prices are different and therefore profits are different.

Market studies of the more established market region of Bandim/Caracol (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002) identified that the market women mostly belong to the coastal groups who are more frequently engaged in the sale of local products. Many businesses operate at a survivalist level. The vast majority are small (usually one-person) and low-income enterprises. Over 70% of the interviewed sellers declared that they did not manage to keep any savings. In addition, 38% of the sellers estimated that they spent all or virtually all of their income on food and a further 22% more than half. This suggests the importance of these activities for the food security of the households involved. Enterprises trading vegetables, fruits, locally produced alcoholic drinks (cashew wine), fish and groundnuts are the most common in the Bandim market (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, p. 102ff.). Many local products are seasonal so that sellers are often compelled to resort to other types of goods or income activities when these are out of season. So, they follow multiple modes of livelihood strategies.

Locally produced rice, the main staple of local food, is commercialized in the dry season after being processed by women who may also be its producers. We find mainly Balanta women dedicated to the production, processing and commercialization of this rice, which is even exported through the *lumos* (itinerant markets in border areas) to Senegal and Guinea-Conakry. Since, in Bissau, local rice, being more expensive than imported rice, is not competitive, women seek rural markets where they obtain the greatest profit for their sale.

Mancanha women control the trade and production of vegetables intended to supply urban markets. The predominance of Mancanha women in the production and commercialization of vegetables is related to historical circumstances, their early migration to the outskirts of Bissau where they started garden agriculture on rice fields in the vacant dry period. Before the land in Bissau's green belt became a scarce asset, Mancanha women had already established the right to use these fields outside the growing season. Thus, they managed to secure an area for the practice of horticulture close to urban markets, which constitutes a competitive advantage as it allows to reduce transport expenses and other marketing costs.¹⁹

¹⁹ Another reason for the specialization of Mancanhas women in horticulture has to do with the contact they maintained to the Cassamance area where they lived (fleeing the colonial war) and came in contact with more developed horticultural techniques. Their entry into the horticulture trade before other groups, allowed them to benefit from well-established commercial relationships with suppliers. Since

Socio-economic networks and livelihood strategies of women in the informal sector

Individual networks

Both kin and market-based networks are used by *bideiras* for sustaining consumption and income strategies. Kin, also in the broader sense, the extended family and beyond, is a very important source of assistance, followed by networks built upon friendship, neighborhood and business interests.

Friendship and/or business relations among two *bideiras*, usually neighbors, seems to be a common model of socio-economic networking. Two women help each other daily in the running of their businesses, support each other when one experiences a temporary set-back and, if neighbours, they even exchange help in household work (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, p. 175).

These are usually long-term friendships in which partners do not keep track of whose turn it is to help who, and a temporary exhaustion of resources usually does not jeopardize the exchange relationship. They usually involve a good deal of altruism, trust and affection. This type of partnership of a mutual and egalitarian nature usually occurs between social equals in the sense that they are often people with similar economic activities and material conditions (*ibid.*). Occupying a similar niche in the urban economy, these small networks are likely to be affected by the same shocks and the material assets at their disposal to cope with these shocks are identically low. Such seemingly strong relationships occasionally reach a point where both have exhausted their resources (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, p. 180).

In times of economic crisis, women often feel ashamed and avoid or cease seeking help from relatives, friends or neighbors who are as impoverished as they are. Social ties of assistance are increasingly being put to the test under ongoing conditions of economic austerity in Guinea-Bissau (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002, pp. 179-180). Balanced relations can turn into relations of dependency, and we can note the tendency to instrumentalist social ties by which people increasingly act on the basis of a careful calculation of returns.

In sum, social resources are not something that poor women necessarily have or that they can arrange, including at the broader lineage and village (of origin) level, expecting assistance by these traditional channels (*ibid.* p. 183).

Collective networks

Today's strong female associative practices in West Africa partially go back to pre-colonial forms of women's organizations. They also derive from European models brought in by colonial administration and missionaries. Women remain linked to the cultural model of social solidarity and mutuality; the reference to the traditional model favors and guarantees trust and prompts women to organize themselves, sharing resources and pursuing their economic and social interests collectively.

These associative practices are related to gender asymmetries of the pre-colonial lineage system where men dominated power structures and women were excluded from power and public authority. Women established voluntary and egalitarian associations, supported by the solidarity of individual and collective positions and interests. As hierarchies were based on seniority and gender, the female associations corresponded to the organizational forms of marginalized women outside the domestic space and provided the reasons, means and opportunities for women's autonomy and individualization. Women's associative activities, today as in the past, serve concrete purposes and constitute collective platforms to achieve individual goals (Moreira, 2017 p. 281; Borges, 2000, pp. 436-438).

the Mancanha women rely on the work of family members, especially sisters and nieces, they are being trained in agricultural and commercial techniques from an early age, contributing to the continued predominance of Mancanha in this sector of activity.

Furthermore, women are less constrained by the hierarchies of kinship structures, since on the one hand, they live among the husband's relatives, and on the other, their power and access to resources within their own family is limited (Moreira, 2017, p.281). Strong female participation in associations in Guinea-Bissau today can be interpreted as a strategy for women to recover an associative tradition with the aim to establish or maintain social relationships, that can be used and mobilized directly and are transformed into durable obligations through, *inter alia*, the exchange of money, work or time.

Local classification of these groups, based on the logic of their functioning, distinguish between mutual groupings with essentially financial purposes, of individual savings, - the *abotas* - and those that pursue essentially user-friendly and mutual-help purposes, the *mandjundaades* (Borges, 2000, p. 283).

Abota-System - Rotating savings groups

Rotating savings groups – *abotas* - are popular in the market place and beyond; this credit system exists in various African countries, in the region and beyond. The *abota*-group normally comprises of a variable and unstable number of members, recruited from individual financial savings interests, based on relationships of mutual trust, neighborhood and mainly on work relations. Although the number of participants in an *abota*-group is unstable, it is never very high. The purpose of the savings made is exclusively individual and this is the only objective of an *abota*- group.

The *abota*-groups can close their activity after one cycle of savings / credit, or start a new cycle, with the same participants or with new ones. The sums that are given to each of the participants depend on the amount fixed at the beginning, multiplied by the number of people involved.

In Bissau, this informal “para-banking system” is very common. It has been shown that in Guinea-Bissau up to 80%- 85% of economic enterprises (production and trade) are initially financed with accumulated capital through the *abota*-system (Duarte & Gomes, 1996: 110; ERI-ESI 2019).

In fact, only women with fixed incomes, *bideiras*, have sufficient capital to invest in these savings and credit systems. From the interviews conducted with *abota*-groups in Bissau and women leaders in Gabu (October 2020), it can be concluded that personal relationships between the participants, at collegial or friendship level, and trust are fundamental for the success of the saving groups. The leader is usually an older woman or some person with influence (leadership skills, reputation as a merchant), and it is her responsibility that members regularly deliver. Usually *abota*-groups consist of five to ten women, who know each other from the place of residence or work. The evaluation of a new candidate is based on her social reputation, as an honest individual, and on the conviction of her commitment to the purposes of the *abota*-group.

These informal financing systems enable women to invest in trade but also to bear the costs of schooling for children and health expenses, and even finance improvements in the domestic space. Some women were able to construct their houses with the *abota*- money, their profit from the *bideira* activity that they carry out. Adherence to these groups belongs to the scope of women's empowerment strategies, as the *abota*-groups can promote women's economic independence and the establishment of female social support networks (Moreira, 2017, p. 304). Another determining factor of female participation in the *abota*-groups is the possibility that they constitute, for women, of subtracting savings from family requests, be it the husband's attempt to control his wife's income, or requests for loans and offers from relatives (Moreira, 2017, *ibid.*).

Mandjundaade groups

Mandjundades originally designated the system of age class bound associations which have a fixed statute in the traditional hierarchies of rural society in Guinea-Bissau and have the purpose to organize collective agricultural work. "Age classes continue to be an effective means not only of organizing collective work, but also of forming a common identity, integrated in a representation of a gerontocratic hierarchy" (Carvalho, 1999, pp. 198-199). The main function of these groups is social reproduction and the socialization and integration of young people, in community systems and values.

In the urbanization context of Guinea-Bissau, characterized by intensive migration to Bissau from rural areas over the last 50 years, the concept of Mandjundaade groups has been vested with innovated content to support women's social empowerment strategies.

In the *Mandjundaade* groups different associative forms are mixed together which pursue the following main objectives: savings and collective purchase of consumer goods (for example the purchase of a fabric to sew, in the same pattern, the same clothing to use at parties and ceremonies), individual credit to members, holding of ceremonies and organizing of recreational parties (Borges, 2002, p. 284). The primary purpose is the constitution of a network of social relations of mutual help to respond to the family and broader social duties, such as festivities and meals, family ceremonies, cyclical festivities which represent the highlights of sociability in the popular neighborhoods of Bissau (Borges, 2000, p. 464). This source of economic and recreational assistance is not easily accessible to everyone because membership is based on quotas and the entrance ritual implies relatively high costs.

According to the study of Borges, small scale trade and horticulture contribute with a greater number of participants to the associations. These professions are largely performed by women (horticulture is specifically female), who are in fact the main animators of *Mandjuandas*. In this sense, the population segment with poor resources, but with monetary income, brings together the motivation (need for social support) and the condition (possibility of monetary investment), for associative practices. It is significant that all members are economically active (Borges, 2000, p. 468).

Women make up to 75% of the *Mandjundaade* members in Bissau. As main reasons for their adhesion, they mention sociability (learning to live in groups, learning new ideas, adapt to new cultures, have more friends), and the instrumental exchanges (financial and service contributions) that occur between members. Indeed, the *Mandjundaades* are institutions in which goods and services circulate and they are spaces for reciprocity, exchange, and social solidarity, providing monetary, social and psychological support. Thus, they fulfil some of the traditional functions of the family (Borges, 2000, p. 476).

The prevalence of multi-ethnic associations indicates the imminently urban nature of the Bissau *Mandjundaades* where the cohabitation of different cultures has given rise to specific forms of expression and social solidarity as result of common material conditions and daily experiences. In the multi-ethnic urban environment cross-ethnic groups are formed as a response to the impact of urban policy and specifically the failure of public institutions to resolve the many problems of urban life. The new groups are problem-oriented and peculiarly urban.

As the ceremonial (family) practices are largely supported by women, they can find in the *Mandjundaades* a privileged means of expression in comparison to the subordinate position that Catholic and Muslim cults and practices reserve for women (Delgado & Fernandes, 1989, Borges, 2000, p. 467). Other purposes of the *Mandjundaade*, such as its recreational activities and those developed in the area of social security and credit also attract women's participation or even are their primary interest in this social network (Borges, 2000, p. 467).

The interdependence between economic and associative practices is reinforced by the fact that participation in these associations provides networks of sociability and information, which can

potentially be used to access employment or come across new business opportunities (Borges, 2000, p. 476).

The organizational structure of the *Mandjundaades*, including the positions they use, such as queen, president, secretary etc., reproduce European models, reflecting colonial/post-colonial influence. These structures provide a set of distinctions in status and prestige that is alternative to the traditional hierarchy based on affiliation.

Mandjundaades are more than a symbolic appropriation of a social order that excludes women. The associations as institutions of socialization and adaptation to a changing urban society allow the training of "modern" organizational and bureaucratic skills as well as of more abstract values that inform them, such as democratic structures, shared leadership and modern learning, including gender equal distribution of leadership position (Borges, 2000, 483).

Conclusions

The *abotas* and *Mandjundaades* are socio-economic networks through which local practices seek to fulfill an essential social function: bring about change without disturbing the social order and finding operational solutions for the economic independence of women (Borges, 2000, p. 495, Mathieu, 1996, p. 72).

Mandjundaades and *abotas* establish social relations, different from those that are established by kinship, and allow for greater autonomy of women in relation to the family and the husband. Women's associations bring about new forms of social relations: women withdraw from conventional gender relations based on growing autonomy from the extended family and the husband, who are no longer the only or main sources of solidarity and the exclusive holders of economic resources.

In particular, women are able to devise strategies that are constitutive and constructive of an informal innovative culture, based on individual initiatives, improvisations and malleable strategies, revealing the combativeness of women and their ability to use the means at hand to reinforce their autonomy (Borges, 2000, p. 518).

The commercial activities of women carried out in the urban context tend to reinforce the individualization of the management of personal income. This economic independence allows the trading *bideiras* to circumvent certain social rules to their advantage. Access to economic resources is accompanied by a review of the relationships in the family and society, allowing a new female identity to be circumscribed. *In this sense, the livelihood strategies of the women qualify them as actors and catalysts for social change. Women are no longer considered solely the object of a determined relationship with men, but also as a social actor, economic agent and author of social changes.*

The practices of the *bideiras* reveal their creativity, to use "whatever is at hand" to continuously renegotiate their positions in the hierarchies and asymmetries of power existing in society, finding a way to avoid conflict and develop consensual solutions, ensuring their social mobility through their ability to self-manage and self-organize (Borges, 2000, 519-520).

The challenges of women's entrepreneurship and financing

As we have seen above, female entrepreneurs in Guinea-Bissau are predominantly concentrated in micro-enterprises, maximizing opportunities in the informal sector that is characterized by low levels of capitalization, self-employment, dependence on local resources and raw materials, informal transactions and easy entry into the sector.

The observed high levels of female entrepreneurial activity are mostly motivated by the need for money and survival, and not by the wish of expansion and appropriate business opportunities. There is a clear gender dimension that distinguishes companies of survival from growth-oriented companies.

Although there is a small group of high-performing women entrepreneurs in Bissau who are oriented towards growth, the vast majority are women who struggle to balance their business with unpaid care responsibilities and barely earn enough income to cover domestic needs, let alone reinvestment strategies to enhance their business.

In addition to educational barriers, women entrepreneurs lack access to financial resources. They also suffer from some weaknesses in business competence and management, and not always have possibilities to find and have access to markets and distribution networks.

There is little government and institutional support. The CFE (*Centro de Formalização de Empresas*), the *Center for Business Formalization*, was founded in 2011 in Bissau as a service of the Ministry of Economy. Its objective is to facilitate the creation of companies, in terms of time, processes and costs. Apart from this center, there is no specific public policy to promote entrepreneurship in Guinea-Bissau, let alone female economic activities ("Guinea-Bissau 2017", www.africaneconomicoutlook.org, p. 16).

Even after the introduction of some important measures for investment promotion, such as reducing bureaucracy, new tax legislation and revising the Investment Code (2011), the development of the private sector in recent years remained very limited, while women make about 10% of registered new businesses (Interview CFE, Bocar Embalo).

Gender barriers are not sufficiently highlighted and addressed. Few women appear to be aware of the opportunities for simplifying legal procedures and administrative arrangements for the acquisition of productive assets and registration of a business/enterprise as women. Even in Bissau and other regional urban centers, women face specific constraints, such as difficulties in accessing loans and credits due to conditions imposed by credit institutions and few subsidized credit offers.

Credit lines are often inaccessible because women are not able to meet the eligibility criteria for benefitting thereof, such as sufficient revenue, profit rates, number of employees, company status. Commercial banks operate almost exclusively in urban centers. On the other hand, there is also a severe lack of agricultural credit because low productivity and vulnerability to climate change, along with problems in the commercialization of agricultural products (export of cashew), make this a too risky business for bank institutions.

Recommendations for women's economic empowerment

To support the development and growth of female companies, legislation should be revised to improve access to economic resources, including land ownership, broader property rights, tax regimes and inheritance rights, regulations on trade and encouraging business and innovation activities.

Most importantly, financial constraints faced by women entrepreneurs need to be reduced.

- Create conditions that guarantee women's access to employment and to production factors, namely land, credits and technology in a way that promotes equality of women and equal opportunities (PNIEG);
- Review the General Labor Law to change discriminatory regulations; elaboration of legal regulations that integrate the informal economy and recognize the value of unpaid and domestic work; review of the social protection system and amplification for the informal sector (inspired by ILO Convention 189 and 190);
- Integration of a full gender approach into the "Land Law", supremacy of individual property, development of a legal framework, including provisions of the customary law, which guarantees equal rights *de jure* and *de facto* of women to land tenure and land use/ control over land;
- Creation of a special fund / investment bank for economic empowerment of women, encouraging the formalization of small and medium-sized enterprises run by women. Reinforce, with special and temporary measures, legal regulations for obtaining credits that

take into account the specific conditions of women; regulations to create and promote start-ups, exception from tax payments; facilitate microcredit, cash donations, mobile banking etc.

- Promote the creation and operationalization of institutions and organizations of microfinance, credit and savings, based on cooperation between the state, development banks and commercial banks, particularly in rural areas;
- Employment opportunities for women and youth; with AMAE, (Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs Guinea-Bissau) and the CNMT (National Commission of Working Women of the National Union of Workers (CNMT / UNTG) which are today the most important interface for women with the Government and private entities in the labor sector;
- ***Support the informal social and economic protection networks of bideiras and other women working force (domestic workers, women farmers), such as the abota-system and the mandjundaade, through financial guarantees and capacity building ;***
- ***Foster the active role of women in the informal sector as agents of social change and seller of important economic goods – food, strategies for the stabilization of their business***

2.4 Gender and decision-making

The *weak and unequal participation of women in decision-making spheres*, namely in politics, is a problem that has been widely debated internationally in recent years. This challenge is a priority for a large number of countries, as attested by the engagement of the 193 member states of the United Nations in adopting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (Target 5.5 in particular).

The (formal) right of women to participate in political life is recognized by the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau. But it was not until the end of 2018 that a law was promulgated to guarantee a more equal representation of women in politics. The “Parity Law” (which is actually a “Quote Law”) defines parity at 36% participation of women deputies in the National Parliament (ANP = Assembleia Popular Nacional) and in local – municipal – elections, which are still a future endeavor as so far they never occurred in Guinea-Bissau. The effective participation of women in parliament, an indicator of an open society, embraces the right of all to contribute to the determination of their own future. A strong representation of women in decision-making is essential to ensure that their needs, interests and experiences are captured in the decision-making process. ***With the “Parity Law” as a temporary affirmative measure, in force since the end of 2018, for the first time ever in Guinea-Bissau a legal basis has been created to ensure meaningful representation of women in political decision-making.***

As we will see further down, to achieve true equality and parity between men and women, it would be necessary to go beyond the scope of this "Parity Law", i.e. to continuously promote the participation and integration of women at the highest levels of decision-making. The parity concept should be applied gradually to all sectors of society and be increased to the 50% level.

According to data from the National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity (PNIEG, 2012, 2017; Barros & Semedo, 2013: 22), huge discrepancies exist between men and women in the assumption of public office in Guinea-Bissau: Women MPs in recent times (2008-2017) oscillate between 10.0 – 13.5 %; Male MPs: between 86.5 - 90.0%; the maximum percentage of female ministers was 18.7% vs. 81.3% male ministers. Women Secretaries of State were at 8.3%. Women Judges counted for maximum 28.0% vs. 72.0% male judges. These data reflect the inequality gap in access to education and training, which refers girls and women to situations of greater social fragility, reducing their social opportunities and their inclusion in political affairs.

The low representation of women in public and political life is all the more surprising since women played a major role in the liberation war. Women “supported the PAIGC because they saw the potential for their own liberation” (Urdang, 1979, p. 123). Women were extremely capable of mobilizing the population and, likewise, some were nominated political commissioners or elected to “village committees” and to the People’s Courts. Without the active and massive participation of women, the country’s liberation would not have been achieved. At the party level, women were quickly integrated into leadership positions and a quota system was in place for PAIGC courts and councils, in an effort to ensure that at least two of the five elected members were women (Urdang 1979, p. 275). The PAIGC managed to include women in the political leadership at basic level (in the villages). Amilcar Cabral stated that victory in the revolution would only be truly achieved with the full participation of women (1974).²⁰

Some data indicate that the political representation of women, at the national level, had been better before the millennium, due to the influence of the first generation of female liberation fighters of the Independence Struggle in active politics. For example, Carmen Pereira, one of the most important

²⁰ According to Semedo (2010: 166): “During the national liberation struggle, there was a militancy, an engagement of women in the ranks of the liberating party. Many of them were active behind the scenes: they taught children and adults to read and write; they cooked, washed, ironed and were nurses. They were also on the frontline, they were commanders, political commissars, they ran schools, but they did not stop being ordinary women. These female combatants also invented songs, reinventing themselves; they sang extolling the struggle for independence and freedom.”

women in the liberation war, became the first woman to preside over the National Popular Assembly (1984-1989) (Barros & Semedo, 2013, pp. 42-47).

In the time before the enactment of the Parity Law (1994-2018), women were always underrepresented in decision-making positions, as is evident from the small number of women deputies in parliament and the few women who exercise high functions in political parties (Barros & Semedo, 2013). A closer look at the outcomes of the parliamentary elections since the democratic opening in the early nineties reveals poor representation of women at the highest political level of the country.

15 political parties competed in the 2014 elections, with only one party being led by a woman. There were 15 candidates for the simultaneously held Presidential elections in 2014, with no female candidacy registered after the Supreme Court of Justice rejected the only female pre-candidate (Antonieta Rosa Gomes). Among the 57 PAIGC (leading party) deputies, 13 were women, while the 41 PRS (main opposition party) only registered 1 female deputy. 14 seats equal 13.7% of women representation: the highest rate reached since the first democratic election in 1994 which was characterized by general low women participation with little variation over the time span of 25 years (1994-2019).

Table 2: Distribution of seats in parliament on the basis of gender in the 1994-2014 legislative elections (Source: PNIEG 2017)

Legislature	Elected MPs		Total
	female	Male	
1994-1999	9	91	100
1999-2004	7	95	100
2004-2008	13	87	100
2008-2012	10	90	100
2014-2018	14	88	102

In 2015, men held 69% of government positions and were overrepresented in the main ministries related to women such as Agriculture, Education and Natural Resources, where women occupied only 14%, 26% and 10% of positions, respectively (Gender Profile, 2015, PNIEG).

In the 2014 and 2019 legislative elections, women won 14 seats, corresponding to 13.7%. ***Despite the new Parity Law, female representation did not change, which is explained by two factors: first, lack of time for the implementation (only 3 months); second, the lack of political will of male candidates and parties to increase the number of female candidates.***

The presidential elections of November 24, 2019 were held without any female candidate but some progress could be noted in terms of female voters in the 2019 legislative elections with a record number in women voters and female candidates, although many of them were positioned in secondary positions or as supplement candidates. There was also a significant number of women who ran for small parties that did not make it into parliament.

While it is true that traditional and cultural factors still limit women's political participation compared to men, women started to advocate for women rights and social justice, protection against violence and activities to assure peaceful coexistence in the country in response to the post-conflict crisis that shakes Guinea-Bissau for almost twenty years.

According to Ude Faty, the Focal Point in Guinea Bissau of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), there are several initiatives to implement women's peacebuilding structures such as bringing together active women in civic organizations, training them on conflict mediation in communities, etc. but they are not as operational as needed and not sufficiently disseminated. Representation of women in peace and statebuilding processes is still limited and can be explained by low presence of women in decision-making structures (government and other) both at national and community levels. Women, in fact, do not occupy decision-making position in the traditional structures, such as leaders of Tabanca (Villages), Régulos (traditional local leaders/kings) and religious representation (see: <https://cspps.org/files/2019-05/Blog%20-%20Persistent%20Challenges%20in%20Implementing%20UNSCR1325%20%281%29.pdf>).

Nonetheless, women, either individually or in groups (e.g. in the frame of the Regional Dialogue Spaces (ERD) of Voz de Paz, the CSPPS member organization in Guinea Bissau), use their influence and identity to mediate and resolve conflicts (mainly family related) in their locality. Following the National Implementation Plan of UNSCR 1325 (2010) to build up the women peace and security agenda in Guinea-Bissau, several women organizations consented, with support of United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau (UNIOGBIS), to create the Women's Political Platform (PPM). The Platform mission is to increase the presence of women in decision-making processes and adopt quota laws (40% of women in all structures) as its central priority. UNIOGBIS has trained more than 70 women to become conflicts mediators. To increase the presence of women in political decision-making as a way of correcting social inequalities that could disrupt social peace, and to address challenges of the UNSCR 1325, Voz de Paz with its partner organization Interpeace also organized a national conference in 2017, with support of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, on the obstacles, added-value and solutions towards women's enhanced participation in decision-making (see <https://cspps.org/files/2019-05/Blog%20-%20Persistent%20Challenges%20in%20Implementing%20UNSCR1325%20%281%29.pdf>).

The increasing political commitment, electoral observation and conflict mediation by Guinean women activists have shown first fruits. After the PPM (*Plataforma Politica das Mulheres*), more women networks were founded, such as the "Peace and Security Network of Women in the ECOWAS Region, Guinea-Bissau section" (REMPSECAO-GB), the "Women Mediator Network" (REMUME - *Rede de Mulheres Mediadoras*), and many others. They strive for full political participation of women, engage in national dialogue, peace and stabilization in Guinea-Bissau, including mediation of the Conakry-Agreement (2016) – although women had been excluded (as typically and expected!) from the original negotiation of this important agreement. The "Group of Women Facilitators" (see also chap. 2.9) demonstrated conflict prevention potential, helping to defuse tensions around a political crisis that Guinea-Bissau leaders called "explosive".²¹

Thus, women played a direct role in resolving the political stalemate in Guinea-Bissau that paralyzed the country since 2015. They are often the first to notice rising tensions that can escalate to violence, be it at home or in society. Women mediate and resolve problems quicker and respond first to conflict conditions, restore social peace, do the bulk of care work for families and step in to repair shattered relations and structures.

Various women organizations together with female MPs etc. led an unprecedented mobilization for the approval of the Parity Law, and were essential to the success of the latest legislative and presidential elections in 2019. Albeit facing immense difficulties and resistance from powerful male

²¹ "Women break the ice for peace in Guinea-Bissau", [October 3, 2017](https://www.passblue.com/2017/10/03/women-break-the-ice-for-peace-in-guinea-bissau/) by Adriana Erthal Abdenur, <https://www.passblue.com/2017/10/03/women-break-the-ice-for-peace-in-guinea-bissau/>, retrieved on 10.10.2020.

politicians and masculine dominated institutions, women continue to claim political decision sharing and leadership. Finally, in 2018, they could celebrate a first success with the Parity Law.

Now, the Parity Law needs to be operationalized. It has been criticized in terms of content as it falls short of hopes and expectations related to it and does not correspond to the previously discussed drafts which were supported by UNIOGBIS and elaborated together with the Special Gender Commission of the Parliament and Civil Society's women activists.

The draft proposed a parity quota of 40% and a far-reaching application into the broader realm of society (discussion in Embalo/UNDP, 2020, pp. 96-102). It was envisaged to include in the scope of the Parity Law, in addition to the legislative body, the executive at all levels: central government, regional and local government with all senior leading positions, starting from the minister, secretary of state down to the general directors of the ministries' departments. Candidate lists for the legislative election should be presented on a gender equal basis to ensure that women can occupy places among the top deputy positions and are not relegated to alternate seats. The draft proposed much stricter measures than the Parity Law in prohibiting the taking over of positions by male candidates resulting from incorrect election lists and requesting the necessary compliance with the Parity Law. In case of government members at the regional and local level, the respective minister would be responsible for correcting nominations that do not respect the principles of gender parity.

In addition to mechanisms that favor compliance with the law, including the application of sanctions in case of non-compliance, the preliminary draft underlined the importance of investing in civic and personal training of each citizen. For this reason, political parties should adopt internal measures aimed at institutionalizing and promoting equitable participation between men and women in their organs and in basic or mass structures. In the same sense, the National Popular Assembly (Bissau-Guinean Parliament) should share the responsibility for encouraging the equal participation of different sexes in political life with a part of its own budget (Embalo/UNDP, 2020, pp. 96-102).

The Parity Law is related to other important laws, the Framework Law on Political Parties and the Election Law which both reflect current gender disparities and mirror the state of gender discrimination which is still the norm in politics and public life in Guinea-Bissau. Those laws have to be gender mainstreamed to create the necessary preconditions for effective implementation of the Parity Law.

Entering into the core of political high level decision-making is nearly impossible for women at party, parliament and election levels as efforts to promote gender equality stand in stark contrast to the dominant culture of *matchundaadi* through which men claim near to absolute power and privilege in the governing bodies, the parliament and party leadership. The culture of *matchundaadi*, of dominant masculinities and its violent expressions, runs through parties, Parliament factions, electoral bodies, and, of course, through the judiciary.

Beyond the small group of female politicians and Civil Society activists in Bissau, most women continue to be excluded from or underrepresented in political processes and the engagement for social justice, peace, security and conflict resolution due to discriminatory traditions and laws, social stereotypes and institutional obstacles. Even when they are instrumental in brokering and sustaining peace, their contribution is rarely visible or honored. Although some progress has been made in the capital, women at large in Guinea-Bissau are still underrepresented in political and party life.

The weak political participation of Guinean women and their poor access to higher levels of decision-making continue to be disadvantageous for a greater and more influential position of women in the different sectors of society.

It should be noted that the presence of women in the various organs of sovereignty and organizations of civil society is also due to the pressure exerted by international donors and financing entities to promoting gender parity and community participation in development projects. Thus, some change

towards women's empowerment that is felt in Guinea-Bissau over the last ten years or so might not have started basically from internal awareness on the importance of women's role in society but was seen as a need to correspond with international demands (Moreira, 2017, p. 89).

According to Barros & Semedo (UNIOGBIS 2013), political participation of women is basically limited to the animation of the grassroots (the electorate), and merely instrumental for the parties to gain power. Barriers for the participation of women are found in the party structure and also in the election process due to the prevalence of the cult of a single strong leader, usually a man, leaving little opportunity for women to enter the political process.

Largely dependent on family and community networks, Guinean women rarely risk losing their social capital to try to enter politics with quite limited success rates. Weak female solidarity is explained in a recent survey of women in Guinea-Bissau with feelings of low self-esteem that prevent them from valuing other women (Voz de Paz, 2018). Most Guinean communities do not welcome and encourage women who spend most of their time in party meetings instead of looking after their husbands and children. Eventually, a realistic assessment of the culture of *matchundaade* by female candidates, hinders women from too high investments in political competitions (Discussion with women leaders - PONGAB).

Contrary to parliament, the government that resulted of the legislative elections of March 2019 sent a clear sign that it is possible to respect and implement the Parity Law in Guinea-Bissau. The formation in July 2019 of a government with 50% women ministers and an overall share of 36% women (including Secretaries of State) under PM Aristides Gomes represents an important advance for gender equality in the public sphere and in high positions of political decision making in West Africa, allowing both sexes to reveal their ability to improve the living conditions of the population in an inclusive and balanced government. Unfortunately, these first gender gains have been adverted negatively by the political crisis following the Presidential elections (Nov and Dec 2019) and the installation of a new government under PM Nuno Nabiam (February 2020) with only three female ministers which shows the fragility of such (predominately populist) decisions.

In the short and medium term, consolidation of achievements towards women political participation and decision making is more likely to be seen at the Civil Society level, especially- as discussed earlier - after the emergence of many women's organizations in Guinea-Bissau in recent years campaigning for women's political, social and economic rights (see above). Beyond the PPM (Women's Political Platform), the Women Mediator Network and the Guinean Women Council of Facilitators for Dialogue (CMGDF) (for more on the work of these organizations see chap. 2.9), these include the Association of Women Journalists, the Association of Women Jurists, the Association of Young Women Leaders; the National Network to Fight Violence Based on Gender and Children (RENLUV); the Association of Women with Economic Activities (AMAE); National Committee for Abandoning Harmful Practices (CNPN); the Friends of Children Association (AMIC, working predominately for *Talibe* children and young girls), the Association of Women Agricultural Producers to Fight Hunger (APALCOF, Contubuel) and many local Women Associations and branches of RENLUV, AMAE and AMIC all over the country.

With these NGO networks the institutional capacity and public gender engagement of the Civil Society in Guinea-Bissau improved and awareness on gender equality and women's political and human rights increased significantly. Nevertheless, the challenges are huge given the country's chronological instability and very restricted public resources in financial and institutional terms and in human capital. In addition to the aforementioned NGOs and Associations that strive for gender equality and the empowerment of women, increased gender sensitivity and capacity can be noted in Parliament, through the work of a specialized committee on women's and gender issues, and in the justice sector through the Access to Justice Centers' (CAJ) which recently developed a Gender Strategy.

Through sharing of experiences and knowledge as well as the exercise of prestigious public positions within their associations, even if these are more of symbolic nature, *Mandjundaadi* groups function as

one of the vehicles of women voices and female discourse in Guinea-Bissau. It was explained above that the *Mandjundaadi* groups have potential for the affirmation of women in the public space, due to their socio-cultural importance, multiethnic character and internal organizational structure. Strong women's organizations in the Civil Society movement are an important asset in preparing women for participation in the political arena, insofar as they constitute an essential pillar for the feminist movement in the country (Barros & Semedo, 2012, p. 37).

Concerning gender consciousness and women empowerment, it can be noted that once elected to political positions, women do not automatically defend the rights and interests of women. Instead, they often assume positions and attitudes similar to those of men and according to the political and governmental institutions in which they are inserted (Barros & Semedo, 2012, p. 60). This phenomenon has been referred to as the "bee queen syndrome", or women's prejudices against women that happens frequently to women in male-dominated professions as these successful women come under enormous stress in terms of competition to defend their achievements and thus are neither good mentors for junior women nor act in solidarity (Moreira, 2017).

The publication of several studies, such as "The Participation of Women in Politics and Decision-Making" (UNIOGBIS, Barros & Semedo, 2013); "Violence against Girls and Women", "Women's Economic Rights" (Cadernos da Casa dos Direitos, 2016); "Women in the Labor Sector" (National Network of Working Women) etc. have promoted public awareness on gender discrimination and the conditions of women in Guinea-Bissau.

The foundation of the "Monitoring House for the Women's Electoral Process" (2014/2015) is another achievement of the dynamism in political participation and electoral engagement of women. Thematic issues, such as the sensitization of women to participate in the electoral process were addressed; furthermore, an early warning system on electoral frauds was established as well as a code of conduct with commitment of the candidates. The whole electoral process was monitored by women, awareness campaigns with the candidates to accept election results were conducted, experiences exchanged with women from the sub-region, and women participated in the announcement of election results (PNIEG 2017, UNIOGBIS documentation).

In addition to the weak representation of women in Parliament and in high positions throughout the Public Administration and the Justice Sector a true culture of masculinity devalues women in the Defense and Security Forces of Guinea-Bissau. Women are excluded from decision-making spheres with many gender stereotyped perceptions, because it is understood that they "talk a lot", "cannot keep secrets" or because "they are physically more fragile". This blunted discriminatory discourse discourages many women, leading them to give up the dream of reaching higher positions in the army and police forces. It is in no way accidental that women only represent about 11% of the total police officers, mainly within the lower ranks (Strategic document RSS, INEP - UNIOGBIS revision 2016). In the Army, there are even less women, especially among combat troops.

Since gender inequalities are rooted within the institutions of Defense and Security, suppressing them through the contributions of female officers themselves is difficult, due to the deep internalization and negative conditioning of gender discrimination to which they have always been exposed based on the dominant male conception of Defense and Security institutions.

Conclusions

The participation of women in public life and decision-making, particularly in the political system, the participation of women as voters and candidates in electoral processes, their representation in governance institutions, including the ANP/ parliament, public administration and the judiciary have been assessed with the following conclusions:

In most formal institutions, Guinean women are largely absent from decision-making spheres. This under-representation of women is almost systematic. It is obvious in parliament and government, and even more so at the highest levels of the Defense and Security Forces, in which women are represented only with a minimum percentage (Interpeace & Voz de Paz, 2018, p. 31).

Regarding informal institutions - local traditional power and spiritual instances - the situation is not better, except for the spiritual rule women play within the coastal ethnic communities (Pepel, Manjaco) as *balobeira* (administrator of the spiritual shrines) and in the *Kansaré* administration, a community based spiritual instrument to resolve problems at the local level and to prevent upcoming illness, misfortune or any kind of catastrophe (I. Embalo/Soronda, 2008, p. 320f.; Teixeira, 2001, p.123-127). The political authority at village level and higher is centered in the hands of male chiefs and *regulos* (local kings); the only true female stronghold and matriarchal system is practiced among the Bijagos ethnic group, representing ca. 3% of the total population.

Challenges and recommendations for women's political empowerment

Public visibility, political participation of women and their ascendance to high levels of decision-making are one of the country's main challenges in terms of gender equality.

The adoption and implementation of specific temporal measures to mitigate unequal representation between women and men in the political and decision-making bodies of governance, political parties, the public administration and the justice sector are strongly recommended.

These measures should go beyond the current limited effectiveness of the 2018 "Parity Law".

Political, socio-cultural and legal limits at the national and local level hinder the achievement of a more inclusive society.

Formal and informal barriers must be removed, the constitution, electoral laws, the parity law and the legal framework of political parties must be revised and improved to allow full participation of women in decision-making and empower them to become responsible for leading public policies.

2.5 Gender and Resilience

Building on the previous sections of the situation analysis, this chapter will develop the nexus between resilience²² and gender, i.e. explore the gendered nature of resilience capacities. While women's vulnerability is almost always assumed, their unique capacities and contributions to adaptation in climate change and across the disaster management cycle and their knowledge and experience in natural resource management are not much documented (UNDP, S. Habtezion, 2016).

Complex Dynamic between Gender and Climate Change

The impact of climate change on human life in Guinea-Bissau is severe. Extreme weather conditions with immediate or long term threatening impact affect the lives, livelihood, harvest, habitation and properties of men and women, boys and girls, elder and marginalized population in nearly all parts of Guinea-Bissau due to its geographic conditions (near/below sea level) and climatic vulnerability. Capacities at the national and local level to adapt to and cope with the long-term effects of climate change are low.

There is a complex dynamic between gender and climate change, not only in relation to vulnerability to adverse impacts of climate change, but also in the way of adapting to these impacts and differentiating priorities for women and men. Women's empowerment is crucial for sustainable and climate resilient development.

As women make up a large number of rural communities in Guinea-Bissau that depend on natural resources for their livelihood, they face higher risks resulting from extreme weather conditions and related disasters, such as storms, droughts, inundations, sea level elevation, threatening people's precarious house construction, properties, agriculture and harvest.

Particularly rural and remote areas are exposed to climate hazards, with no accurate weather forecast, no Early Warning Systems or any kind of prevention measures against climate hazards in place and no minimal services of the Civil Protection Department.

Women are responsible for ferrying of goods, water, children, fuel, market goods, and household supplies. They do all manual labor at the household level beside farm work and manual agro-processing. They are exhausted physically by this workload and also exposed to physical hazards such as pollution, burns, back pain etc.

Gender inequalities are exacerbated by climate change and women will have a higher time, stress and work burden than men. Women and children in Guinea-Bissau also suffer from high health risks of indoor pollution through cooking with solid biofuel and invest a lot of unpaid work in searching wood and water, both scarce resources in many rural regions of the country. Women and children often have to skip meals as households cannot afford three meals per day. "Um tiro", one shot, is a popular saying describing the nutritional situation of many families in Guinea-Bissau (MICS, 2014). In times of severe food gaps, women will have even less possibilities to eat enough food. Therefore, they will have less ability to adapt to climate shocks, will be less resilient to certain illnesses, such as malaria and cholera, and often will be too weak to continue their work as primary food producer.

Most women still lack access to crucial resources which can add to their resilience. This is the case in Guinea-Bissau as elsewhere on the continent. We have seen that most women lack access to land, livestock, financial capital and mobility which are critical in reducing vulnerabilities to hazards or disasters induced by climate change.

²² Resilience is defined as the capacity of families, communities and systems to absorb, adapt and recover from shocks and stresses in ways that support equal economic and social development. Resilience can only be sustainable by looking at the relationships between food security, gender equality, economic security and climate change, seeking to increase overall impact and find long-term solutions.

The traditional gender roles of household responsibility and caretaking reduce women's mobility and social networking. Experience from Mozambique floods disaster demonstrate that women's confinement to households and caregiving make them often lose their lives to save others (Chineka et al. 2019).

Women can play a key role in building-up climate resilient communities in Guinea-Bissau

Climate change policies and the actions aimed at adaptation and mitigation of climate change must be gender-responsive. So far the environmental policies and laws of Guinea-Bissau do not address gender issues appropriately: they foresee only a few gender specific programmes and do not analyze and consider gender differentiated needs and priorities: Instead they refer to gender mostly under the notion of vulnerability. Instead the needs should be carefully assessed and resilience capacities enhanced.

It is necessary to advocate for enhancing equitable representation of women and excluded groups at all levels in planning, decision making and implementation of adaptation and mitigation actions, from the ministries (environment, energy, natural resources) down to local government structures and the affected communities.

Equal access of women to training and capacity-building programmes should be guaranteed to ensure women's full participation in climate change initiatives. Financing mechanism for climate change must be developed and adapted to the priorities and needs of women, youth, men and vulnerable groups.

How women in Guinea-Bissau can develop resilience capacities in response to climate change

(based on GEF/UNDP Prodoc, 2018 "Strengthen the adaptive capacity and climate resilience of Guinea-Bissau vulnerable coastal communities to climate risks"; GEF/UNDP Prodoc, 2019 "Promoting better access to modern energy services through sustainable mini-grids and low-carbon bioenergy technologies among Guinea-Bissau's forest-dependent communities").

- Strengthen through training (agriculture extension) capacities for diversification of livelihoods: women are often at the forefront of farmers who are willing to introduce crop varieties (smart agriculture) with irrigation technics from the realm of "Climate Smart Agriculture"; land management methods to promote more resilient rice production in the *bolanhas* (especially those that can withstand extreme climate variations and salt tolerant rice varieties);
- Enhance women's capacities for diversification of livelihoods through training & implementation of horticulture (including resistant vegetables), functional alphabetization, fruit processing;
- Promotion of "*bideira*" model of self-reliance, encouraging women to undertake economic activities higher-up in the value chain;
- Training to improve production and sales of cooperatives, associations and small and medium enterprises owned by women, making women's work more efficient;
- Empower women to take the lead in community-based renewable energy systems.

Energy scarcity is closely linked to poverty in Guinea-Bissau which affects women disproportionately as we have seen in Chapter 2.3. The efficiency of women's work is very low in light of the lack of basic sanitary infrastructure, lack of water, lack of firewood, lack of electricity etc. To the extent that any of the RE energy technologies frees women from unnecessary labor, it presents an opportunity for development. To the extent that any of these technologies protects the natural resources, it helps to reduce pressure on the forest environment and is beneficial for climate protection.

Women, as active agents in biomass management, as the primary household cooks, and as participants in many biomass-intensive processing sectors, play an integral role in shifting Guinea-Bissau onto a cleaner development pathway. To gain time and avoid pollution women in the consulted communities demonstrated high levels of motivation to work with clean energy, i.e. renewable energy sources and low-carbon bioenergy technologies (improved cook stoves and charcoal production) for all aspects of cooking, food production by agro-processing (multifunctional platform), cooling of fish and other products. The use of electricity of RE-systems also is of enormous benefit for village schools and hospitals, to improve the education and health conditions of women and children.

Off-grid RE services can also play a transforming role in the fishing sector, the second subsistence and income activity of rural population in Guinea-Bissau. Being fish conservation and selling an exclusive women business in all coastal communities, cooling facilities and ice production are a major demand and concern of local women. Traditional fish smoking is not only harmful (equivalent to cooking) but sufficient wood is often not available with the result that fish rots and has to be thrown away. Fresh fish has a higher value chain; fishing capacities could increase if storage and market are guaranteed. Fish-vending could be transformed in a much more lucrative and less arduous business for village women (Interviews with women and fish association in villages near Fulakunda, GEF/UNDP, 2019).

Women as entrepreneurs in green business

Clean energy can also bring women potential opportunities to start income earning activities that weren't even considered yet, without leaving their house or village, i.e. with the possibility of taking care for their children and household simultaneously, for example, as *solar bakeries*, *cold drink sellers* or through *small enterprises in food processing*.

Further, in the value chain of renewable energy supply, there are economic opportunities opening up for small scale enterprises not only in electricity production itself, but also in allied services which could be promoted as new women profession. There is also the issue of women trading in energy products (stoves, solar kits, fuels, etc.) and services (phone charging, cold purified water, etc.), see the "Solar Sister" enterprise, chap. 5.3.2.

Nevertheless, it has to be invested a lot into the poor educated and overwhelmingly in traditional gender role fixed Bissau-Guinean women to enable them to benefit from the opportunities that energy provision and the green business sector provide for them and unleash this new economic potential.

Mainstreaming gender into disaster prevention, Early Warning Systems (EWS) and recovery

Vulnerability in climate induced disaster, the preparedness to cope with impacts as well as recovery capacities are shaped by gender. ***Cultural norms and gender-related traditions limit the potential for women's resilience*** and quick reaction to natural disasters. Girls and women are not encouraged to learn to swim and climb trees or leave their homes to reach safer land (UNDP/Habtezian, 2012).

Community consultations in different regions in Guinea-Bissau (GEF/UNDP October 2019, Project-Prodoc) revealed a broad consensus concerning the different impact and vulnerability of community groups to climate induced hazards: women and children were identified as the most vulnerable and most exposed to the dangers of suddenly occurring extreme weather events as well as to long term phenomena, such as droughts. A mother would try to save all persons in the household, including elderly and sick members and would not leave any children behind. Most women don't have the physical capacities of swimming and climbing trees and therefore are very disadvantaged in case of immediate rescue need. Human insecurity is further related to precarious house construction, especially construction in low wetlands. Crisis in rice supply post-disaster would also increase the malnutrition of poor women and children first.

Risk knowledge and comprehension of climate induced hazards is increasing among local communities in Guinea-Bissau. Women in the visited communities feel that they are left alone by their husbands, brothers etc. in household and caretaking responsibilities, particularly children's well-being and food security. They do not trust much in adequate response capacities of the male family members in emergency situations, such as flooding and storms (GEF/UNDP, October 2019).

Women in Guinea-Bissau have started to develop consciousness about their limitations in mobility and active response capacities related to perpetuated gender roles of care taking and domestic responsibilities. These gender specific vulnerabilities and female vision of "engendered weakness" motivate women to be at the forefront of building up EWS at community level and engage in prevention and protection from (natural) disaster.

Gender inclusive EWS means empowering women, along with men, to understand and use climate information and benefit and participate in the EWS, including adaptation strategies, on equal footing with their male counterparts.

Affirmative action is necessary to ensure women's involvement in trainings and exposure visits, in order to enhance their capacity to understand and make use of climate information, protection measures and prevention strategies. ***Active participation of women and girls in providing Climate Info and EWS services to their communities should be fostered through training women among affected communities as climate equipment and data observer, as local messenger of EWS, as disaster rescue assistant and as volunteer at the local Civil Protection service.***

Once being involved in the process of saving lives and properties through EWS, women have the opportunity to overcome the victimization role and transform into empowered women with agency and their say in disaster prevention/recovery and the broader climate change debate.

Through the incorporation of gender differentiated needs, demands and solutions the effectiveness and gender equality not just of the use of accurate climate information and of early warnings, but of climate resilient development and adaptation activities can be ensured on a broader scale (UNDP/Habtezian, 2012).

2.6 Gender mainstreaming into national policies

Awareness about gender issues was systematically raised, for the first time, in **DENARP II** (2011), the **Second Poverty Reduction Strategy**, which linked structural gender inequalities to the country's economic development and, shortly afterwards, through the PNIEG (2012/2017), the "National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity" (Politica Nacional da Igualdade e Equidade do Género).

DENARP II established (i) a specific objective for the promotion of gender equality and equity, which aims to "eliminate structural inequalities between men and women"; (ii) defined most of the specific objectives, explicitly differentiating men and women as targets for the proposed action; (iii) integrated the gender dimension with planning and monitoring indicators; and (iv) the project budget took into account gender disparities and structural inequalities.

The National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity (2012, 2017)

The "**National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity**" (PNIEG) was developed with the participation of all stakeholders over a two-year period, validated nationally and approved by the National People's Assembly in 2014. On the one hand, it is the product of work of the National Institute of Women and Children (IMC, *Instituto da Mulher e Criança*), created as an operational structure for the development, coordination and implementation of policies for women's rights and gender equality. On the other hand, it is the result of the tireless engagement of civil society organizations and women activists. The entire initiative was well supported and technically assisted by the UN in Bissau.

The PNIEG, for the first time, takes into account the role of women in different sectors of society and in decision-making spheres. ***The PNIEG also emphasizes the priority of sustainable development and is the most important roadmap for gender equality and equity in Guinea-Bissau, providing comprehensive analyses and recommendations.***

PNIEG's mission is defined as: "The reinforcement of coordination and support mechanisms for the Government in the systematic and transversal implementation of the gender approach in the legal frameworks, in policies and programmes at the level of public and private institutions and civil society organizations, for equality and gender balance through mind change in communities and families" (PNIEG, 2012, p. 75). Implementation of the policy did not start at the time of its elaboration due to lack of funding and cut of supports by international donors after the military coup of April 2012.

The PNIEG notes that women and girls have been particularly affected by the years of crisis, as they are relegated to secondary status in all spheres of domestic, community and national life. They face gender-based restrictions in access to scarce resources (such as credit and land) and education, and the double burden of domestic work to care for and feed their families, associated with work in the market to contribute to family income. In addition, girls and women in Guinea-Bissau face the specific risk of maternal mortality and gender-specific abuse, such as domestic violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early / forced marriage (PNIEG, 2012/2017).

The *Canchungo Declaration* of October 2014, elaborated by women from Civil Society, proposed a 40% share of female presence in parliament and government, the revision of the National Elections Commission (CNE) law, the electoral law and the framework law of political parties, as well as the creation of support centers for women, girls and children, victims of gender-based violence.

The gains achieved so far are mostly related to the first global objective of the PNIEG, i.e. legal frameworks, policies and programmes that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The elaboration of the PNIEG supported a propitious environment and political leverage for a series of "gender protection laws", such as the *Law against Domestic Violence* (2014), the *Law against FGM* (2011), the *Law against Trafficking in Human Beings* (2011) as well as the *Canchungo Declaration* (2014) of Guinea-Bissau women activists.

The National Gender Policy was revised and a new version, PNIEG II and an Implementation Plan for the period 2016-2025 were prepared and approved in Parliament by the end of 2017. It focuses on the implementation of the National Gender Policy, a reformulation of specific objectives and its link to international and regional gender strategies as well as to "Terra Ranka", the Guinea-Bissau Strategic Development Plan (2015-2025).²³

The formulation of a National Gender Strategy by PNIEG aims to systematically and transversally integrate gender equality and equity in all bilateral and multilateral development and cooperation policies, in strategies, projects and programmes developed in Guinea-Bissau. The PNIEG considers that women and girls have been particularly harmed by the long years of political crisis, since they are allocated to a secondary status in all spheres of family, community and national life.

The PNIEG formulates specific objectives, such as:

- *Improvement of the country's legal framework for the achievement of gender equality and equity and women's Human Rights;*
 - *Promotion of an integrated gender agenda in the social sectors (health, education, justice, security, well-being, housing, water);*
 - *Empowerment of women at the level of public administration;*
 - *Equal economic and productive opportunities for women and men with the objective of reducing poverty and inequality;*
 - *Preventing and combating all forms of violence and trafficking against women and girls;*
 - *Promotion of women's participation in public life, in the political sphere and decision-making*
- (PNIEG 2012, 2017).

The PNIEG now needs to be operationalized and prioritized, with resources and targets.

Gender-sensitive budget allocations

The *General State Budget Framework Law of Guinea-Bissau* (Law 2/2015, 5.3.2015) establishes rules regarding the drafting, approval and enforcement of the annual budget laws and does so far not include any gender perspectives which would result in a revision of budget lines that seem to be gender neutral, the analysis of the impact of the budget on women and men and a subsequent redefinition of spending priorities and restructuring of taxes.

Budgets reflect the way governments set their priorities and are one of the most important tools for the implementation of public policy decisions. They indicate the government's commitment to meeting gender needs and achieving gender equality. Gender-sensitive budget allocations need to be introduced as priority into the State Budget to ensure an effective implementation of the PNIEG, strategies to combat gender-based violence and related programmes / measures for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment (AU Gender Strategy, p. 47, Canchungo Declaration, 2014). Specific promotional regulations should also be introduced in the budget law to give priority to ministries responsible for gender issues (Women and Family, Economy, Public Administration, etc.).

²³ The (current) Master National Development Plan "Terra Ranka"/ "A Fresh Start" (2015-2025) could not be implemented so far due to political stagnation. Anyhow, it contains the basic elements of various government programmes developed in the last years, but needs reinforcement in gender issues and a gender mainstreaming strategy.

2.7 Equality in Law, access to justice and gender justice

Legislation

Equality in law is crucial for gender equality, as women and girls look at their country's laws to protect them and enforce their rights. Laws that discriminate and deny women and girls equal rights to men and boys betray their trust in society and signal that gender discrimination is acceptable, is a normal and expected fact. Women and girls left behind by discriminatory laws are often excluded from development benefits all together (UN-Women, 2019, p. 8).

The legislative process is a vital entry point for gender mainstreaming. Legislation has a direct and tangible impact on citizens' lives and most directly reflects the needs and priorities of various constituencies. The legislative process offers a forum for dialogue on the most important issues in society and can promote the expression of multiple voices and perspectives. Thus, this process presents an effective vehicle for promoting the values and principles of gender equality and equity.

Significant parts of the national legal frameworks are gender-blind or discriminate against gender.²⁴ Although the constitution (CRGB 1984/1996) prohibits all forms of discrimination based on sex, race or religion, Guinea-Bissau's basic law itself does not go much further than a general non-discrimination provision and recognition of formal equality of women. Other key legislation, such as the Civil Code, the Penal Code, the General Labor Law, the Framework Law of Political Parties, contain directly discriminatory and obsolete content or partially unconstitutional provisions. These diplomas are characterized by serious gender shortcomings or are laws that simply neglect (whether intentionally or unintentionally) the gendered and differentiated needs and interests of women and men.

Significant gender equality gaps in legislation, some of which will be discussed in the following paragraphs, and weak implementation capacities due to a fragile and underfinanced justice sector hamper compliance with national and international commitments to gender equality and equity and women's rights in Guinea-Bissau.²⁵

Looking at the Guinea-Bissau legal framework from the chronological perspective, it is noted that the Civil Code (1966, still from colonial time) as the oldest law is the most obsolete that contradicts the constitution, the first national laws produced in 1976 and the recent series of gender protection laws (2011, 2014) (Embalo/UNDP, 2020, p. 151).

The constitution of 1973/1984 and its latest and current version of 1996 reflect the *Zeitgeist* of the time between socialist concepts and democratic opening of Guinea-Bissau: it belongs to a historical period when equality, protection and - most importantly - empowerment of women was not in vogue, nor a priority. Women are not visible as subject and social actor of special consideration in the Bissau-Guinean constitution.

The first national laws which were enacted three years after independence in 1976 regulated certain inequalities and discrimination of the Portuguese Civil Code. With the new Divorce Law (substituting the respective provisions of the Civil Code) and the Law of "União de facto" (informal marriage) the legislator intended a first approximation to the family reality and relationships experienced by the vast majority of the population – beyond civil marriage. It was an early but too cautious approach, only

²⁴ In a recent study (in Portuguese) on the need of gender mainstreaming into the National Legal Framework I have presented a detailed analysis of gender situation and gender gaps in the national legislation and proposals for its revision (Embalo/UNDP, 2020).

²⁵ As defined by the CEDAW standard indicators for gender equality in law (CEDAW 1979) and expressed in international, continental and regional gender strategies by the UN (UN-Women and UNDP etc.), the AU (Gender Strategy 2018-2027) and ECOWAS (Embalo/UNDP, 2020, pp. 8-11; www.genderindex.org/country/guinea-bissau).

partially able to cover the serious gaps of the Civil Code regarding discrimination of women in family matters.

The General Labor Law of 1986 (under revision but not updated until now) is not concerned with gender equality issues beyond minimum labor social standards and formal equality. Its language is similar to the constitution in terms of formal equality, guarantees of the protection of pregnancy and maternity, without elaborating further on the economic dimensions of that equality.

The Penal Code of 1993, a national adaptation and updated version of the Portuguese Penal Code, contains directly discriminatory provisions, for example on abortion (CP 112) and on sexual harassment and rape (CP 133). It is formulated – generally - without taking into account gender issues; in a spirit to be classified as *gender blind*.

The legislation of the last decade, since 2010, shows a turning of the page in relation to women's issues and gender mainstreaming into national legislation. The law package addresses gender-based violence, whether at the domestic level, whether harmful practices with FGM at the top, whether sexual exploitation, prostitution, forced child labor and forced marriage, dealt with under the Human Trafficking Act as attached crimes. These new gender protection laws are based on a current vision of gender equality and empowerment, including as priority the protection of women and girls from GBV and other forms of abuse. At the same time, the Reproductive Health Law (2010) establishes the legal basis for safe pregnancy and procreation with a minimum age of marriage of 18 years and minimum standards / safe conditions for pregnancy, birth giving and procreation.

With respect to human rights baselines, the country's performance has improved in the last decade, particularly through the law that criminalizes female genital mutilation (2011) and the law against domestic violence (2014). The drafting of these laws as well as the Law against Human Trafficking (2011) and advocacy among stakeholders were significantly supported by the United Nations system in Guinea-Bissau.

The Basic Law of the Educational System (2011), despite many gaps in its implementation, is founded on an inclusive approach to teaching, guaranteeing the universal, free and compulsory education up to the 6th year and also certain favorable temporary measures for girls and women (to improve literacy etc.).

Finally, the Parity Law (2018) is the first Bissau-Guinean law that formulates special temporary measures that favor women as established by CEDAW, in this case with a parity share (of 36%) in representation in parliament. In addition to the principle of equality and equity, it is recognized the need to implement special temporary measures through a different treatment of women for their empowerment, in order to compensate and combat the subordination, discrimination and historical and social disadvantages of women.

Women's access to Law and Justice

The Constitution of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (1996) guarantees every citizen the right to go to court, to be informed and to have legal protection (articles 32 and 34 CRGB). Decree-Law nº 11/2010 enshrines the right to legal aid and legal consultation and effective conditions for access to law and justice as well as legal support in the form of total or partial waiver of costs. It includes mechanisms to address inequalities in access to justice resulting from economic and social conditions, lack of information or geographical isolation and free services for disadvantaged persons.

The laws on Access to Law and Justice (2010, 2011) start from an inclusive view of society and users/clients. Access to justice with greater equality in terms of gender and geographic location, free legal assistance and special care for SGBV victims create legal bases for greater equality and a fairer - balanced - treatment of women, girls, men and boys.

The National Programme for the Reform of Justice (2015-2019) aims at the in-depth transformation of the justice sector, including the strengthening of access to justice – particularly for women and girls - through Access to Justice Centers (Centros de Acesso a Justiça - CAJ). Starting in 2011, nowadays six centers are operational (Bissau, Canchungo, Mansoa, Bafata with extension to Gabu, most recent center opened in Buba in 2017), to provide public information and legal consultation service with the population. These legal assistance services have improved access to justice, a crucial prerequisite for Human Rights, for the communities and vulnerable groups. They are perceived as a major contribution to reducing human rights violations that prevail systematically in this region; the CAJ activities are complemented by fundamental rights awareness raising campaigns on access to justice, human rights and gender equality.

Despite these measures that resulted in a significant improvement in judicial services and infrastructures, citizens' access to law and justice is hampered by lack of confidence in the formal justice system and continuous awareness gaps of common populace regarding their rights, particularly women. The weakness of the justice system goes back to general low territorial coverage by judicial institutions in Guinea-Bissau and limited resources available to the majority of the population. People have little trust in the justice system, which is perceived as being costly, ineffective and most importantly – biased – serving and covering up the interests of the powerful (ERI-ESI, 2019; Interview F. Mané).

Gender inequalities are obviously linked to this perception, together with low legal literacy and limited understanding by women of their legal rights and how to defend them through the formal legal system. Moreover, cultural factors of discrimination, submission to men, fear from stigmatization and punishment by family or community and poor economic conditions are significant (Ministry of Justice, UNDP, Access to Justice, 2011). Women are disproportionately disadvantaged due to the cost of going to court, social pressure, lack of (operational) sectoral courts, lack of family courts (existing only in Bissau) and the limited number of Access to Justice Centers, still not covering all regions. The CAJs suffer from lack of equipment and qualified personnel (for mediation etc.) and struggle against underfinancing (Evaluation Report, 2017).

The CAJs are the main vehicle to improve access to justice to vulnerable groups, in particular women, and providing legal assistance to victims of SGBV. Evidence is available that within communities where they operate, the CAJ consolidated their role as increasingly the instance of choice for women to seek assistance in issues, such as property, inheritance or family disputes. But the number of women attending the CAJ remained steadily at around 21 per cent since 2011; climbing to about 25-30% in Bissau only in 2018 and 2019 (Evaluation Report 2017, Interview with GUIJC, 2020).²⁶

On the other hand, there is no data confirming that SGBV, in particular FGM, or domestic violence diminished, or that reporting and accountability of perpetrators increased as result of CAJs activities. Research of evidence for the evaluation report in 2017 suggested that SGBV and the situation of victims of domestic violence in terms of accessing justice remains more often than not fundamentally the same, even if the Access to Justice Centers intervene (Evaluation Report, 2017, p. 34). We can note a very limited number of cases of FGM brought to the courts and sentenced until now which are more of a symbolic nature (WB Manual 2019).

²⁶ Evaluation Report, 2017, p. 33: For example, between January and September 2016, only 192 women were assisted against a total of 700 men.

The (still) limited results in reaching out to women and girls go back to:

- **Cultural barriers:**
many families prefer to solve conflicts through local conflict settlement which does not pay sufficient attention to the needs and human rights of women. This option, based on the legal pluralism and hybridity of the justice system, is particularly relevant for cases of domestic violence, sexual harassment, FGM and early marriage. Problems of this nature are solved within the family or according to customary law and local institutions of conflict solution, such as the village chief, traditional authorities (*régulos*), religious authorities and local political village structures – the *comité de tabanca* – a reminiscent from the PAIGC one-party governance. These cultural barriers are generally greater for women in rural areas with less access opportunities to claim their rights at the CAJs.
- **Significant preference for traditional justice:**
A recent survey conducted by the NGO *Voz de Paz* (2019) evidenced that 31% of interviewed are not confident that their problem will be resolved well in formal justice. The data also show that 61% of the respondents think that traditional justice is the best way to resolve conflicts. With the exception of the Autonomous Sector of Bissau, all other regions consider traditional justice the best option to resolve conflicts (*Voz de Paz*, 2019).
- **Gender Imbalance in CAJ staffing:**
The fact that the overwhelming majority of justice personnel is male, might also play a role. Only 25% of the technical personnel working at CAJs is female; among those to be currently trained there are also not more than 30% women (CAJ Gender Strategy, 2019, p. 9).
- **Gender Strategy for CAJs:**
In late 2019, a Gender Strategy for the CAJ was developed, covering the period 2020-2024, which has to be implemented and applied now. Main change is expected through development of institutional capacity for service provision based on a gender mainstreaming perspective (activities such as training and qualification of Legal Assistance Technicians in family conflict mediation priorities; in depth knowledge on gender, gender inequalities, women's rights and domestic violence etc.) and a communication strategy that will improve the effectiveness of communication, build gender sensitive culture and enable efficient dialogue with the target groups (CAJ Gender Strategy, 2019).
- **Partnerships between UN, CAJs and NGOs need to be intensified:**
Partnerships between the UN-system and national NGOs need to be fortified and increased regarding partnership/cooperation with the CAJs. Barriers are of financial nature and over competence of national partners. Synergies and partnerships between the GICJU and NGOs/Associations that operate in the area of women's rights have been promoted but suffered underfinancing and organizational and logistic problems (LIGA, RENLUV, Interviews B. Embalo for Civil Society Capacity Development Plan, 2019).
- **Implementation of specialized units dedicated to women and children's problems:**
Specialized units dedicated to women and children's problems (*Células de Atendimento às Vítimas*) are so far not implemented at the CAJs or tribunals; protection offices at the police work with severe restrictions; the same holds true for the on-call specialized brigade for women and children victims of violence within the Judiciary Police.
- **CAJ positions as “being from UNDP” between formal and informal justice systems:**

Interaction of the Access to Justice Centers with the local informal justice system / authorities is not brought forward substantially and the potential of customary law remains largely untapped. The CAJs foster access to justice through mechanisms that fill the constitutional right to legal aid but, at the same time, are perceived as being “from UNDP”, located somewhere in between the formal and the informal legal systems (Evaluation report 2017, p. 36). Tailored training for both traditional leaders and formal justice actors should be reinforced to counter institutional culture resistance from formal institutions in recognizing and interacting with traditional leaders, and customary law defiance to integrate gender and human rights observing practices (*ibid.*).

The vulnerability of women is multiplied due to lack of effective mechanisms to protect victims of sexual abuse and gender-based violence. There are not enough shelters, let alone psychological support and economic and social reintegration programmes for women and girls, victims of SGBV. The CAJs have inherent limitations in providing guarantees of non-recurrence to victims of human rights violations. These severe gaps in the chain of protection and reintegration of the victims is decisive for the limited acceptance of CAJ services until now. Most vulnerable population (women and children) do not feel their justice needs adequately addressed by the formal system and are unlikely to deposit trust in state justice, including the CAJ services (discussion with Focus-group NGO Platform Bafata).

Beside a complete protection and integration chain (referral system), what is lacking most, is alignment between the CAJ activities at the interface of diverging legal systems and forms of alternative dispute settlement mechanisms carried out by other actors (restorative justice), including CSOs and traditional justice practitioners.

These cumulative gaps confirm the need to complement progress on legal aid, assistance and representation for women with robust capacity development and training of criminal justice actors to investigate and prosecute SGBV and approximation to and recognition of traditional leadership and customary law (Evaluation Report, 2017, p. 35).

Constitution is not gender-sensitive²⁷

The Constitution of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (CRGB 1996) guarantees the principles of equality and non-discrimination of all citizens (Art. 24 and 25), but does not provide a precise definition of the term discrimination in accordance with CEDAW standards. The constitution's preamble designates the “people” in general as the constitutional community to whom the constitution is addressed. It does not use other expressions, such as citizens, populace, men and women etc., to develop a more inclusive view of the people who make up the constitutional community. More specifically, it does not include women, and does not recognize in a particular way women, youth, elderly etc. as sub-groups of the constitutional community. As the 1996 constitution is based on the 1984 version, even the concept of citizenship (*cidadania*) it is not reflected in the preamble, although the term “citizens” is applied in some articles.

A preamble that specifically recognizes women can set an inclusive tone and provide orientation for the interpretation of the constitution as supporting gender equality and setting a frame for future State policies. The constitution of Rwanda (2003), for example, expresses the state's commitment to gender equality, in its preamble: (IDEA, 2016, p. 19) *“Committed to ensuring equal rights between Rwandans and between women and men without prejudice to the principles of gender equality and complementarity in national development”*.

²⁷ This part is based on Embalo/UNDP, 2020, Legal frameworks, pp. 44-53.

Commitment to gender equality in the constitution opens the way for the State to take specific actions to achieve equal positioning of women and men in society and overcome ingrained prejudices and the history of discrimination and inequality (IDEA, 2016). The Constitution of East Timor (2002), for example, recognizes gender equality as one of the fundamental objective of the State (section 6, j): "*To create, promote and guarantee the effective equality of opportunities between women and men*", (IDEA, 2016, p. 23).

There is no specific section in the Guinean constitution that explicitly deals with women's rights, such as ensuring equal opportunities (for example at work) and equal responsibilities of men and women in all areas, including family matters, education and properties, gender parity in elected assemblies, or taking specific measures to eradicate gender based violence. Women's rights are not made visible and underlined in the different thematic sections of the constitution, for example: fundamental human rights, labor rights, participation, political rights. The constitutional community is always approached as a whole, in general and without the needed differentiation that would allow for the integration of different groups in this community of the people.

Article 16 of the Guinea-Bissau Constitution considers "the elimination of illiteracy as a fundamental task" (16.2), and Article 49 guarantees the gradual access of all students at all levels of education (49.2), as well as the obligation and right of citizens to education (49.1), without further developing how this right and universal access to education will be realized and protected nor reasoning about the necessity of specific measures for the promotion of women and girls.

Education is one of the most powerful ways to deal with inequalities between men and women. Specifying the right of girls to education in the constitution imposes on the State the obligation to guarantee access to education, adopt laws and policies to ensure enrollment below a certain age and address the conditions that prevent equal access and registration of girls (IDEA, 2016).

The rights to health, clean water and food are dealt with in the Guinean constitution only in a generalized manner (Article 15), indicating that public health aims to promote the physical and social well-being as well as the populations' mental health. Specific women needs and rights in maternal and reproductive health of high significance for good health are not mentioned nor is the right to maternity leave.

The Guinean constitution is lacking specific articulation regarding violence against women. Art. 37 defends that "*The moral and physical integrity of citizens is inviolable*" and "*No one can be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman and degrading acts*". The constitution does not explicitly recognize women's right to be freed of and protected against violence, be it committed by the state or by non-state actors (such as family members, employers, companies, private organizations, etc.). Such protective legislation against gender-based violence was only initiated much later, in 2014, with the enactment of the "Law against Domestic Violence".

In the same token, the constitution does not pronounce on human trafficking and the exploitation of victims, crimes that most affect women and children. Article 37.2 prohibits only forced labor and custodial measures whereas exploitation includes various forms, such as sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or slavery-like practices, bondage and organ removal (IDEA, 2016). The respective law against human trafficking was passed much later, in 2011.

Language throughout the constitution is gender neutral. Masculine or neutral form of nouns are used when referring to the constitutional community, such as 'citizen', 'person', 'civil servant', whereas feminine forms and respective personal pronouns are avoided. The term "woman" (or synonyms, such as female, etc.) to underline the importance of women and demonstrate an inclusive view is not mentioned in the constitution in any article, except in Article 25 about non-discrimination. Non-consideration of gender clearly dominates throughout the constitution, for example, in the description of political functions.

Overall, it can be concluded that the constitution of Guinea-Bissau (1996) is not gender-sensitive. Despite the equality provision and the non-discrimination provision (prohibiting discrimination based on sex and / or gender) a visible inclusion of women's rights and gender mainstreaming could guarantee and protect gender equality in a much securer way.

Gender-mainstreaming into the basic text of Guinean legal framework is crucial and should be advocated for in the constitution revision (see revision proposals in: Embalo/UNDP, 2020, Legal Frameworks, pp. 51-52). UNDP is supporting the Women Jurists' Association in advocating for including gender clauses and mainstreaming gender in the context of the constitution revision. This activity has started in October 2020 and the effort should be continued until the conclusion of the revision to make sure it can be successful.

Severe Gender discrimination in the Civil Code²⁸

Huge gender inequalities and discrimination against women characterize the legal provisions of the Civil Code (Portuguese Colonial Law from 1966, Family Law = Book IV of Civil Code) regarding marriage, divorce, the personal status of the spouse, parental rights and responsibilities, inheritance etc. Women are seen through patriarchal lens and are not valued as equal partner in marriage, in the education of children and in their personal status as a spouse.

Many provisions of the Civil Code (CC) have been revoked by other national laws which came into force during the late 1970ties, some years after independence, whereas other CC provisions were declared as unconstitutional. This procedure resulted, first and foremost, in ambiguities and lack of clear guidance for the justice professionals.

The Guinea-Bissau Family Law (Book IV of the CC) needs profound reform, removing, for example, the status of the head of household and related provisions that diminish women's legal capacity and economic autonomy. Although according to the constitution, both parents have equal parental authority in marriage and after divorce, Article 1674 of the Civil Code establishes that the husband is the sole head of the family, giving him the right to represent his wife and make decisions on behalf of the whole family. According to article 1678 of the Civil code (Administration of the couple's assets) "The administration of the assets of the couple, including the woman's own property, belongs to the husband, as head of the family". This article is very discriminatory, identical to article 1674, it is turned against the capacities and potential of the wife in decision-making and management of family matters. To determine a woman's participation in marital property, consideration is given mainly to the financial and material contributions she made while diminishing other non-monetary contributions, such as raising children, taking care of elderly relatives and performing household chores. This is discriminatory because these contributions generally allow the husband to obtain income and increase assets while the unpaid work of women inside and outside the house is ignored.²⁹

According to Article 1576 of the Civil Code, the sources of legal family relationship are "marriage, kinship, affinity and adoption". This article is discriminatory and should include other sources of legal family relations, incorporated into national legislation through Law 3/1976 which recognizes the de facto union or so called "non-formalized marriages" to produce the effects of formalized marriage once acknowledged in court (1.1 and 1.2/Law 3/1976).

²⁸ Based on Embalo/UNDP, 2020, Legal Frameworks, pp. 56-74.

²⁹ Failure to recognize unpaid work performed mainly by women, is a structural barrier to women's human rights in the family and contributes to women's poverty. Financial and non-financial contributions to a couple's marital property should therefore be given the same weight (UN, 2018, p. 30-31).

The lack of legal protection of de facto unions as life-long relations has led to disastrous situations in innumerable cases, not only for the woman and man, but also for children born in the constancy of these unions whose legitimate moral and patrimonial interests have not been protected.

The problem in Law 3/1976 mainly consists in the condition that the de facto union takes effect only after recognition, blurring its differences with civil marriage. For CEDAW, de facto unions are protected under the provisions of the marriage and family life of article 16 of the Convention because “women can be exposed to economic risks when a cohabitation / union relationship ends, even when they had contributed to the maintenance of the house and the construction of other common assets”(CEDAW GR 29, in: UNDP, UN-Women, UNODC, OHCHR, 2018, A Practitioner’s Toolkit on Women’s Access to Justice Programming).

The unconstitutionality of many provisions of the Family Law/Civil Code implies their automatic revocation, but there is not much transparency about how this is handled in current legal practice in Guinea-Bissau. The practice of tacit or indirect revocation leaves a wide margin for interpretation and, in fact, it does not help in fixing and clarifying certain rights and equal duties of women and men in marriage, personal status as married and their rights and obligations towards their children.

A “Civil Code Review Project”, implemented by the Bissau Faculty of Law since 2019, is currently establishing revision proposals with technical support of UNDP. The legal situation of Guinean women in relation to marriage and divorce, legal status as a married woman, types of marriage recognized in Guinea-Bissau, ownership and separation of assets, etc. is oscillating between the Civil Code, other national legislation and uncertainty or lack of clarification on the legal status and dimensions of discrimination against women and girls.

The discriminatory provisions of the Civil Code regarding the personal status of women can overlap and are interrelated with gender gaps in other rights, such as the right to be protected against various forms of violence, for example early marriage, widow inheritance, domestic violence and others.

Gender bias in property and inheritance rights

According to state law, women have the same property rights as men. However, in legal practice this is only the case to a limited extent when it comes to land ownership and other mobile goods. Among certain ethnic groups, women do not have access to land or other movable property due to discriminatory inheritance provisions under customary law (www.genderindex.org/country/guinea-bissau). Balanta, Fula, Mandinga, Manjaco and Pepel women cannot be land tenure right holders, except in extraordinary conditions when they receive the land as a gift from fathers or grandfathers which is a form of pre-inheritance to ensure female descendants share in the inherited lands. Women in all these ethnic groups normally also have restricted property rights to other assets (house etc.) (Embalo, 2010, pp. 76-79; Barros& Semedo, 2013, pp. 33-39).

In the Civil Code, men as heads of household have exclusive authority over most family matters. According to article 1686 of the Civil Code, a woman cannot run a business without her husband's consent, unless she owns the entire family property or the couple lives based on the regime of separation of goods. There is little transparency about the *de facto* revocation of this provision.

As discussed above (Socio-economic situation, chap. 2.3), the Land Law (1998/2018) recognizes women's equal land ownership rights but also accepts customary community land ownership systems as a legal form of private land use to the disadvantage of women.

The laws that regulate inheritance also discriminate women. According to article 1678 of the Civil Code, the couple's property belongs to the husband, but the wife can take over if, for some reason, the husband is unable to do so. Customary laws governing some ethnic groups prohibit women from inheriting properties that are instead passed on to a male heir. Some communities practice widow

inheritance (*levirate*), in which a widowed woman is forced to marry one of her husband's male relatives. If she refuses, she and her children can be exposed from family housing and land (www.genderindex.org/country/guinea-bissau/).

Women in Guinea-Bissau do not have complete control over productive assets, and ownership rights are not clarified unequivocally as formal legislation partially contradicts customary laws. In any case, property, women's access to land and control over productive assets (household, inheritance, financial capital) can determine development: it is therefore an essential good to secure guarantees for a loan or to strengthen resilience against threats from climate change, economic crisis etc.

The challenges of law implementation for the promotion of gender equality

The gender equality laws / gender protection laws, especially those that challenge privileged cultural norms and practices of the patriarchal environment in Guinea-Bissau, have been legislated with joint advocacy and lobbying efforts of female activists (from within political institutions and Civil Society) and their strategic alliances with male legislators. The development of the first version of the National Gender Equality Policy (PNIEG 2012), the engagement of the IMC (Instituto Mulher e Criança) and of female MPs have played a critical role, beside significant support from the international community (UNDP, UN-Women, UNIOGBIS), to harmonize national legislation with international and continental conventions.

Laws such as the Criminalization of Female Genital Mutilation (2011), the Law against Domestic Violence (2014) and the Prevention of Trafficking in Women and Children (2011) are test cases that point to the entire process of the policy of mobilization and construction of coalitions between women's rights activists and state actors, despite the resistance that these legal reforms have encountered and still face (World Bank, 2019, Manual FGM).

A comprehensive set of laws and regulations that address gender equality and gender mainstreaming is key while its proper implementation is as important as the laws.

Women and men need to be aware of the protection and provisions made available in the different laws. Effective legal frameworks are at the heart of good governance. Despite notable legal measures to enforce gender equality and other gender-sensitive laws, the implementation challenges in Guinea-Bissau remain enormous. The legal frameworks should become more coherent, while more effort needs to be directed for proper implementation and towards overcoming the difficulties in legal practice. This requires the following key measures:

- Gender mainstreaming across political agendas and the state budget;
- Implementation of PNIEG II;
- Allocation of sufficient human and financial resources to the implementing bodies; strengthening the infrastructures and professional qualification in the justice sector;
- Improvement of existing response capacities of Access to Justice Centers and ADR mechanisms;
- Putting in place solid mechanism for monitoring implementation; intensify existing parliamentary gender mainstreaming mechanisms (special gender commission), involve other governing bodies, research etc. and empower them;
- Coordination with Civil Society and other regional / international organizations;
- Empowerment of communities, women and leaders, through awareness campaigns and interactive training about cultural barriers and widely accepted discriminatory practices.

Struggling for gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of legal pluralism

Each individual must manage several identities, including ethnic affiliation, religion and gender. The (unregulated) coexistence of customary and formal state law in Guinea-Bissau or *legal pluralism* leads people to practice “forum shopping” for seeking justice, i.e. to switch between the systems in looking for the best solution, based on the individual case. Rural people continue to rely mainly on customary law institutions, particularly due to the physical, social and economic barriers in accessing state institutions. Plural legal systems accord women some rights and withhold others on the basis of tradition, customary law and religious beliefs, including denial of women's fundamental rights.

Through partly contradicting and overlapping legal systems women face multiple gender discrimination and vulnerability in Guinea-Bissau. The situation of multiple gender discrimination goes back to outdated state (formal) laws and lack of substantial reform. The Portuguese Civil Code from 1966, in vigor in Guinea-Bissau since 1968, has been completely reformed in Portugal in 1976 (immediately after the democratization) whereas the colonial law is still partly valid in Guinea-Bissau. In law practice, national laws enacted since the late 1970ties do not always prevail against the provisions of the Civil Code.

Regarding family law, the minimum age of marriage, divorce, the property and economic rights of married women, responsibility for children and their education etc., there is a second level of contradictions: the Civil Code and other national legislation vs. traditions and provisions of customary law which are adhered to by the majority of people in Guinea-Bissau.

Shortly after independence, three of the first six laws passed by the National Popular Assembly aimed to overcome situations considered most damaging to women's rights, allowing for equal rights of both, women and men, in divorce, abolishing the legal concept of the “illegitimate” child and recognizing *de facto marriages* (Urdang, 1979, p. 273).

However, the practical impact of the legal production of the independent State of Guinea-Bissau was limited by the fact that *legal pluralism* continued governing family law in which legal norms emanating from the State and customary regulations of the various ethnic communities coexist. Furthermore, the mere production of legal norms, by itself, obviously is insufficient to produce changes in women's living conditions. Obviously, cultural and socio-economic conditions more than state jurisdiction impact on women's daily lives.

Numerous provisions of customary law are discriminatory and widely applied, including the authorization of early and forced marriages, polygamy and levirate. Effective application of laws that protect women's rights are confronted with the broad patriarchal conception of society, especially in rural areas. Few cases of domestic violence, sexual harassment, FGM and early marriage are brought to public attention and justice by women.

In Guinea-Bissau, as in many other African countries, navigating the margin between constitutional/state and customary law is crucial for protecting women and their fundamental human, civic and personal rights. Resolving the contradictions between the formal and informal legal systems by seeking viable compromise can open the way forward for the attainment of gender equality. Customary law and institutions are closer to people and their decisions more binding on community members, especially in matters pertaining to family law. This means that gender relations are often the subject of adjudication in customary forums.

The relationship between the state law and customary law in GB is ambivalent; community-based legislation is partially tolerated but not officially recognized nor binding. The constitution (CRGB, 1996) does not address the issue of the country's legal pluralism. However, customary law is partially accepted by the formal legal jurisdiction, for example at the Sector Court level (*tribunal de sector*) where customary law can be administered as long as it neither contradicts constitutional law nor offends human dignity (human rights). Judges can decide on separation or divorce of married couples

according to the local customs and practices or can apply extrajudicial mediation (Organic Law of Sectoral Courts, 1993).

Another key problem is that the ***justice institutions are built on male dominated decision making that defends the male elite*** and the ***culture of matchundaadi***: the power positions at family, village and state justice level are concentrated overwhelmingly in men's hands. To improve access to justice for women and achieve gender justice, particularly in SGBV related cases, yielding results significantly beyond what has been achieved so far through the Access to Justice Center, remains a great challenge.

The principle problem is the continuum of male dominated decision making in the justice sector.

Most people rely on the councils of elders of their own community to file complaints and have wrongs redressed. The family is the first site for the adjudication on conflicts and complaints. The power to decide at this level lies with male elders and spouses often jeopardizing women's chances of getting a fair hearing. A second level is the village or community level. The people with the power to arbitrate and decide are village chiefs, religious and/or traditional chiefs and again they are mostly men.

Only a small part of cases (less than 10%) enter the state system and here too gender biases in the law and judicial process prevent women's claims receiving a fair hearing (Embalo, Soronda 2008; Mukhopadhyay, 2008). The police, often the first state institution approached, often canalize family conflicts back to traditional authorities. There is empirical evidence for this in the capital Bissau and beyond in rural areas (Embalo, Soronda, 2008, p. 204-205; Mane, Soronda 2008, p.222ff).

Staff imbalances speak its own language. In the formal justice sector among 38 employees at the CAJs currently only 8 are women; the Bar Association has 238 members and among them 33 women; the Supreme Court is composed of 12 male judges with no female judge at all; in the judiciary of the Public Prosecutor's Office only 19 of 103 members are women. Finally, the general judiciary has 62 members, of whom 44 are men and 18 women (CAJ Gender Strategy, 2019, p. 8). In the institutions of customary law there are virtually no women at all among traditional authorities and religious representatives. Some exception are specific religious positions among the animist coastal ethnic groups, such as the *balobeira* (female administrator of an *iran*/spirit shrine), and the *Kansaré* ritual activities controlled by women (*catandeiras*) on behalf of the régulo (I. Embalo/Soronda, 2008; Crowley, 1990; Einarsdottir 2000). Through these and similar religious institutions, women can play an important role in local conflict resolution. So far, there are no quantitative figures available, particularly no data on the percentage between male and female holders of these animist positions.

The reconciliation between national laws and regulations based on traditions and customary law continues to be a huge challenge (UNDP, 2016, Gender Strategy). The CEDAW calls on member states to define and address gender equality not only in legislation at national level, but also through the harmonization with traditions, customary and religious laws.

Due to the wide acceptance of informal practices and customary law by significant parts of the population of Guinea-Bissau, this "harmonization" between the different legal systems is quite difficult in the absence of a well-defined cooperation mechanisms and lack of transparency in their interaction. UNDP commissioned the elaboration of such a cooperation mechanism in early 2020. It is too early to assess its acceptance among the representatives of both, the state and the customary legal systems. The practice of legal pluralism allows for moving back and forth severe cases (including on SGBV, forced marriage, homicide) between the formal and informal system, often more influenced by personal interest and local conditions than by gender justice and human rights' approach (Interview F. Mané).

And the legal practice in Guinea-Bissau?

Polygamy is an important regulatory factor of social life in rural Guinea-Bissau marked by traditions, especially in the absence of any social protection for women and families by the state. As demonstrated above (chap. 2.2) polygamist relations are still widely spread and accepted.

The CEDAW Committee opts for a dual approach to abolish polygamy: by protection of women's rights in existing polygamous marriages and by discouraging future polygamous marriages. In the Maputo Protocol (2003), the AU expresses that "monogamy is encouraged as the preferred form of marriage and that women's rights in marriage and family, including in conjugal polygamous relations are promoted and protected "(UNDP, UN-Women, UNODC, OHCHR, 2018, "A Practitioner's Toolkit on Women's Access to Justice Programming"). Some African countries encourage the registration of traditional and religious weddings which is not the case in Guinea-Bissau. This could be a way to "legalize" these relationships, similar to the "de facto union", to better protect women, including equal options concerning the property regime, children's custody and rights, property rights and provisions in case of separation or death of the husband.³⁰

Based on the importance of traditional and polygamist wedding, it is really quite strange – as noted by the Civil Code Review Project of the Bissau Faculty of Law (FDB, 2019, p. 86) "that the legal system only consecrates civil marriage, denying any legal effect to the relationships validly constituted in the light of customary law".

As long as in the traditional patriarchal societies marriage is the sole basis for women's access to social and economic rights, and these are lost upon divorce or widowhood, **widow marriage or the Levirate system is another pillar of traditional protection and discrimination of women.** It is practiced mainly among Muslim groups. Young widows are encouraged to remarry. Levirate marriage—a tradition in which a widow marries a relative of the deceased husband—provides a modest safety net, but the remarried widow often occupies an inferior position in the new household and marriage might occur without the widow's true consent (WB, 2018, Invisible and excluded).

Approximation between state law and traditions/ customary law? Is it possible?

Approximation between the state law and the traditions /customary law of Guinea-Bissau and cooperation mechanisms between the institutions of legal pluralism are needed to overcome the victimization of girls in early and forced marriage, regulate polygamist relations and achieve more gender equality in divorce, inheritance and property rights / access of women to economically relevant assets.

The most debated topics are:

- a) Within the scope of family law: Early and forced marriage, non-fixing of minimum age and equal age of marriage for both sexes, polygamous marriage and violation of women's rights, gender-based violence, discriminatory inheritance laws or the exclusion of the wife from succession in most ethnic groups, widow status / "levirate" marriage and FGM traditions;
- b) On the economic side: man's dominance over household goods and property of agricultural land, even if the wife works exclusively; barriers to land access; relegation of women's work to low levels in the economic value chain, resulting in a permanent inferior position of women;
- c) Representation and decision-making: Women do not have a proper place in the representation of traditional power / the institutions of traditional power of various ethnic groups; only among groups of the coastal strip and islands (Bijago, Manjaco, Papel) they occupy some important positions in the traditional religious hierarchy. There are no rules for the representation of women in the traditional political area and traditional justice.

³⁰ Other means of proving the existence of a traditional or religious marriage may be a marriage contract, witnesses of the weeding rituals or other appropriate means (CEDAW GR 29 in: UNDP, UN-Women, UNODC, OHCHR, 2018, A Practitioner's Toolkit on Women's Access to Justice Programming).

For the discussion of the traditional justice system and gender equality, in-depth views of actors in the informal / traditional legal system in Guinea-Bissau on gender discrimination practices in customary law and possible improvements (in the fields of inheritance, land tenure, early and forced marriage, domestic violence) should be registered and assessed. This could be done in the near future, within the process of dissemination of the proposal for the new cooperation mechanism between formal and informal justice systems. According to the cooperation mechanism, UNDP and other international actors, together with national NGOs, should act as facilitator (UNDP Guinea-Bissau, February 2020, *Proposta de Mecanismo de Colaboração entre Justiça Formal e Justiça Tradicional*).

Solutions

- To change prejudices and discrimination deeply rooted in so-called traditional society, continuous and comprehensive dialogue with its leaders and women who are well positioned in the social structure of their communities should be used, drawing inspiration from experiences in other countries, in finding viable solutions.
- There is a huge need to build knowledge on gender and access to justice. This strategy should include specifically designed educational and awareness-raising programmes targeting women and men at all levels of society, including Government officials and traditional and community leaders, and should be aimed at building-up / fortifying an ***enabling environment for the transformation and change of stereotypes and discriminatory cultural values, attitudes and practices.***
- Understanding the wealth and limits of legal pluralism can offer us entry points to the potential and limits of cooperation and eventual harmonization of so-called traditional legal rules with imperatives arising from the national legal order and international legal standards.
- It is important to recognize that customary law is not static and its regulations and resulting practices constantly change in response to internal and external factors - starting with changing community norms and reaching interrelation with national legislation. Traditional leaders want to secure their power and authority and therefore might be willing to accept change, even in critical issues. They need to be engaged in working towards solutions at the interface between state and customary law. Several examples from African countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda) demonstrate that traditional authorities and religious leaders could play a much more active role in helping their communities to move away from gender stereotypes, or at least not to deepen them.³¹ Traditional and religious leaders in Gabu, Guinea-Bissau expressed a similar preparedness and positive attitude towards the right of women for the fulfillment of their human rights and gender equality (Interview with Central Regulo of Gabu, Saico Embaló, and the Imam Aladje Malema Djum, Gabu).
- Any strategy to “harmonize” the plural legal system must respond to the question of the meaning of harmonization itself. It must be a consultative process which includes traditional authorities and the community in reforming customary law and implementing it.
- The Codification of customary law has been one solution adopted by several African countries to the problem of plural systems. UNDP Bissau advanced on this issue together with the Faculty of Law, Bissau and the National Research Institute (INEP) between 2008 and 2011.³² For it to actually serve the purpose of achieving gender equal justice outcomes ***the codification process***

³¹ AU Gender Strategy, 2018-2027.

³² Published partially: Fernando Loureiro Bastos, 2011, Estudo sobre a Recolha e a Codificação do Direito Costumeiro em vigor na República da Guiné-Bissau (2008-2011) – Direito Costumeiro Vigente na República da Guiné-Bissau. Balantas. Fulas. Mancanhas. Manjacós. Mandingas. Papéis, Bissau, 2011, electronic version

and its results / regulations have to be made answerable to standards of gender equality.

This would be a major interpretative challenge for the codification project and most likely needs to be done in an independent study.

The harmonization between customary law and state legislation must be perceived as a consultative process

Regarding the improvement of the traditional justice system in Guinea-Bissau, the recent study by the “Practices of justice in the tabanca: A look on traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in the regions of Gabú, Oio and Tombali”, (Voz di Paz, 2019) recommends a more inclusive conflict resolution process in traditional justice: through strengthening the participation of women and young people in the process and decision-making and the appointment of women to the boards and committees of the village so that they can raise their voice among traditional justice actors.

Traditional justice should avoid friendships, familiarity and bribes and be impartial in mediating conflicts. Impartiality and a notable representation of women would strengthen the legitimacy of traditional justice and help to improve the resolution of conflicts involving women and children; respecting the rights of women and children, namely in matters of divorce, inheritance and property sharing. Providing widows and divorcees a secure foothold in society is central to the broader struggle for gender equality.

Important role of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) for the achievement of gender justice

As both systems, the state and the traditional justice system are inherently patriarchal in their attitudes towards women, the resort to ADR is deemed an opportunity that would expand the frontiers of justice for women and enable them to attain a qualitative justice that is democratic, accountable, gender-sensitive and effective. In Guinea-Bissau a formal ADR approach annexed to the justice system is in the formative phase, with technical assistance and support of UNDP in the frame of the Justice Reform Project.

It is hoped that ADR in Guinea-Bissau in the near future will play an increasing role as mechanisms at the interface between state and customary law for conflict solution, including of family cases and GBV. Training of ADR practitioners is on the way through the UNDP justice reform project. How could ADR best be managed and brought closer to the population, especially women and girls, so as to deliver gender just outcomes, needs to be further specified.

ADR would be the means and approach to improve the juridical practice shifting to gendered outcomes as opposed to merely focusing on equal access to justice for all, including marginalized and vulnerable population, particularly women (Interpeace & Voz de Paz, 2019). There are, however, some weaknesses inherent in the practice, particularly as it affects women, which we have to take into account. To enable women to meaningfully benefit from this mode of dispute resolution, ADR practitioners need to undergo gender sensitive training and women and child-friendly fora should be created. Power imbalances during the mediation process could be disadvantageous for women, albeit the ADR principle to create “win-win situations”, particularly in cases of domestic violence, divorce and child custody (Appiagyei-Atua, 2013).

From access to justice to “strategies to achieve gender justice”

Equal access to justice is by itself the first and very important step towards gender equality in law. But it does in no way lead automatically to improvement of the legal situation of women, especially the excluded rural and urban poor segments as we have seen in the relatively low numbers of women using the services of the Access to Justice Centres (CAJ, p. 47-48).

In order to improve practice to shift gendered outcomes it is important to broaden the concept of access to justice from legal justice to gender justice. Interdisciplinary strategies aimed at enhancing women's rights and gender justice needs foregrounding. ***Most importantly mobilizing women themselves for justice has to be the cornerstone of strategies to achieve equal outcomes. Agency and empowerment of women instead of their victimization should be the guideline***, and finally working with legal pluralism in ways that benefit women and promotes equality.

Cultural attitudes towards women underpin all the barriers in accessing justice. Women are not perceived as subjects of rights and equal to men, they are usually seen as objects for whom choices are made. The processes of gendering are most effective because women have internalized the attributes as part of their identity. Well intentioned advocates reinforce this by continually talking about women as helpless victims lacking agency.

2.8 Manifestations of Gender based Violence

In some traditional societies of Guinea-Bissau, the role of women is highly valued, as is the case of the Bijagós Islands ethnic group, run by a matriarchal system. The Pepel and Manjaco ethnic groups, both located at the Guinean coastal zone, are other examples where women play an important social role, as they guarantee the family line (*djorçon* in the Pepel language). The social environment, heavily influenced by ethnic practices and where family and community members play a major role in valuing and supporting women, thus represents a key opportunity to influence sociocultural practices anchored in society (Interpeace & Voz de Paz, 2018).

Apart from these nuances, as discussed in chap. 2.2, the patriarchal model dominates in Guinea-Bissau, where gender-based violence is legitimized by traditional cultural practices, according to which various ethnic groups in the country govern their behavior and attitudes.³³

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) reports document the prevalence of violence against gender in the Bissau-Guinean society (PNIEG 2014; Plano Nacional de Ação 2011; Roque 2011). Although rigorous survey data are lacking and further research is needed, Guinea-Bissau women's organizations and technical and funding partners attest to the wide-spread and socially-accepted violence against women, principally domestic violence in the home by spouses and intimate partners (Interviews with RENLUV, CNAPN, Bioksan).

In her groundbreaking study on "Violence against Women in Guinea-Bissau" (2011), Sylvia Roque indicates that reported cases of GBV are highest in Bissau, Bafatá, Gabú and Oio (p. 14), with a steady increase in complaints from 2006 through 2009 which is interpreted as a positive sign of women's increased willingness to report rather than an increase in violence (p. 21). Among women surveyed, 44% of women said they had been victims of physical violence, and 43% of sexual violence (21% rape and 22% sexual harassment). The respondents gave the following reasons (non-exclusive), contributing to their experience of violence:

- 49%: women are considered inferior to men;
- 34%: the government does not defend or protect victims;
- 33%: women do not have economic assets (Roque, p.21).

Despite the coming into force of the Law against Domestic Violence in 2014, the following factors dissuade women from registering complaints: i) lack of knowledge of laws against gender based and domestic violence and of women's legal rights; ii) lack of competency of state structures, especially the police, to deal with violence against women; and iii) lack of capacity of state as well as traditional institutions or non-profit organizations to advise and protect victims (PNIEG, 2014, p.46; Gender Profile, 2015); iv) the fear of social pressure that women may be subject to when denouncing the violence that they are targeted and that may culminate in the end of relationships. In most communities, especially in rural areas, denouncing means turning the aggressor over to the authorities. Many Guinean communities do not report cases of GBV to formal institutions; they prefer the social arrangements developed in the community to resolve conflicts.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is recognized as an extreme form of discrimination and gender-based violence. It violates women's basic human rights, such as freedom from violence, the right to physical integrity, the right to non-discrimination and the freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment: rights that are all guaranteed in the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau (CRGB 1996). Its objective is to control the body, sexuality and reproductive rights of women and girls (World Bank, Manual, 2019).

³³ See 2.1.1. These practices include female genital mutilation (FGM), forced and / or early marriage, levirate, gerontophilia, polygamy and domestic violence (Balde & Mendes, 2017).

FGM affects 52.1% of women between 15 and 49 years, whereas among young girls aged 0 to 14 years, 29.7% were the target of this harmful practice (MICS 6, 2020). According to other sources as much as 50% of girls up to the age of 14 have been subjected to female genital mutilation (Casa dos Direitos, 2016; as already noted, statistical data are not always very accurate).

The procedure as practiced in the country involves the worst form of FGM: excision with mutilation. In Guinea-Bissau, FGM is rooted in the custom of “*fanado*” – a traditional initiation ceremony of many ethnic groups which marks the passage of both boys and girls into the adult community and involves circumcision of boys and genital mutilation of girls. Efforts to end the *fanado* practice of FGM for girls have had some success through programs of alternative *fanado* rituals without excision, and alternative sources of income for the female excisers (*fanatecas*). The National Committee to End Harmful Traditional Practices CNAPN (Comité Nacional para o Abandono de Práticas Nefastas) found that in Muslim communities, the practice is also rooted in what many believe to be a requirement of Islam. MICS6 data show that in the predominantly Muslim ethnic groups more than 90% of adult women have experienced FGM: 93,7 % Fula, 89,7% Mandinga, 87,4% (MICS 6, 2020). The National Islamic Council and groups such as CNPN argue that FGM is a practice that pre-dated Islam in Guinea-Bissau and has nothing to do with Koranic recommendations (CNPN, 2013, p.12). The MICS4 2010 survey showed that a larger percentage of women without education had experienced FGM as a child (65%) than those with education (28%), but the practice is common across all income groups: 40% of the richest quintile; approximately 60% of the three middle quintiles; and 50% of the poorest (MICS4, Quadro CP.8). Women who have experienced FGM themselves are highly likely to have at least one daughter who has been excised (72%).

Between 2006 and 2014, the overall prevalence of FGM for women aged 15-49 stayed roughly constant (44.5% in 2006 and 44.9% in 2014). It appears to increase, with 52% in 2018 (MICS 6, 2020). In 2006, 27.9% of women (aged 15-49) who had heard of FGM stated that they believed the practice of FGM should continue, while in 2014, that figure had dropped to 12.8%, while 81.4% believed it should be stopped (MICS 2014). ***According to more recent statistics, an overwhelming majority of women in Guinea-Bissau believe that the practice of FGM should be stopped: 85.8% of women living in urban areas and 68,6% of women living in rural communities*** (MICS 6, 2020).

Between 2008 and 2018, about 389 communities publicly declared total abandonment of FGM practices in their communities. In 2018, a “Second National Strategy for the Abandonment of FGM” was adopted, which aims to consolidate and reinforce these results (World Bank, Manual, 2019). According to a recent study by INEP, respondents were asked whether they were aware of the consequences or risks of FGM. The majority (76.3%) confirmed to be aware of the consequences and risks of FGM (INEP 2017). As for the measures to be taken to prevent the practice, the majority of respondents (73.5%) opted for some form of prevention that would avoid the practice of FGM, some control measure. A minority of 26.5% replied that there should be no control measure.³⁴

Recent studies on FGM in West Africa show that in spite of the creation of political, legal and religious environments conducive to abandon FGM, the actual number of women exposed to this violation has so far not been significantly reduced. Advocacy campaigns, public declarations to abandon FGM by religious leaders and communities, improvement of female education and other measures do not bring about the desired change in attitude and behavior for giving up the practice of harmful

³⁴ 42.5% of respondents who opted for prevention indicated that a good measure of control involves awareness among *fanatecas* (women who perform the excision), parents, schools, associations and the community; 10% responded that law enforcement is sufficient because it punishes; 8.6% responded that monitoring and surveillance should be strengthened; 7.4% answered that there should be control, but also community involvement (World Bank, Manual, 2019).

cutting/mutilation towards total abandonment or towards replacing it with alternative ceremonies without bodily interventions (Carvalho et. al. 2018).

The situation in Guinea-Bissau is similar with a rising tendency towards clandestine FGM. Although quite a number of cases have been reported to the Judiciary Police, so far nearly no condemnation has been imposed. On the other hand, people who do not want to give up the practice of FGM have decided to adopt a new strategy, subjecting the girls to excision when they are newly born, and practice FGM hidden from the public, without any of the usual festivities (Embalo, 2020, workshop discussion).

Early and Forced Marriage

According to international protocols, marriage should not occur before age 18. The practice of ***early and forced marriage*** is widespread among the most diverse ethnic groups of Guinea-Bissau and incorporates different types of violence (psychological, physical and sexual). Main victims of this practice are girls from 12 to 16 years. Besides personal interest and sexual abuse, forced marriage is related to financial hardship and extreme poverty in rural areas. It is often used as payment of debts: in return for loans, money, jobs etc. a girl is offered to the “benefactor”. The woman is seen as an economic asset, reinforced with the dowry system. With the marriage authorization for girls from 14 years age and boys from 16 years age (CC 1601), the Civil Code gives almost an endorsement of Guinean law to forced /early marriage.

It was only in 2010, more than 35 years after independence, that the legal age for marriage was definitely fixed at 18 years for both sexes through the *Law of Reproductive Health* (2010). Nevertheless, this harmful practice continues and is rarely brought to public light, unless in some cases when local/national NGO or the church have the opportunity to intervene and assist the victims.

MICS6 data show that 25.7% of women aged 18-49 were married under the age of 18, and 8.1% under the age of 15. The MICS6 study also showed that 39.2% (48%, in MICS 4, 2010) of married women aged 15-49 in Guinea-Bissau are living in a polygamous relationship (MICS 6, 2020). Prevalence of both early marriage and polygamous marriages are higher in rural areas. Other traditional marriage practices which violate women's rights are *levirate* (forced marriage to a brother-in-law on death of one's husband) and *sororate* (forced marriage to a sister's widower), although statistics on this type of forced marriage are not available.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is still a worrying reality and very difficult to overcome: 41.8% of women compared to 28.7% of men between 15 and 49 years of age declare that the husband is justified in beating his wife in at least five circumstances (Casa dos Direitos, 2016). MICS 6 (2020) finds that circa 37% men and women justify domestic violence. The 2014 law establishes sentences of up to 12 years in prison. Although the police intervene in domestic disputes, if requested, women are often reluctant to report on forms of domestic violence, including rape by the spouse or intimate partner due to stigma and social pressure (www.genderindex.org/country/guinea-bissau/; Gender Profile, 2015).

In 3 years of engagement in the northern region of Cacheu, the NGO Manitese has registered more than 80 cases of gender-based violence, mostly cases of domestic violence (in a total of 38 villages). Cases included psychological and economic violence, sexual violence and forced marriages. The organization works with communities to try to reduce cases of gender-based violence by promoting awareness-raising activities on the factors that cause violence, its consequences and how to avoid it to build a peaceful community, free from SGBV. They also developed awareness-raising activities in schools aimed at adolescents on gender-based violence, children's rights and the promotion of human rights values in the school environment. Nevertheless, only two of the cases that have been followed up resulted in legal processes which has been considered as “a shocking thing, for us who try to

sensitize people to the complaint according to the laws in force in the country" (<https://www.manitese.it/en/nadile-violence-against-women>, retrieved on 11 October 2020).

Gender based Violence has to be fought with a whole series of actions aimed at raising collective awareness of the phenomenon. A change in mentality and behavior to achieve gender equality needs to engage against the systemic practice of SGBV widespread in all areas of life and awareness-raising activities that include above all men who are often the perpetrators of the abuses. In addition to violence, women suffer from desperation and powerlessness because society imposes on them the burden of family humiliation in the act of reporting (<https://www.manitese.it/en/nadile-violence-against-women>, retrieved on 11 October 2020).

Ensuring the physical integrity of women and girls by special laws that prevent and combat all forms of sexual and gender-based violence as well as providing multisector support services to victims.

With the Gender Protection Laws (against FGM, Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking and for Reproductive Health) a strong and comprehensive legal body has been established in Guinea-Bissau to guarantee the physical integrity of women and girls and respond to all forms of SGBV. Female excision and domestic violence are defined as public crimes; this condition allows the competent authorities to open legal procedures without complaint from the victim, and without denunciation and participation of the victim (or legal representatives) in the process.

Passing legislation to address gender-based violence is only a first step to overcome the problem. It is also essential to ensure that countries properly implement laws at all levels and that their judicial systems hold perpetrators accountable. In a second phase, it is necessary to elevate these laws beyond formal lines towards true ownership and implementation. Legal mechanisms for the explanation and dissemination of the aforementioned laws to communities should be strengthened, particularly in rural areas and in local languages, including interaction with traditional structures (local authorities, religious leaders, djambacus, fanatecas etc.).

The State has created legal instruments and intervention structures, but does not ensure their operation in a way that affects the applicability of the different legal instruments under their care. Let us see, as a paradigmatic example, the creation of the Institute for Women and Children. It is an exemplary structure from a formal point of view, but it does not receive from the State the human, logistical and financial resources that are fundamental to the fulfillment of the purposes for which it was created. This tendency is extended to the other structures created. The laws do not work if they are not accompanied by strong institutions that guarantee their enforcement and it is in this field that the State must make a qualitative leap (Interview with Institute for Women and Children).

There is a lack of serious political commitment regarding the implementation, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of the measures recommended. The State tends to delegate this responsibility – the difficult enforcement and implementation - to international cooperation organizations, NGOs and CSOs. In fact, this is a real reversal of roles.

Main Civil Society Partners in Combat against SGBV

NGOs and networks are the most important implementing partners in the challenge to reduce and finally eradicate FGM and all forms of SGBV in Guinea-Bissau. Among the main organizations are the *Network Against Gender Violence* (RENLUV), created in 2003, and active in the areas of prevention, reduction and combating of gender- and child-based violence; the *National Committee for the Abandonment of Harmful Traditional Practices for Women and Child Health* (CNAPN), created in 1996, with the objective to combat traditional practices harmful to the health of women and children; advocacy, awareness campaigns and capacity-building against FGM and for the empowerment of women; and *The Friends of Children Association* (AMIC), one of the eldest Bissau-Guinean NGOs, active

since the 1980ties, and involved in the rescue of *talibé* children and adolescent girls seeking help in cases of forced marriage, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

They and similar organizations need support and technical assistance to strengthen national capacity to deliver high quality and appropriate prevention against SGBV and multi-sectorial (health, psychological, socio economic and legal) responses for the victims of GBV and harmful practices (FGM, child marriage etc.). Another important cornerstone would be support to GBV-FGM data collection, analysis and dissemination, including research studies, to better understand its quantitative dimension, social indicators and reluctance of women to seek justice.

In June and July 2020 more cases of SGBV came to be known in which the police was criticized for its passive and discriminatory attitude. The promoters of the initiative "Woman is not a drum" denounced "alarming situations" of cases of gender-based violence that continue to occur in Guinea-Bissau (<https://www.publico.pt/2020/07/24/mundo/noticia/iniciativa-mulheres-guineenses-denuncia-situacoes-alarmantes-violencia-genero-pais-1925728>, retrieved 8. 10.2020).

The initiative launched by young Guineans to register, denounce and follow up on cases of violence against women, reports that the "police do not seem to intend to act" in the face of specific cases of physical aggression in Bissau, including the rape of a 15 year old housemaid by her patron who was released from prison after some hours and the case of a 20-year-old man who was beaten with glass blades by a group of youths, for being homosexual. When the victim filled out a complaint at the police, the agents only laughed and made fun of him (www.publico.pt, ibid).

Another innovative initiative to tackle the severe situation of SGBV in Guinea-Bissau in the times of the Corona pandemic is the online platform "Bioksan", a joint project of the Ana Pereira Foundation and RENLUV and other organizations working on SGBV in Guinea-Bissau, assisted by the UN-System and the World Bank. Within six months Bioksan reached out to more than 110.000 people (videos, radio and TV messages, the online platform and door to door awareness campaigns), informing about Covid-19 and gender based violence in Guinea-Bissau and the risks of increase of sexual abuses, gender based violence and severe human rights violation of women and girls due to and during the pandemic. 19 cases of GBV were registered by the Bioksan Platform, from the 1st of July to the 31st of August. The most verified type of violence was physical and forced marriage. Most of the complaints were made by the victims themselves; average age of the victims is 17 years, with the youngest victim being 3 years old and the oldest 49 years old. Male aggressors are the majority, all of whom have family relations with the victims (Bioksan platform/Fundação Ana Pereira, Activity Report, September 2020).

As more baseline data are not available at present, it is too early to conclude on the increase of SGBV during the Corona pandemic. The reaching out to so many people, men, women and children nationwide in the time frame of some months and the conducting of awareness campaigns in different formats, via all available media and in person, is a significant success. The young virtual women, 18 year-old Bioksan, is on the way to become a leading figure in the fight against SGBV and Corona in Guinea-Bissau.

2.9 Leaving No One Behind – specific vulnerable groups in gender inequality

The concept of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims at ensuring that progress is more than an improvement in averages and that gains come first for the most disadvantaged groups, those most vulnerable to violence, discrimination and social exclusion.

“Leaving no one behind means prioritizing human beings’ dignity and placing the progress of the most marginalized communities first – women and girls being all too often at the top of the list. It urges us to address the structural causes of inequality and marginalization that affect them.”

(UN-Women 2017; <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/fge-leaving-no-one-behind-in-action-2017-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5026>).

The criteria for gender marginalization are manifold: The UN-Women Fund for Gender Equality mentions 18 types of specific vulnerabilities. Whereas rural and young women, almost everywhere in the developing world, are considered the leading groups of marginalized women, there are smaller highly vulnerable groups, such as single mothers, elderly women, domestic workers, women living with HIV, women living with disabilities etc. (UN-Women, 2017, Fact Sheet, Fund for Gender Equality).

Specific vulnerabilities

Extreme poverty in the many inaccessible and remote areas of Guinea-Bissau make ***rural women*** the first group among the most vulnerable and marginalized, threatened to be left behind economically, in health and education coverage as well as in the fulfillment of their social and political rights, including access to justice. The number of women in this category may well be about 10% of the female population, or roughly 100.000 persons.

Three more specific groups of women that are extremely vulnerable in Guinea-Bissau are informal domestic workers, women living with HIV and the elderly women. Due to the intersectional character of vulnerabilities, we find women with overlapping vulnerabilities: for example, an elderly rural women of a remote area, living with HIV.

The group of ***informal domestic women servants*** consists mainly of adolescent girls and young women from the countryside who work in the capital and other regional cities in better income households without any social protection, regulation of their labor rights, fixed and regular minimum wages etc. They are easily left behind as they are nearly invisible as a group. They often work far away from their residential areas and families, are young and unexperienced. In 2016, a “National Association for the Protection of Domestic Workers” (Associação Nacional de Proteção dos Trabalhadores Domésticos (ANAPROMED) was founded, which needs to be strengthened for better claiming the rights of about 7,500 female domestic workers, mainly illiterate, in the capital. Various cases of sexual abuse of these women and practices of domestic violence have become public through local media in Bissau in 2019 and 2020 (<https://www.dn.pt/lusa/oitenta-e-cinco-por-cento-das-empregadas-domesticas-de-bissau-sao-analfabetas---associacao-9080207.html>).

Women living with HIV are a highly vulnerable group in Guinea-Bissau due to high prevalence of the disease,³⁵ social stigmatization, resistance against testing and treatment due to social/ family pressure,

³⁵ Prevalence in adults 15-49 is 3.4% with disparities existing within the country vs. 1.4% in West and Central Africa (<https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-west-and-central-africa-overview>, 05.08.2020, retrieved on 12.10.2020); the total of registered infected in Guinea-Bissau is 44.000 of whom only 15.500 receive ART according to the National Secretary to Fight HIV/AIDS in Guinea-Bissau, see: https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/mundo/seis-pessoas-infetadas-por-dia-com-hivsida-na-guine-bissau-durante-estado-de-emergencia-governo_n1241840, 02.07.2020, retrieved on 13.10.2020.

no access to testing and insufficient provision of antiretroviral treatment. Moreover, a specific gender strategy to combat HIV is missing, including also female sex workers³⁶ and LBTG.

Adolescent girls and young women (aged 15-24) are almost twice as likely to acquire HIV than their male counterparts for numerous and complex reasons, namely SGBV, FGM and early marriage. Girls and young women must be placed at the centre of the response to reduce HIV. This involves meaningfully addressing gender inequality, tackling harmful traditional practices such as child marriage, and increasing educational opportunities. The number of infected women in Guinea-Bissau might oscillate between 25.000 and 40.000, as there is about 35% gap of unknown status/unreported cases (<https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-west-and-central-africa-overview>, 05.08.2020, retrieved on 12.10.2020).

Elderly women are another almost invisible group that is highly vulnerable and marginalized due to age, poor health system and the fact that elderly women are left behind in the villages of origin while their families, children/ grandchildren migrate to the regional towns or capital. There is no regular care for the elderly. They are at risk or are living in extreme poverty and no social care system is in place to allow for a dignifying ageing of these women. Elderly, over 65 years, count for about 2.9% of the population (UNFPA.org/data/world population/GW, 2020), whereas women exceed men.

The common assumption, which has underpinned mainstream poverty and human development efforts in the West African context, – that the elderly are relatively less affected by or less vulnerable to poverty than younger age-groups, or are largely adequately supported by family – is unjustified (INEP/UNECA, 2016, Ageing, Country Report Guinea-Bissau). African countries, among them Guinea-Bissau, have fallen behind in developing capacities to address the needs of their ageing populations which are wide-ranging.

88.7% of the older population are illiterate, with men at 79.1% and women at a rate as high as 96.5%, a fact that has contributed to greater dependence of older persons, especially in health issues. The efforts made by older people in Guinea-Bissau to continue working should be noted. Elderly women perform household or income-generating activities as a way to ensure their livelihoods and that of their children and grandchildren for whom they often care.³⁷ Poverty that affects the majority of the Guinean population appears to be more pronounced in the older population, mostly in rural areas where the largest percentage of this population is concentrated (about 4.1% of the total population compared to 1.9% in the urban centers, INEP/UNECA, 2016, Ageing). When elderly women fall ill, they are sometimes exposed to accusations of witchcraft in the rural environment which limits the family support given to them, leading to isolation, more poverty and depression of those women (INEP/UNECA, 2016, Ageing).

³⁶ Female sex workers are a key population with high infection rates, over 25%; they are forced sometimes to work without condoms and are even more vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic due to lack of clients and closing of bars etc. , see Lindmann, J. et. al, 2020, "The HIV care continuum and HIV-1 drug resistance among female sex workers: a key population in Guinea-Bissau", <https://aidsrestherapy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12981-020-00290-3>.

³⁷ Among the Bijagos ethnic group, through joining knowledge and gerontocracy a social security system has been established which allows for a more healthy and dignified ageing. In the Bijagos society, at each stage of age individuals have their obligation in terms of service delivery to the community. Older people have less obligations in terms of physical work, devoting themselves more to spiritual and leisure activities. The younger become responsible for the services performed by the older with regard to activities that require more physical effort.

Three principles of the LNOB-strategy for gender equality and women empowerment

The LNOB-strategy consists of three principles for overcoming marginalization and the disadvantaged status of the most vulnerable gender groups, such as those exemplified here for Guinea-Bissau. All should be considered in future programming and projects of UNDP:

1. The support to local/national women organizations and NGOs should be aimed at those who carry out projects with high relevance and impact for the most vulnerable groups.
2. Project design needs to identify the specific obstacles that hinder marginalized women groups from accessing their rights and develop strategies to overcome key barriers.
3. The objective of the LNOB-strategy is to invert the situation, to enable marginalized and most vulnerable groups of women to be at the forefront of development by assisting them to get the necessary skills and resources to become economically and politically empowered. Hence, they will be able to make substantive contributions to their families and communities

(UN-Women 2017; <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/fge-leaving-no-one-behind-in-action-2017-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5026>).

2.10 The role of women in peacebuilding and conflict management in Guinea-Bissau

Strengthening the role of women in peace processes has been a priority of the international community since the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2000. Guinea-Bissau signed the UN-Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008) and 1899 (2009) on the participation of women in peacebuilding and their protection in conflict and post-conflict situations. Conflicts, and consequently peace, are profoundly influenced by and impact gender. Better understanding the gendered dynamics of conflict and implementing gender inclusive programming are critical to ensuring that peacebuilding efforts are more effective and sustainable (Interpeace 2020, p. 7).

The Guinea-Bissau's peacebuilding context reveals that there is a persisting lack of readiness to engage in constructive dialogue and reconciliation. The lack of meaningful dialogue among key political actors has prevented progress in advancing political and institutional reforms, which are key to bring stability and lasting peace to the country. Women continuously bear the brunt of intra-community and internal political conflicts but have been underrepresented in the peace process for many years, if not to say, they have been systematically excluded from negotiations for peace and political negotiations more generally. The contributions that Guinea-Bissau women are making to local mediation, nevertheless, face a number of barriers, namely the deterioration of socio-political conditions and the wide spread patriarchal culture (*matchundaade*) among the main political stakeholders.

In response to continuous crisis, aggravated by the military coup of 2012, several peace initiatives and mediation networks emerged to campaign for the political, social and economic rights of Guinean women, such as the PPM, the Women Political Platform, REMPSECAO, the Women CEDEAO Peace Network, WMN, Women Mediation Network (RENUME-GB), the Association of Female Journalists, the Association of Female Jurists, the Association of Young Women Leaders etc. Aiming at boosting women's participation in peacebuilding processes and in political representation, UNIOGBIS and the UN-system in GB supported the creation of some of these women's organizations by politically engaged and well educated women from the urban elite in Bissau. UNDP and some agencies also are working with rural women for their economic empowerment, in the frame of the UNDP/UNDC Local Development Project, the PBF Project on Political Dialogue where WFP is focused on rural women and environmental projects, such as those discussed in chap. 2.4 (UNDP/GEF).

Working on the elimination of gender-based violence and defending the culture of nonviolence and peace, these women organizations strive for full political participation of women and engage in national dialogue, peace and stabilization in Guinea-Bissau. The women peacebuilders have played an important role in the negotiation process of the Conakry Agreement and the election/post-election crisis management in 2018/2019 against immense difficulties and resistance from powerful male politicians and masculine dominated institutions. Women are often the first to notice the rising tensions that can escalate to violence, be it at home or in society, respond first to conflict conditions, restore social peace and step in to repair shattered relations and structures.

If women are engaged and actively participate in peacebuilding, then it will be stronger, more effective and a more inclusive process. Based on own local experience and calibrated support from the UN and other international actors women perceive the importance of constructive dialogue and reconciliation for Guinea-Bissau and are willing to support the peace process, because they clearly see the benefits they derive from it.

Despite important progress in Bissau, beyond a relatively small group of women politicians and female Civil Society activists in the capital, most women from the country side continue to be excluded from political processes and the engagement for social justice, peace, security and conflict resolution due

to discriminatory traditions and laws, social stereotypes and institutional obstacles. Even when women are instrumental in brokering and sustaining peace, their contribution is rarely visible or honored.

Reinforce women's security and women conflict mediator capacities

Discriminatory legislation renders women and girls particularly vulnerable to conflict-related violence and human rights violations. The Guinea-Bissau Penal Code considers the practice of torture and other cruel and degrading treatment as well as sexual violation as crime acts (Art. 102, Art. 133). However, there is no specific legislation that protects women against political motivated violence in its various dimensions, especially in armed conflicts. Specific legal provisions should be elaborated to protect women against these war atrocities in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The *National Action Plan* (NAP) of Resolution 1325 (NAP, 2010, p. 13) defines equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their contribution to all efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, as indispensable condition for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security in the country.

Stronger linkages among the women networks (Network of Women Mediators, Voice of Peace, Political Platform of Women, Network of Parliamentary Women etc.), their efficient training in conflict mediation at the highest political level as well as in local communities and effective financing mechanisms should be established and promoted by a legal protocol with supervision of the Parliament.

Main Organizations

The Women Political Platform (PPM, Plataforma Politica das Mulheres)

PPM is the oldest of these women's organizations, created in 2008, and encompasses important NGOs and all political parties. It is the key mechanism for dissemination of information and of advocacy for women's political participation without restriction of political party, and has been essential to the success of actions on women's rights. (Gender Profile, 2015).

Women commonly expressed that political parties use them to mobilize votes but do not take them seriously as political candidates. It was felt that apart from the sensitization of political parties' leadership, activities should be undertaken to boost women's capacity, as well as their motivation to engage effectively in formal politics alongside their male counterparts.

PPM operates at different levels in electoral processes and has been instrumental in the creation of laws combating gender inequality and gender violence and criminalizing female genital mutilation (2011). With the support of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, PPM was also key in establishing the gender quota law (Parity Law) in 2018.¹⁶ It has a well-established women's network in the provinces that facilitated the creation of other networks, such as, REMUME (Carvalho, 2020). PPM works with political parties; the Platform constitutes the largest instrument in the country for awareness raising and political participation of Bissau-Guinean women. It is a space for the consultation of women from all political and social quarters, which aims mainly to increase their participation in decision-making bodies and within political parties. In effect, this structure houses more than 11 female civil society organizations, with a focal point in each political party. Therefore, it is an indispensable partner today for all actions in the "Women, Peace and Security Agenda".

The Women's Mediation Network (WMN, Rede de Mulheres Mediadoras, REMUME) was created 2015 with UN support. Its mandate and vision is to mobilize a critical mass of women and men from the community to national levels and develop their capacities in dialogue and mediation processes. The network seeks to be a voice for women and contribute to a larger infrastructure for peace in the ongoing national reconciliation and peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.

REMUME brings together women with national political profile and local activists and has mostly been effective as community mediation. The Women's Mediation Network has structures in the different regions of GB (20 in the Autonomous Sector of Bissau, 8 in the Eastern Province (Bafata and Gabu), 19 in the south, and 8 in the north. Recently, the WMN has been supported by a PBF project in Guinea-Bissau,³⁸ to strengthen and enhance women's mediation skills to better be able to play an active role and engage more effectively in peace processes. In June and July 2019 UNIOGBIS provided training aimed at reinforcing and guiding the operationalization of local level mediation. It is also intended to contribute to strengthening coordination, communication, advocacy and leadership skills.³⁹

At local level, REMUME is a platform that unites both men and women working with different organizations in conflict management. They mediate mainly in land disputes, inheritance conflicts, gender violence and cattle theft. Mediators are trained by different CSOs (Carvalho, 2020).

The creation of REMUME was crucial for the affirmation of women in local conflict management and mediation – a role usually attributed to the male-dominated group of traditional and religious authorities. According to Carvalho (2020) it is by far the network with the strongest potential for implementing FemWise's objectives for women's mediation.⁴⁰

The Group of Women Facilitators, was created in 2017 and recently reorganized as the *Guinean Council of Women Facilitators for Dialogue* (Conselho das Mulheres Guineenses Facilitadores de Dialogo - CMGFD). It initially brought together 10 women with different backgrounds occupying positions of public visibility and leadership. The group led several initiatives, ranging from dialogue promotion to peaceful and well-mediated processes in order to minimize the impasse arising from the Conakry Agreement (Abdenur, 2017; Abdenur, 2018). Their coordinator is a well-known businesswoman (Zinda Vaz) who has been facilitating peace dialogues since the conflict of 1998.

The Group of Women Facilitators defended its performance as an attempt to "break the ice" between the main dissenting parties to the Conakry Agreement (President José Mario Vaz, and PAIGC President Domingos Simões Pereira) - who had not spoken to each other since two years due to their political differences.

Although the women were able to opening communication channels in that scenario marked by impasse, they did not receive sufficient support and resources so to have at least a chance to transform the conflicting character of Guinean politics. After about half a year of mediation, they felt even personally intimidated and exhausted by the slow progress and temporarily diminished their engagement (Britto, 2018). Other engagements followed after the 2019 general election to ensure the functioning of parliament and the new government.

2018-2020, PPF project "Support to political dialogue and national reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau", implemented by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

³⁹ Website UNIOGBIS, www.uniogbis.org, retrieved on 09.10.2020.

⁴⁰ <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/final-concept-note-femwise-sept-15-short-version-clean-4-flyer.pdf>: FemWise-Africa aims to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The network provides a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity building and networking aimed at enhancing the implementation of the commitments for the inclusion of women in peacemaking in Africa. Bringing women involved in Track 1, Track 2 and Track 3 mediation together can be a powerful partnership and learning approach for women peacemakers on the ground, who are often not in the spotlight. Through this network type local women peacemakers can be linked with formal processes. This also ensures that their work translates into influence and impact. The networks have been credited for activating and multiplying the role of women in community-level peacemaking. They have identified and exposed "hidden" women mediators who are working in community-level mediation processes – experiences often not known at local, national and international level.

However, the influence of women mediators to move the current political scenario in Guinea-Bissau towards inclusive and lasting peaceful solutions is rather limited. In a recent meeting (July 2020) the Guinean Council of Women Facilitators for Dialogue, which included representatives from all regions, all political parties with parliamentary seats and representatives of Women's organizations, held a debate with UNIOGBIS and UNDP on the current situation and the way forward for the civil society women activists who have been silenced in the post-presidential election political crisis. They reflected about an intervention approach centered on the impact of the political crisis on women and strategies of women's intervention to resolve the conflict, based on understanding, solidarity and cohesion among women as a way to overcome the fragility resulting from the context of social and political division (UNIOGBIS, website).

Voz di Paz (Voice of Peace), a CSO working as national branch of Interpeace, was created in 2007 and is mandated to help create and broaden dialogue on the main obstacles that hinder peace in the country and to support local, national and regional actors to prevent future conflict. Voz di Paz developed a useful participatory conflict analysis and studies on gender topics, such as "Nô obi Mindjer ku Mininu", um olhar sobre os mecanismos tradicionais de resolução de conflitos nas regiões de Gabú, Oio e Tombali (2019), and "Sintidu di justisa" (The Sense of Justice) – Participatory barometer on the perceptions and experiences of the population: How to improve the governance of justice in Guinea-Bissau (2020) through country-wide consultation processes. In the Regional Spaces of Dialogue (RSD), set up by Voz di Paz, community leaders acted as facilitators and created a space that encourages debate about various issues. The Voz di Paz programme created a culture of dialogue to build bridges between all stakeholders, such as citizens, structured constituencies, organizations, and the military (<https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library2/Case-Studies/Creating-a-National-Dialogue-to-Prevent-Future-Conflict-in-Guinea-Bissau>). These structures relieved many tensions throughout the country as the population began to work together to solve their issues. With its sound and broad local structures, Voz di Paz supports women conflict mediation initiatives at local level, including through its female RDS members. The organization is an important partner in research on gender and peacebuilding and practical support of women mediators at local level.

Where do we stand?

Women are suffering most from gender based and political violence and the breakdown of state and community structures in the country. As mediators, in the broad sense of bridge-builders between parties, women identify early warning signs of deterioration, provide humanitarian services, facilitate political transition and tackle problems quickly before they aggravate. As women, they can bring to the table new and different issues that are relevant to their communities and groups and may not have been discussed. These evidences highlight the need for equal gender representation and equal gender decision making in peacebuilding efforts. "For gender inclusive processes to positively contribute to peacebuilding efforts, they must go beyond representation and include opportunities and strategies for influencing, strategies that specifically challenge and transform power for more equal decision-making." (Interpeace, 2020, p.6).

Although progress in peacebuilding is slow in face of the complex and persisting political crisis in Guinea-Bissau, the enhanced institutional capacity of the women networks discussed above has increased society-wide awareness on women rights, particularly political and human rights. Women activists of CSOs in Guinea-Bissau have gained momentum as credible facilitators for constructive dialogue. There has been notable efforts to bridge the disconnection between the available mediation capacities of women and the formal and informal peace processes. The role of women peacebuilders has become more visible at the national level, due to the joint efforts of these networks and their international supporters (UN, ECOWAS) in empowering women.

With a relatively high level of organization and unbroken engagement, these women developed resilience capacities despite numerous setbacks that enable them to harness and to broaden peace agency and bring diverse actors into the peacebuilding processes.

Resilience manifests through individual, relational, and institutional practices, allowing women and their communities to cope with the consequences of conflict and positively transform relationships.

The links to regional organizations, such as ECOWAS (Women Peace Network) and the AU (Femwise), and the respective UN entities, those represented in the country and those with regional offices (UN-Women) should be further strengthened. Support from these organizations should be driven by local needs and adapted to the multiethnic context of Guinea-Bissau to enhance the sense of local ownership of the women peacebuilders. These links should focus on capacity-building, including in rural and remote communities, and be sustained by lessons learned from the region and beyond as well as the promotion of South-South cooperation, particularly creating links to women's groups in other Lusophone countries (Abdenur 2018).

PBF-funded projects, implemented by UNDP, are ongoing to strengthen inclusive and sustainable national capacities (mainly women activists) for dialogue and mediation with effective mechanisms to engage in constructive dialogue early on, including at the community level, when tensions arise, and to prevent escalation into political and institutional crises. The women organizations are assisted with the development of strategic plans, operational frameworks and training sessions on advocacy and leadership skills in dialogue and mediation.

The mediation capacities of women should be further explored at the local rural level where traditional women mediation figures exist among some ethnic groups who might play an important role in conflict management at community level. This is the case, for example, with the *Kuonhinnhás* of the ethnic group of Mandinga. These are individuals, men and women, at local level with a specifically trustworthy, confidence building relation to the population in their villages which has been built over time and is based mainly on the broad life experience of these local mediation protagonists (Soronda, 2008, Fode Mane, p. 227-228).

On the other hand, efforts to integrate men into women's mediation networks should be intensified. They can play a significant role in advocating for broad issues and equal political participation when men and boys understand their gender specific sources of vulnerability and resilience and masculinities can be valorized that promote peaceful behavior, transforming the dominant culture of *matchundaade* that pushes men towards violence (see Interpeace, 2020, p. 7).

2.11 Gender Inequality and gender needs in health and education

There are severe gender gaps in the health and education sector. To overcome them, affirmative measures to promote the health and education of girls and women are needed. A package of affirmative action needs to be implemented for achieving gender equality and develop social and health services that can guarantee basic human rights to education, maternal and reproductive health.

Huge gender inequalities in the health sector and overall lack of qualified treatment

Gender discrimination in health remains a significant problem in Guinea-Bissau. Although the Constitution guarantees equality between men and women (Art.25), women often have lower health outcomes than men, especially pregnant women. The disproportionate burden of disease borne by women of childbearing age combined with their specific needs for access to sexual and reproductive health care of standard quality means that women are much more exposed to the weak health system than men. Their needs deserve extra attention and concentrated efforts by the State (UNIOGBIS, 2017: Right to Health).

The right to health has been codified in several international and regional human rights treaties to which Guinea-Bissau is a party (legally binding). The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) recognizes “the right of everyone to enjoy the highest possible standard of physical and mental health” and “the need to take concrete measures to achieve the full realization of that right” (UNIOGBIS, 2017: Right to Health). Until now, Guinea-Bissau does not have a Health Basic Law in place which should outline the main facilities and services of the health sector and the population's rights in the field of health.

Poor health service conditions, especially in the country’s rural areas, impact disproportionately negative on women. Bissau-Guinean women bear on average five children (6.8 in rural areas, according to UNICEF country statistics) for whom they care - without access to basic infrastructure of water, sanitation, electricity and transport which would ease physical burdens, save time and increase productivity of women-mothers.⁴¹

How dramatic the health system situation is, is reflected in the following statistical data: one woman dies in 126 births (UNICEF, 2017) which indicates that the maternal mortality rate in Guinea-Bissau is one of the highest in the world. Many children do not celebrate their fifth birthday: Due to latest figures the under five years of age death toll is 56 of 1000 (MICS 6, 2020), quite a decrease to figures from some years earlier, a lot of these children dying during birth and in the first months.⁴²

To reduce maternal and under 5 mortality are priority concerns for ensuring women's sexual and reproductive health rights (SDG goal 5.6), together with approaches to effectively combat the feminization of HIV / AIDS observed in Guinea-Bissau, with a rate of 4.5% in pregnant women compared to 1.5% in men of the same age range (National Institute of Public Health, 2014).

The HIV burden in Guinea-Bissau is the highest in West Africa, while coverage of antiretroviral therapy is one of the lowest. Women are disproportionately affected (2.1% women versus 1.1% men of total population) and accounted for 62.8% percent of HIV cases in 2019 (WB 2019). Factors that contribute

⁴¹ 67% of households do not have drinking water at the place of residence. Women over 15 spend at least 30 minutes a day to obtain water, according to the Multiple Indicators Survey (MICS6 2020) and sometimes hours to collect firewood. Only 18% of the population has improved sanitation facilities for human waste; in rural areas, the figure is 3% only.

⁴² The maternal mortality rate between 2007 and 2014 was 900 deaths per 100,000 live births, among the worst in the world. In 2015, the number dropped to 549 deaths per 100,000 live births. According to the MICS 5 report for Guinea-Bissau, only 45% of births were attended by qualified staff qualified in 2013 and 2014. In 2016, the under-five mortality rate was 92.5 per 1,000 live births. Of deaths under five years, many are among children in the first month of life (2010-2015, MICS and WB).

to the spread of the infection include limited knowledge of HIV prevention and risky sexual behavior, including multiple sexual partners and inconsistent use of condoms (WB 2018, p. 12ff, MICS 6, 2020). The underlying socioeconomic conditions also play a role in the dissemination of infection by various routes, including the distorted perception of risk among the poor and vulnerable. The disproportionate vulnerability of women, particularly the youngest, to HIV and AIDS is worrisome. Despite the constant information and civic education campaigns, very few men and women use HIV testing and counseling. Few prevention campaigns focus on improving the status of women. Awareness campaigns should consider the specific vulnerability of young women that is related to patriarchal attitudes towards virginity and female sexuality and traditional practices that compel high risk behavior (e.g. polygamy, levirate, pressure to have children). Generally, men are better informed about the transmission of HIV / AIDS than women, even with regard to mother-to-child transmission.

The Reproductive Health and Family Planning Law (L 11/2010) defines reproductive health and its services. Among other rights, the law guarantees women access to health services that allow safe pregnancy and birth giving, pre- and postnatal care and the right without any discrimination to reproductive health, family planning and reproductive health services. The law sets the minimum age for both sexes for marriage and procreation to 18 years and reconfirms the prohibition of torture, inhumane treatment and all forms of violence. It holds the couple and any adult individual responsible for the well-being of the people in their family environment, specifically children, the elderly and women (article 9).

Beside the area of reproductive health and safe birth, including neonatal care, several key health issues for women are addressed in this law which are essential to overcome not only gender inequalities in the health system but life threatening conditions related to women's and girls health, namely: 1. Care of complications following clandestine abortion; 2. HIV / AIDS infections and prevention; 3. Prohibition of marriage under the age of 18, indirectly creating a measure to reduce and restrict early pregnancy.

Urgent action and temporary / permanent special measures are needed to improve women's health conditions and safe lives!

In recent years, Guinea-Bissau has made some improvements in the area of strategic planning in the health sector. This includes the preparation of the National Health Development Plan (PNDS), based on sector priorities, as presented in the 2015 National Development Plan of the Government, *Terra Ranka* (WB 2018, pp. 102-103). It is very urgent to elaborate the Basic Law of the Health System because existing laws⁴³ and plans, although sensitive to some gender issues, can neither give sufficient answers to general public health concerns, nor guarantee the integration of gender in health legislation in Guinea-Bissau. Anyhow, the low implementation level of these laws remains a reason for great concern.

It is evident that the financing of public health needs sustainable solutions for the successful implementation of policy and measures to improve women's health, combat maternal and child mortality, malnutrition and HIV / AIDS. There are serious problems with financial management in hospitals, health centers and in the Ministry of Health: The flow of resources to and from decentralized

⁴³ Existing health legislation relates to HIV / AIDS (2007); the law prohibits discrimination against people living with HIV, The Reproductive Health and Family Planning (2010); the Law for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children (2011) and the Law against FGM (14/2011) to prevent, combat and suppress female genital mutilation.

health entities is unclear and not reported in public accounts, while internal and external auditing is practically non-existent (WB, 2018, p. 102-103).

There is a tendency of equating gender issues with measures to reduce maternal mortality and increase sexual and reproductive health services. The perception of gender equality has to go further and include the systematic promotion of gender equality in health programmes, for example, in campaigns to bring malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases down, to better respond to women's specific health needs and requirements in these areas.

Broader women's health needs also include malnutrition, long hours of work, violence, respiratory disorders that result from cooking with charcoal and firewood, the fact that women carry heavy loads on their heads, suffer from consumption of improper water and fall ill with urinary infections that result from poor sanitary conditions.

Specific attention is needed to abortion which occurs clandestinely in high numbers with severe health risks in Guinea-Bissau (Interview Prosecutor's Office, Carla Mendes). Although the Civil Code (Art. 112) does not criminalize abortion, provided it is carried out by a professional and with the consent of the pregnant woman, women seeking abortion tend to suffer multiple discrimination in access to services. Unable to pay these fees, a significant proportion of girls and women in Guinea-Bissau resort to abortion services performed by unskilled individuals and out of health facilities, at risk to their lives and health, where they also run the risk of being criminalized. ***The groups that most frequently resort to unsafe and illegal abortions are young and poor women with low levels of schooling. No data are available on the mortality rate due to abortions, probably is quite high.***

The need for a Health Basic Law

The Health Basic Law should design health service delivery strategies that transform women's rights to integrated treatment of all specific aspects of maternal and reproductive health in efficient legal provisions and special affirmative measures that take into account the specific needs of women.

This includes ensure access for all women to the public health system by raising the number of facilities with essential services, surgical sections, main health products and proximity to the population (remote rural areas); promote a significant increase in the number of qualified midwives; overcome cultural norms that discourage women from attending public health system; guarantee the exemption by law for pregnant women and children, from 0 to 4 years, from payment of consultation fees; improve reproductive health services with solutions for free abortion in dignifying conditions.

Furthermore, a gender perspective has to be mainstreamed into the national strategy against HIV / AIDS for effective provision of antiretroviral HIV therapy, with special attention to girls, pregnant women and mothers of newborns. The quality of healthcare for women has to be improved by sensitizing technicians and health professionals on the interests and specific needs of women and train medical staff on specific gender issues in terms of information, medical treatment and follow-up of women/pregnant patients. Community awareness should be increased, particularly of traditional and religious leaders and the civil society on the importance and right to health of women and their specific needs (reproductive health, HIV, pre- and postnatal child care).

Poor equity of the educational system in Guinea-Bissau

Despite the improvements achieved since independence in a context of great fragility (significant progress in access to school), the educational system by far does not reach all Bissau-Guineans, thus not fulfilling the aims of the Guinean Constitution (1996) and of the Basic Law of the Educational System (Law 4/2011).

Basic education is universal, compulsory and free of charge up to the 6th year of schooling. It is organized in three cycles, the first cycle from the 1st to the 4th year, the second includes the 5th and 6th year, and the third goes from the 7th to the 9th year of schooling. In addition to formal education, it contains non-formal education in the areas of alphabetization and basic education of youth and adults; conversion actions, professional development and civic education.⁴⁴

There are still 53.7% girls versus 46.30% boys that did not receive any education at all; furthermore, girls are underrepresented in relation to boys at all levels of school attendance, except primary education: nowadays they have the same access opportunities in the first cycle (1-4 year) but make up only about 40% of individuals enrolled in levels after primary school. 75% of girls of a generation access the first cycle of basic education, against 80% of boys; while only 48% of girls reach the end of the second cycle of basic education against 72% of boys who complete it. By the end of secondary school (12th grade) there is a huge female drop-out: the differences are such that only 34.7% of inscribed girls complete this cycle against 60% of boys (RESEN Report, 2015).

According to the Basic Law of the Educational System and the Sectoral Education Plan (2017-25), strategies are geared to compensate for geographical and gender disparities etc. that is, to accelerate access and improve retention, while fighting against gender disparities and access inequalities between different zones in the country.

One of the key characteristics demonstrated by the Report on the National Education System (RESEN, 2015) is the ***poor equity of the educational system in Guinea-Bissau. That is, seen both in access to school and in the completion of teaching cycles and in several dimensions: gender, means of residence, level of wealth and regions.*** The correlation based on location, sex and economic situation is even more pronounced for secondary education. Currently, the likelihood of an individual being able to access education depends largely on the individual's gender, location (residing in urban or rural areas) and whether the student comes from a poor or wealthy family. School completion rates for girls are really very low and much worse than boys' rates. High illiteracy rate of women, with extreme values of 90% in rural areas, particularly in Oio and Tombali, demonstrate the magnitude of the challenge of creating a qualified workforce in the country (DENARP II, p.22). Motivations for female school dropout are mainly related to marriage, pregnancy and family approval (parents or husband), while economic reasons, such as school accessibility and the need to work to support the family, are more frequent among boys who drop out school (INEP- OIM, 2018).

Due to a series of socio-cultural, economic, access and other barriers almost a third of children between 6 and 11 years old never attended school, especially children living in rural areas and poor children (RESEN Report 2015).

The benefits of education for girls and women, such as increased income for families, increased use of family planning services, reduced malnutrition, child and maternal mortality and improved public health can in turn change existing gender relations.

⁴⁴ Cycles of education and more information in: Ministério da Educação e Ensino Superior. (2017). *Plano Setorial da Educação (2017-2025)*; Ministério da Educação e Ensino Superior. (2017). *Carta da Política do Setor Educativo*; Ministério da Educação e Ensino Superior. (2015). *Relatório do Diagnóstico do setor educativo (RESEN)*; Ministério da Educação e Ensino Superior. (2010). *Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*.

Among the extreme poor, educational levels are proportionally the lowest with a significant gender gap (WB 2016). Current statistical data on formal education show that girls on average attend school only 1.4 years, less than half the time of Guinean boys who average 3.4 years in school (MICS, 2014).

The school profile produced by the RESEN report confirms the fact that albeit girls have the same opportunities as boys in accessing primary education, their situation is degrading as they advance to the upper levels of the education system. 79% of children in a generation living in an urban environment, conclude the first two cycles of basic education, whereas this figure is only 40% for rural children. Finally, the data highlight the fact that children from the wealthiest families clearly have more opportunities to access (83%) and complete (66%) compulsory education than children of the poorest families (for the latter, access and completion is respectively 67% and 49%) (RESEN 2015 Report).

At the end of secondary school (12th grade) the differences are even more pronounced: a girl from a poorest rural household has 15% opportunities to finish secondary versus 78% for a boy who comes from a wealthier household in an urban area (RESEN, 2015).

The high rates of illiteracy in Guinea-Bissau, the very low rates of girls' school enrolment and completion of schooling at all levels, and the persistence of structural barriers to quality education are alarming. They constitute particular obstacles to the education of girls and young women. These barriers include extreme poverty, a lack of physical infrastructure and a lack of trained and qualified teachers, especially female teachers, which may increase girls' vulnerability to violence and abuse in schools. Particular concern is raised about cultural barriers to education and the negative impact of harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage, on girls' education (CEDAW, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, last reported: 3 august 2009).

Constraints to girls' education

Constraints on girls' education include the low value attached to education compared to the education of boys given that it is not expected that daughters get jobs; the burden of domestic work and girls' seasonal work; poverty particularly in rural areas.

Other barriers are based on the lack of female teachers who can be seen as role models follow the girls to supervise them; lack of security and protection against violence and sexual abuse of students at school; lack of adequate sanitary facilities; the distance between home and school and the lack of a residential system (homes) for girls who live farther away. This is especially important for older girls and secondary education as most secondary schools are located in regional towns. It is also observed that the lack of schools that offer the first 6 levels of the basic cycle, penalizes girls more than boys. This is explained by the fact that, if it is necessary to continue studies in another location, families prefer to send boys over girls.

The school does not offer a framework to reinforce the development of self-esteem and confidence of girls. Few girls are encouraged to apply for positions of class speakers and many of them with potential are not recognized by parents, who play a key role in supporting children and their school development (Voz de Paz, 2018).

In rural areas, there is a conflict between traditional education and formal education. Practices such as early marriage and pregnancy often imply that parents value alternative instruction such as initiation rites and Quranic schools to the detriment of formal education. The scarcity of girls in higher education is related to the reproductive role of women that is often considered incompatible with studies. Following the dominant patriarchal view, families with limited economic and financial resources prefer investing boys' education. The greater the identification of the family with gender stereotypes and the idealized image that a woman's place is at home, the smaller the probability of girls' schooling and continuing to advanced training. Early marriage in this logic is the proper strategy to cover shame of a pregnancy (Voz de Paz, 2018).

Regardless of the provisions of the Basic Law of the Educational System (2011), which is all in all quite sensitive to providing and teaching equity and equal opportunities for all, the role of teachers and the families is very important to break traditional barriers and award the same degree of importance for both sexes in accessing formation (Voz de Paz, 2018).

Other issues that continue to limit girls' education levels are the lack of quality education that remains a major challenge for the Guinean Education System with worrying results at various levels: a very high teacher-to-student ratio, teachers are predominately male and a high number does not have appropriate pedagogical training (RESEN Report, 2015).

To overcome the gender barriers in education it is needed :

- to increase the proportion of children enrolling in primary school and completing compulsory education, including disabled children and to eliminate urban-rural gender disparities in education;
- to raise awareness of the importance of education as a human right for all children and as a basis for the empowerment of girls and women;
- to give special attention to raising the proportion of girls completing their primary and secondary education, including through affirmative action and similar special measures, and by ensuring that girls have the same opportunities as boys to attend formal education;
- to take steps to overcome traditional attitudes that constitute obstacles to girls' and women's education;
- to develop "stereotype-free" educational curricula that address structural causes of discrimination against women, introducing concepts of gender equality, citizenship, human rights and women's health/reproductive health, transforming school curricula into advocates for gender issues: integration of all topics of discrimination and gender rights within the different disciplines;
- to provide gender-sensitive training for teachers and school personnel;
- to stress the importance of the female voice, of teachers, mothers, aunts and older sisters in participating in school life at the local level and in the elaboration of educational policy;
- to ensure that women and girls have access to safe educational settings that are free from gender based violence, abuse and sexual harassment;
- to promote inclusive and high-quality education,
- to focus on recurrent education and ongoing learning opportunities for adults/ young women and young men with the objective of functional literacy, protection from early marriage, girls / young women who want to resume learning after pregnancy, marriage etc.;
- to make a concerted effort to improve the literacy level of girls and women through the adoption of comprehensive programmes at the formal and non-formal level, and through adult education and training;
- to introduce specific measures to encourage school attendance of girls and young women through the allocation of scholarships to girls and women in all categories of education;
- to promote more gender-equitable funding: temporary measures to raising the ratio of girls in primary education could have a special gender title at OGE.

Key areas for gender mainstreaming in the education system include a curriculum reform, greater community and parental participation in school management, increased funding and temporary

measures to support girls in need and substantial measures to reduce sexual harassment and abuse in schools.

Financial resources, technical means and human resources are needed now to implement the Basic Law of the Education System and operationalize its gender strategies.

2.12 Covid-19 Pandemic and Gender in Guinea-Bissau

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed and intensified gender inequality in Guinea-Bissau. Many women have to work harder than before while earning even less than they normally would. The fact that entire communities can still function despite the pandemic is mainly due to the efforts of women. Coronavirus places more demands on many women — and at the same time threatens to frustrate ongoing efforts for gender equality (DW: <https://www.dw.com/en/covid-19-places-extra-burden-on-african-women/a-53795533>, retrieved n 7.10.2020).

The worst impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Guinea-Bissau has been on the economy with a severe decrease of the cashew export, the most important single factor for the economy and public finances, in the 2020 season (at least one third less exportation). Again, women are suffering most in this crisis situation due to their caregiving role and enormous domestic work obligations combined with increased responsibilities for food supply (see below). The UNDP/UN Women gender tracker launched during the pandemic gives detailed information for government action against COVID-19, especially on topics relevant to women and gender based violence (<https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>).

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Africa, particularly in West Africa, was and still is relatively low in global comparison. While in the first months of the pandemic, there was great concern among health experts that the continent would still see major and eventually uncontrollable outbreaks of the disease, meanwhile leading epidemiologists argue that due to the young population (at least 50% under 20) and probably a different immune-response, the infection rates in Africa are lower and cases generally mild. One of the few broader studies on Covid-19 in Africa found that 1 in 20 adults in Kenya had SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, while only 2093 COVID-19 cases and 71 deaths had been reported through the national screening system (data of July 2020).⁴⁵

The government of Guinea-Bissau acted like neighboring countries and according to WHO recommendations by early imposing a national lockdown, closing international borders, schools, markets and restricting gatherings, mobility and travel within the country. These measures continued for about 6 months (March to September 2020) with gradual relaxation. Schools reopened doors by 5th October 2020.

In the frame of the present gender analysis a quick look on the Corona Pandemic in Guinea-Bissau seems necessary as the pandemic has long-lasting consequences for the country's politics, economy, gender relations and gender mainstreaming programmes. We need to understand the different impacts that COVID-19 potentially has on women, men, girls and boys and other vulnerable groups in Guinea-Bissau. On this basis, it will be possible to inform UNDP programming and mid-term planning based on the different needs of women, men, boys and girls with a particular focus on food and nutrition security, women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence (GBV) and health.

Although critical in slowing the spread of the disease, the measures themselves impose significant social and economic costs, especially for many people in Guinea-Bissau living with poor access to health care, clean water, and sanitation. Guinea-Bissau's very fragile public health system (see 2.10) is in no way prepared to tackle the spread of Covid-19; many nurses and doctors got infected and at least one female covid-19 patient died due to lack of oxygen, just to mention some most obvious fragilities.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ "Seroprevalence of anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgG antibodies in Kenyan blood donors", Running Title: SARS-CoV-2 Sero-surveillance of blood donors in Kenya, Sophie Uyoga, et.al, preprint 30.07.2020 in: medRxiv preprint doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.07.27.20162693.t>.

⁴⁶ WHO multidisciplinary expert team assists the government of Guinea-Bissau to improve response to Covid-19 since early August; <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/guinea-bissau-who-strengthens-expertise-to-fight-covid-19>; Cuba sent in a medical team to Guinea-Bissau in June 2020. Further international support through UNICEF, helping training community health workers, informing the public on the pandemic and providing handwashing stations to nearly 1000 communities; <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/covid-19-in-guinea-bissau>.

With the Ebola epidemic still fresh in mind, private initiatives for hand hygiene and NGO work (awareness raising, distribution of face masks and disinfectants) quickly became visible in the capital and some other towns and places in Guinea-Bissau and provided important assistance in the fight against the pandemic.

The impacts of Covid-19 – direct and indirect – fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Guinea-Bissau. Beyond health outcomes, the wider impacts, including increased burdens of care giving, disrupted livelihoods, increased malnutrition and an increase in violence, significantly and disproportionately affect women and girls:

Household level: Women's care burden for children, the sick and elderly at home has increased due to the closures of schools and as health systems become less accessible in the shift to COVID-19 responses. Unpaid work at the household level has multiplied with more household members staying at home for whom women and girls cook, wash, carry water, firewood etc.

Frontline: Women are at the frontline of the response as community health workers, nurses and doctors, which places them at increased risk and exposure to infection. These risks were exacerbated by limited access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and resulted in high infection rates of medical personnel. Consequently, nurses etc. stayed at home out of fear of infection, further worsening the gap in qualified medical staff in Guinea-Bissau's hospitals and health centers.

Access to health facilities: Access to sexual and reproductive health services, to HIV-therapies and to gender-based violence (GBV) support have been reduced due to restrictions in movement and lack of financing, potentially resulting in an increase in maternal mortality and intimate partner violence. With maternal mortality rates still high, the progress made in this area in the past may see a setback during the crisis (data not available).

Economic situation: Women's economic and productive lives have been affected disproportionately due to restriction in movement as most are engaged in informal trade, where they earn less and have no social safety nets. Significant reduction of informal trade and production, especially in the food sector, has resulted in sharp income diminishing or complete fall-out.

During the pandemic women sell their products to Bissau or to weekly organized markets, the *lumos*, under risks and with enormous difficulties, such as elevated transport costs and restrictions in mobility of goods. Their products are threatened to deteriorate and they have to produce less/ buy less from local small food producers (mainly women) which diminishes the income of the later as well. Fruits, vegetables, sweet potatoes, salads etc., produced mainly by women, got rotten in the villages all over Guinea-Bissau.

The shutdown of the two main export markets for cashew raw nuts from Guinea-Bissau, India and Vietnam, put the cashew campaign under acute stress as demand for the nuts fell sharply. Like other international commodities, the price for raw cashew nuts dropped significantly. Therefore, the cashew harvest this year did not contribute much (if at all) to the income of women in the villages and beyond. A kg of raw nuts was sold by 200-250 Fcfa. Many women from urban areas who normally participate in the harvesting could not move inland due to the confinement order and lost an important income source. Low revenue from cashew sales will have a significant negative impact on the subsequent agricultural campaign, another crucial resource of income and food (UNDP, 2020, Guinea-Bissau-socio-economic impact).

Women's economic activities in nearly all businesses related to food (selling of fish, export of fruits, oyster etc. to the region and Portugal, import of vegetables and small animals from Senegal and Gambia, small informal street restaurant provider) stagnate with the pandemic and a sharp

deterioration of their economic conditions can be noted, preventing women to meet their normal expenses for household, school, medical treatment etc.

Social protection: As shown above (Chapter 2.3), no modern social protection network exists in Guinea-Bissau that covers unemployment, accidents at work, health insurance and so far for all working force, including the informal sector. High health costs have to be financed by the families, even for treatment in the public health care system. Thus, the pandemic means an additional heavy economic burden for the poor, particularly for women headed households. The informal social safety nets and networks (as explained in the section on *abota* and *manjundaade* in 2.3.) that many women rely on for support are now weakened due to reduced physical mobility, income cuts and social distancing. Regular payments and loans are partially postponed.

Food security: Many households in Guinea-Bissau cannot cope with food shortages. In 2020, they are not able to barter rice for cashew in sufficient quantities. Hunger in the rural areas where most women live has started as early as in August. Rice harvest this year is estimated to be very poor due to continuous flooding of rice fields, mainly in the coastal area. The negative impacts of climate change, low rainfall in 2019 and extremely high rainfall in 2020, become more aggravated in combination with the Covid-19 Pandemic. This holds especially true for households headed by women, insofar as they are not developing the income-generating activities they normally perform and the outcomes of the ongoing agricultural year are uncertain.

Increase in GBV: An increase in GBV and domestic violence are potential threats related to the pandemic. Staying at home can engender stress and likely expose women to gender-based violence. Tensions further raise during confinement, having the family constantly sequestered at home, on top of limited access to food and basic supplies. As in many countries increase in GBV and domestic violence have been witnessed in Guinea-Bissau as observed by women activists and NGOs working on GBV (<https://www.dw.com/pt-002/mulheres-na-guin%C3%A9-bissau-s%C3%A3o-duplamente-afetadas-pela-pandemia/a-53789695>; retrieved 08.10.2020); <https://www.publico.pt/2020/07/24/mundo/noticia/iniciativa-mulheres-guineenses-denuncia-situacoes-alarmantes-violencia-genero-pais-1925728>, retrieved 08.10.2020).

As families face heightened tensions and financial uncertainties, due to the erosion of families' livelihoods, women and girls are confronted with intensified vulnerabilities, including early marriages, trafficking, or other coping strategies. The economic effects of the Ebola outbreak, for instance, led to exacerbated sexual exploitation risks for women and children (UNDP, 2020: Covid-19, socio-economic impact analysis).

Human rights violations: An increase in human rights violations is to be expected in various aspects. Women face difficulties to access information due to the internet divide, they generally have much less opportunity and capability to use mobile phones; during the lockdown, they cannot contact justice institutions, NGOs, or even friends, in case of human rights abuse, inside and outside the family. Many potentially averted cases of FGM as well as child or forced marriages will now occur during the times of the pandemic, as protection efforts are not being ensured. Women's access to health has been limited and risks faced by women will further increase.

The lockdown measures may have increased the crimes of homicide against women accused of **witchcraft**. **The Guinea-Bissau League for Human Rights reports a total of 49 cases over the last 2 years** in different regions in the country. The perpetrators of those crimes have not been convicted. The organization calls for the need to adopt concrete measures to tackle these obscurantist practices that continue to take human lives and jeopardize peace and harmony within the population (https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/mundo/ong-denuncia-homicidio-de-mulher-por-feiticaria-na-guinea-bissau_n1259653).

As part of its national COVID-19 response offer in Guinea-Bissau, UNDP supports with other sister agencies the Bioksan Platform (see chap. 2.9) that aims at protecting and defending women's and children's rights as well as protecting gender equality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bioksan encourages communities to report gender-based violence and human rights violations.

Gender Gaps in education: the huge gender gap in the use of technology, particularly smart phones, and lower literacy levels of women and girls impacts negatively on prevention, awareness raising and resource access of women and girls related to the pandemic. Higher drop-out rates of girls from primary and secondary education as result of the lockdown are to be expected.

Decision making: As demonstrated in chapter 2.4, women have limited decision making in governance and policy making bodies in Guinea-Bissau. Consequently, there has been limited engagement of women in COVID-19 decision making processes. The participation of women in formal structures established by the highest state authorities is restricted to those taken by women in the government, female MPs etc., such as the female High Commissioner of the Covid-19 Secretary, an ex-WHO responsible and former health minister in Guinea-Bissau. Women engaged mainly within NGOs and were, among other, co-responsible for the creation of a new central market for fresh food in Bissau, with organized social distancing measures (in the so-called Green Space in Bairro de Ajuda).

New Opportunities in gender relations: While the participation of women in official structures is mostly limited to the implementation of activities, the work of NGOs and volunteers shows that Coronavirus is also creating opportunities, some examples already noteworthy in Guinea-Bissau, to disrupt deeply entrenched gender inequalities.

Women groups, local Associations, with support from a female fashion designer in Bissau and an international NGO provide the health sector and communities with sewing of facemasks; women of the Gabu Plataforma das ONGs organize awareness raising campaigns; women activists from the Fundação Ana Pereira and RENLUV, a national women association, created an online Women Human Rights Platform "Bioksan Platform" that aims at protecting and defending women's and children's rights as well as protecting gender equality during the COVID-19 pandemic (https://www.gw.undp.org/content/guinea_bissau/en/home/news-centre/protecting-womens-rights-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.html, retrieved on 7.10.2020)

Chapter 3 Global and Regional Gender Equality Strategies

3.1 The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021)

This chapter presents an overview of current UN gender equality strategies and the priority setting at international level, including innovative approaches and the dialectical linkage between SDG 5 and other SDGs for the achievement of gender equality. It also looks at relevant continental and regional gender strategies. Based on this broad conceptual framework, tailored solutions for each country can be developed and potential areas in which UNDP, the Government and other development partners of Guinea-Bissau may contribute to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are going to be identified.

Gender equality is an essential aspect of “leaving no one behind,” one of the guiding principles of the 2030 Agenda. UNDP estimates that gender inequality translates into 44% loss in potential human development as women often belong to the poorest and marginalized and are over-represented among those furthest behind. On the other hand, there is sufficient empirical evidence to illustrate that SDG 5 is one of the most potent development accelerators (Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, 4 June 2019, Progress in the implementation of UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021,<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/speeches/2019/undp-gender-equality-strategy-.html>, retrieved on 19 October 2020).

Gender equality is reflected in 45 targets and 54 gender-specific indicators of the SDGs. The work and experience of UNDP as the largest operational platform of the UN-System are of central importance to bring the world on track with the agenda of sustainable development. In its latest Gender Equality Strategy(2018-2021), UNDP has made a strong commitment to the intensification of mainstreaming gender equality in all aspects of its work to reduce poverty, build resilience and peaceful societies and help member states to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

Ever since the first UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2008-2013), the United Nations has multiplied its efforts to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in all its work. UN-Women was established in 2010 to strengthen coordination and accountability for gender equality results across the organization. Under its leadership, UN-SWAP was developed, the UN System wide Action Plan to implement the United Nations policy on gender equality and women’s empowerment. (UNSWAP, see <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/unsystemcoordination/un-swap/un-swap-2-tn-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2841>).

Gender mainstreaming is prioritized as the main strategy to achieve gender equality. UNDP’s approach to gender mainstreaming is a dual one: On the one hand it builds on gender-specific targeted interventions to support the empowerment of women and girls, on the other hand, UNDP addresses gender concerns in the developing, planning, implementing and evaluating of all its policies and programmes (UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, 2014, p. 3).

The current UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021) is the third such strategy. It is built on lessons learned through the implementation of the previous strategies and also integrates findings and recommendations of independent evaluations of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and UNDP’s contribution to gender equality and women’s empowerment (2015) (see: UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2018,p. 3).

The roadmap to gender equality envisaged in the strategy is based on the following commitments and priorities:

- Focus UNDP interventions on tackling structural changes that will allow for the acceleration of gender equality and women’s empowerment;

- Fully integrate gender equality into UNDP's work on the environment and clean energy as well as into interventions in crisis response and recovery;
- Better align UNDP programming with the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Strengthen and fully apply the "Gender Equality Seal" and the "Gender Marker", as effective institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming which provide measurable standards and incentives to drive development progress.

(<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/undp-gender-equality-strategy-2018-2021.html>, retrieved on 19 October 2020).

The current UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021) is aligned with the common chapter of the Strategic Plans of UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women and UNFPA (2018-2021). They define as key areas in compliance with their mandate and collaborative advantage, among others, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (UN Executive Board of UNDP, UNPFA, UNOPS, 2017, *UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, New York, DP 2017/38, 17-18438 (E) 081117, p. 3).

The areas of collaborative advantage have positive multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals and require multi-sectoral approaches. Building up stronger partnerships across the UN system is of paramount importance to the fulfillment of gender equality. It strengthens the UN common capacity in "addressing the root causes of persistent gender inequalities, including discriminatory practices and social norms, and investing in dedicated gender expertise and capacities throughout the spectrum of UNDP development assistance" (Gender Equality Strategy, 2018, p. 3). The latter is particularly relevant in the areas of climate change, crisis prevention and recovery which are critical for the achievement of sustainable development but quite often are addressed without the needed gender lens.

In addition, the Gender Equality Strategy underlines the vital role of UNDP leadership for gender equality as a global advocate, to promote and support women leaders and to foster ownership of and accountability for gender equality within UNDP ((Gender Equality Strategy, 2018, p. 3).

3.1.1 Regional Gender Equality Strategies

For a better understanding of the UNDP gender strategy, we will highlight its linkage and common conceptual ground with the African Union's and the African Development Bank's gender strategies and also with ECOWAS "Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Men and Women for Sustainable Development of the ECOWAS Region.

In 2015, the **African Union** adopted the "**Agenda 2063**", the continent's 50-year structural transformation and development agenda. The Agenda's sixth Aspiration is: "*An Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of women and youth*". In other words, this strategy calls for Africa to work towards full gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres of life. The subsequent **AU "Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)"** (2018-2028) is based on an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach and sets forth a plan to realize the sixth Aspiration. It is a framework document to strengthen women's agency in Africa and ensure that women's voices are amplified and their concerns are fully addressed.

The strategy's Theory of Change elaborates how specific actions and interventions will generate positive outcomes under the strategy's four pillars for gender equality which are:

- Maximizing (economic) Outcomes, Opportunities and Tech E Dividends;
- Dignity, Security and Resilience;

- Effective Laws, Policies and Institutions;
- Leadership, Voice and Visibility.

(AU Gender Equality Strategy, <https://au.int/en/documents/20190614/au-strategy-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>, retrieved on May 5 2020).

The sixth aspiration comes very close to SDG 5 while the four pillars for gender equality include the key spheres of economic, political and social intervention needed for women's empowerment, covering basically all SDGs related to and relevant for the promotion of gender equality. Thus, the AU Gender Equality Strategy appears in great part quite smoothly compatible with the current UNDP Gender Strategy and can be seen as the *integrative African complement*.

The Gender Strategy of the African Development Bank (first developed in 2014) is based on the reality that gender equality is integral to Africa's economic and social development. The Bank's vision for Africa includes creating opportunities for women and marginalized people. This would enable these groups – often left behind – to participate in and to benefit from the development of their communities and nations. Peaceful, stable and vibrant societies would be the result of the envisaged inclusive growth and social cohesion (AfDB, Gender Strategy). Gender inequalities need to be reduced by "strengthening women's legal and property rights, promoting women's economic empowerment, and enhancing knowledge management and capacity building" (AfDB, Gender Strategy, p.2). The Gender Equality Strategy calls for women to have a strong voice in decision-making at the household, community and national levels, so that African institutions will be more representative and responsive. (AfDB, Gender Equality Index, 2015).

Economic empowerment is one central area of AfDB's engagement which includes women's access to and control over financial resources and services, affirmative action in favor of women and women-owned businesses, promotion of women farmers' productivity and market inclusion, enhancement of gender-responsive infrastructure projects in water, energy etc. to achieve more gender equality and promote women skills in science and technology (AfDB, Gender Strategy, p.3). These concerns of AfDB's gender strategy are in line with the vision and principles enshrined in the UNDP gender strategy highlighted above.

The African Development Bank and UNDP have very similar assessments of promoting gender equality and implementing this vision in their programmes and structure of their own organization. The external part of AfDB Gender Strategy consists of gender mainstreamed programmes and their operationalization, while its internal part focuses on gender responsive staff capacities and gender mainstreamed monitoring and financing of all projects. AfDB's conception corresponds to the principles conveyed by the UNDP gender marker and the UNDP gender equality certification programme (Gender Seal, see more in chap. 3.1.4).

The Bank has designed its own Gender Equality Index in 2015. It does not only measure gender inequality but works as indicator to promote development. Through discussing main dimensions of gender equality: economic empowerment, human development, and laws and institutions — this index is action-oriented and intends to help African decision-makers to focus on — and address — some of the most serious barriers that prevent African women from engaging on equal footing with men (AfDB, 2015, Gender Equality Index, p. 2, www.afdb.org).

The ***Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region*** (2015) commits all ECOWAS Member states to the promotion of gender equality and equity in all sectors through appropriate policy and legislative frameworks/ reviews as well as strategy alignment.

The objectives of the Act are laid down in Article 3:

It provides the legal basis for the harmonization of national legislations with international commitments to protect and promote women's rights in West Africa. A single regional instrument will be established through harmonization of national gender policies that will provide a basis and a common reference for all Member States to create mechanisms for periodic evaluation at both national and regional levels; to strengthen the economic activities of women, eliminate discrimination and achieve gender equality and equity through the development and effective implementation of laws and policies; to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups, mainly women, girls and boys, the elderly and persons living with disabilities, in line with the demands of sustainable development; to increase the rate of women's participation at all levels of decision-making in the different sectors, particularly in the political sphere, notably the processes of conflict prevention and management and the restoration of peace and security; to ensure a greater role for women in early warning mechanisms within the ECOWAS region; to consolidate regional integration and sustainable development through the effective participation of women in the regional integration process (ECOWAS, 2015, Supplementary Act, p. 17-18, <https://www.ccdg.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/Supplementary-Act-on-Gender-Equality.pdf>).

Based on this act, ECOWAS developed sector related Gender Strategies, such as the *ECOWAS Parliament Gender Strategy 2010-2020* on the political participation and decision making of women and the important role parliaments have to play in recognizing and enforcing gender-based laws such as CEDAW and UNSCR 1325; and also in ensuring that governments adopt policies that address the needs of both men and women. The ECOWAS Parliament Gender Strategy pursues 10 specific objectives: awareness and training sessions on the legal instruments at all levels; sensitization of men/law-makers to become key actors (resource persons); elaboration of manuals on gender and development issues for schools, training of MPs, members of committees, national networks, governments officials in leadership; advocacy to strengthen women political participation in ECOWAS regional structures and at the national level (equality, quotas); gender sensitive budgeting at ECOWAS level and national level; affirmative action to be taken for girls' education (GENDER STRATEGY ECOWAS PARLIAMENT 2010 – 2020, <http://www.womencount4peace.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/publications/Publication%20-%20ECOWAS%20Parliamentary%20Center%20-%20Gender%20Strategy%20-%20ECOWAS%20Parliament%202010%20-%202020%20-%20en%20-2020130716.pdf>

The *ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2030* (ECOWAS DRR GSAP), based on gendered analysis of disaster risk, demonstrates that the risks and impacts associated with disasters and climate-induced hazards are not equally distributed across society. This allows for a better understanding of the differential abilities and challenges faced by women, men, girls and boys and to address these essential nuances, helping member states to build resilience to natural hazards that is inclusive of all segments of society, responding to the needs of all communities in their full complexity (www.gfdrr.org/sites/default/files/publication/ECOWAS%20GSAP_EN_Final.pdf).⁴⁷

The Supplementary Act and the sector gender strategies clearly indicate the priority ECOWAS leaders accord to gender equality, the consideration of needs and potential of women and men, affirmative action for women in education, and women's empowerment in the scheme of the regional integration. Guinea-Bissau's national and regional gender equality vision and UNDP's gender equality mainstreaming into the design of the UNSCDF and the CPD find a strong alliance and backing in the ECOWAS Supplementary Act.

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Further ECOWAS strategies on *Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access* (ECOWGEN, ECCREE).

3.1.2 Core principles and priority intervention areas of UNDP Gender Equality Strategy

For UNDP **gender equality** is defined and envisioned at the same time, as a **precondition** and an **accelerator for achieving the SDGs** (UNDP 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p.8). The achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment require the eradication of all forms of gender discrimination and gender based violation of human rights. It is a complex transformational process and, as such, needs strategic planning, the identification of potentials of change and international guidance in gender mainstreaming.

Beside the SDG standalone goal 5 on gender equality (9 targets), gender equality is also reflected in 36 targets and 54 indicators across the other 16 sustainable development goals. These focus, among others, on poverty reduction, agricultural productivity, hunger, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, climate change-related planning, participation in public life and sustainable cities and communities. The closing of gender gaps by achieving these targets will have multiplier effects across the Goals and accelerate their achievement (UNDP 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p. 5).

The impact of gender equality – some impressive figures

Equal access of women to productive resources, can lift hunger of 100 to 150 million people worldwide; Women's equal participation in peace processes results in 35% increase in long-term success of the agreements (15 years);

Equal educational opportunities and labor force participation of women can raise global GDP by 3.8% in 2030 (UNDP 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p. 5).

UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021) has fulfilled a conceptual shift from engaging primarily in programmes focused on women as beneficiaries and their practical needs to strengthening interventions that tackle structural changes for the acceleration of gender equality and women's empowerment (UNDP 2018, Gender Equality Strategy).

Following this paradigm change, UNDP programming and intervention design have to be aligned more and more with UNDP's key corporate message on ***the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the achievement of sustainable development***.

To achieve gender equality throughout its programmes and interventions, UNDP pursues integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to address interconnected development challenges, built on the following core principles.

Core Principles of UNDP's gender mainstreaming (UNDP 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p. 8-9)

The Human Rights approach

Human rights principles and standards guide programming and performance monitoring as well as progress report in achieving gender equality; in line with CEDAW and other human rights treaties and commitments;

Women and men as active agents of change

The achievement of the SDGs is premised on equal opportunities for all people to fulfill their aspirations and potential and on equal valuing of their knowledge and contributions. All women and men are understood as active agents of change. The Gender Equality Strategies empowers those marginalized and left behind so that they gain agency to make decisions over their lives and participate in the development of their societies. ***UNDP interventions "will go beyond counting numbers of beneficiaries by sex and will focus on empowering and creating agency for women and men and closing gender gaps"*** (p.8), i.e. they will go beyond gender targeted projects to achieve gender transformative goals.

“Leaving no one behind”

This key concept unfolds across all UNDP intervention to target and include population affected by multiple forms of discrimination and focus on the furthest behind;

Transforming gender and power relations

This approach is reached through accelerating structural transformations for gender equality: remove the institutional, societal, political and legal barriers that hinder its achievement, address root causes and change discriminatory social norms of gender inequalities;

Engaging men and boys in the process towards gender equality

They are acting as allies in closing gender gaps but also to address discrimination and oppressive forms of masculinity, including SGBV, that impact both women and men;

Country contextualization

With the objective to produce tailored solutions to the conditions, needs and potentials of each country, UNDP will address challenges requiring multi-sectoral responses and mobilize sister organizations in the UN-system at country level in support for country-specific efforts to advance gender equality;

Innovation approach

Work for gender equality relies on innovative approaches. This includes applying new communication strategies to target communities and challenge discriminatory cultural practices and norms at the heart of gender inequality. Technological innovations can be used to overcome structural and societal barriers that prevent women from access to financial sources, resources, economic tools for development and power. UNDP Gender Equality Seal can be applied to measure performance on gender equality in the public and private sectors.

3.1.3 Signature solution 6 and the centrality of gender equality in the SDGs

As shown above, the UNDP Gender Strategy is closely aligned with ***UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021*** where essentially three different development settings have been prioritized which form the three outcomes of the plan:

1. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions;
2. Accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development;
3. Building resilience to shocks and crises.

All these settings that can overlap offer strategic entry points which serve for mainstreaming gender equality into UNDP programmes and projects (UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, p. 15-18, see below an illustration).

A series of signature solutions is proposed in the Strategic Plan with which UNDP seeks to develop integrated responses and new ways to address complex and interconnected challenges such as shocks from crises, economic stagnation, inequality etc. The signature solutions can be combined and configured to respond to the three development settings and are applicable across the contexts of these settings where they have differentiated approaches in each. The signatures are focused on challenges such as poverty reduction, effective governance, risk, recovery and resilience, gender equality and environment. Each signature solution is built on a theory of change with a mix of interventions designed to achieve significant progress towards key Sustainable Development Goals and targets (UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021, p. 12).

Signature solution 6 of the UNDP Strategic Plan is devoted to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The UNDP gender equality strategy identifies ***priority areas for signature solution 6*** and ***provides entry points for gender equality*** in each of the three development settings detailed in the Strategic Plan. As each outcome indicator of the Strategic Plan addresses a range of SDGs, ***this strategy goes beyond Goal 5 on gender equality to drive achievement across all 17 Goals.***

Signature solution 6 focuses attention on the deep-rooted structural barriers that perpetuate gender inequality and hinder sustainable development. With the key priority areas identified under signature solution 6, UNDP is best prepared to achieve the transformational change that will advance gender equality and accelerate the path to accomplish sustainable development. The contents consigned in the 4 priority areas of the signature solution 6 are in line with the goals of SDG 5.

The four priority areas of signature solution 6: (UNDP, 2018 Gender Equality Strategy, p. 15)

1. ***Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work;***
2. ***Preventing and responding to gender-based violence;***
3. ***Promoting women's participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making;***
4. ***Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis (conflict and disaster) prevention, preparedness and recovery.***

These priority areas correspond to a great extent to the intervention areas of ongoing UNDP projects in Guinea-Bissau (see details in chap. 4). They tackle main challenges towards the realization of gender equality in the country as identified in the situational analysis of this study (chap. 2) and other available studies / sources on the gender situation in Guinea-Bissau, including my own.⁴⁸ They are a very helpful tool for guiding the elaboration of recommendations on the promotion of gender equality in the new UNSDCF for Guinea-Bissau and the upcoming UNDP Country Programme Document.

The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy presents strategic gender mainstreaming entry points to the three outcomes of the ***UNDP Strategic Plan*** (2018-2021)⁴⁹. They offer a broad perspective for identifying potential entry points and/ or adapting some for the project design of the CPD and UNSDCF.

Potential strategic entry points for gender equality mainstreaming in Guinea-Bissau

Outcome 1. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and keeping people out of poverty

(Entry point f) Supporting partners to ensure gender-responsive sustainable management of natural resources, including land, water and forests, and to expand women's access to, control and ownership of land, property and finance as well as to partnerships in new micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises established on green and inclusive value chains;

Outcome 2. Accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development, especially through innovative solutions that have multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals

(Entry point g) Supporting national institutions and engaging community leaders to implement the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and gender-related

⁴⁸ UNDP/ Justice Reform Project: Embalo, Birgit (2020), "Study on the need of Gender Mainstreaming into the legal frameworks of Guinea-Bissau". UNDP Consultancy; GEF/UNDP Project No 10105 "Strengthening climate information and early warning systems for climate resilient development and adaptation to climate change in Guinea-Bissau (2020)", Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan, for EBD Global Optimum (Team lead by Fabiana Issler).

⁴⁹ UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, UN-Document, 2017 DP/2017/38.

obligations of other human rights treaties; support women's access to justice through both formal and informal systems; and increase women's leadership in the judicial, security and legal sectors;

Outcome 3. Building resilience to crises and shocks, in order to safeguard development gains

(Entry point b) Ensuring that post-disaster and peacebuilding needs assessments and recovery planning are gender-responsive, addressing the needs of men and women, especially in areas such as health, security, safe drinking water and sanitation, housing and education, and that women are part of decision-making processes.

3.1.4 Gender Equality within UNDP - internal strategy

The principles and requirements of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)⁵⁰ guide UNDP's gender equality strategy internally at global, regional and country level (UNDP, 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p. 19-22).

Commitment to champion gender equality

UNDP leadership and senior management is committed to champion gender equality as integral to UNDP work; they stand at the forefront for changing gender power structures and discriminatory practices, both formal and informal, within the organization and in programmatic/policy work.

Integration of gender equality in the programming cycle, activities and budgeting

UNDP integrates gender equality in all stages of the programming cycle and activities. Gender equality results are ensured through gender responsive policy and planning. Gender analysis is mandatory for country/regional framework documents, programmes and projects. Structural barriers to gender equality are discussed in the project rationale and project priority areas should identify concrete changes to advance gender equality in at least one area of intervention. A minimum of one gender-specific outcome and indicative outputs and indicators is to be included in the results and resources frameworks.

UNDP Country Offices should develop gender equality strategies and implementation plans, translating the corporate strategy into concrete actions and budget allocations relevant to the country programme.

It is envisaged that 15 % of all country programme and project budgets is allocated to advancing gender equality and/or empowering women, especially in projects with the gender marker attribute GEN-3 – in which gender equality and the empowerment of women is the principal objective of outcome.

Accountability for gender equality results

UNDP will integrate accountability for gender equality results within its overall accountability framework, including – among other – gender-responsive staff performance management and mainstreaming gender into the UNDP corporate monitoring system (results-based management) and tools. All UNDP evaluations are based on the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system, including the gender-related norms and standards. Implementation of the gender equality strategy at country level will be evaluated and gender will be included in the annually risk-based audit.

Gender architecture and gender capacities

Gender equality and the empowerment of women will be integrated into the core values and/or competencies for all staff. Multidisciplinary Gender Focal Teams are required at UNCT level to ensure gender mainstreaming in programmes and the monitoring/evaluation of gender equality results. The Gender Focal Team also oversees institutional issues, such as gender parity, enabling environment and

⁵⁰ <https://www.unsystem.org/content/un-system-wide-action-plan-gender-equality-and-empowerment-women-swap-0>.

gender-sensitive communications. A dedicated gender specialist at country level is responsible for technical backstopping, the implementation of gender focused and women specific programmes and partnership building in country with women organizations etc.

Gender Equality Seal: innovation for organizational change

The UNDP Gender Equality Seal, since 2011, incentivizes country offices to integrate gender equality into all aspects of their development work. It serves as a certification programme and learning platform to support country offices/units to address gaps, document and share innovation and knowledge and advance organizational change for gender equality. Besides expansion of the Gender Equality Seal to more country offices, UNDP offers its expertise also for establishing Gender Equality Seals among sister agencies and at a broader level to public and private enterprises in country.

Inclusive, diverse and safe working environment

The creation of an inclusive, diverse and harmonious working environment is based on respect for the dignity of all persons and the promotion of a culture of equality, overcoming beliefs and values that reinforce exclusionary norms and tolerate prohibited conduct. UNDP is committed to full gender parity of all its staff and senior management by 2021; the transformation of the culture and quality of the working environment, including equal opportunities for career progress and a respectful atmosphere with zero tolerance to harassment and abuse of authority and sexual exploitation/abuse.

UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard

UNDP works closely with UN-Women on system-wide action on gender equality, including on the development of the ‘UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard’. The scorecard provides a set of standards to promote improved results for gender equality and women’s empowerment, aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, at the UNCT level.

3.2 Best practices in the promotion of gender equality

This chapter presents some best practices which appear feasible, appropriate and adoptable to the Guinea-Bissau context. They are based on an analysis of reports and evaluations of gender-sensitive / gender transformative projects - implemented by UNDP, UN-Women and other agencies - that document good practices and lessons learnt on the promotion of gender equality in social, political and economic terms and in resilience building to crisis and shocks.

UN Women defines a Good Practice in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) as "an intervention, business practice, process or methodology that is responsive to the needs of women and girls, replicable, scalable, and succeeds in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment".

(UN-Women, 2017, Documenting good practices on gender equality and women's empowerment - guidance note).⁵¹

The following presentation of best practices is organized along the four priority areas of UNDP Signature Solution 6:

1. Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work

Given the complex context and different levels of constraint that hinder women's economic empowerment, there are numerous and quite diverse approaches and project concepts to women's economic empowerment of which only a few examples of best practice can be presented here.

African economies will benefit immensely if women's access to paid work was equal to that of men. Macro-economic simulation of the gender gap/ contribution of female labor to GDP growth estimate about 6% GDP or 95Billion USD annually in Sub Saharan Africa alone (UN-Women/UNDP, 2018, Gender Equality as accelerator, p. 13).

Financial inclusion through saving schemes

One approach which emerges directly from local practice of women solidarity networks and saving schemes is the "Oxfam Savings for Change (SfC) programme" for access to microfinance for rural women. This programme has almost 700,000 group members across five countries. OXFAM Senegal targets rural populations, and women in particular, who lack access to modern agricultural equipment and to financial services, which are critical for livelihood investment and the provision of a safety net in times of crisis.

Oxfam's innovative approach to increasing women's empowerment and enhancing their resilient capacities follows a simple model: project teams train groups of women to save regularly, borrow from their group's fund, and repay loans with interest. The programme is implemented by the local NGO La Lumière and has helped women to develop into key actors in the economic, social and political life of their community. The loans enable women to acquire productive assets that are traditionally owned only by men, for example farming tools or livestock. This facilitates women to engage in income-generating activities, including rice and peanut farming.

Financial inclusion is the entry point of this project to disrupt the belief that men alone are the decision makers at the household level as they are responsible for income generation.

⁵¹ A good practice is shared to learn from each other and apply knowledge and experience to new situations. It can be improved and become better when adapted to meet new challenges and circumstances (ibid.)

Women's greater economic power gives them more autonomy in making decisions on how household income should be spent; with the savings groups the absorptive and adaptive capacities of rural women to cope with economic stress have increased. They can invest in better food for the family through agriculture diversification and in adaptive practices, such as the rehabilitation of boreholes.

The project also challenges discriminatory attitudes, perceptions and practices that have been holding women back, by engaging men in the fight for gender justice – sensitizing husbands and religious and traditional leaders to SfC's approach through awareness-raising sessions. Now they support the women in their communities, and with the buy-in of their male counterparts, women's voices gain greater impact (OXFAM, 2017).

Women's agency in green business

Another good practice for the economic empowerment of women is the potential that green business offers. In the developing world the increase of renewable technologies, coupled with the spread of energy-efficient household practices (improved cookstoves), benefits women on many levels. Reducing the hardship of wood collection, renewable energy has the potential to promote social progress in the rural areas. This presents a unique opportunity to not only empower women to be more efficient energy managers at the household and community levels but also to be committed about expanding access to sustainable energy (including renewable energy) at school and in health care facilities, and to enter the energy industry as workers or entrepreneurs. (UNDP, Habtezian, 2016). For example, the "Solar Sister", a women-led social enterprise in Ghana, is scaling up the use of clean energy technologies with woman centered direct sales to reduce energy poverty (through solar lights) in remote communities in rural Africa (www.solarsister.org, retrieved 23 October 2020).

Solar Sister believes women are a key part of the solution to the clean energy challenge. Women are provided with economic opportunity, training, technology and support to distribute clean energy to underserved communities in Africa, i.e. Solar Sister invests in women's enterprise in off-grid communities. Thus, women can be empowered and the furthest behind who aren't reached by business-as-usual energy models can benefit from RE.

Centering local women in a rapidly growing clean energy sector is essential to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable solutions to climate change and a host of development issues (www.solarsister.org).

2. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence

A key topic of interest are best practices for the prevention of gender based violence and the important positive role that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can play for gender justice in West Africa.

Complex, multi-faceted issues such as SGBV require a comprehensive response. Findings across all sectors have identified the need for collaboration between law enforcement, legal aid services, health care organizations, public health programs, educational institutions, and agencies devoted to social services and economic development. Collaboration across sectors is essential for both providing effective services to victims of violence as well as for preventing violence against women.

Integrated Services for SGBV victims

Programmes that integrate services for women's empowerment and/or victims of SGBV under one roof are promising practices that may reduce violence and increase victims' ability to leave their perpetrator. By meeting the multiple needs of violated victims in one location, they don't have to spend additional time and resources seeking help at different institutions. Additionally, they are spared from repeating their testimonies each time. These integrated services include psychological and legal support, sexual and reproductive health services, as well as economic empowerment activities,

including vocational training, labor market intermediation, business development services, and microcredit (see Violence against women and girls, www.vawgresourceguide.org/innovate, retrieved on 23 October 2020).

In El Salvador “Women’s City” is a unique model for empowering women by offering them integrated services under one roof (Women’s City Centers). The services are provided by different public institutions (service providers) under the leadership of the Secretariat of Social Inclusion (SIS). The services include: 1. Prevention and response to violence against women; 2. Sexual and reproductive health services; 3. Support for establishing economic autonomy; 4. Group education to promote women’s rights and prevent SGBV; and 5. Childcare for children under 12 years of age while women use services at the Center.

The “Women’s City” approach provides a customized and coordinated package of SGBV response services targeted exclusively to each woman. The approach also allows for greater quality and delivery of services, as these follow a chain of service provision that is coordinated throughout the institution. *In addition to receiving response services (such as treatment for physical injuries, psychosocial support, etc.), women also participate in activities to gain economic independence, thus increasing their options for leaving situations of violence (www.vawgresourceguide.org/innovate).*

Education for prevention

UN Women, in partnership with the “[World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts](#)” (WAGGGS) has developed a global non-formal education curriculum to engage young people in efforts to prevent and end violence against girls and women. “[Voices against Violence](#)” is designed for various age groups ranging from 5 to 25 years, providing young people with tools and expertise to understand the root causes of violence in their communities, to educate and involve their peers and communities to prevent such violence, and to learn about where to access support if violence is experienced.

The youngest groups may start out with storytelling and games that prompt them to think about gender bias and stereotypes, while older age groups can organize poster competitions, visit local shelters, develop local community-based campaigns or projects to address specific forms of violence against girls and women (www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/prevention, retrieved on 23 October 2020).

“*Voices against Violence*” can be adapted to national context, translated into local languages, and rolled out in schools and communities in partnership with youth organizations, UN partners and governments.

Safe cities and markets

UN-Women Ruanda and the Kigali Safe Cities Programme implemented together a rehabilitation measure for 14 mini markets. The improvement of physical infrastructures enables women of the informal sector to work at safer and more productive markets. The project includes hygiene measures and protective zones, child care facilities, toilets etc. which all help in the prevention of sexual harassment and violence against women in public spaces (UN-Women, 2019: Women and Sustainable Development Goals, p. 23, www.unwomen.org)

Multiple Strategies to prevent SGBV

The evaluation provided in the “Framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women” (UN-Women, 2015) finds that *interventions that combine multiple strategies and target more than one level of the community or organizational ecology can count on more success*. “Whole-of-school” interventions are more effective than implementing a single strategy; media campaigns in combination with group training and efforts to develop leadership show good results. Interventions that seek to

transform gender relations are the most successful, for example changing men's roles in caregiving in the family or increasing women's economic participation. The results are not only changes in attitudes, but also in the behaviors, for example reductions in violence perpetration or victimization (Fulu et al., 2013). Interventions that work with both men and women seem to be more effective than single sex interventions (Fulu et al., ibid). Besides having better prospects for change, this comprehensive intervention can help to prevent potential backlash from men that could otherwise occur (www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/prevention_framework_unwomen_nov2015.pdf?la=en&vs=5223, p. 17).

Local led initiatives to fight FGM/C

Decline in the practice, noted all over the continent, has been at a slower rate than was hoped. A vast array of interventions have been developed, but many of these seem to be ineffective in their outcome. Efforts to tackle FGM/C have been highly fragmented and not followed a whole system approach. While FGM/C nowadays is illegal in many countries, it was found, for example, in Kenya that that it is still being conducted in secret in some communities (like Senegal, Guinea-Bissau etc.).

There is a need to re-orient the community strategies from awareness raising to behavior-change intervention approaches, which should be furthermore reflected in the training provided at all levels (Mwendwa et al, 2020).

Contextualized and comprehensive approaches are needed that combine comprehensive education at all levels, the support of religious leaders, awareness campaigns within churches and mosques, women as role models and men gaining a voice in the debate to advocate openly for the abandonment of the practice. A combination of behavior change support at the community level, law enforcement and persistent advocacy by diverse representatives of communities is needed.

Guinea-Bissau adopted a strategy of publicly declaring the abandonment of the practice of female genital mutilation by the “Fanatecas” (women *fanado* exercisers - cutters) and alternative *fanado* ceremonies without physical interventions, see chap. 2.8.

In the opinion of focus group members of a study on FGM in Kenya: “Education still plays an important role in ending circumcision because girls who are educated know their rights ... You know when a girl goes to secondary schools and knows that other girls are not circumcised, and the teachers are also not circumcised, and their lives are alright, this helps a lot.”⁵²

Restorative Justice and Domestic Violence

The positive impacts of restorative justice and ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) on cases of SGBV and more broadly domestic violence and family matters are controversial. Albeit there is some evidence for the success of these extra-judicial interventions, we cannot find a body of best practice. Certainly, the justice systems among African countries and the relationship between formal and informal justice in each country differ widely; these conditions have to be taken into consideration at the country level and force us to lower our expectation of “best practice” solutions.

A small scale study on “Giving Women their Voice: Domestic Violence and Restorative Justice in South Africa” (Amanda Dissel & Kindiza Ngubeni, 2003, <http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/gender/givingwomenvoice.pdf>, retrieved on 25 October 2020) illustrates high level of satisfaction with the mediation process among the female victims of domestic violence. For most of the women, it afforded a unique opportunity to make their voices heard, to tell their story, and to insist on changes in their

⁵² Mwendwa et al., 2020, “Promote locally led initiatives to fight female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)”. Lessons from anti-FGM/C advocates in rural Kenya, *Reproductive Health* (2020) 17:30 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-020-0884-5>, Focus Group 3.

partners' behavior. The experiences of these women indicate that restorative justice practices can be successfully used in domestic violence cases, and can result in lasting and meaningful change.

Before cases are referred to mediation, there should be preparation with the female victim so that her decision to participate is voluntarily made based on a sound understanding of the process and its consequences. In all cases, there should be a full assessment of her safety concerns, and steps taken to ensure that she and her family are protected.

Proper training is crucial to ensure that mediations are properly conducted. It is also important that mediators are impartial and do not buy into the cultural perspectives on women that are so prevalent in the African societies. A process of monitoring the case for a period after the mediation should be institutionalized. This is to ensure that the agreement has been complied with and that no further abusive behavior has occurred (Dissel & Ngubeni, *ibid*).

These main principles of successful mediation in domestic violence cases, mainly intimal partner violence and family matters, can serve as an orientation guide for the challenges ahead in Guinea-Bissau regarding mediation and restorative justice between the formal and informal justice system.

3. Promoting women's participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making

Men's resistance against sharing political power with women and joining decision-making processes is a global phenomenon. Entrenched societal and systemic gender stereotypes and a lack of support at home and in the workplace still are some of the major causes of persistent under-representation of women in leadership and decision-making (Illesann, O.O. 2018, Women's Visibility in Decision Making Processes in Africa—Progress, Challenges, and the Way Forward, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00038>, retrieved on 22 October 2020)

When considering women's political participation, it is important to take into account their representation, both descriptive (the proportion of women in elected bodies) and substantive (their impact on decision-making), and their mobilization both within formal and informal political spaces.

There is a vast body of measures to accelerate women's visibility in decision-making, such as establishing gender-balanced governmental bodies and parliamentary committees, creating national gender machineries, promotion of gender equality in the public administration and judiciary (through specific targets and a positive action policy); integration of women into elective positions in political parties; promotion and protection of women's political rights and reconciliation between work and family responsibilities for both men and women. Women's equal participation in leadership is fostered by specific leadership and gender awareness training.

Nevertheless, straightforward best practices are hardly to find as the effectiveness of parity laws and quota-systems is doubtful. Participation in formal political institutions (political parties, parliaments, civil service) and in formal processes (elections, national reforms) is often the most direct way to influence decision-making. But women can shape decisions and behavior of power holders outside public office through engagement in social movements, civic associations and community-based organizations (UN-Women / UNDP, 2018: Gender Equality as Accelerator, p. 33).

Scholars disagree whether increasing women's representation in sub-Saharan Africa where legislatures are weak and executives are strong results in significant substantive or symbolic representation or is less meaningful. In Botswana, gender quota campaigns have raised awareness but have been unsuccessful in achieving quotas, and women's parliamentary representation continuous to be low – similarity with the situation in Guinea-Bissau. In Rwanda, a constitutional gender quota, including reserved seats combined with voluntary party quotas for women have resulted in a majority female lower house of parliament—the only such parliament in the in Africa: For Some insights from

democratic Botswana and autocratic Rwanda see the study of G. Bauer and J.E. Burnet.⁵³ As important as quotas are, they need to be driven by societal support for women's representation and progress in the political systems towards more public participation and accountability. Proportional representation probably is the most important factor in bringing high numbers of women into parliament, but no one size fits all and flexibility is key.

Platform for promoting and valuing the skills of women in decision-making positions

The Ivory Coast has set up a compendium for the elaboration of a directory to make Ivorian women's skills visible in order to enhance their participation in public life. This initiative is based on the collaboration between UNDP, UN-Women, UNFPA, Government Information and Communication Center (CICG) and the National Institute of Statistics (INS).

The Compendium is a platform for valuing female skills with the main objective to strengthen the visibility, participation and leadership of women in the management of public and private affairs at all levels. It identifies areas in which women are underrepresented and encourages action towards equity and social justice; the platform provides timely and useful information for making decisions regarding the recruitment, appointment or representation of women's skills; it promotes the building up of a solidarity network among the women members of the compendium

Togo, Benin and Mali have been inspired by the experience of the Ivory Coast in designing and implementing their female skills; several other countries, such as Senegal, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Guinea-Bissau, have demonstrated interest to implement this Ivorian practice.

(<http://africa.southsouthworld.org/46-solution/2425/empowering-women-to-promote-women-in-decision-making-positions-in-cote-d-ivoire>).

4. Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis (conflict and disaster) prevention, preparedness and recovery

Women's agency is crucial for tackling the perils of climate change and disaster risk. They continue to be particularly vulnerable to current and future climate change and disaster risk, despite some progress made over the years. Including women and girls in DRR projects does not automatically make them gendered nor bring gender equality gains. Women's and girls' capacities and needs must be recognized, not just their vulnerability status. Building women's and girls' resources for resilience will help reduce disaster impact in the future (Bradshaw and Fordham 2013, p. 38). Knowledge and experience in natural resource management and other societal activities at the household and community levels equip women with unique skills that benefit adaptation and disaster efforts. For example, during a drought in the small islands of the Federated States of Micronesia, the knowledge of island hydrology that the women had as a result of their land-based work enabled them to find potable water by digging a new well.

Women create safer communities after disaster

The experience from an emergency response programme in East Cuba after Hurricane Mathew in 2016 demonstrates how women were able to lead the relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts together with men – and to create safer, more resilient communities. The Oxfam project for the rehabilitation of vital infrastructure, housing, sanitation etc. for over 500 families took into account

⁵³ Gretchen Bauer, Jennie E. Burnet, 2013, "Gender quotas, democracy, and women's representation" [wsif.2013.05.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.05.012), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.05.012>.

the specific needs of different groups in the community based on age, gender, location and other often-neglected factors, including disability (Oxfam 2017).

This project demonstrates the possibility of integrating humanitarian response and development in a gender-transformative way whereby women strengthened their leadership while supporting their communities to become more resilient.

Volunteer women's groups not only enabled women to make decisions regarding preparedness; they also served as space for reflection of women to end domestic violence. The women's groups called for the broadening of definitions of 'safety', beyond infrastructure, to also consider social and protection risks like domestic violence. As a result, the project aim changed – from providing safe roofs to creating a 'safe community'. Women then worked directly on gender inequalities together with men. The project provided a flexible fund that enabled women to set up small businesses, which increased their resilience to extreme weather events by providing alternative income sources. Together these activities enabled women to become critical actors – and leaders – in the community reconstruction. Playing non-traditional roles and, in doing so, making a vital contribution to local development, women grew in confidence as they found that they were capable of responding to the different needs in their community. As result of their role in the emergency response, women have become local leaders and able to overcome social norms that previously made their capacities invisible and prevented them from taking political, economic and social leadership (Oxfam 2017).

Better outcome in peace processes

Women's skills as negotiators and mediators, beginning at the household level, and their experience in maintaining dialogue during community conflicts and building trustworthy relationships with communities, can explain better outcome in peace processes through women's meaningful participation. Women have advocated for issues such as land ownership, inheritance, health care, gender-based violence and human rights violations in peace negotiations. In Burundi, for example, women succeeded in inserting into the peace agreement provisions on freedom of marriage and the right to choose one's partner (UN Women, UNDP, 2018: Gender equality as accelerator, p. 40).

Chapter 4 How to promote gender equality in Guinea-Bissau

(In this chapter the results of the previous chapters will be matched. This will lead to a comprehensive view of the different components for UN programming and subsequent presentation of recommendations how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the upcoming strategic country documents (UNSDG Cooperation Framework and CPD).

4.1 Assessment of current UNDP programmes and practice

4.1.1 First Gender Equality Strategy of UNDP Guinea-Bissau

The first Gender Strategy of UNDP Guinea-Bissau was elaborated in 2018/2019 and received its final shape in May 2020. UNDP calls on each country office for developing its own gender strategy in line with the global one. With its gender strategy UNDP Guinea-Bissau aims to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women in Guinea-Bissau are integrated into all its programmatic and operational activities (*Estratégia de Género, Introdução, p.1*).

The UNDP *Strategic Plan 2014-2017* emphasizes the importance of gender equality in all three areas of activity: Sustainable Development; Inclusive and Effective Democratic Governance; and Resilience Building. Aligned with global UNDP policy ("UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and Gender Strategy") and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Guinea-Bissau (UNDAF 2016-2020), the UNDP Gender Strategy Guinea-Bissau defines four priorities:

the promotion of women's political and economic participation and representation in decision-making bodies;

evidence-based strategies and partnerships to raise attention to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);

support women's access to goods, services and productive resources, including environmental ones;

improvement of institutional effectiveness of the UNDP Country Office in gender mainstreaming (Gender Strategy, p.3).

The UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy formulates specific gender outputs (with notes) related to the UNDAF (2016-2020) outcomes and potential entry points for UNDP. A (slightly summarized) English version of the Portuguese original is presented in the table below.

TABLE 3: Gender Strategy Guinea-Bissau (Gender Outputs aligned to UNDAF Outcomes (2016-2020) with Entry Points for UNDP)

Outcome	Gender-Output	Notes	Strategic Entry Points for UNDP
<p>1. <i>The State institutions, including defense, security, and justice, consolidate the stability and the Rule of Law, democratic participation, and equitable access to opportunities for all.</i></p>	<p>More women participate in democratic governance processes and enjoy their basic human and civil rights.</p>	<p>Strengthening a framework of good governance that provides the basis for inclusive, responsible and transparent relations between the State and citizens.</p> <p>UNDP's activities focus on giving women and young people a voice, promoting their civic engagement and political participation in supervisory institutions.</p> <p>The improvement of women's political representativeness in sovereign bodies and their equal participation in governance, in the development of public policies and in political dialogue are at the heart of this result.</p> <p>Elimination of barriers against advancement of women, including young and disabled women, in order to enable their participation in decision-making processes.</p>	<p>UNDP supports national institutions to make efforts to accelerate the equal participation of women, including young women and marginalized groups in decision-making;</p> <p>Provides technical assistance to establish a strong advisory mechanism for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the governance process;</p> <p>Supports the network of women's organizations and the civil society movement to provide for the integration of gender equality into policies and legal reforms, including those related to transparency and accountability, Leverage their partnership with government authorities, public administration and other decision-making bodies in strengthen their engagement;</p> <p>Provides legal and political reinforcements to accelerate women's rights in law and in practice, eliminate discrimination and eradicate gender-based violence;</p> <p>Support to national institutions in fulfilling international human rights obligations, including the national implementation of CEDAW, as well as providing advocacy policies and techniques in relation to the constitution, laws on gender equality, family, domestic violence, property, land, inheritance and citizenship and support training on women's rights for women, communities and religious and traditional leaders;</p> <p>Assists national partners to make efforts for women's access to justice, both in the formal and informal systems, which include gender accountability of the judiciary, security and the legal sector through capacity building and increased female participation in decision-making, promoting women's legal empowerment and engaging religious and traditional human rights leaders.</p>
2.		Consolidation and effectiveness of	UNDP supports national partners to promote economic and political reforms that incorporate a gender perspective in planning and budgeting;

<p><i>The economic growth is inclusive and sustainable to promote poverty reduction, decent jobs, food security, and the structural transformation of the economy.</i></p>	<p>More women, particularly the most vulnerable and low-income, have an adequate standard of living and access to sustainable income opportunities.</p>	<p>development plans; economic strategy for poverty reduction, addressing gender dimension and gender-based economic inequalities; activities support women to expand their opportunities for emancipation, equitable access to resources, financing and decent jobs</p>	<p>Technical and financial assistance for the production of a new Multidimensional Poverty Index, update of economic indicators / planning for poverty reduction;</p> <p>Support national partners in the design and implementation of innovative gender-sensitive social protection measures, promotion of sustainable microcredit systems, agricultural subsidies and employment guarantees.</p>
<p>3. (= No 4 in UNDAF)</p> <p><i>The public institutions, Civil Society Organizations, and the private sector ensure the promotion of sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, risk management, and disaster prevention.</i></p>	<p>3.1.3: Women deal with mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience and sustainable management</p>	<p>Promotion of environmentally friendly actions and inclusion of women as most vulnerable actors;</p> <p>Ensure gender-sensitive sustainable management of environment and biodiversity, in accordance with international standards, based on firm institutional framework integrated into public policies, programs and development projects;</p> <p>Biodiversity will be preserved and valued with a view to strengthening the resilience of communities based on the needs of women and men, in an integrative gender perspective, which guarantees equal access to natural resources and the empowerment of women, including the promotion of</p>	<p>UNDP supports the improvement of national capacity in the formulation and implementation of environmental and natural resource management policies, ensuring the full participation of women in decision-making on the use, management and protection of natural resources;</p> <p>Supports partners in transforming traditional gender roles and stereotypes, for women's equal access to resources for domestic and productive purposes and property;</p> <p>Supports the incorporation and awareness of gender equality and gender mainstreaming criteria in climate financing strategies and programs;</p> <p>Supports increasing access of women to ecosystem goods and services, their ownership and sustainable management.</p>

		economic opportunities , such as green jobs	
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Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy

As the Gender Equality Strategy was completed only in 2019, it was not integrated into the work and action plans of the current Country Programme Document (CPD) right from its elaboration time, in 2015, and, most importantly, the Gender Strategy does not dispose of a specific budget for the implementation of its activities.

For accurately assessing the current state of the promotion of gender equality in UNDP projects, we will look at projects with a gender-sensitive component which were planned and were / are implemented under the current CPD, against the Gender Strategy, taking into consideration its four priority areas of intervention and its gender specific outputs (see further down).

Gender Action Plan (2020-2022)

The Gender Action Plan for the Gender Equality Strategy will develop its activities over three years between 2020 and 2022. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic its implementation is delayed; it is to start as soon as financial means are available. The Gender Action Plan presents the indicators and indicative activities for the three gender outputs; it follows the entry points proposed in the Gender Strategy.

The Gender Action Plan still needs budgeting of the envisaged activities. At present, we cannot assess the success of its implementation, as it did not start yet.

Together with the Gender Equality Strategy, the Gender Action Plan is the key document for understanding and formulating the strategic vision for the promotion of gender equality in the upcoming CPD and UNSDG Cooperation Framework.

4.1.2 Instruments for the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality programming and project implementation

The promotion of gender equality through UNDP programmes and projects needs to be verified and monitored through specific evaluation instruments.

Gender Marker

The gender marker is the fundamental instrument used to evaluate project design and project performance as well as to track the financial expenses made to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment:

Score 3 for projects that have gender equality as a principal objective and allocate at least 80% of the total project budget to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)

Score 2 for projects that have gender equality as a significant objective and allocate at least 30% of the total project budget to GEWE

Score 1 for projects that contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly (less than 30% of the total budget for GEWE)

Data from ROAR UNDP Bissau in 2016 and 2017 and from the Independent Evaluation (UNDP, 2020: Evaluation Guinea-Bissau) show that UNDP Guinea-Bissau needs to improve its performance in relation to gender mainstreaming, which requires an increase in quantity and quality of projects with a gender marker 2. Furthermore, to reach the objectives of SDG 5 the implementation of a significant number of projects with a gender marker 3 is required. The UNDP Gender Strategy (UNDP Gender Strategy Guinea-Bissau, 2018) proposes one gender output at minimum.

Table 4: Projects per outcome UNDAF with Gender Marker

Outcome	Total	GEN-0	GEN-1	GEN-2	GEN 3
Outcome 1	13	1	6	6	0
Justice, RoL 2014-2019	6	---	3	3	---
Public Administration 2008-2018	3	1	2	---	---
Consolidation of Democratic Institutions and CS 2015-2019	1	---	1	---	---
Electoral Support 2018-2019	3	---	---	3	---
(Global Fund) not counted	7		6	1	
Outcome 2	04		2	2	
Poverty Reduction/DENARP 2008-2017	1	---	1	---	---
PBF Youth peacebuilder 2018-2019	1	---	---	1	---
Policy Formulation & Aid Management 2013-2018	1	---	1	---	---
Local Governance 2015-2019	1	---	---	1	---
Outcome 3	10	2	4	4	
Environment, Biodiversity 2010-2022	8	2	4	2	
UNDP/GEF Prodocs 2017-2019	2			2	
TOTAL	27	03	12	12	0

Out of a total of 27 projects, covering a period of roughly 10 years, only 12 are marked GEN-2; there isn't a single GEN-3 project; but two projects were rated with GEN-0 or as gender-blind projects.

Projects that address fundamental issues of gender equality, such as public audits by NPs and CS, have a GEN-0 marker (see: Project for Strengthening technical and functional skills of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), National Parliaments and Civil Society for the control of public finances in the PALOP and Timor-Leste (Pro PALOPTL SAI, MPs, and CSO). Given the crucial importance of gender mainstreaming financing, a project on audit and supervision should definitely integrate gender-sensitive (GEN-2) project components, such as capacity building of women in audit and on gender sensitive public budgeting, to comply with current gender mainstreaming standards.

The environmental projects implemented under outcome 3 (UNDAF outcome 4) show higher awareness for gender equality; this may go back to the well-established criteria for gender mainstreaming, elaborated by GEF, UICN etc. into climate change adaptation, natural resource management, biodiversity etc. and the key community components that all these projects have.

It seems that for the more recent projects the GEN-2 marker is often attributed which is a positive development as it hints to a certain increase of gender awareness in programming.

Nevertheless, no project until now could meet the GEN-3 criteria, which is the standard indicator required in the Gender Strategy, at minimum for 1 output/per outcome. The country office until 2018/19 had not implemented any gender-transformative (GEN3 = stand alone gender project with gender transformative content) project to address structural changes in social norms and cultural stereotypes.

The new PBF project that started recently (2019) “Placing Women at the center of Justice Reform in Guinea-Bissau” promotes women’s human rights, namely gender equality and women’s empowerment. Its main objective is enabling women to play a role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and to ensure peace consolidation as well as to strengthen justice operators and traditional authorities’ sensibility and knowledge on matters related to women. ***The project falls under the PBF priority window “Gender Promotion Initiative” and is marked as GEN-3 project with 80% of its total budget allocated to activities in direct pursuit of gender equality and women’s empowerment.***

As the project is ongoing, it is too early for its general evaluation but some already executed activities clearly demonstrate very positive impact on the promotion of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau success, such as (under Output 1.1) the analysis and discussion of the national legal framework with a gender sensitive lens (Embalo/UNDP 2020). That study demonstrated the persisting gender gaps throughout the main laws of Guinea-Bissau, presented strategies and indicators for its update, including constitutional review, and created elevated awareness among concerned stakeholders and women’s organizations for the urgency of action to mainstream gender into the legal framework and make it more adequate to prevent women’s human rights violations and conflicts.

The Gender Equality Seal

The Gender Equality certification program is a process of recognizing the good performance of the Country Office in relation to gender equality. It provides a framework for senior programme officers in meeting specific performance standards. The Certification Program is also a quality assurance initiative that tracks, measures and certifies competence and achievements in promoting women's rights and corporate gender equality goals.

According to the UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy, the UNDP Country Office has undertaken several initiatives to address the concerns expressed in the Gender Equality Certification Program. The CO has carried out an online self-assessment and received a list with issues/elements that the Gender Seal requires and which need improvement. A respective workplan for 2020/21 was established and is being executed (see UNDP Gender Equality Seal 2020-2021-Guinea-Bissau CO Action Plan for Improvement). Among others, the ToR for the Gender Focal Group (Gender Committee) were elaborated, and a gender analyst was recruited who is undertaking a set of actions in the gender domain to make UNDP Guinea-Bissau fit for the application to the Gender Equality Seal by 2021.

Gender equality financing mechanisms

UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021 foresees at least 15% spending of the whole budget for gender mainstreaming issues. The gender equality seal foresees that the total amount of expenditures with gender equality as the main objective or significant objective, that is of GEN-2 and GEN-3 marked projects, should be at least 50% of the total programme budget.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The gender equality seal presents some proposals how adequate resources can be made available for gender mainstreaming.

The situation on the ground, at UNDP Guinea-Bissau, on gender financing mechanism has been far less encouraging: UNDP financial commitments to gender equality were low during the last years. 72 per cent of programme expenditure (\$33.8 million) was directed towards outputs expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1 outputs), and 27 per cent (\$12.6 million) towards outputs expected to have gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2) (UNDP, 2020: Independent Evaluation).

4.1.3 Gender Architecture at UNDP Office Guinea-Bissau

In compliance with the UNDP corporate Gender Equality Strategy (chap. 3.1), the Guinea-Bissau Gender Equality Strategy and its Action Plan deal with the institutional organization for efficient gender mainstreaming.

Gender Focal Group / Gender Committee

The Gender Focal Group is the main supervision body for gender equality inside the organization. It has the task of ensuring compliance with the gender mainstreaming guidelines, such as following the implementation of the gender strategy and its respective action plan, verifying gender mainstreaming in the projects, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality results, and coordinating the initiatives aimed at implementing a gender mainstreaming certification program (UNDP Bissau Gender Strategy).

In fulfillment of the requirements of the Gender Focal Group, a ***Gender Committee*** has been put in place at UNDP CO Guinea-Bissau for the period 2020-2021. This Committee substitutes its larger predecessor which was not functioning very well. The new committee is composed of 5 members (DRR-P, Gender Program Analyst, Communications Analyst, Human Resources Associate from Operations and Finance Specialist from the Global Fund Program) and chaired by the Deputy Resident Representative- Programme, in accordance with the Global UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021 and the recommendation of the Gender Equality Seal (GES).

The Gender Committee is the main body for the implementation and monitoring of a gender mainstreaming mechanism in UNDP CO Guinea-Bissau in which all tasks and responsibilities for the promotion of gender equality, including strategic leadership, programming, resource management and budgeting, are united under one roof. The Gender Committee has the following objectives (ToRs, 2020):

"The Gender Committee of the UNDP Office in Guinea-Bissau has an essential role in ensuring that a gender mainstreaming mechanism is put in place in the country office. The Gender Committee will help coordinate the Office's gender initiatives, provide strategic leadership and management, raise awareness, support policy and capacity building, work on resource mobilization, planning, programming and budgeting to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women are achieved and discriminatory social norms are questioned. The Gender Committee will promote organizational learning at the individual and work unit levels on how to practically and effectively integrate gender equality into policies, programs, operations and structures of the UNDP country office and partners."

The recently installed Gender Committee, however, has yet not met with the frequency indicated in the TORs. Meetings proposed by the Gender Programme Analyst during 2020 had to be postponed several times due to internal coordination difficulties (Covid-19 etc.). Thus, the Gender Committee so far could not fully play out its role in leading the office in the implementation of its gender strategy.

To enable quick and substantial progress in the implementation of the gender strategy an adequate particular financing mechanism should be provided.

Gender Specialist at Country Level

A Gender Programme Analyst has been engaged in early 2019 and already improved various components at the design/ programmatic level of gender equality building, foremost the actualization of the Gender Strategy and Gender Action Plan and preparation of UNDP Guinea-Bissau candidature for the Gender Equality Seal. **The gender specialist also achieved important progress at the institutional level, being responsible for technical backstopping, the implementation of gender focused and women specific programmes and partnership building in country with women organizations etc.**

The gender specialist prepared the UNDP Guinea-Bissau gender response proposal to COVID-19, the gender committee's TORs, the gender focal point TORs, the gender committee's annual work plans (2020 and 2021) and budget (inspired by the global gender seal work plan), the TORs and follow-up of this study on gender analysis and reviewed /elaborated parts of the ROAR sections concerning gender and UN-SWAP.

Furthermore, she deepened the gender diagnosis of the recently concluded “Local Economic Development” project whose contents will be integrated in the Strategic Plans for Sustainable Development (PEDSS); provided technical support for the implementation of the project on “Political Stabilization” (PBF), through building trust and political dialogue, specifically through improving the technical proposal presented by the Guinean Association of Women Lawyers (AGMJ) and the script used during the consultation process for the revision of the constitution. The gender analyst engaged in fortifying partnership with important NGOs, women leaders and other local partners: by improving technical proposals, for example of the Bioksan platform (SGBV and statistical data during COVID-19 pandemic) and resizing activities of the project “Placing women at the center of the Justice reform” (PBF) in order to adjust them with the proposals of the beneficiary organizations.

The gender specialist participated in drafting concept notes and abstracts for project proposals at CO level⁵⁵, and prepared an in-depth gender analysis of the health sector for the activities to strengthening the COVID-19 epidemiological surveillance system in Guinea-Bissau. In the frame of the project to limit the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, she developed project activities for matching gender marker 2 through enhancing the social protection scheme to cover the most vulnerable, leveraging livelihoods and digital solutions.

Internal capacity and partnership building is another field of engagement of the gender specialist. She organized training for UNDP CO staff, on the basic concepts used in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. The training also focused on the classification of the gender marker, as an instrument that tracks the financial contribution of projects to gender equality and on the gender seal corporate program to certify the performance of the office towards gender equality. The training contents were shared in the UNDP internal newsletter. At regional level, she participated at a workshop of the UN Regional Bureau for Women on UNSDCF Development and Gender Equality Scorecard for West and Central African countries and shared the knowledge acquired with members of the Guinea-Bissau United Nations gender working group.

A network of gender focal points of the UNDP offices in PALOP was recently created by the gender specialist (in consolidation phase) with the main objective of carrying out joint activities and providing the sharing of experiences; furthermore partnership with the Governance unit of UNDP office in Dakar (in consolidation phase) was established to be able to share information and experiences.

⁵⁵ Among others, for the PBF project “Strengthening social cohesion and participatory conflict resolution mechanisms through socio-economic empowerment of rural women in Guinea Bissau”, UNDP Guinea Bissau early response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Trust Fund (MPTF) on COVID-19, (UNDP, UNICEF and WFP).

During UNDP's co-presidency of the thematic group in 2020, the gender specialist represented UNDP in the thematic group in consultation forums with partners in the gender domain, (such as the Women and Child Institute, the Women's Council, the Women's Policy Platform, other UN agencies, etc.) on the operationalization of the National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity (PNIEG), CEDAW, United Nations Resolution 1325 and initiatives to combat COVID 19.

Gender equality in the office and gender capacities

Gender equality among the UNDP CO Guinea-Bissau staff and their gender capacities have both to be improved substantially. Despite gender being used as the corporate tiebreaker criterion, the imbalances in staff persist with more men than women in all socio-professional categories, the largest gaps being registered in the socio-professional category of international and national officers (UNDP 2020, Independent Evaluation, p. 36). At the highest levels, P5 and NOC, there are no women at all, at P4 and NOB level there are significantly less women than men.

To correct the verified imbalances, special hiring measures are and will continue to be applied in UNDP Guinea-Bissau which privilege women for certain positions (see UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Action Plan. 2020-2022). This measure is required when the number of women in an UNDP CO is less than 45% of staff. Recruitment methods, such as tests and interviews, should be made more gender sensitive and the gender equality component should be observed throughout all phases of recruitment.⁵⁶ To overcome this imbalance four vacant/new P3 positions were staffed recently with female candidates.

Gender capacities of the UNDP CO staff and management have to be further increased in 2020 and 2021 by capacity-building and training sessions on gender equality in the programme cycle (already started with initial training by the gender specialist), in gender sensitive budgeting and M&E measures (marker, seal) and the implementation of a gender friendly environment at the work place. The latter includes respect for the dignity and different needs of everybody in an equal manner, creation of infrastructures (barrier-free), flexibility in contracts and working schemes for gender equal life-work balance (UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Action Plan). In fulfillment to UNDP regulations, a focal point for the awareness of and compliance with workplace policies regarding sexual harassment, respect for diversity and abuse of authority at UNDP Guinea-Bissau has been nominated recently, in May 2020.

The UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy recommends its country office to strengthen its position through frequent internal training in the gender domain, involving all office staff, to incorporate the gender dimension which is transversal to all services of the agency.

Training to achieve a basic understanding and technical capacity for gender mainstreaming, based on LMS (Learning Management System) is mandatory in UNDP COs. All employees must complete proxy courses in the first three months after recruitment in the fields of gender, sexual harassment and abuse of authority etc. 10% of the budget for internal training is reserved for gender mainstreaming.

To sum up, capacity-building in gender equality is a key component of the Gender Action Plan for improving the institutional setting for gender mainstreaming of UNDP Guinea-Bissau CO. Activities planned for 2020-2022 include specific training courses for the "Appropriation of the Gender Strategy by office staff" and "Strengthening capacities of office staff to formulate, implement and evaluate gender equality and women's empowerment policies" (Gender Action Plan, 2020-2022).

⁵⁶ Recruitment procedures must be revised so that the team, the project staff and consultants have basic skills and functional experience in gender (see UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy and Gender Action Plan), including the elaboration of the terms of reference, pre-selection, formulation of the written tests and interviews, composition of the committees.

Partnership Building for Gender Equality

The Gender Strategy underlines the importance of partnership building and networking for gender equality at different levels and with different partners and national stakeholders.

Interagency: UNDP Guinea-Bissau and UN Women as the depository of expertise in the field of promoting gender equality have jointly implemented several activities and combined efforts to strengthen the capacities of different national actors. UNDP has also collaborated with UNFPA, UNICEF etc. in programmes that address gender equality and women's empowerment. The gender dimension in inter-agency activities should be further strengthened to bundle synergies and enhance effective delivery as one (DAO approach).

Public stakeholders: UNDP closely collaborates through various projects and programmes that include the promotion of gender equality with government entities, such as the Ministries of Economy and Finance, specifically the State Secretariat for Planning and Regional Integration (SEPIR), Ministry of Justice, Women and Child Institute (IMC), National People's Assembly.

Private Sector: UNDP's efforts in partnership building with the private sector will be focused on collaboration with banks and national private capital on the microcredit system.

Civil Society and community actors: Building up networks with women organizations to enhance the national capacities in gender equality and understanding socio-cultural practices of different communities in Guinea-Bissau are extremely relevant for UNDP to improve gender equality at the local level. Direct partnerships enable UNDP to understand the needs of community actors, inquire about their expectations and jointly build solutions to the gender concerns they raise.

4.1.4 Conclusions: Where do we stay?

Are the conditions for the promotion of gender equality at UNDP Guinea-Bissau created and the necessary requirements met?

Gaps in the promotion of gender equality in programming and projects

With relation to programming, the Independent Evaluation (IE) of UNDP Guinea-Bissau (2020) which integrates project execution until 2018 comes to the conclusion that UNDP Guinea-Bissau made only limited progress in translating the UNDP commitment on gender into programmes (i.e. gender mainstreaming and the integration of gender concerns into all of its programmes). The results have not been very promising and often remain only gender-targeted (IE, p. 34).

Projects that aimed at strengthening women's rights and representation in public institutions (under Outcome 1) included support for the gender parity law (approved in the ANP in August 2018), capacity development for the Network of Women Parliamentarians on gender budgeting and integrating a gender perspective in the National Assembly's oversight role. The Women's Political Platform (PPP) received trainings in advocacy techniques and public opinion mobilization. Due to political impasse and blocking of Parliament, these trainings could not materialize into strong gender advocacy in a timely manner.

Together with UN-Women, UNDP worked on the legal basis for accelerating women's rights in law, and to disseminate the law on domestic violence to combat sexual and gender-based violence.

The well received and successful projects of building-up and supporting the Access to Justice Centers (since 2010) lack of a convincing and feasible exit strategy, as the transfer of all staff related costs to the national budget of Guinea-Bissau did not work out. UNDP, at the same time, had no alternative plan for a smooth handover and budget commitments to continue support for the CAJs. As discussed in detail in chap. 2, the proportion of women who relied on the CAJ for treating cases etc. is relatively

small (30 % of all users to CAJs, ROAR 2019), limited due to cultural norms and language barriers. So far only meager gains in bringing SGBV and FGM cases to court and reducing violence against women have been made. The frame is good but needs to be filled up with more financial resources, special gender counselors for legal aid etc. and needs the international assistance for quite a longer time period (another 5-10 years). The recent elaboration of a Gender Strategy for CAJ in late 2019 is one important pillar in the right direction.

The Independent Evaluation suggests that effectiveness of CAJs could be improved with more training for the lawyers on mediation and reconciliation and clear referral networks for the victims of gender-based violence. Dispute settlements agreed through mediation at the CAJs lack enforceability as there is no protocolled link and cooperation mechanisms between formal and traditional justice systems. But evidence from the field allows us to understand that the counselors at CAJ and traditional authorities and NGOs have their “informal” communication lines which should be reinforced. The Independent Evaluation criticizes insufficient investment in activities to bridge the formal and informal justice systems and strengthen alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (IE, p. 17). Meanwhile a proposal for the collaboration mechanism between formal and informal justice systems has been elaborated. There is yet no feedback on its acceptance and the implementation strategy.

The quality of services needs to improve, particularly for women. This has started recently in follow-up initiatives of UNDP and through the awareness raising of local traditional justice actors on human rights, gender and alternative dispute resolution methodologies, mainly through CSOs, in another related PBF project. UNDP also concluded a study on the collaboration mechanism at the interface of formal and informal (traditional) justice.

It is important to note that the new PBF project “Placing women at the center of Justice Reform” is a vital component and scale-up of past and ongoing UNDP projects⁵⁷ in strengthening the Rule of Law, supporting the justice reform and improving access to justice through the CAJs, including projects with PBF support, which were lacking a strategic gender mainstreaming approach. These PBF projects implemented by UNDP obviously were not part of the Independent Evaluation: 1) on strengthening public confidence in the justice system through, improving access to justice to vulnerable people; 2) on supporting political and institutional stabilization of the Justice sector for peace consolidation through the institutionalization of Alternative Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice mechanisms and the development of interface mechanisms for cooperation between the formal and traditional justice system to safeguard human rights and prevent conflict escalation and insecurity (PBF Project Document).

Concerning economic empowerment of rural women, the design of the project on “Creating the conditions for Local Governance and Local Development” ensures women’s equal participation in projects, particularly in committees established in the local governance project in the Cacheu region. In general, the project aims at focusing attention to women’s distinctive needs, constraints, and vulnerabilities and to build their skills and capacities to fully gain from economic development (equal opportunities in wages, access to social services). The programme pretended to allocate at least 15% of the total budget towards specific gender indicators as per the UN Secretary General’s directives.

Output 3: Local Development Plans are funded and investments in gender sensitive service delivery are promoting the Food and Nutritional Security (FNS) and Local Economic Development (LED)

According to the Independent Evaluation the planned activities to promote economic opportunities for youth and women or improve their access to inclusive finance products and markets, have not been executed within the project, although this was a key aspect under output 3. The project did not address

⁵⁷ The new project will allow UNDP to stay involved in the reform efforts and enable the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to secure and sustain the expected achievement of the current PBF funded projects.

the different needs of women or youth and there has been no work to include a focus on masculinities (IE, p.22; Final Evaluation of the Local Development Project, 2020).

Due to the outlined situation on gender equality promotion in programming, the Independent Evaluation recommends that “UNDP Guinea-Bissau should seek to systematically mainstream gender, youth and human rights into its programming. This requires designing and investing in pilots to create opportunities for women and youth to more actively and effectively participate in economic life, and identifying approaches to effectively promote behavior change, including on masculinity and cultural norms” (Independent Evaluation, 2020, Recommendation No 6, , p. 2).

It is certainly true that gender equality promotion has still to be intensified and deepened in content at programming level. But not less important is that the operationalization of projects for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment has to be better adapted to the Guinea-Bissau context, considering the constraints resulting from chronological political instability, severe lack of infrastructures in every area and huge gaps in qualified human resources. Local experiences and locally proved solutions and work approaches should be considered, particularly with regard to community driven gender equality promotion.

Positive developments

I. Gender Strategy and Gender Action Plan aligned to UNDP Gender Strategy

The UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy and its Gender Action Plan are new products, they have been developed very recently and are well aligned with the principles of the UNDP corporate Gender Strategy. They have to be validated quickly at UNDP Country level. The intervention priorities should be further harmonized with the priority areas of the UNDP signature solution 6 which already come very close to each other. The Country Office needs to urgently develop a financing proposal and mobilize a sufficient budget for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

II. Enhancement of gender capacities at UNDP Guinea-Bissau – ongoing-

The management accountability systems for the promotion of gender equality in programming, project implementation, management and M&E have been put in place during the last months and appear to be solid and functional. With the new Gender Committee an active and effective Gender Focal Team is in place. Equipped with ToR according to the UNDP Guinea-Bissau *Gender Equality Strategy*, it has started to function and held its first work meetings.

Technical expertise for gender equality and women’s empowerment at UNDP CO is raised through a gender programme analyst and the engagement of senior management. Internal gender capacities are strengthened through training and learning programmes that are ongoing / are to start very soon according to the *Gender Action Plan*. The creation of an enabling environment in the office/ at the workplace for gender equality and respect for diversity is on the way and will be finalized in the coming months (see *Gender Action Plan*). Recruitment is now orientated towards gender balance at all staff levels.

III. Some progress made in the preparations for the Candidature for the Gender Equality Seal in 2021

Preparations for the application for the Gender Equality Seal are on the way: the action plan, elaborated by the Gender specialist in June 2020, details how the improvements that were indicated by the Gender Equality Seal Office should be responded to and sets the agenda/time-table for this preparatory phase in 2020/21.

Due to gaps in financing, so far only some of the planned activities could be executed. As noted above, the full implementation of the UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy is pending on a proper financing mechanism.

IV. Awareness that adequate resources must be made available for gender mainstreaming

Awareness is raised on the necessity that the total amount of expenditures with gender equality in programmes as the main objective or significant content should be at least 50% of the total programme budget in upcoming CPD (Gender Equality Seal).

Final remarks

UNDP Guinea-Bissau needs to build up full capacity and commitment for gender mainstreaming into its programmes and practice, including shifting the focus to transformative approaches that address the root causes and social norms of gender inequality and discrimination.

Some progress has been made since 2019 through gradually improving internal gender capacities, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation and concern for a gender friendly work environment at the CO. But gender still does not have the desired visibility in the CO as a crosscut theme. All clusters should engage much more in the promotion of gender in terms of internal training and transversal programming. This process has to advance rapidly in the coming months in order to fully integrate the gender equality perspective into the design and programming of a new CPD and the upcoming UNSDCF framework.

4.2 Policy recommendations: How to place gender equality at the center of national development planning

How can the country reduce gender inequality? It will be needed multi-pronged approaches tailored to the complex thematic issues / aspects to be addressed (in different plans), and, foremost, a strong awareness that activities to place gender equality at the center of national development planning should be carefully aligned to the SDGs, the National Gender Policy (PNIEG) and UNDP corporate Gender Strategy, in particular the current UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy.

As discussed in Chapter 2.1.4, the *National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality* (PNIEG II, 2017) provides the overarching policy and planning framework for national gender equality commitments.

Objectives of PNIEG II

General objective: to integrate, in a regular, systematic and transversal way, gender equality in all policies, strategies, projects and programs of development and bilateral and multilateral cooperation developed in the country.

Specific Objective 1: To improve the country's legal and juridical framework with a view to the realization of Gender Equality and Equity and the Human Rights of women;

Specific Objective 2: Promote the adoption of an agenda for gender equality and equity in social sectors (health, education, justice, security, providence, housing, water);

Specific Objective 3: To strengthen national mechanisms for gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women in the public administration;

Specific Objective 4: Promote equal economic and productive opportunities for women and men as a strategy for the empowerment of women and the reduction of poverty and inequality;

Specific Objective 5: Prevent and combat all forms of violence and trafficking against women and girls;

Specific Objective 6: Promote the participation of women in public, political and decision-making life;

Specific Objective 7: To improve knowledge, the information system, monitoring and data production in the field of gender equality and female status in the country.

The following recommendations how to place gender equality at the center of national development planning are grounded in the PNIEG and the linkage between the specific targets of Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the entire 2030 agenda.

Policy Recommendations

Systematic review of national plans, foremost the new “Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento” (PND = National Development Plan, 2020-2023) and its financing instrument “Hora Tchiga”⁵⁸ as well as other national plans which are related to sustainable development, such as environmental plans, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (2013), the National Education Plan (2015), Local Development Plans etc.

Make national planning inclusive and gender responsive through

Integration of gender equality commitments into national plans to build an enabling policy environment for inclusive and sustainable development, grounded in a human rights based approach

⁵⁸ The new national development plan of Guinea-Bissau was finalized in August 2020. It is based on the Financing Programme for the Economy, denominated “Hora tchiga” (Time to act), prepared by the new government under PM Nuno Nabiam.

which builds upon CEDAW and other main conventions/ treaties on gender equality and women's empowerment;⁵⁹

Mainstreaming gender in the situation analysis, thematic and sectoral sections, and monitoring and evaluation framework of the plans;

Dissemination and appropriation of the Politica Nacional de Equidade e Igualdade de Género (PNIEG, 2012/2017), the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Equity need to become well known among different ministries, the CSOs and the population at large as national baseline for gender mainstreaming into public policies and planning;

Development of indicators and M&E systems for gender-inclusive financing / budgeting of the development plans and the State General Budget (Orçamento Geral do Estado);

Enhancement of gender capacities of the public administration, especially of lead ministries (economy, planning, work, women). Making state institutions more sensitive to gender requires, at the level of human resources, increasing the number of women in leadership positions and battling for a gender equal staff recruitment and job parity (up to 40% women at least). This is far from being achieved in Guinea-Bissau so far (see Chapter 2.4, p. 49) and needs to be brought forward rapidly. Beyond building up gender capacities in numbers and quality of staff, we need a better understanding how formal and informal policies, practices and procedures across state institutions can reinforce gender inequalities and gender-based stereotypes, and what can be done to enable gender equality (UN-Women, Inclusive National Planning, (www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/governance-and-national-planning/inclusive-national-planning), retrieved on October 30 2020).

Enhance gender capacities in the Parliament through

more capacity-building of MPs, male and female, on gender-inclusive planning and legislation with the aim to develop critical analytical understanding for supervision of legislative processes, government and for improved gender-sensitive budgeting. Inclusion of as much MPs as feasible, not limited to Special Gender Commission and Women Machinery.

Priorities

Gender mainstreaming into the National Development Plan (PND)⁶⁰ beyond the economic perspective

The PND's central objective is to reduce/neutralize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's economy and society, and restructure and rebuild the economic structures with alternative financing mechanisms towards more resilience and inclusive sustainable development. Women and youth are identified as main economic actors and beneficiaries in this vision of an economic turnaround. The PND calls also for the reform of the justice, defense and security sectors, the modernization of the public administration, improvement of basic services, strengthening of democratic institutions, the sustainable management of natural resources, renewable energy and blue economy.

The *National Development Plan* presents quite a lot of gender disaggregated socio-economic data but does not unfold a profound gender analysis. Economic inclusiveness targets the poor and marginalized segments of the population and the youth as motor of development. Women and poor families are at the focus of those vulnerable groups whose economic potential should be unleashed for breaking out of the poverty circle. Gender inequalities, discrimination and gender based violence are neither duly

⁵⁹ Conventions, treaties and resolutions, see Annex.

⁶⁰ Governo da Guiné-Bissau, 2020.

considered, nor is the view deepened to the root causes of gender inequality and its expressions. The *National Development Plan* emphasizes the development of human capital: it should sharpen the gender perspective in the strategies to improve education, health services and social protection.

The PDN should be carefully aligned with the PNIEG (objectives 1-6) and the current UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy as presented above.

Deepening Gender Mainstreaming into the National Education Plan: as analyzed in Chapter 2.10, the National Education Plan (2015), although being gender sensitive, needs improvements for better responding to the promotion of gender equality. In alignment with PNIEG, Objective 2, and the SDGs, more has to be done to overcome the stark disparities in school attendance and school graduation between boys and girls. The structural barriers / gender norms that hinder girls' education have to be taken into account at the community and individual household level and within the education system through improvement of gender capacities of teachers, gender mainstreaming into school curricula and a safe and secure environment for girls at school.

Gender equality begins at school; it is the institution that can deliver nation-wide on gender equality, if it is appropriately equipped with gender capacities (teachers, curricula, gender mainstreaming training, community participatory approach) and set examples for the promotion of gender equality against gender stereotypes and socio-cultural norms dominating the children's domestic environment and neighborhood.

Women should be key actors in environmental and DRR planning

Given the significant number of national plans in the field of environment, biodiversity, climate change and adaptation, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), main tendencies observed in some of these important planning instruments are presented here. So far the environment and DRR planning and policies do not address gender issues appropriately and do not analyze and consider gender differentiated visions, needs and priorities. Instead they refer to gender mostly under the notion of vulnerability.

The ***National Strategy for Biodiversity 2015-2020*** holds the vision that up to 2025 Guinea-Bissau will be a model of sustainable development, whose biodiversity will be preserved and regenerated to maintain in a durable way the potential of value creation of its precious and its renewed resources, offering services to the local communities, to the country and the whole sub-region.

The human factor in biodiversity conservation, and on the other side, the lack of knowledge of the economic value of the biodiversity which lead to its subsequent degradation and loss are linked to the population in general, the forest communities in the protected areas, the households using firewood and charcoal for cooking etc.

The threats to biodiversity and protection measures are yet not looked at from a gender perspective and no differentiation of interest, needs, knowledge and behavior among the population is made, between men and women and in their relationship to natural resources. This strategy can be considered as gender neutral. To improve its effectiveness and impacts it would be very useful to mainstream gender considerations into the analysis and formulation of goals of the strategy related to biodiversity conservation and conservation techniques.

In the closely related ***Energy sector*** the situation is different. The ***National Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming in Access to Energy*** was drafted recently, in 2019. It is based on the ECOWAS "Policy on Gender Mainstreaming in Access to Energy", adopted by ECOWAS on 4 June 2017 (in its 51st Ordinary Session) through a Law amending the ECOWAS Treaty. The policy aims at addressing barriers to equal participation of men and women in expanding access to energy in West Africa. The Guinea-Bissau Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy developed its ***National Action Plan*** (NAP), defining a

five-year strategy by which the country will fulfill its national obligations. This is one of the rare positive examples ***of gender mainstreaming into national development plans.***

The activities of the NAP allow (first) the creation of the institutional framework for gender mainstreaming in access to energy which will then lead to a guiding intervention framework that fits, legitimizes and contributes to the sustainability of the remaining interventions and strategic objectives. The energy gender mainstreaming plan emphasizes the training of women and young people to level knowledge. Complemented with interventions to raise awareness of the different sectors of the Guinean society, this will enable the creation of a diverse and inclusive labor market in the energy sector. The NAP also includes activities to periodically measure the progress of its implementation, so that gender mainstreaming interventions can be checked against their effectiveness.

Increase gender perspective in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning

The ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2014) foresees the adoption of National Plans of Disaster Risk Reduction, the establishment of National Multi-Sectoral Platforms, Focal Points and mainstreaming of DRR into development plans and poverty reduction strategies. No gender specific instruments for disaster risk management are discussed.

Guinea-Bissau's ***National Disaster Risk Management Strategy*** (2013) mentions women and children as part of vulnerable groups of communities in its analysis of right holders / stakeholders and suggests literacy campaigns and measures to improve the well-being of poor households. The strategy, although following the approach of community centered disaster management, does not elaborate systematically on gendered needs, priorities and visions. A first evaluation of the Strategy (2015), based on evaluation criteria from the Hyogo Framework, contains some gender relevant evaluation criteria, such as gendered vulnerabilities, gender differential treatment in disaster situations and gendered assessment of post-disaster necessities.

Gender gaps and the promotion of gender equality are so far quite poorly addressed in this national disaster risk management strategy. Women are increasingly viewed as ***key actors of proactive engagement in disaster management*** beyond being limited to the role of vulnerable victims of climate hazards or mere end-users of early warning systems (Sendai Framework, 2015; GEF Gender Implementation Strategy, 2018, p. 8). Thus, the National DRR Strategy should be reviewed, and linked to the UN resilience agenda and the UNDP Gender Strategy; particularly outcome 3, entry point "UNDP supports the improvement of national capacity in the formulation and implementation of environmental and natural resource management policies, ensuring the full participation of women in decision-making on the use, management and protection of natural resources".

Importance of Local Development Plans for gender mainstreaming at community level and the national planning

Local development plans are of key importance for national planning. On the one hand, they can function as pilots to test innovative concepts and activities. Given the nation-wide breakdown and dysfunctionality of public institutions in Guinea-Bissau and loss of interest and trust of the citizens in the state and its affairs, confidence needs to be restored. This is more feasible and visible at the local level. Being closer to the users, efficiency gains are obtained and the state-society interaction can be improved with more direct investments in local governance for local development, the creation of local

economic opportunities and local social services. Local Development Plans pursue the vision to foster development locally in direct participatory approach with local NGOs and communities (AfDB, 2017)⁶¹. The drafting of local development plans was foreseen in the UNDP /UNCDF project “Create conditions for local governance and local development in Guinea Bissau” (2016-2019), under its first outcome. Albeit the project has been confronted with implementation problems of different nature (see Final Evaluation, Draft Report, UNDP January 2020), it was able to draw 3 strategic gender-sensitive sustainable development plans for the sectors of Cacheu, Bula and Canchungo. The project made two important contributions to build upon for future local development: Elaboration of a methodology for a local development plan based on the participatory approach; integration of local development planning into the curriculum of the National School of Administration (ENA) (Final Evaluation).

Unfortunately, the local development plans for four other sectors, i.e. those of Caio, Bigene, Sao Domingos and Calequiesse were still being in the development phase and thus were not considered in the recent terminal evaluation of the project. Initially, in the PRODOC, a total of 16 plans were envisaged. Implementation of these new gender-sensitive sustainable development plans at the regional level, however, could not start yet, due to lack of funding.

Gender sensitivity has been considered as important element in the local development planning. It is unclear at the moment of writing what the plans exactly foresee for the promotion of gender equality, beyond strong women participation in local decision-making (committees). As gender mainstreaming into local development and local economic opportunities will play an important role in future UNDP projects, it is highly recommended to carry out a detailed gender analysis of these nascent local development plans to provide lessons learnt for a potential follow-up project.

Introduce a Gender Equality Law into the legal frameworks of Guinea-Bissau

Policies, plans and laws are interrelated and interdependent. Gender equality in law is a prerequisite for the promotion of gender equality in national development plans and policies and *vice versa*.⁶² The study on the necessity of gender mainstreaming into the legal frameworks of Guinea-Bissau (Embalo/UNDP 2020) came to the conclusion that due to the urgency of moving forward with gender mainstreaming and the fact that profound revision affects almost all key legislation in the country, the introduction of a “Gender Equality Law” into the national legal framework is recommended. A gender equality law would function as a *matrix law of gender* and a “baseline” for gender equality. It has the great advantage of giving a strong visibility to gender equality in the legal framework, of covering the central concerns of women and highlighting essential themes, particularly gender-based violence, inequalities related to marriage, political rights, economic status and parity in political and professional public life. In this case, the harmonization with other laws becomes less urgent and allows for the systematic updating of national legislation with gender equality standards. This recommendation was reaffirmed by the validation workshop which took place in Bissau in February 2020.

⁶¹ Decentralization in Guinea-Bissau. Available from:
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319037631> Decentralization in Guinea-Bissau, retrieved on November 03 2020.

⁶² Gender mainstreaming into the legal frameworks of Guinea-Bissau is in line with the PNIEG, (*Specific Objective 1: To improve the country's legal and juridical framework with a view to the realization of Gender Equality and Equity and the Human Rights of women*), and the UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy (Strategic Entry Point under outcome1).

4.3 Promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in (future) UNDP programme design

4.3.1 General Notions

The elaboration of proposals for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in future UNDP programme design is informed by:

- Insights and results of the gender analysis;
- UNDP corporate Gender Strategy and UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy (2018-2021) and its priorities;
- Assessment of gender mainstreaming / gaps in gender perspective in ongoing and/or recently concluded UNDP projects (2010-2019);
- Assessment of gender capacities of UNDP Country Office;
- Lessons learnt and good practices related to the promotion of gender equality, from West African countries and beyond, which can be adopted to the context of Guinea-Bissau,

Preferably, UNDP support should be catalytic and transformational. It is grounded in the UNDP signature solutions and aligned with UNDP's key corporate message on ***the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the achievement of sustainable development***. To respond to the evidence of the intersectional dimensions of gender inequalities, cross-cutting solutions are needed that build on the interrelatedness of the SDGs and new approaches of UNDP Innovation LABs (UNDP, 2018, Moonshots).

Therefore, UNDP gender mainstreaming pursues integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to address the development challenges of gender equality. UNDP's promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment follows the seven core principles of the *UNDP Gender Strategy, 2018-2021: Human Rights approach, women and men as active agents of change, leaving no one behind, transforming gender and power relations, engaging men and boys in the process towards gender equality, country contextualization, Innovation approach*.

Find appropriate approach to capacity development

Programme design for gender equality and women's empowerment should consider development through the lens of complexity, especially when tackling cultural and social norms and stigma and intending to induce transformational change in behavior of women and men concerning gender relations. Capacity building is at the center of the UNDP mandate and is expected to function as a core contribution to development. Capacity development, as defined by UNDP, is focused on empowering and strengthening endogenous capabilities, making the most of local resources (people, skills, technologies, institutions) and taking an inclusive approach in addressing issues of power inequality (UNDP, 2016, Primer Capacity Development).

Conceptions of capacity-building for gender equality should be contextualized and flexible, built on local ownership and adapted to practices and features of localized problem-solving. UNDP Accelerator Lab initiative which starts working also in Guinea-Bissau reinforces this approach and gives it further impetus.

4.3.2 Identification of programme priority areas

The *adaptation of the four thematic priority areas of Signature Solution 6 to the Guinea-Bissau context* would allow to create minimum conditions for achieving gender equality in all dimensions in Guinea-Bissau. This would at least include to create employment opportunities for women, adolescent girls and most vulnerable population groups, to guarantee political participation of women in decision-making bodies, access to justice and land and preventing women from gender-based violence.⁶³

The four thematic priority areas of Signature Solution 6 are (UNDP, 2018 Gender Equality Strategy, p. 15):

Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work;
Preventing and responding to gender-based violence;
Promoting women's participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making;
Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis (conflict and disaster) prevention, preparedness and recovery.

The following table demonstrates the linkage and correspondence of the *four thematic priority areas of Signature Solution 6* to the UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy and the PNIEG. It lists key common pillars within the four thematic priority areas of the Signature Solution 6 and entry points for the Guinea-Bissau context.

Each thematic priority is limited to four key pillars/ calls for action and entry points. This scenario has been chosen to cover main aspects and to focus on essentials and, thereby, avoid to put UNDP CO capacities at risk against difficult financing and implementation conditions of Guinea-Bissau. Being overambitious easily could become a trap instead of leading to the fulfillment of the sustainable development goals.

⁶³ See on minimum standards for gender mainstreaming: Gender Practitioners Collaborative, 2017, Minimum Standards for Mainstreaming Gender Equality, <https://www.fhi360.org/news/gender-collaborative-launches-minimum-standards-mainstreaming-gender-equality>; and the UNDP Gender Equality Seal Initiative: The Gender Equality Seal establishes minimum quality standards and provides a clear framework for linking gender equality at the workplace with development results. This leads to increased internal efficiency and to visible results. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/undp-gender-equality-seal-initiative-for-undp-entities.html>

Table 5: UNDP Signature Solution 6 priorities / Gender Strategy Bissau/ PNIEG and common key pillars/ entry points

Signature Solution 6 Priorities and linkage to SDGs UNDP, 2018 Gender Equality Strategy, p. 15	Gender Strategy UNDP Bissau and linkage to UNDAF	PNIEG (2012/2017)	Key Pillars/Calls for Action	Guinea-Bissau Entry points
Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work <p>SDGs Multiplier effects on progress across the Goals, helping to advance efforts related to Goal 1 on ending poverty, Goal 3 on health and well-being, Goal 4 on quality education, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 8 on decent work, Goal 10 on reduced inequalities, Goal 13 on climate action and others.</p>	More women, particularly the most vulnerable and low-income, have an adequate standard of living and access to sustainable income opportunities. UNDAF (2016-2020) The economic growth is inclusive and sustainable to promote poverty reduction, decent jobs, food security, and the structural transformation of the economy.	Specific Objective 4: Promote equal economic and productive opportunities for women and men as a strategy for the empowerment of women and the reduction of poverty and inequality;	<p>Structural barriers and gender-discriminatory practices are addressed that deny women their socioeconomic rights, restrict their economic, social and political opportunities and undermine their resilience to all forms of shock.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Innovative solutions for women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, including by engaging men in care work</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Women's equal rights to property, credit, land and natural resources are ensured.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Female poverty and marginalization of women are inverted through decent work for women and privileged access to health and education services.</p>	<p>UNDP supports national partners to promote economic and political reforms that incorporate a gender equality perspective in planning and budgeting;</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Enhance public care system for infants and the elderly, at local level (village/neighborhood,) with local workforce (men and women) through innovative care approach/ (public-private cooperation/social service); introduce paternal leave and elderly care leave in formal contracts</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Promotion of sustainable microcredit systems (rural banks and innovative “qualified <i>abota</i>-system”), gender-responsive implementation of land law, review of civil code on property, agricultural subsidies and employment guarantees.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Partners are supported in transforming traditional gender roles and stereotypes to drive for women's equal access to resources for domestic and productive purposes and property;</p> <p>Design and implementation of innovative gender-sensitive social protection measures for the formal</p>

				<p>and informal sector (including basic health care system); boost local economy with the <i>bideira</i>-model as woman enterprise/start-up; national education campaign on women platform, smart phone based</p> <hr/> <p>Extra, 5th key pillar Strengthen national capacities to generate and use sex-and age-disaggregated data for gender analysis and gender budgeting, which is key to the design of gender-responsive macro-economic policy and social protection programmes</p>	<p>UNDP + other partners (WB?) assist ME and INE in the production of a new <i>Multidimensional Poverty Index</i>, update of key economic indicators</p>
<p>Preventing and responding to gender-based violence</p> <p>SDGs</p> <p>critical linkage between gender-based violence and SDGs, 1 (poverty), 3 (health and well-being), 5 (gender equality)</p>	<p>No individual priority, falls under consolidation of state institutions, justice sector</p>	<p>Specific Objective 5: Prevent and combat all forms of violence and trafficking against women and girls;</p>	<p>Improvement of legal and policy frameworks on SGBV, end impunity for perpetrators</p> <hr/> <p>Mind change: support national capacities to prevent SGBV</p> <hr/>	<p>UNDP supports effective law enforcement to the benefit of women and girls; monitoring of Human Rights violations by judicial system, CS, and community representatives; UNDP supports advocacy of women networks to monitor progress and hold government accountable for implementation of gender-responsive laws and gender justice; monitor the effectiveness of interventions through data collection and evaluations;</p> <hr/> <p>Comprehensive measures to transform gender relations: strengthen gender capacities in the judiciary, community awareness campaigns for gender equality, champions against gender based violence, he for she campaigns???, address the needs of men and boys to tackle the root causes of violence, promotion of positive behavior</p> <hr/>	

<p>10 (reduced inequalities), 16 (promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all),</p>		<p>Ensure access to justice and protection of women and girls, especially those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discriminations (young girls, elderly women, women living with disabilities)</p> <hr/> <p>Empower victims of SGBV through social protection and special job opportunities</p>	<p>Improve CAJS and ADR in quality of service and regional coverage, operationalize mobile legal aid clinics, provide multi-sectoral high-quality service for victims of SGBV (including referral system, extended psychological and social support)</p> <hr/> <p>Create special job agency with training modules to empower women: prepare for decent work and independent business options (green) with social protection system in the backdrop (local <i>manjundaade</i> groups)</p>
<p>Promoting women's participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making;</p>	<p>More women participate in democratic governance processes and enjoy their basic human and civil rights.</p> <p>UNDAF (2016-2020) <i>The State institutions, including defense, security, and justice, consolidate the stability and the Rule of Law, democratic participation,</i></p>	<p><i>Specific Objective 3: To strengthen national mechanisms for gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women in the public administration</i></p> <p><i>Specific Objective 6: Promote the participation of women in public, political and decision-making life;</i></p>	<p>National institutions are supported to accelerate the equal participation of women in decision-making, including young women and marginalized groups.</p> <hr/> <p>Women's participation and leadership is increased in political office, constitutional bodies, public administration, the judiciary, the defense and security institutions, the private sector and fora on climate action, DRR, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-crisis recovery</p> <p>UNDP provides technical assistance to establish a strong advisory mechanism for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the governance process; UNDP supports monitoring and advocacy for implementation of legal and policy reforms (constitution, electoral and party laws, family, SGBV and domestic violence, property, land, inheritance); UNDP engages to widen scope of parity law and drafting of a gender equality law;</p> <hr/> <p>Initiatives to develop women's capacities to participate and lead; Initiative for gender equality in all branches of the public sector, including defense and security, and in the private sector, encompassing women and men, disrupting gender stereotypes and gender discrimination at the workplace;</p>

	<i>and equitable access to opportunities for all.</i>		<p>Support to national partners in fulfilling international human rights obligations, including the national implementation of CEDAW, and improving women's access to justice</p> <p>Assistance of key actors for gender equality from women's organizations, civil society movement, marginalized groups to provide for the integration of gender equality into policies and legal reforms, including those related to transparency and accountability.</p>	<p>Support of Gender Equality Seal candidature/implementation in public and private sector⁶⁴</p> <p>Advancement of nation-wide capacity building in the justice sector with increased female participation in decision-making; Promotion of women's legal empowerment, both in the formal and informal systems, which include gender accountability and engagement of religious and traditional human rights leaders.</p> <p>Leverage partnership of women's organization with government authorities, public administration and other decision-making bodies in strengthen their engagement; Support for training on women's rights for women, communities, marginalized group and religious and traditional leaders.</p>
Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis (conflict and disaster) prevention, preparedness and recovery.	Women deal with mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience and sustainable management		Gender equality and women's participation are integrated into crisis prevention, preparedness and recovery as well as into resilience building to respond to climate change and to manage disaster risks.	UNDP assists women to build and confirm their role as key actors in mediation/conflict settlement, SCR 1325 implementation, and in the frontline of CC adaptation and DRR; Awareness campaigns and training of women and men (local communities), considering gendered needs and roles, on community based resilience to crisis, CC and disaster management;

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The **Gender Equality Seal for Public and Private Enterprise** supports companies to meet gender equality standards in such areas as: eliminating gender pay gaps, increasing women's roles in decision-making, developing and implementing work-life balance polices; eradicating sexual harassment at work; enhancing women's access to non-traditional jobs.

<p>UNDAF 2016-2020</p> <p><i>The public institutions, Civil Society Organizations, and the private sector ensure the promotion of sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, risk management, and disaster prevention.</i></p>		<p>Support for women's networks and women's grassroots organizations in post-crisis settings, disaster and climate resilience.</p> <p>Ensure gender-sensitive sustainable management of environment and biodiversity, in accordance with international standards, based on firm institutional and policy frameworks, striving for the full participation of women in decision-making on the use, management and protection of natural resources.</p> <p>Promotion of sustainable management of the environment, preservation of biodiversity and inclusion of women as the most vulnerable actors; women empowerment through equal access to natural resources and innovative economic opportunities</p>	<p>Conflict prevention, crisis preparedness, recovery efforts, disaster management, CC adaptation/mitigation are underpinned with gender analysis and gender-disaggregated data ;</p> <p>Partnership building to design recovery and stabilization initiatives and create opportunities for women to contribute to and participate in sustainable livelihoods and improve their socioeconomic status. (example ongoing: PBF Youth and Women Initiative)</p> <p>Gender responsive review of environmental and energy laws and policies (Third National Contribution, DRR, Early Warning System etc.); Promotion of female national capacities in the environmental sector; building-up of focal gender points in line ministries, Incorporation of gender equality criteria in climate financing strategies and programmes</p> <p>UNDP supports pilot initiatives for the increase of local economy and promotion of new green business options that showcase the path towards CC and disaster resilience built on women's sustainable management of ecosystem: women as managers and users of RE solutions and new agriculture and processing technics</p>
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4.3.3 New analytical and mapping techniques for holistic gender analysis

A holistic gender analysis needs new mapping and analytical tools. It needs to go beyond the data-mix and interpretation spectrum gained from official national statistics which in Guinea-Bissau are generally in a poor state and do not provide all available data systematically and duly analyzed. Conventional data, such as household surveys and censuses, are necessary to gain reliable insights and to establish baseline data. But such traditional data collection methods are expensive, resource intensive and time-consuming. They cannot be undertaken frequently and therefore do not provide real-time updates. The production of more and better gender data by new approaches to data collection will enable UNDP to derive actionable insights from that data and build on them to drive smarter, gender-equitable decisions (see Data 2X, 2018).

Household surveys are often the primary source of social statistics, including on poverty, harmful practices, violence against women and sexual and reproductive health. They tend to be limited in the scope of information and size of the population sample. In many countries, specialized surveys, for example, on violence against women are a one-off exercise; data may be available for women age 15-49, but not for elderly women, which leads to knowledge gaps (UN-Women, 2018: Promise).

Population censuses are an essential source of country-level information. Given their universal coverage, they can be especially useful for analyzing vulnerable and marginalized groups. *These data are often the only option for indicators that are disaggregated.* However, censuses are normally conducted every ten years and its data need actualization.

To advance gender equality and ensure that women exercise their rights and can fully contribute to the development path, the collection and access to reliable, timely and disaggregated data of high quality is key. They are needed to design and implement evidence based and effective policies. In relation to the SDG 5 data indicators (and by large indicators for all SDGs), the situation in Bissau is quite bad. The most TIER II data are not available here through conventional statistic data⁶⁵.

Disaggregation of data is missing in many traditional data collection forms. As long as data analysis and dissemination are based on national averages, disparities within societies are often masked. A clearer view of inequalities (in gender, age, economic status, education, health outcomes etc.), can be achieved through focusing on the most marginalized and disadvantaged through disaggregation and collection methods that allow for the comparison of different population groups.

Given the current data situation in many countries of the developing world (uneven indicator coverage, gender data gaps, poor data quality) and the difficult circumstances of the data collection (inadequate budgets, low human and technical capacities, lack of gender mainstreaming methods), UN-Women fears that key areas of the SDGs will not be monitored from a gender equality perspective (UN-Women, 2018, Promise, p. 58). This concern is definitely legitimate for Guinea-Bissau: Here as elsewhere

⁶⁵ Out of the 14 indicators selected to monitor SDG 5, only 2 are Tier I, meaning data are widely available and supported by internationally accepted standards for measurement. Out of the remaining 12 indicators, 9 are Tier II, meaning indicators for which data are only collected and available for a limited number of countries: 5.2.1 on intimate partner violence; 5.2.2 on non-partner sexual violence; 5.3.1 on child marriage; 5.3.2 on female genital mutilation; 5.4.1 on unpaid care and domestic work; 5.6.1 on women who make their own sexual and reproductive decisions; 5.a.1 on women's equal rights to land; 5.a.2 on legal frameworks that guarantee women's rights to land; and 5.c.1 on countries with systems to track budget allocations and expenditures for gender equality. For these indicators, global monitoring is difficult due to insufficient country coverage and, in some cases, lack of comparability. Two other indicators are Tier III, meaning these are indicators for which internationally agreed standards do not yet exist and most countries do not regularly collect data.

“Violence against women” statistics are particularly problematic.⁶⁶ Until now no credible nation-wide baseline data for the incidence of GBV and/or the number of reports on GBV are available in Guinea-Bissau (except limited NGO surveys and partial statistical data from the Access to Justice Center, see chap.2.8). The lack of reliable statistics and information regarding human rights violations, justice services, and dispute settlement through formal and alternative mechanisms is a major constraint for establishing baselines and assessing the impacts of interventions.

New / non-conventional data sources

A comprehensive gender analysis as the one carried out for this report should be enriched by other sources and diagnostic tools, for instance, ***national surveys, community assessments, and targeted surveys using mobile technology***. Under the pandemic, field visits have been impossible. On the other hand, whats app chat groups, video conferences etc. are still new communication means for national partners and beneficiaries in Guinea-Bissau. Smart phone and Internet coverage nowadays are much better than some years ago but may not always be available in remote areas. Users, particularly women with little literacy levels, have to be enabled to fully benefit from the new technologies. The gender divide in internet use is clearly a problem in the country, especially in rural areas.

The analysis of ***big data***⁶⁷ (which in GB might be available, for example, in health, education, economics, climate), could improve the diagnostic tools and make the gender analysis cost-effectively. Big data offer the opportunity to collect data quickly and for low cost, as a by-product, if technological infrastructure and human resource capacities allow for it. Experience from Uganda is very promising: satellite data were used to distinguish between different types of roofs as a proxy for poverty (UN-Women, 2018: Promise, p. 64). Satellite data on climate and expected natural hazards will be used under a UNDP/GEF project for Early Warning Messaging in Guinea-Bissau that could be directed, for example, particularly to women in flood prone areas (see PRODOC UNDP/GEF 2020: “*Strengthening climate information and early warning systems for climate resilient development and adaptation to climate change in Guinea-Bissau*”).

Administrative records and registries could be a cost-effective source of data, but the coverage rates and quality of data are often low. Over two thirds of the countries with the highest mortality rates in maternal and child death (including Guinea-Bissau) lack registries of births and deaths including on vital registration and maternal mortality (UN-Women, 2018: Promise, p.37).

New data sources from big data analysis are not only being added but they can be combined with traditional data to provide new insights. Analyzing roof-structure as proxy for poverty in Guinea-Bissau would be a powerful tool to measure and observe over the years regional disparities in poverty and get more detail on the rural-urban poverty divide in the country. Related to gender inequalities it is not that easy to find proxies for measurement as these disparities are not as obvious and often difficult to measure at all in quantitative terms with conventional methods.

Certainly, big data analysis needs to be combined with traditional data sources and qualitative research methods (observation, open interviews, life-stories) to get a comprehensive picture of gender disparities. Digital data should enhance and not replace conventional data. It will be important to make women visible within Big Data for the benefits of gender analysis.

⁶⁶ Survey and sample for GBV need to be carefully designed, the enumerators specially trained, ethical guidelines applied and protocols are needed to ensure the safety of both respondents and interviewers. International guidelines for the production of violence against women statistics have been elaborated and should be applied (UN-Women: 2018, Promise, p. 62).

⁶⁷ The term Big Data usually describes extremely large data sets that are computationally analyzed to reveal patterns, trends, and associations. They are collected passively from digital interactions with great variety and a high rate of velocity (Data 2x, 2018).

The project Data2X's "Big Data for Gender Challenge" seeks to use and identify big data innovations to fill gender data gaps and improve understanding on key aspects of girls' and women's lives.

Online advertising data of Social Media are used to track global digital gender inequalities in internet and mobile phone access. Through the Facebook Gender Gap Index a simple indicator was generated, a ratio of female-to-male users on Facebook, derived from Facebook's advertising platform. In countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, this Facebook Gender Gap Index showed significant levels of gender inequality. A high correlation was found by validating the Facebook indicator against survey data on internet access gender gaps. This suggests that the Facebook gender gaps are a good signal of wider gender gaps in internet access in these populations; i.e. when women are missing on Facebook in these countries, it is a sign that they are not online at all (www.digitalgendergaps.org.)

Another example is the **Dynamic Wellbeing Mapping which aims at building** dynamic maps of sex disaggregated vulnerability indicators, e.g. population density, literacy, stunting, school enrollment and uses mixed data of Household surveys, GIS (geographical information system) data, CDR (Call Detail Record) data and phone surveys (Data 2x, 2018).

User-generated data offer new opportunities to give the beneficiaries, often the unheard groups, a voice. One approach to gaining actionable qualitative insights is the **collection of micro-narratives**. (UNDP, Moon Shots, p. 60-61). Real-time communications between international organizations and affected populations strengthens the understanding of actual problems and leads to more inclusivity of needs assessments and better evidence-based interventions. User-generated data would be a tool to bring us closer to the **local approach**; they can improve the identification of most vulnerable girls and women, boys and men and foster the comprehension of root causes for gender inequality and overlapped vulnerabilities for more efficient programme design.⁶⁸

Collection of micro-narratives via mobile phone technology

UNDP Lebanon developed the WhatsApp-based "Speak Your Mind" survey tool with target users in a design-thinking workshop. In a first pilot project, the WhatsApp survey tool used voice messages to ask participants to tell a story recorded as audio WhatsApp messages (micro-narratives). The voice message option helped to reach people who struggle with literacy, soliciting their responses on questions related to community needs, conflict dynamics, and feedback on stabilization projects (Syrian refugees, Lebanese villages) in the area. With different topics each week over the course of a month, the inputs from more than 700 hundred participants provided rich narrative data comparable to conducting individual qualitative interviews. The initial results on conflict dynamics, inter-community relationships and the hidden barriers they reveal by giving more voice to vulnerable communities, showcase the broad potential for the tool to bring about more effective conflict prevention efforts once scaled (UNDP, Moon Shots, p. 62).

Gaps and an uneven quality of public service provision in Mauritius disproportionately affect the most disadvantaged populations. UNDP and UNICEF supported the Government to pilot a mobile phone-based citizens' reporting mechanism as a platform for the poorest and most excluded groups to provide feedback on public service delivery. The tool allows personalized SMS messages to be sent to citizens and analyses responses in real time. The launch of the mobile feedback platform across all ministries will constitute for the first time a participative, bottom-up data collection and analysis mechanisms to inform the development of pro poor policies in Mauritius (UNDP, Moon Shots, p. 112).

⁶⁸ The commitment to leave no one behind calls for greater granularity of data. Decisions regarding the collection of data on vulnerable or marginalized groups should be made in partnership with the group(s) involved.

Where do we stand?

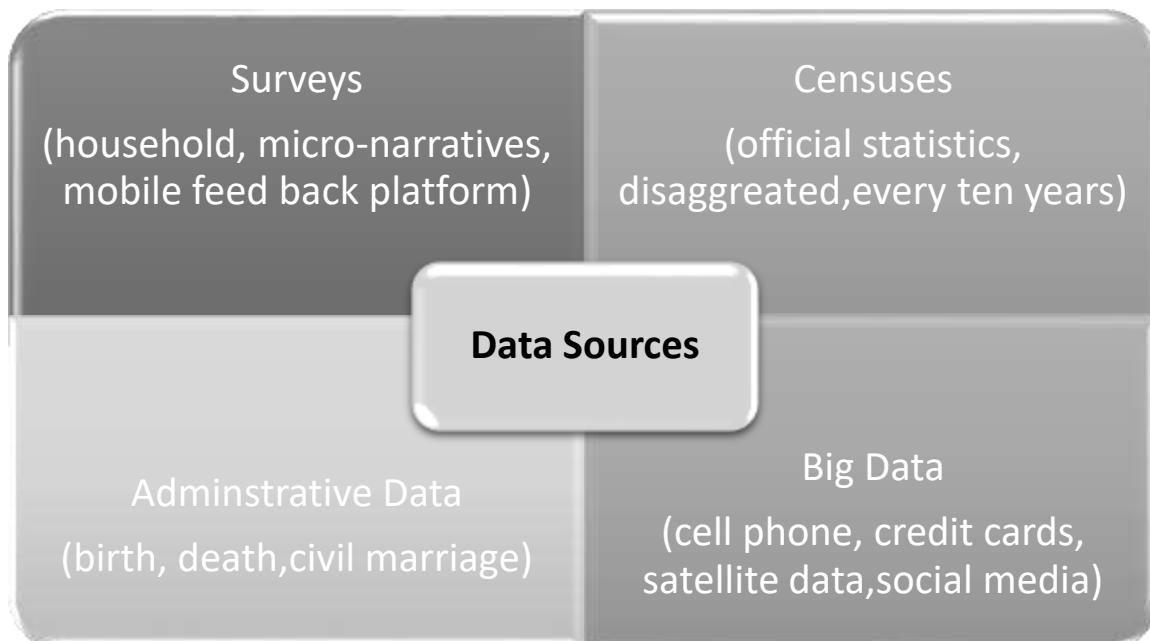
New, non-conventional data sources will gain more importance for closing the gaps in data for a holistic gender analysis. The examples above demonstrate their promising potential to deliver information on different gender inequalities. The lack of trend data makes it difficult to assess and monitor the direction and pace of progress for women and girls. Quantitative indicators (e.g. number of girls in school) will continue to be very important, but alone cannot inform about processes and dynamics that lead to or cause conditions, for example, disparities in education.

Investment in national statistical capacities is central to improving the coverage, quality and timeliness of data for monitoring gender equality. Gender must be mainstreamed into national statistical strategies and prioritized in the regular data collection process (UN-Women, 2018: Promise, p. 47).

More micro-narratives, quick surveys and profound qualitative studies are necessary to provide insights about successful women's and girls' agency in removing obstacles to their advancement and in reframing gender and social issues.

Furthermore, the data / recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review and other human rights mechanisms provide an important basis for highlighting gender based violations of HR and corresponding obligations of the member state.

Data Ecosystem



4.4. UNDP innovative approaches and acceleration tools to support gender-transformative programming

(In this subchapter innovation tools and approaches are presented that seem appropriate and capable to stimulate gender equality and women's empowerment in the Country Document Programme design).

Innovation is defined as “a new solution with the transformative ability to accelerate impact” (IDIA, p. 9). Innovation can be fueled by science and technology, build on improved ways of working with new and diverse partners, develop new social and business models, achieves behavioral insights, or enable path-breaking improvements in delivering essential services and products.

According to the core principles of the UNDP Gender Strategy work for gender equality relies on innovative approaches. Innovation holds the potential to empower individuals and communities at the base-of-the-pyramid and those who are marginalized and discriminated against (UNDP, 2018, Moon Shots). Innovations can serve as powerful tools to increase awareness, access and the availability of opportunities. They can break discrimination, particularly for women with low income and education, in rural remote areas.⁶⁹

Innovation is widely recognized as a catalyst and accelerator of desired sustainable development outcomes. Coupled with gender equality, it is a crosscutting approach necessary for achieving all SDGs.

Innovative Approaches – Proposals for project design in the Guinea-Bissau context

Implementation of ***new communication strategies*** in the work with ***local communities*** (for example campaign against FGM) for smooth propagation of ***key messages that challenge harmful cultural practices*** and uncover severe human rights violations at the heart of gender discrimination (short text messages via SMS, short audio messages and videos via Whats pp).

Early warning messages on climate events (storms, fire etc.), health crisis, or any other type of urgency concerning women most can be communicated easily and in the appropriate language and content to women organizations and individual communities all over the country via mobile phone.

New Communication applications via smart phone technology could be installed in remote areas to support vulnerable population, primarily women and girls. The technology could be applied to different fields, for example ***e-learning*** and ***e-medical clearance***. Simple online learning tools could be provided by the Ministry of Education, NGOs, platforms with different learning contents for target population, for example young girls, adolescent girls etc. in and beyond school curricula. Online healthcare advisory and consultancy services could be installed at local health posts for pregnant women, young mothers, families with small children and the elderly to facilitate communication, receive prescriptions for medication and further treatment options. It would also be possible to train women, for example, in ***green business opportunities*** / options in the energy, food storing, production and marketing sector via this technology.

⁶⁹ Despite the understandable enthusiasm for innovations one should also consider that technology and innovation can create new problems and may not benefit all equally. Women are still under-represented across core innovation sectors, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and new technology brings risks of bias and possibilities for data and other types of misuse (UN-Women, 2019, Innovation for gender equality).

Access to financial sources, any kind of simple bank transactions or credits, can be achieved through the system of mobile banking, already in place and in use in Guinea-Bissau for small business that should be further improved in terms of security and client friendly application.

Multi-sectoral approach through partnership building among national/local stakeholders and institutions. Programme design should consider linking and building complementarities between different sectors and the elaboration of multi-sectoral approaches, for example, to improve women's rights and access to justice in Guinea-Bissau. A recent PBF project envisages to bring together justice, health, social services and law enforcement institutions – through their specialized units in several different institutions - in order to provide effective services to the vulnerable population, especially women – main victims of violence and insecurity.

Technological innovations, for example in the energy and agricultural sector, can be used to overcome structural and societal barriers that prevent women from access to resources, and economic tools for development and power. **Access of rural women to technology and technical tools** can facilitate and save women's labor and generate income alternatives: household energy interventions to ease time demands on women's roles, and reduce effects of indoor pollution on them and children; tools and methods that allow for better agricultural outputs and marketing strategies, such as solar-powered freezers, improved cooking stoves and charcoal kilns, women's commercialization of improved fuel, women at the forefront of climate-resistant corn, sorghum and vegetable production, improved water-saving pouring and green fertilizing methods, enhanced version of the UNDP multifunctional platforms, i.e. agro-processing machines, which enable women farmers and women head households to increase and diversify their income with RE/hybrid energy.

The development of an improved model of the UNDP Multifunctional Platforms, in which the energy installation is based on RE/hybrid energy provision. Besides agro-processing with different functionalities, the platform can also strengthen capacities for service delivery of public infrastructures (health center, school, administration, water pumping, public lightning) in rural communities. Lead countries of the UNDP MFP programme in West Africa were Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso with about 3000 platforms installed as of 2012, benefitting over 3.5 million people.⁷⁰

The **UNDP Gender Equality Seal** can be applied to drive progress and measure performance on gender equality in the public and private sector. Public institutions as well as private business and enterprises can participate and candidate for the enhanced Gender Equality Seal. They become qualified as gender equality practicing institution/firm/business and function as role model in the public sphere as well as among national private sector entrepreneurs. Better funding and investment options could be linked to this certification with the Gender Equality Seal.

Promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment through the new Country Accelerator Lab of Guinea-Bissau that is being installed at UNDP Bissau. The LAB follows interdisciplinary approaches, broad partnerships with the Civil Society, the business and affected people for developing non-linear solutions, exploring local insights and the knowledge of people closest to the problem and the solutions. The Accelerator LAB builds on local innovators. It will identify grassroots solutions together with local actors and evaluate their potential to accelerate development (www.gw.undp.org, retrieved on 11 November 2020).

The Accelerator Lab provides contextual, country-based insights and expertise to accelerate impact and progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and builds on experimentation as rapid and cost-effective tools to test the accuracy of particular assumptions and deliver small and quick pilot-projects before deploying solutions at scale. Innovation follows a six stage scaling process going from

⁷⁰ ECREEE, 2015: Situation Analysis, p. 66.

Ideation over proof of concept and transition to scale and finally to sustainable scale (<https://www.globalinnovationexchange.org/resources/blog-the-six-innovation-stages>).

The ***local solution approach to gender equality*** is informed by insights originating from local knowledge, built on grassroots solutions for addressing, in our case, gender inequalities, women's empowerment etc. with the objective to stretch their potential for accelerating development. Locally rooted, "user-driven" development solutions that originate from the beneficiaries are at the heart of this approach. The local communities / end-users are acting as co-designers of all relevant programme details, whereby the process of programme design is based on multiple iterations and rapid "prototype" testing until the product reaches its final shape as validated and tested programme (Flint & zu Natrup, 2018).⁷¹

⁷¹ (Flint & zu Natrup, 2018, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328941724_Aid_and_development_by_design_local_solutions_to_local_problems, retrieved on Nov 10 2020).

The local solution approach involves a transfer of power from the funders of aid/ international development community to the users of aid at the local level. The development expert acts as facilitator and shares expertise with the local knowledge holders. Problems of national / local ownership and accountability are becoming subordinate. Aid users must be trusted to know and understand the context in which they are operating, which represents a significant degree of divergence from how development aid is currently practiced. The advantage for local communities / governments / stakeholders is that they are provided with choice, flexibility, dignity, and it is acknowledged that those in need best know what they need and how to generate significant impact out of a suitable programme.

Chapter 5 Recommendations for UNDP

5.1 Mainstreaming gender into the process of implementing the new UNSDCF for Guinea-Bissau (2021-2025)

The strategic recommendations presented here suggest how gender can be mainstreamed into the process of implementing the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) - Guinea-Bissau. They strictly follow the internal guidance for the elaboration of new UNSDCF (UNSDG, June 2019, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework - Internal Guidance, https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf), retrieved on 15 May 2020).

According to the New UN-SWAP (version 2.0, December 2019) “the integration of gender into strategic planning document should follow a dual approach to implementing the SDGs, as appropriate to their mandate, and the importance of linking targeted and mainstreaming approaches so that there is a coherent impetus on GEEW.”

From the UNSDCF Cooperation Framework Internal Guidelines (p. 6-11):

The Cooperation Framework represents the UN development system’s collective offer to support countries in addressing key Sustainable Development Goal priorities and gaps. The Cooperation Framework is a vehicle for supporting peaceful societies through sustainable development strategies specific to diverse country contexts. The SDGs constitute the frame of reference for formulating and implementing the Cooperation Framework. Its analytical foundation should be based on a broad, holistic and integrated approach, considering the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs.

By adopting an integrated and multidimensional programming approach—in line with the “five P’s” of the 2030 Agenda (people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships) —the Cooperation Framework identifies how working on and advancing one SDG can maximize synergies and positive impacts, and manages potential trade-offs.

Through the “Human Rights Based Approach to Development” (HRBA) human rights principles (equality and non-discrimination, participation, accountability) guide UN development cooperation. The focus is put on capacity development of both, the ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations, and the ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights.

The Cooperation Framework intends to address patterns of exclusion, structural constraints and inequality in all dimensions. To realize this end, it calls for supporting all measures (legal, policy, institutional and others) and for ensuring the free, active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly the most marginalized.

The Cooperation Framework also provides specific guidance on reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability for inclusive, diversified and job-intensive economic transformation that empowers women and leaves no one behind, protects the planet and strengthens the ecological foundations of economies. SDG targets and indicators become the default monitoring framework, informed by country-defined and disaggregated baselines.

Mainstreaming gender equality and women’s empowerment

As gender equality and women’s empowerment are integral to realizing all of the SDGs, they should be mainstreamed into the new Cooperation Framework. Gender equality should be put at the heart of programming, driving the active and meaningful participation of both women and men, and consistently empowering women and girls (Cooperation Framework, p. 11). The minimum

requirements agreed upon by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) in the UNCT System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard⁷² should be duly considered and implemented:

“Gender equality and the empowerment of women should be visibly mainstreamed across all outcome areas in line with SDG priorities including SDG 5”.

The “System Wide Strategic Document” underlines the necessity of “upscaleing of investments in gender equality and women’s empowerment, a cross cutting system wide priority that is underserved currently” (<https://unsgd.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/SWSD-UNSDG-FINAL.pdf>, p. 3, retrieved on 15 May 2020).

To comply with the “System Wide Strategic Document” (UNSDG) and the requirements of the UN-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard⁷³ a standalone gender equality and LNOB outcome should be integrated into the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) – Guinea-Bissau.

To exceed the minimum requirements of the Gender Equality Scorecard one outcome “specifically targets gender equality in line with UNDAF Theory of Change and SDG priorities including SDG 5”. (Gender Equality Scorecard, Indicator 1.2).

To measure the impact of gender mainstreaming in the UNSDCF the Equality Scorecard defines as minimum requirement that “between one-third and one-half (33-50 percent) of outcome (and output) indicators measure changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women in line with SDG targets including SDG 5 (Gender Equality Scorecard, Indicator 1.3).⁷⁴

UNSDCF 2.2.2. Strategic priorities for the UN development system

Text proposal:

Through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021–2025, the UN in Guinea-Bissau will significantly broaden and increase its partnerships to contribute to the changes needed to stabilize Guinea-Bissau’s trajectory towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda, achieving economic transformation towards sustainability, a peaceful, just and resilient society and ensure gender equality and that no one is left behind (LNOB).

UN Guinea-Bissau prepared and actualized its CCA, commissioned a gender analysis and a LNOB strategy, and undertook a multi-stakeholder consultative process to identify ways of accelerating

⁷² The UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard establishes performance standards for gender-related programme results and institutional arrangements to achieve them. It is a standardized assessment of UN country-level gender mainstreaming practices and performance that is aimed at ensuring accountability and improving UNCT performance.

⁷³ UN-SWAP 2.0 Accountability framework for mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women in United Nations entities, December 2019, p. 15. A. Results-Based Management 01. Performance Indicator: Strategic Planning Gender-related SDG results, meets requirements: “1.b.1 Main strategic planning document includes at least one high-level result on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which will contribute to meeting SDG targets, and reference to SDG 5 targets and 1bii. Entity has achieved or is on track to achieve the high-level result on gender equality and the empowerment of women.”

⁷⁴ It is sometimes challenging to tell the difference between an outcome where there is visible mainstreaming of gender and an outcome which is dedicated to gender. A rule of thumb is that for visible mainstreaming gender will make up one part of the outcome (e.g. an outcome that focuses on human rights and gender equality, or the environment and gender equality), while for a dedicated outcome the whole outcome will focus on gender equality (e.g. boy’s education), Gender Equality Scorecard, p. 27.

progress on the SDGs. This process will enable the UN to identify its strategic priorities for the UN's work in the country for the period 2022–2026. The selected priorities are based on the UN's understanding of the mutually reinforcing multiplier effects of the chosen priorities and their potential to accelerate development progress and contribute to achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

Recommendation:

One of these overarching priorities that embrace the engagement of the UN in Guinea-Bissau and the outcome design of this cooperation framework is the promotion of gender equality and the protection and empowerment of the (most) vulnerable.

UNSDCF 2.2.3 Cooperative Framework outcomes

Text proposal:

A standalone gender equality and LNOB outcome should be integrated into the UNSDCF (gender-targeted outcome).

(According to the internal guidance “a strategic priority comprises a limited number of outcomes and outputs. Overall, the numbers must be realistic, together reflecting the strategic focus of the UN development system during a Cooperation Framework cycle”. Outcomes typically represent change in the institutional and behavioral capacities for development (Internal Guidelines, p. 18).

The outcome formulation recommended would be:

Women, girls, young people and children, persons with disabilities, elderly, chronical ill people and migrants will live free from discrimination, violence, stigma and inequalities, be holders of their decision, empowered to claim their rights and contribute to the socio-economic fabric of the society as agents of change.

Gender-targeted outcomes: focus on gender equality and empowerment of women as the primary objective, and addressing women and/or men in the context of their gender norms, roles and relations. Vs.

Gender-mainstreamed outcomes: ensures that gender equality is considered within a broader objective and addresses the differential needs of and inequalities experienced by women, men, girls and boys.

(Gender Equality Scorecard, p. 27).

UNSDCF 5.1. Implementing the Cooperation Framework through UN development system entity country development programmes

(According to the internal guidance the Cooperation Framework is implemented through UN development system entity instruments for country development programming. These entities must derive their development programming from the Cooperation Framework; specific country development programming documents should be aligned with the Cooperation Framework at the earliest opportunity, p. 24)

Recommendation:

UNDP Country Programme Document will have a standalone Gender equality and LNOB outcome, following verbatim the Cooperation Framework outcome.

UNSDCF 5.2. Coordinating Cooperation Framework implementation through results groups

Recommendation:

As each strategic priority must have a corresponding results group, a “Gender Equality and LNOB” results group should be constituted that operates according to the Internal Guidance of the Cooperation Framework. Gender and LNOB specialists of the contributing UN development entities should be members of this result group. Ideally, one of these specialists should have the lead of the results group (chair or co-chair with UN heads of agencies).

Recommendation:

The “Gender Equality and LNOB” results group should incorporate relevant national and international partners (Instituto Mulher e Criança/ Women and Child Institute, specialized Gender Commission of Parliament, ministries (social protection, health, economy, education), NGOs and be co-chaired with relevant Government counterparts.

Recommendation:

The “Gender Equality and LNOB” results group together with the other results groups develops UN joint workplans to operationalize the Cooperation Framework (including all other roles identified in the Cooperation Framework Internal Guidance). Beyond its own strategic priority, the Gender Equality and LNOB results group should crosscheck/ give inputs to the gender equality and LNOB perspectives in all other strategic priorities.

UNSDCF 6.1. Adaptive programming

According to the Cooperation Framework Internal Guidelines the results groups and joint workplans are mechanisms for adaptive programming and should be supported by the M&E group. The review function of the results groups is of key importance as they jointly review outputs, activities and budgets in response to new information, lessons and risks emerging from continuous analysis, monitoring (including real-time) and evaluation (p. 27).

Recommendation:

The “Gender equality and LNOB” results group has the opportunity and responsibility to give inputs to adaptive programming in and beyond its own priority area to ensure system-wide monitoring of gender equality promotion and implementation of the LNOB strategy.

The monitoring process should include as guidance the performance indicators of the Gender Equality Score Card.

The minimum requirement for monitoring the gender mainstreaming against the gender results is described as follows. Two of the following conditions must be met: **a)** UNDAF Results Matrix data for gender sensitive indicators gathered as planned; **b)** UNDAF reviews/ evaluations assess progress against gender-specific results. **c)** The M&E Group or equivalent has received technical training on gender sensitive M&E at least once during the current UNDAF cycle (p. 27).

UNSDCF 7: Cooperation Framework Governance Arrangements in support of national ownership

It is envisaged in the Cooperation Framework Internal Guidance that the UN development system and/or the JSC may decide to have advisory committees to support their work (p. 30)

Recommendation:

A Civil Society committee that includes women leaders and women networks should form part of the advisory committees to support the work of the Joint Steering Committee.

Harmonized use of the UNCT Gender Equality Marker Codes (GEM)

The UNCT GEM uses a four-point coding scale. It is essential that all UNCTs harmonize the use of the UNCT GEM, so as to provide the UN system with globally comparable data in its reporting to the Member States. At no point in the process should the UNCT GEM Coding be modified, regardless of previous UNCT country specific practices. The UNCT GEM Coding system does not directly impact internal UN entities' GEMs, as the UNCT GEM is to be applied to JWP_s, which in accordance with UNSDCF Guidance, are meant to capture the UNCT's collective actions (p. 8).

Maximum stage: Gender Marker 3: GEWE is the principal objective of the Key Activity. For GEM3 to be applied, narrowing gender inequalities, transforming prejudicial gender norms, or the empowering of women and girls is the main reason the Key Activity is being undertaken (p. 13) (UNSDG, 2019, UNCT Gender Equality Marker Guidance Note, <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/UNCT%20GEM%20UN%20INFO%20final%20draft%20June%202019.pdf>, retrieved on 6 November 2020.

5.2 Mainstreaming gender and human rights into the new UNDP Country Programme Document (2021-2025)

The new UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) is based on the strategic priorities, guiding principles and outcomes of the UNSDCF. According to UNSDCF Internal Guidelines (p. 6), ***United Nations entity-specific country programmes are to be derived from the Cooperation Framework, not vice versa.***

Within the Cooperation Framework, UNDP Guinea-Bissau has an important role to play in identification of the outcomes and in delivering in the ***strategic area of gender equality and empowerment of the most vulnerable, mainly women.***

UNDP has comparative advantages to complement United Nations development system efforts in Guinea-Bissau. Its value proposition is anchored in its mandate as a lead development agency globally, through signature and integrated development solutions. As the support platform for mainstreaming acceleration and policy on the Sustainable Development Goals, aligned with its *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, UNDP intends to work in a more integrated and collaborative manner to help Guinea-Bissau address interrelated development challenges and achieve sustainable development goals.

The UNDP Country Office has elaborated its Gender Strategy and priority areas of intervention for gender equality and the empowerment of women in close alignment with the UNDP corporate *Gender Strategy and signature solution 6*. UNDP will adopt approaches that integrate gender equality into its programming to ensure sustainable impact and meet the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The

The CPD should design at least one standalone gender outcome, considering SDGs interlinkage and Signature Solution 6 in one of the identified priority areas. ***Structural barriers to gender equality should be discussed in the project rationale. Project priority areas should identify concrete changes to advance gender equality in at least one area of intervention. A minimum of one gender-specific outcome and indicative activities and indicators is to be included in the results and resources frameworks*** (UNDP, 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p. 19). The CPD should achieve transformative gender results: "Transformative results are results that contribute to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discriminations". (UN-SWAP, 2.0, p.40)

The core principles of UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021), such as Human Rights approach, beneficiaries as active agents of change, implementation of LNOB concept, transforming gender and power relations, innovation should be applied (UNDP, 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p. 8-9).

Human rights-based programming principles, innovative approaches, integrated platforms and financing solutions will be used to build strategic new partnerships and to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Women's participation in all areas of society is essential to make visible, significant and lasting change for all people, men and women alike. UNDP has the ability and responsibility to integrate gender equality into every aspect of its work. Gender equality and women's empowerment are a *guiding principle* that applies to every intervention, collaborating with partner countries to end gender-based violence, tackling climate change with women farmers or advancing female leadership in governance, business and politics.

Partnership-building of UNDP Guinea-Bissau among the UN-system, with UN-Women, UNICEF, UNFPA etc. are of paramount importance to addressing the root causes of persistent gender inequalities, including discriminatory practices and social norms, and investing in dedicated gender expertise and capacities throughout the spectrum of UNDP development assistance, particularly in such areas as

climate change and crisis prevention and recovery that are critical to the achievement of sustainable development but are too often addressed without a gender lens.

Partnerships will be established with international financial institutions and multilateral and bilateral agencies to unlock domestic public and private capital to transform legal, policy and social norms, and creating a sustainable impact on women's economic, social and political empowerment.

Programme priorities

Recommendation: Gender Equality and empowerment of the most vulnerable, mainly women, as stand alone outcome in the new CPD

Imagining a programme design that will include at least the following outcomes/results:

- a) Transformational and inclusive governance for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies;
- b) Inclusive and sustainable growth;
- c) Sustainable management of natural resources and resilient development.

(These would be achieved through strengthening the governance system in the public and private sectors as a backbone for delivery; enhancing social protection; transformation of nature-based solutions, innovation, inclusive business models and technology into decent jobs, economic opportunities and improved livelihoods; improving adaptation to climate change and disaster risks; and ensuring sustainable access to energy services)

Outcome:

Women, girls, young people and children, persons with disabilities, elderly, chronical ill people and migrants will live free from discrimination, violence, stigma and inequalities, be holders of their decision, empowered to claim their rights and contribute to the socio-economic fabric of the society as agents of change.

Outcome has 4 sub-outcomes (on gender):

1. Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work
2. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence
3. Promoting women's participation and leadership in all forms of decision-making
4. Strengthening gender-responsive strategies in crisis (conflict and disaster) prevention, preparedness and recovery.

(Outcome would have additional/ enlarged sub-outcomes on LNOB)

The outputs to the 4 sub-outcomes can be directly derived from the key pillars/ entry points presented in the table in chap. 4.3.2 Priority areas:

Example for sub-outcome 1

Sub- Outcome 1: Removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work

Output 1.1 Design and implementation of innovative gender-sensitive social protection measures for the formal and informal sector (including basic health care system);

Output 1.2 Boost local economy with the *bideira*-model as woman enterprise/start-up;

Output 1.3 Enhance public care system for infants and the elderly, at local level (village/neighborhood,) with local workforce (men and women) through innovative care approach/ (public-private cooperation/social service); introduce paternal leave and elderly care leave in formal contracts;

Output 1.4 Female poverty and marginalization of women are inverted through decent work for women and privileged access to health and education services.

Beyond the targeted/standalone outcome on gender equality and empowerment of the most vulnerable, the promotion of gender equality and empowerment should be integrated throughout the three other outcomes proposed above, subordinated to the overarching thematic fields, such as keeping people out of poverty, governance and accountability, resilience building.

To meet the minimum requirements of the UN-SWAP Gender Equality Score Card, half of the outcome and output indicators should be gender mainstreamed.

Mainstreaming Human Rights into the new CPD

Mainstreaming of Human Rights into the CPD is guided by the **Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Development** (see “UN Common Understanding on a Human Rights-based Approach”) which UNDP applies in all its development programming. The HRBA is a conceptual framework for the process of sustainable development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and principles and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.

Under the HRBA, the plans, policies and processes of development are anchored in a system of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law, including all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and the right to development.

HRBA requires human rights principles (equality and non-discrimination, participation, accountability) to guide UN development cooperation, and focus on capacity development of both ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations and ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights. Assessment and analysis are necessary in order to identify the human rights claims of rights-holders and the corresponding human rights obligations of duty-bearers as well as the immediate, underlying, and structural causes of the non-realization of rights. It is also essential under a HRBA to recognize people as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services. Furthermore, the programmes focus on marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded groups, the development process is locally owned, programmes aim to reduce disparity and both top-down and bottom-up approaches are used in synergy (<https://hrbaportal.undg.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies>, retrieved on 6 November 2020).

In the new CPD the Human-rights based approach should be implemented to its fullest possibilities, regarding especially the promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination and inclusiveness for those furthest behind in all programme design undertaken.

Human rights principles and standards should guide programming and performance monitoring as well as progress reports in achieving gender equality; in line with CEDAW and other human rights treaties and commitments.

UNDP should particularly address the gaps in respecting human rights in Guinea-Bissau through assisting national partners in improving the norms, institutions, legal frameworks and the economic, political and policy environment.⁷⁵ Programme design should focus on strengthening **policies** (PNIEG,

⁷⁵ Laws have to be consistent with international human rights standards; courts, judiciary and law enforcement as well as independent human rights institutions function effectively; procedures are in place for individuals to effectively claim one’s rights; good governance and accountable government

PND, the New National Development Plan (2020-2023) **laws** (constitution, civil code, labor and land laws, drafting of a gender equality law), **reforms** (Justice Reform, SSR) to promote gender equality and the LNOB strategy.

UNDP should also support effective systems for societal monitoring of human rights enforcement; promote transparent mechanisms to correct human rights violations and utilize affirmative action for addressing structural issues that perpetuate inequality and discrimination. In continuation of the UNDAF (2016-2020) outcome on the consolidation of stability, the Rule of Law, democratic participation, and equitable access to opportunities for all.

The centrality of the Human-Rights approach for the whole SDG agenda is reflected - as if contracted under a magnifying glass- in the targeted – standalone - gender equality outcome. Linking with ongoing PBF projects, CPD programming in the Rule of Law and Human Rights sector should place women and marginalized vulnerable groups at the focus of Justice Reform in Guinea-Bissau, particularly targeting the development of adequate mechanisms to process GBV cases, sensitizing and training women and other groups of the furthest behind on their human rights, including access to gender justice, and empower them to participate actively in ongoing peace and security processes in Guinea-Bissau (Prodoc PBF project “Placing Women at the center of Justice Reform in Guinea-Bissau”).

The severe violations of human rights, sexual and gender based violence and FGM, should be responded to in the CPD programme design under the gender equality sub-outcome 2 with projects to initiate “mind change”. UNDP should support comprehensive measures to transform gender relations, including besides the strengthening of gender capacities in the judiciary and community awareness campaigns, the promotion of positive behavior for women’s human rights through male champions and addressing the needs of men and boys to tackle the root causes of violence.

Institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in the new CPD

Mechanisms such as the Gender Equality Seal and the Gender Marker which provide measurable standards and incentives to drive progress should be built up and reinforced. The UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard⁷⁶ is the system wide practical support tool for monitoring and evaluation gender equality at country level and will be always considered.

UNDP Guinea-Bissau will implement its gender strategy, advance the gender seal initiative and invest at least 15 percent allocation of all country programme and project budgets to advancing gender equality and/or empowering women. These are programmes to which Gender marker GEN-3 is attributed where Gender equality and the empowerment of women is the principal objective of outcome (UNDP Gender Strategy 2018, p. 19)

The gender marker will be used to monitor expenditures and improve planning and decision-making. The CO M&E plan integrates tracking of gender commitments in the CPD and CO gender strategy, including a gender impact evaluation of key programmes.

UNDP will participate in Cooperation Framework results groups to track outcome indicators, including using the United Nations electronic management information system.

Results and Resources Framework

To measure the success of UNCT programmes, such as the UNDP CPD, the Gender Equality Score Card establishes as minimum requirements that the UNCT has achieved or is on track to achieve **all** gender

institutions promote and protect human rights; decision making processes are democratic, open, transparent and participatory; and a strong and independent civil society is active and effective.

⁷⁶

https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNCT-SWAP_Gender-report_Web.pdf.

equality and the empowerment of women results as planned in the UNDAF outcomes in line with SDG priorities including SDG 5. Requirements can be exceeded when additionally at least one outcome level UNDAF result has contributed to transformative change in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN-SWAP Gender Equality Score Card, p. 63).

Risk assessment and mitigation strategies

The UN CCA would identify multidimensional risks that could impact the development trajectory of the country. This risk analysis allows for the understanding of groups left behind, and underlying drivers of risks, vulnerabilities and needs, including those that are social or related to conflict, disasters, climate change, the environment or the economy. Gender aspects should be mainstreamed appropriately into the CCA risk analysis.

The identification of specific major programmatic risks at CPD and UNSDGF level, such as sustainability, security threats, environmental shocks and programme fragmentation, which may impact the achievement of programme priorities, should include gender analysis and gender performance indicators. Thus, programme design could be supported on how to ensure that risks are avoided and/or mitigated and managed.

UNDP Risk analysis include an early warning mechanism to anticipate significant changes in programme implementation (Atlas, Risk Log frame). Ideally, UNDP undertakes ***environmental and social screening*** of all programmes and projects to mitigate any potential adverse impact and risks. It includes questions on gender equality and women's empowerment (<http://www.undp.org/ses>) and related accountability mechanism (<http://www.undp.org/secu-srm>).

5.3 Strategies for the economic empowerment of women

5.3.1 Immediate opportunities - quick win projects

Women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Fast pathways to reduce female poverty and give women and girls perspectives for livelihood improvements are one of the most urgent concerns of women in Guinea-Bissau. To respond to this demand, it would be appropriate to test some ***economic quick win projects on a small scale*** which could ***alleviate women and girls from multidimensional vulnerabilities***.

Target groups would be, for example, girls out of school due to early pregnancy/marriage, women of female headed households, victims of GBV, widows.

Project type I in urban and rural areas: “Mobile Phone vocational training learning platform and cash transfers to increase employability of women in the formal and informal sector and support immediate economic empowerment”

Project is experimental and intends to crack the technology divide, biased internet use in Guinea-Bissau (male-female, urban-rural) through supplying a mobile phone as basic tool for the project or a first cash transfer.

Conditions: Mobile Phone and Internet, or first cash transfer = in kind, covering mobile phone, Internet for the training, quick instructions on mobile phone use (1 day course)

Programme:

Mobile phone apps for vocational training, participants: women (all age) and adolescent girls:

- Choice between 5 different modules for different job profiles, for example, Hairdresser, domestic worker, infant care giver, smart agriculture & sustainable land management technician, renewable (solar) energy supplier); course duration: 3-6 months;
- Mandatory content for all participants:
Literacy and numeracy training at the beginning,
Participants create “abota” / local saving groups;
Meetings of abota-groups in “Women’s Club” which is a training and meeting space;
Awareness building on GBV and services for women/girls via mobile phone app.
- End of course:
Certification (qualified), assistance for development of business plan, micro/mini-enterprises and/or internship, visit to firms/institutions,
- Cash transfer via mobile phone at the beginning, half-term and end of course (3-6 months);
- For start-ups, new entrepreneurs, access to “credit/loans” or mini-grants (UNDP), combined with abota-system and on top of initial cash transfer

Replication/ Upscaling: Once the online learning platform with modules for vocational training is created and tested with the first group of participants, preferably in Bissau and with CSO and private sector partners, upscaling is relatively easy in the regions, preferable regional cities (Internet availability, Women’s club); survey among participants on the cash transfer component, saving results, job training programme.

Project type II in urban and rural areas: “Bideira” is my profession

Based on the *bideira*-model of women traders and vendors (Chap. 2.3), add value to this very widespread female occupation and create an enabling environment to develop the *bideira* into a true woman entrepreneur (mini/small enterprise), ***initiating an important transformative process from informal to formal business operation.***

Besides career counseling, the participants benefit from financial inclusion programme (credits or saving schemes), registry with the Ministry of Economy (department for business creation), obtaining the status of small entrepreneurs and becoming eligible to social protection measures (according to the Social Protection Law which needs amendments, Embalo/UNDP, 2020, p. 117). This will improve efficiency of planning and increase sales, result in better income and enable women to step over the poverty line to establishing more robust business structures. Economically empowered, the *bideira*-women-entrepreneurs can stimulate growth in the private sector and might be able to overcome the “family-survival” approach of their business towards expansive, growth orientated approach.

First project duration: 3 months; this project can be replicated, in partnership with AMAE (Associação das Mulheres com Atividades Económicas) and other NGOs and the Chamber of Commerce, in different locations/regions in Guinea-Bissau, after testing the responding capacities of *bideiras* in a limited locality (Bissau or Gabu)

Project type III in rural areas: “Women Farmers associate for sustainable agricultural production, food security, access to rural markets and childcare”

This project is experimental, in testing a combination of different measures, using a bundled or complementary approach, limited to one region or some selected localities of Guinea-Bissau. If successful, replication and gradual upgrading is possible, introducing additional components over time.

The reduction of unpaid care work through community organized child care would free women to become members of community based associations to increase and diversify agriculture production, enhance food security, and improve access to markets.

Groups of, for example, 18 women are formed, consisting of 6 subgroups, 4 for agricultural production, 1 for market access and sales operations, 1 for child care taking at village level, rotation system or fixed.

Agricultural extension training in agricultural skills would focus on issues, such as identification of food products, fields and possibilities, smart agriculture (training on climate resistant crop and vegetable varieties), land concessions/private land property rights for women (implementation of the Land Law, see chap 2.3), seasonal production, post-harvest losses; family farming plus cash crops for sale; a child care take facility organized in every group, including alimentation and payment approach (with minimum standards to be fixed).

Under technical guidance, the women would develop a “business plan” for their agricultural project and benefit from saving scheme, such as the “Oxfam Savings for Change programme” which has been implemented successfully in West Africa (see chap. 3.2). After receiving small grants, combined with the savings, the women would be empowered to buy productive assets, such as farming tools, seeds, irrigation pumps, livestock etc. In a period between 4 and 6 months, depending on the production cycle, first results of the work can be evaluated in terms of agricultural products, its quality and quantity, functioning market access, surplus sales and increase in women’s / families food security and cash income from sales. The full roll-out of the project would be achieved with the first harvest cycle completed.

The finance mechanism would be framed through small grants and the saving schemes, individual or to the women farmer association. It would include credits and in-kind payment of basic transport (moto-cycle).

Additional project components that could be introduced, optional, after successful prototype testing: continuation of training with field experiments on climate resistant crop and vegetable varieties; support and technical assistance with RE based multifunctional platforms for transformation of agricultural products; evening schools for adolescent girls and women (functional alphabetization), domestic energy supply, RE based water supply, school/health centre etc. provided with clean energy.

Cooperation with New Acceleration LAB

For the project ideas outlined above, the cooperation with the new Acceleration Lab would be very important. Its efforts to deep community immersion and the development of positive relationships with a range of local communities would allow confidence building and matching with potential partners in experimental, locally installed solutions for sustainable development with gender equality as accelerator. When innovations have demonstrated small-scale success, their model would be developed and partners attract to help fill the gaps in their capacity to scale.

This study proposes quick win projects to rapidly reduce female poverty, in which new technologies (smart phone) to crack the technology divide, the transformation of women entrepreneurs from informal to formal business and integrated women farmer projects with a childcare component are presented as “solutions”. These project ideas were selected as they showcase the benefits of technological innovation, the potential of adding value to the traditional “*bideira*” – one-woman micro-enterprise occupation, and the advantages of a multi-pronged approach for stimulating transformative change in gender relations at village level through empowering rural women with saving schemes and technical training. All projects could be implemented as pilots and under programmes for local development in the regions of Guinea-Bissau, and scaled up, if the prototypes achieve good results.

5.3.2 Opportunities and challenges for UNDP programming in the economic sector, in order to create an environment that stimulates economic development and entrepreneurship

Economic growth in Guinea-Bissau is mainly driven by the primary sector (agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry), which accounts for about 36% of GDP over the last five years. Besides being subject to fluctuating international cashew prices (Guinea-Bissau being the fifth exporter in the world, estimated up to 200.000 tons in 2020), the economy is constrained by obsolete farming methods, low productivity, lack of diversification and very poor transformation activities. The potential for agriculture, especially processing, is largely underexploited and could be used as leverage to accelerate the country's economic growth. Only 4 percent of cashew nut output is processed locally; the rest is exported unprocessed. The country's economy would benefit from locally adding value to cashew exports, which would provide major benefits in terms of growth, employment creation, and poverty reduction (Common Country Analysis, Draft 10, p. 25-27). Despite a demographic dividend, labor productivity's contribution to per capita GDP growth remains low. Commerce, another major sector in Guinea-Bissau, tends to be small-scale, mostly informal, with little potential for productivity gains. Agriculture share of employment is 67% in 2019, with female share averaging 70.6 % compare with 65% of male in 2019⁷⁷. Over 75% of employment is informal and vulnerable, with no social protection (CCA, Draft 10, p. 34 and <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.EMP.MPYR.ZS?locations=GW-ZG>).

⁷⁷ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.EMP.MPYR.ZS?locations=GW-ZG>

The economic situation has worsened significantly under the Covid-19 pandemic. Lockdowns and mitigations measures weigh heavily on income, prices and inequality in health and education. The failure of the 2020 cashew campaign has aggravated the poverty situation with significant income drop and the extreme poor, mostly working in agriculture, being the most affected (CCA, 2020, p. 32). Export revenues from cashew slumped by 91%, as the pandemic coincided with the campaign season, and the country experienced the largest drop in government revenues (33%) in the UEMOA region (CCA, 2020, p. 29-30).

Local supply chains have been impacted by the pandemic and its response measures, with implications on the availability, quality and affordability of food. Poor households remain unable to sell their cashew. At the same time, they are faced with sharp decrease of purchasing power due to high food prices, in particular imported rice. In the absence of basic social protection system, in order to cope with worsening food security, farmers probably will have to sale available productive assets, foremost livestock, to buy rice, which would make the way out of poverty in the medium and long term even more difficult (CCA, 2020, p.33).

Women are the hardest hit from the pandemic shock, especially rural and pregnant women with children in poor households as maternal/newborn health care services worsened, schools were closed and school feeding programs for 180.000 children interrupted for months (see chap. 2.11). Several other reasons aggravate rural female poverty due to the pandemic, such as decreasing remittances from abroad, informal micro and small businesses closings, reduction of agriculture yields and extremely intensive rainfall which might result in partial or total harvest loss of rice this year (harvesting under way at the moment). Savings is a preferred mechanism many women use to invest in their business and to smooth consumption when households undergo aggregate shocks. The local saving schemes are a very important traditional means of resilience and social protection for women and whole families, as we have seen in chap. 2.3 (*abota*-system and *manjundaade*). While men are obliged to sell livestock for buying rice, it is very likely that women's savings also will be quickly depleted with the current economic contraction.

Given the magnitude of the macro-economic and livelihood crisis, the challenges UNDP programming faces to stimulate economic empowerment of women in the new Country Programme Document are immense. They should be responded with emergency projects in the agricultural sector, based on short-term, highly adjustable programming, adaptable to the pandemic aftermath. On the other hand, UNDP efforts to support women's economic empowerment should be linked to transformative approaches in economic recovery.

UNDP programming should be built on evidence what works and what does not work. It would be inspired by best practices, insights gained from relevant programmes at regional level and previous/ongoing UNDP projects in Guinea-Bissau with a women economic empowerment component (such as UNDP/UNCDF project "Create conditions for local governance and local development in Guinea Bissau" ⁷⁸).

The agriculture sector and food security have gained even more importance with the COVID-19 pandemic. At the national level UNDP, together with other UN-agencies, should not sparse efforts to continue and reinforce measures a) for sustainable diversification in agriculture and improvement of

⁷⁸ Prodoc, Project Output 3: "Local Development Plans are funded and investments in gender sensitive service delivery are promoting the Food and Nutritional Security (FNS) and Local Economic Development (LED)". Due to lack of funding for the Local Development Plan, Output 3 was not realized, see Final Evaluation of Local Development Project).

production (increase yields, reduce post-harvest loss), b) significant increase in local rice production and c) the transformation of raw cashew in Guinea-Bissau.

Investments in local governance and environmental protection that are building blocks of the local development project of UNDP should focus sufficiently on economic development and livelihoods, in particular to promote the empowerment of women. Therefore, the initial commitments to promote the economic development of women must be operationalized in specific projects to strengthen their capacities, taking advantage of market opportunities.

Strategies for women's economic empowerment

In its programming, UNDP should be guided by the following strategies for women's economic empowerment that can accelerate the path to inclusive and sustainable development:

- Promoting an enabling environment through reforming discriminatory laws, focus on improved sexual and reproductive health; provision of child and elderly care; transformation of gender roles;
- Prioritizing women farmers' increased productivity and *boosting women's income generation in the rural economy*
- Supporting young women's integration into and benefits from employment and livelihood programmes;
- Fostering women entrepreneurs' access to training, finance and markets.

Promoting an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment

UNDP in the new CPD should continue to engage for legal reforms/ review of discriminatory laws (civil code, inheritance, land law, labor laws, social protection) and measures for the implementation and enforcement of the "gender laws" (FGM, Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, Reproductive Health), as well as strong advocacy for a new "Gender Equality Law".

UNDP further should support awareness-raising campaigns around the need for gender equality in access to and control over economic resources; integrated component of economic empowerment programmes in partnership with women's organizations, the media and the private sector to highlight women's economic rights and advocate for greater legal rights and protections.

Any programming to increase women's economic empowerment or access to labor markets should be coupled with efforts to reduce the disproportionate care-giving responsibilities women face, in terms of time and limiting their opportunities for employment outside the home. There is evidence that in the developing world the value of unpaid care and domestic work is comparable to, or even greater, than that of key economic sectors (UN-Women, 2018, p. 19). These roles often keep women in informal employment / family enterprise with poor remuneration and high insecurity.

Child and elderly care responsibilities should be valued by creating paid jobs for women and also for men in this sector with modalities adapted to the local circumstances (for example: Child care in home at village level, supported by project and beneficiaries; child care in specific care taking facilities, annexed to schools). Affordable and better child-care options should be based on a minimum standard contract for care taking. Infrastructures that reduce time burden for domestic work, such as better water, sanitation and energy supplies, should be also included (see: UNDP, 2019: Gender and Recovery Toolkit).

UNDP should introduce cash transfers as programme component. As it is a key instrument to mitigate some of the most negative short-term effects of economic crises, it is being deployed by governments and international organizations in response to the pandemic. Cash transfers are a

potential tool to protect women's income and empowerment gains, if they are designed and implemented in a way that manages pre-existing gender-gaps (Buvinic et al, 2020).

It is also crucial to mitigate potential risks and engage men as partners (family, relatives, community leaders, boys) to ensure economic opportunities for women do not result in negative changes in existing household and community relationships. According to UNDP Toolkit on Gender and Recovery (2019, p.) experiences show that it is common for women to face resistance, even violent, from men and the larger community when they are perceived to be favored through women's economic empowerment projects in a context of high male youth unemployment. To mitigate the risks, i.e. increased levels of domestic and other forms of violence, it is necessary to develop more holistic approaches that consider the gender dynamics at play within communities and proactively aim to transform the gendered division of labor. For example, where women receive employment opportunities, young men and women can be trained and paid to mind children and people with disabilities. Hence, the Economic empowerment of women takes place alongside men's acceptance and adherence to new gender roles which reflect gender equality (UNDP, 2019: Gender and Recovery Toolkit).

Prioritizing women farmers' increased productivity and boosting women's income generation in the rural economy

In high fertility-agrarian economies (more than 5 children), such as in Guinea-Bissau, the majority of women works in agriculture and off farm work linked to agriculture and in the informal sector in food trade, sales and food production.

Women farmers' increased productivity and boosting women's income generation in agriculture and in rural household micro enterprises should be the first programming priority of UNDP to respond to the high and increased poverty level and the sharp increase in hunger resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The challenge is in finding practical solutions that are economically empowering and transformative (Buvinic et. al., 2020).

Women should be supported with new and resilient agricultural interventions which can mitigate limitations in access to land (legal restrictions) and losses/destruction due to natural disasters and push women to be innovators and leaders of their work. Increasing women's access to secure land and agricultural inputs, including credits, should go a long way to increasing women's productivity and income in agriculture, and their empowerment. Agricultural interventions should also address women's severe time and mobility constraints, evident among Guinea-Bissau's rural population, especially among poor and very poor rural households.

Studies have shown that what works best and is particular effective are programmes in which access to (agricultural) information, cash transfers, and other financial services is delivered through mobile phones in rural areas which are distant to markets and banks. Married women as well as young women who strive for their autonomy in financial decision-making can benefit from the privacy mobile platforms (Buvenic, p. 24ff.).

The need for bundled interventions

According to the study of Buvinic et.al. (2020)⁷⁹ evidence from Malawi and Uganda suggests that an intervention based on savings alone may not work for poor rural women. An integrated or holistic

⁷⁹ Based on results of systematic reviews and meta-analysis of projects on women economic empowerment in West Africa and beyond, the study concludes that more educated, higher-income and unmarried women face fewer constraints and experience greater benefits when provided with skill development opportunities, financial services, and other types of support. Education is a longer-term

approach which bundles different measures is more likely to be impactful (Buvinic, ibid). In Burkina Faso, integrated agriculture and nutrition programmes increased investments in agriculture and improved outcomes for women and children, including men's more favorable opinions of women as farm managers. Poor and very poor rural women need combined or integrated projects, as they are caught in "poverty traps" and face multiple constraints to increase their productivity and earnings in agriculture.

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture programmes combine small transfers of agricultural and animal assets to women and add agricultural extension, temporary cash consumption support, home food production and training and nutrition practices. Bundled programmes seem to have enhanced benefits for women by addressing multiple constraints simultaneously. These interventions can increase women's empowerment and control over assets with positive effects on child wellbeing (Buvinic et.al, 2020, p. 49ff).

Supporting young women's integration into and benefits from employment and livelihood programmes

A key aspect of a practical job agenda, to be promoted by UNDP programmes, would be the creation of economic opportunities for the large portion of adolescent and young women who are unemployed and out of school. Given the economic crisis described above and the general poor skills of this workforce, the job market in the first phase of recovery from Covid-19, would be quite limited, restricted more or less to "typical" women's occupation in Guinea-Bissau, as farmer, food producer, domestic worker and small *bideira*.

The effectiveness of very intensive short-term capacity training as driver to economic empowerment among participants with poor school levels is unclear. Therefore, job training is not recommended as the only central measure; it should be accompanied by approaches that operationalize local solution options for the stimulation of local markets and local development. It is more likely to induce economic empowerment through cash transfer to stabilize the most food insecure households, awareness campaigns on the job market situation and elaboration of job profiles together with the target population of young and adolescent women. Potential long-term benefits, in the sense of promoting a virtuous cycle between women's economic empowerment and progress towards more gender equality, are hoped to be achieved as well.

Fostering women entrepreneurs' access to training, finance and markets

Women are still overrepresented in low productivity work in subsistence agriculture and subsistence level family enterprises, while facing high reproductive burdens and severe time constraints. Although women in the regional towns of Guinea-Bissau have (partially) moved out of agriculture, they are largely unable to move into higher productivity jobs in the formal labor market, due to lack thereof and given the severe gaps in relevant professional skills (see chap. 2.3).

Women more and more work as self-employed micro-entrepreneurs or as wage workers in informal business. As we have seen with the successful *bideira*-model, not all informal self-employment is low productivity and poorly paid. But studies have shown that savings, used as initial capital investment (in Guinea-Bissau the local *abota*-system), often fall short in providing the capital requirements needed to upgrade microenterprises significantly (Buvinic et al, 2020, p. 58ff).

investment with the potential of breaking job barriers for young women, as countries in West Africa recover from the economic contraction and labor markets expand once the pandemic recedes and containment measures are over (Buvinic et al, 2020).

The informal self-employment strategies need to be upgraded through better financing. Projects in Uganda, for example, evidenced two helpful lessons for future UNDP programming: First: Mobile platforms can provide women with increased autonomy over financial decision-making. In-kind transfers instead of cash or credit can insulate women from pressures to share assets they receive for their own business investments with family and community members (invest into other micro-business of the same household that are male dominated). Second: Sufficiently large loan or grant can help to overcome some of the binding constraints of women-owned subsistence level firms. This was shown in a project for poor young adults who received a comparatively large infusion of capital in the form of an unconditional grant. The increase in earnings was stronger and longer lasting for young women, who started from lower incomes, than for young men (Buvinic, 2020, p.66).

Therefore, UNDP should consider remodeling of microfinance approaches. They might provide too small capital transfer relative to the distance to the poverty threshold for most households (see Buvinic, 2020, p.67-68).

Longer perspective: social protection and job creation in the formal labor market

To fully promote women's economic empowerment in Guinea-Bissau, opportunities for women to access formal sector jobs with benefits will need to increase. A robust social protection system is one of the urgent priorities, combined with initiatives for the creation of more jobs for women in the formal sector, such as primary school teacher, more personnel in health care and social services, IT and bank jobs and new opportunities for women in the energy sector, a profound male domain. This is a gradual process and UNDP programming has to be realistically scaled relative to the small dimension of the country: More and qualified jobs in the formal sector for women go hand in hand with a general economic upswing in Guinea-Bissau which could be accelerated through massive affirmative action for gender equality in waged formal labor.

Opportunities for transforming gender relations

We will close this chapter with some specific remarks for UNDP programming on the potential of women empowerment in clearly male dominated or male absent sectors of the Guinea-Bissau economy and the inherent opportunities for transforming gender relations.

Local processing of raw cashew

According to estimates of the WB, up to 10.000 job opportunities, many of them for women (manual peeling, selection and packing of cashew kernels), could be created through the ***local processing of 30.000 tons of raw cashew in Guinea-Bissau***. This would be an interesting project for the recovery of the national economy, if sufficient investment is undertaken to operationalize existing processing installations. Processed cashew kernels have a value of 14 times more than raw cashew nuts (WB???). It would be a huge opportunity for the economic empowerment of women in the formal sector, if leveraged through UNDP with projects that create an enabling environment for gender equal treatment of the cashew processing workforce: no gender segregation in the processing process, equal pay for equal work, equal work for both sexes, fixed contracts with acceptable minimum wages, social protection, child-care facility etc.

To create valued, good paid and secure jobs for up to approximately 7.000 women would mean a very significant step in women's economic empowerment in Guinea-Bissau. If this job opportunity is used properly for the economic empowerment of women, it has great potential to initiate change in the self-confidence of women, creating a significant workforce among rural poor women: it would guarantee a minimum regular income to many impoverished families; strengthen women's self-esteem as equal worker with equal rights and capacities. It might trigger positive reactions in men as

well, if the project includes a good communication strategy for the promotion of gender equality, so that men working in the processing units experience that women work as hard and good as them and thus deserve their respect.

Make rice production more gender equitable

Rice production is not homogenous in terms of gender differentiated roles, workload and income benefits throughout the country/ among different ethnic groups as explained in chapter. 2.3. As increase in national rice production is key to fight hunger and improve rural livelihood, UNDP could induce transformative change in gender relations with a programme to support new production patterns towards more equal distribution of workload and incentives to make rice production the top priority of every rural family with more equal workshare of men and women members. Enhanced food security through more locally produced rice would directly profit family consumption and increase community resilience against economic and climate shock. Men must be motivated to engage more in local rice production with manual workforce and agricultural machinery to better secure the basis of their family's diet.

Gender equal shared rice production with improved seeds (climate proved, drought resistant) would probably increase rice production and free women from some arduous work in the rice fields with double benefit. Women farmers could invest more time in the production and processing of vegetables, fruits, fish and poultry, increase their sales at the market and cover other household expenses with that additional cash income. For women headed households without male workforce, the local community should be integrated into the incentive and supply the families in need collectively with young men.

Gender equitable rice production should go hand in hand with sustainable diversification of the agriculture production which is local community driven and oriented. Being measures to preferentially empower women economically, these are inclusive approaches which actually promote the family and village economy as a whole.

The “Solar Sister” of Guinea-Bissau

The “Solar Sister” social enterprise, presented in Chap. 3.2, has the mission to achieve sustainable, scalable impact at the nexus of women's empowerment, energy poverty and climate change. It would be an innovative and adaptable approach to unlock women's potential as "green agents of change" in Guinea-Bissau. “Solar Sister” has a highly scalable, marketable and sustainable business model for women-driven clean energy distribution in Africa. The potential demand for modern lighting products in Guinea-Bissau (as elsewhere on the continent) is immense, solutions for charging mobile phones present a big market opportunity as there are far more mobile phone users than grid users. In Guinea-Bissau, about 70-80% (or more) of rural population is not connected to electricity (conventional or renewable). This translates into a huge clean energy market for Solar Sister products and services. At the grassroots level, Solar Sister partners with organizations linked to local women's groups to benefit from their existing infrastructure and deep roots in the community. Through a micro-consignment model, Solar Sister entrepreneurs get a start-up kit of inventory, training and marketing support (business in the bag) to bring clean energy directly to their customers (www.solarsister.org).

UNDP would integrate the “Solar Sister” approach in its programming for women's economic empowerment and initiate the launch of Solar Sister activities, together with community based organizations and private sector female entrepreneurs in Guinea-Bissau, to create a national women network for clean energy in Guinea-Bissau.

Chapter 6

Conclusive remarks and recommendations

The objective of this study is to enhance UNDP decision-making on how to best promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the system-wide United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Guinea-Bissau and the new UNDP Country Programme Document, both starting next year.

The following conclusive remarks and recommendations are based on comprehensive gender analysis on the status of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau, the discussion of UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy, the assessment of UNDP's CO gender capacities and programmes, the identification of programme priority areas and discussion of innovative approaches for the promotion of gender equality at UNDP and recommendations for the new UNSDCF and CPD.

- 1. The gender status in Guinea-Bissau is characterized by widespread discrimination of women and girls, caught up in traditions and social norms. Inclusive participation of women remains an ongoing challenge. The disparities analyzed in the gender situational analysis revealed the interdependence of inequalities and the intersectional nature of gender and other parameters of marginalization.*

As main barriers to women's equality and socio-economic and political empowerment the study identified: Lack of institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming; discriminating policies and laws (property, inheritance etc.); stark underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions, from the family up to the public administration and the government level; dominance of traditional gender roles and relationships - subordination of women; disproportionately high illiteracy rates, particularly among rural women; lack of operational basic health care; limited access of women to courts and to Access to Justice Centers (CAJs), especially in cases of gender based violence and sexual abuse due to structural barriers: fear, stigma, lack of operational protection structures for victims of SGBV; no societal recognition of domestic work and caregiving; low status of women in agriculture.

- 2. Progress towards gender equality is too slow and small and, if happening, occurs selectively. The latest MICS data, released in late October 2020 (MICS 6), demonstrate that over a time-span of roughly ten years there has been no significant progress in key parameters of gender equality in Guinea-Bissau.*

With regard to gender based violence (domestic violence, intimate partner violence, early marriage, FGM, rape) and the full implementation of the respective laws, there is still a long way to go in Guinea-Bissau to reach significant progress to protect women and girls against these human rights violations. The study elucidated the root causes and socio-cultural factors that perpetuate gender inequality, the *matchundaadi* culture, the concept of *fidju matchu*, the dominance of traditional values in social life and the strong appreciation of gender stereotypes by both sexes.

- 3. The study identified and described the role and functioning of some positive drivers of change that can trigger women's economic empowerment and can be helpful on the path to gender equality in Guinea-Bissau.*

The independent figure of the "bideira", the woman vendor or self-made mini-entrepreneur, is a widely practiced business for women all over the country and accepted throughout the society, even in conservative circles. The efficiency and economic sustainability of the "bideira" could be scaled up, guided by local experience and insight into market structures, to design a replicable micro-business

model for women's empowerment in Guinea-Bissau. Closely linked to the "bideira" figure, are locally developed and qualified saving systems, the "abota"- system and women multi-ethnic networks for mutual help and socialization, the *mandjundaade*. Through these socio-economic networks of local practice change is brought about gradually without disturbing the social order, and operational solutions are found that enable economic independence and greater autonomy of women. The livelihood strategies of these women qualify them as actors and catalysts for social change. Women are no longer considered solely the object of a determined relationship with men, but also as a social actor and economic agent. The *abota* and *mandjundaade* groups could be developed towards a regular social protection system (for the informal sector).

4. *The growth over the last ten years of women's organizations and networks of the Civil Society that advocate for women's rights, political participation and against gender based violence is a very positive achievement. Gender equality has gained a certain attention in the social discourse, but this is far from being enough. Women are engaged in the electoral processes and as conflict mediators in the continuous political crises that upset the country. Their voices have been heard sometimes, but without real breakthroughs until now. Some progress has been achieved with the new "Parity Law" (2018) which now needs to be implemented consequently and its horizon being widened to all public institutions and the private sector. In midst the Corona pandemic, a first digital platform for gender equality has been created, supported by UNDP, that follows-up on gender based violence cases. The revision of the constitution from a gender mainstreaming perspective is ongoing.*

These promising developments of tireless commitment of women's networks to raise gender equality and women's empowerment high on the national policy agenda need to be better channeled. NGOs, networks and women's local associations need to be consistently assisted to improve their advocacy and monitoring capacities of public policies and the justice sector. They are the Civil Society and community partners with whom UNDP should immerse deeply into rural and urban communities for the development of local, grassroots based solutions.

5. *The central problem of how to pave the path towards gender justice in Guinea-Bissau to accelerate tangible outcomes requires urgent solutions. UNDP Guinea-Bissau has engaged for years, frankly for more than a decade, to improve the human rights status of women and girls in this country (in projects under the Rule of Law component in the current CPD). Advocacy for gender equality in the justice reform project, better access to justice for women and marginalized groups, the new services offered by the CAJ (Access to Justice Centers), the recent elaboration of a coordination mechanism between formal and informal justice with the objective to enhance gender justice through alternative dispute settlement - all these components need to be further broadened, integrated into solid financing strategies and intensified under the new Country Programme Document.*

A major breakthrough to reduce and finally end gender based violence in Guinea-Bissau will need extraordinary commitment of UNDP. There are no easy solutions for the prevention of GBV and the protection and empowerment of its victims, neither in Guinea-Bissau nor in the region as data from the SIGI Index demonstrate impressively (SIGI INDEX, OECD, 2018). Therefore the combat of GBV in all its forms is a priority area proposed for the CPD programming design, to care about particularly.

6. *The challenges that UNDP faces given the overall crisis situation in Guinea-Bissau (political, economic and humanitarian, aggravated with Covid-19 pandemic) and the tasks the organization has to master to effectively promote gender equality and women's empowerment in its programmes and overall work are huge and demanding.*

The study could demonstrate that gender mainstreaming at UNDP Guinea-Bissau follows the clear and comprehensive approach laid down in the UNDP Corporate *Gender Equality Strategy* and UNDP *Strategic Plan* which place gender equality at the heart of sustainable development and position it as catalytic accelerator through the interlinkage of the 17 SDG goals in the gender dimension.

UNDP Guinea-Bissau's first gender strategy fully takes over the outcomes proposed in the *signature 6 solution*. The assessment of UNDP projects in Guinea-Bissau (2010-2019) and the evaluation of the gender structure of the country office revealed that some important improvements towards gender equality took place in recent times, more particularly, after a gender programme analyst was hired with the needed human capacity to push forward gender equality systematically and new senior management engaged in gender promotion. Nevertheless, a certain delay in the gender architecture of the office, in staff structure, in programming and in financing instruments is still obvious.

The efforts to catch up on this need must be stepped up quickly to meet the (minimum) requirements of the UN-SWAP monitoring gender equality score. The ongoing candidature for the *Gender Equality Seal* and the implementation of the *Gender Action Plan* (2020-22) are decisive steps in this direction.

The most challenging task ahead is to design programmes which intend to achieve the Gender Marker 3 and really deserve this score: these should be programmes with a comprehensive gender transformative approach capable to address the root causes of gender inequalities and discriminating social norms. Available financing and funding mechanisms must be carefully evaluated and relocated. To meet the *Gender Equality Seal* standard, 50% of the programme budget of the new CPD must be qualified with GEN3 and GEN2 markers. This needs increased internal efficiency and additional analytical capacities at the UNDP Country Office, including strong cooperation with the new Acceleration LAB. Through joint design a variety of pilot projects backed up with a local knowledge approach could be tested for women's economic empowerment and behavioral change in gender relations.

7. *The study has concluded that the four priority areas of signature solution 6, adapted to the national context, should guide UNDP interventions for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the next CPD and UNSDF cycle, from now to 2025.*

The four priorities would allow the building-up of minimum *conditions for achieving gender equality in all dimensions in Guinea-Bissau*, including minimum employment opportunities for women, adolescent girls and most vulnerable population groups; political participation of women in decision-making bodies; improved access to justice and land; protection of women from gender-based violence and strengthening of women's resilience capacities.

8. *UNDP gender transformative programming and project implementation need to be based on comprehensive and innovative approaches and tools which should be benefited from immediately.*

Given the severe lack of key statistical data in Guinea-Bissau, it can be concluded from the preparation of this gender analysis and the assessment of UNDP projects with gender components that both, the gender analysis and the whole project cycle (including monitoring of SDGs indicators), urgently need to be based on a better data ecosystem. Good and differentiated data are needed to enhance informed decision-making. Existing national statistical capacities at the *National Institute of Statistics*

and in some line ministries must be improved to produce meaningful and credible gender disaggregated statistical data. Gender should be mainstreamed into the regular data collection process. Other data types, including big data, micro-narratives, surveys and qualitative studies, are necessary to measure change in social norms, behavior and gender relations and should become an integral part of comprehensive gender analysis and UNDP programme design.

A range of innovative approaches has been presented in this study with clear evidence for their usefulness and applicability in the context of Guinea-Bissau. Be it new communication strategies based on technological innovations, such as smart phone technology, renewable energy solutions as key tool to sustainable development or the local solution approach etc. - all are good candidates to be integrated into new UNDP projects for the promotion of gender equality and tested for their impact.

9. UNDP should assist the government to mainstream gender into national development planning that needs to go through a thoroughly revision and alignment process. In general, national planning must be made more inclusive and gender responsive through the integration of gender equality commitments, plans that address gender needs and differences appropriately, promote gender equality and introduce gender-inclusive financing.

The analysis of various planning instruments, such as the National Development Plan (PND, 2020-2023), the National Education Plan, Local Development Plans, environmental and disaster risk plans, demonstrates that women and gender questions are not covered and considered consistently in these plans. It should be a top priority to integrate a comprehensive gender equality strategy into the National Development Plan (PND). Furthermore, the role of women and their potential to being key actors of national sustainable development has not been brought to the forefront. Only the energy sector has so far developed a full national action plan for gender mainstreaming into energy access.

10. UNDP programming should benefit from the pool of best practices for the promotion of gender equality and gender justice compiled in this study. These are relevant sources of inspiration and their replication in Guinea-Bissau could be an enriching option.

The study offers a pool of best practices. Particular emphasis was placed on the presentation of best practices in the fight against gender-based violence.

11. It has been recommended in this study that UNDP and the whole UN family intervening in Guinea-Bissau choose the promotion of gender equality and the protection and empowerment of the (most) vulnerable as one of the overarching priorities that embrace the engagement of the UN in Guinea-Bissau and the outcome design of the cooperation framework. The UNDP Country Programme Document should as well have a standalone Gender Equality and LNOB outcome, derived directly from the Cooperation Framework.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) represents the UN development system's collective offer to support countries in addressing key Sustainable Development Goal priorities and gaps and address patterns of exclusion, structural constraints and inequality in all dimensions. As gender equality and women's empowerment are integral to realizing all of the SDGs, they should be mainstreamed into the new Cooperation Framework. Gender equality should be put at the heart of programming, driving the active and meaningful participation of both women and men, and consistently empowering women and girls (Cooperation Framework, Internal Guidelines, p. 11).

It can be concluded that compliance with the guidelines of the UNSDCF is mandatory for all UNDP country offices. Once the promotion of gender equality, women's empowerment and the demand to leave no one behind are positioned at the center of the Cooperation Framework through a standalone

outcome, gender inequalities, multi-sectoral vulnerabilities and the agency of women will be perceived differently and with elevated attention. A new vision will open up about the centrality of gender equality and the LNOB strategy for the 2030 agenda among the government, national partners and among the staff of the involved UN organizations.

Gender mainstreaming into the UNSDCF entails far-reaching steps in the implementation of the cooperation framework, which in turn reinforce the effect of the gender equality outcome at programme level. Each strategic priority area has its own results group, composed of specialists and co-chaired by heads of UN-agencies. The high level results group develops joint work plans and is responsible for adaptive monitoring of the framework's strategic priorities. It can invite national stakeholders and specialists as well. This implementation mechanism reflects and enhances the importance of the strategic priorities and gives gender equality and LNOB the recognition they deserve. This upscaling of gender equality is expressed in its impact in the Cooperation Framework where one third to one half of outcome and output indicators measure changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women in line with SDG targets.

It can be concluded that the gender capacities of UNDP Country Office Guinea-Bissau in programming and monitoring should be elevated to the highest possible quality standards which obviously will need intensive and rapid capacity building and more personnel as currently available. Readjustments should be considered in the ongoing restructuring of UNDP Guinea-Bissau, taking into account as well to suppress the gaps in gender capacities caused by the end of mission of UNIOGBIS which had its independent Gender Unit and the closure of the national UN-Women office.

12. The new UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) has to be designed out of the Cooperation Framework and closely follows the Corporate Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021). It elaborates at least one standalone gender outcome, considering SDGs interlinkage and signature solution 6 in one of the identified priority areas. The project priority areas should identify concrete changes to advance gender equality in at least one area of intervention. A minimum of one gender-specific outcome and indicative outputs and indicators are to be included in the results and resources frameworks (UNDP, 2018, Gender Equality Strategy, p. 19).

Following these recommendations, the CPD produces the same upscaling effect for the promotion of gender equality as the UNSDCF through focusing the attention on gender and women's empowerment in a standalone gender outcome. It has been proposed in this study to stick very close to the *signature solution 6* and its priority areas as outcome aspects / sub-outcomes (1 to 4) and derive the outputs from the key pillars and entry points elaborated for the joint priority areas/UNDP Guinea-Bissau Gender Strategy/ PNIEG (chap. 4.3).

This study has demonstrated how the core principles of UNDP's corporate Gender Equality Strategy can be applied in the CPD and new UNDP projects: for the Human Rights (HRBA) approach see chap. 5.2; for beneficiaries as active agents of change, chap. 2.4, 3.2, 5.3.1; for implementation of the LNOB concept, chap. 2.8; for transforming gender and power relations see chap. 4.3.2; for innovative approaches see chap. 4.4.

From the analysis of gender components in UNDP projects (chap. 4.1.4) it can be concluded that the Gender Marker and the Gender Equality Seal should not only be seen as monitoring tools but as orientation for the design of programmes, particularly in the new CPD. As UNDP Guinea-Bissau so far has only one project marked with Gender Marker 3 (ongoing PBF project), a closer look at that project and its internal evaluation during the CPD design is recommended. The *Gender Equality Seal Action Plan* (prepares CO candidature for the Gender Equality Seal) is another helpful tool to better understand the gender requirements in the new CPD.

Given the very volatile situation in Guinea-Bissau, particularly in the economic and health sector and the worrying economic outcomes projected for the months ahead (chap. 5.3.2), the post-acute Covid-19 pandemic time, much attention should be channeled in the CPD to UNDP's capacity to adapt to the changing context and respond to quickly changing national development needs and priorities with flexibility and innovative approaches, some of which were discussed in chap. 4.4.

The preparation of the CPD programme design includes financial resources and budget exercises. UN-SWAP 2.0 Performance Indicator "Financial resource tracking mechanism" should be considered together with the UNDP "Gender Marker" for quantifying disbursement of funds that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. According to UNDP *Gender Equality Seal* the total amount of expenditures with gender equality as the main objective or significant objective should be at least 50% of the total programme budget. That requirement directly leads to the conclusion that CPD programming right from the start needs to find a careful balance between gender and other components throughout the programmes. In other words, gender financing should become part of the central strategic planning concerning budget allocation.

- 13. Under the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic situation has worsened significantly and women are the hardest hit from the pandemic shock (see chap. 2.12). This has its impact and reflection in the preparation and programme design of the new CPD. Given the magnitude of the economic crisis and high national expectations, UNDP faces immense challenges to stimulate economic empowerment of women in the new CPD.*

Beside quick-win projects (chap. 5.3.1) UNDP's support will be linked to transformative approaches in economic recovery. These include the promotion of enabling environments, the prioritizing of boosting income and productivity of rural women and the integration of young women and girls in economic recovery programmes. Economic empowerment of women means to build up more robust and resilient communities which are eager to respond to the challenges ahead by new forms of cooperation and partnerships: by transforming gender relations, buy-in of men's acceptance and adherence to new gender roles, with the help of locally adapted technologies, local agricultural knowledge and through new job opportunities created in the area of green business.

- 14. It can be concluded that the outstanding areas for the promotion of gender equality on which the engagement of UNDP should focus, guided by the new UNSDCF for Guinea-Bissau and its new CPD, are the protection of women's human rights and empowerment, including taking the lead on action for women's wellbeing wherever possible.*

Apart from special short-term humanitarian aid packages, UNDP should counter the negative economic consequences of the pandemic with an intensification of the measures described for the economic empowerment of women, particularly a rapid implementation of projects for economic development at the local level (see chapter 5.3).

The projected aggravation/ exacerbation of gender based violence and human rights violations during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic will have to be countered with the projects presented, and above all, with UNDP's insistent commitment to the preservation and enforcement of women's human rights.

Expectations in UNDP Guinea-Bissau are high to bring gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality forward very seriously: be it in programming and project design; be it at staff level and in the working environment at UNDP country office. To further improve monitoring indicators, it should be considered to apply additional gender specific indicators for the SDGs as proposed by UN-Women (UN-Women, 2019, UN-SWAP 2.0).

Ultimately, it is the transformation of gender relations which is at stake, to end gender based violence and gender-discrimination, and advance with the economic and political empowerment of women. Achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals – and notably goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment – requires *transformative shifts, integrated approaches and new solutions*.

Based on current trajectories, according to UN-Women, existing efforts will not be sufficient to achieve full gender parity and equality by 2030 (Un-Women, 2019: *Innovation for Gender Equality*). The realization of the 2030 Agenda with 17 sustainable development goals in all of which gender responsive action is key, might be threatened.

This rather sobering assessment by UN-Women on the realization of the SDGs by 2030 points to the three essential components that UN programmes should comprise of in order to make effective progress in the promotion of gender equality.

Our key recommendation for UNDP to build the gender equality results/outcomes in the new strategic programme documents on the signature solution 6 translates exactly these three essential components: transformative shifts, integrated approaches and new solutions.

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ANNEX 1 *SDG 5 targets*

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

ANNEX 2 Consultations

Date	Organization/Institution	Name	Function
07.10.2020 – 17.10.2020	Bafata NGO Platform + Focus Group	ECAS-D, Mulheres Ponta Nova de Bafata, Assoc. , Deficientes, LIGA, Plataforma, AGUIBEF, MIDEI	Bubacar Djalo, Maria Handem, Nhana Seidi, Braima Embalo etc.
07.10.2020	Access to Justice Center, Bissau, Bairro Militar	Dr. Ansumane Sanha	Coordinator
09.10.2020	NGO Network “Casa dos Direitos”, Bissau	Filomena Barreto Teixeira	Coordinator
09.10.2020	Center for Business Formalization, Ministry of Economy and Finance	Bocar Embaló	Coordinator, Statistical Section
10.12.2020	National Research Institute (INEP)	Samba Tenem Camara	Director, senior Economist
12.10.2020	Guinean Association of Women Lawyers	Helena Neves Abrahamson	Coordinator
13.10.2020	RENLUV, National Network Against Gender Based Violence	Aissata Camara Injai	President
15.10.2020	AMAE Bissau, Association of Women with Economic Activities	Duarte Mansoa	Executive Secretary
16.10.2020	Law Professor, Senior Researcher,	Dr. Fodé Adulai Mané	Professor, National Research Institute
16.10.2020	Women and Child Institute	Directorate	Members
17.10.2020	Bar Association, Bissau	Januário Pedro	Vice-President
17.10-20.10.2020	Focus-Group Bairro Belem, Bissau	Ana, Santa, Cadija, Evelina	Members of local abota-groups
19.10.- 23.10.2020	Focus-Group Bairro Pefine/Cupilon	Aminata, Domingas, Joana, Jenabu, Christina	Market women, local abota-groups
19.10.2020	Regulo /Local Traditional Authority	Saico Embalo	Central traditional authority of Gabu
20.10.2020	CNAPN Bissau, National Committee for the Abandonment of Harmful Practices	Fatumata Balde Djau, Bubacar Balde	President, Project Coordinator
21.10.2020	Prosecutor`s Office	Carla Mendes	Judicial Magistrate, civil court
19.10-21.10.2020	Platform Bioksan/ Ana Pereira Foundation	Maimuna Gomes Sila	Presidente
10. + 11.11.2020	PONGAB Gabu, NGO Platform Gabu,members and women leaders, Focus Group	PONGAB, Associação Mulheres Jovens	Saico Umara Embalo, Jenabo Sano, Binta Bari, Djamalai Camará, Djenabu Indjai, Awa Sye
12.11.2020	Imam in Gabu town	Aladje Malema Djum	Imam and CS Activist

