



**DPPA**  
Preventing Conflict. Sustaining Peace

# 2022 Evaluative Exercises

A Summary of Lessons Learned  
Studies and Evaluations

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# Acronyms

<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DOS</b>	Department of Operational Support
<b>DPPA</b>	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
<b>DPO</b>	Department of Peace Operations
<b>FGS</b>	Federal Government of Somalia
<b>MYA</b>	Multi-Year Appeal
<b>PBF</b>	Peacebuilding Fund
<b>PBSO</b>	Peacebuilding Support Office
<b>PDA</b>	Peace and development adviser
<b>PKO</b>	Peacekeeping operation
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator's office
<b>SPM</b>	Special political mission
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNSOM</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
<b>WPS</b>	Women, peace and security

# Introduction

In 2022, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) continued to conduct evaluative exercises to strengthen the Department’s organizational learning and accountability. In an ever-dynamic peace and security environment, these studies support the Department’s efforts to continuously enhance its approaches to conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding, in coordination with partners. They help the Department to identify gaps, track good practices, and develop paths forward. It is also hoped that they create entry points for dialogue and contribute to the broader literature on conflict prevention. Extra-budgetary funding through DPPA’s Multi-Year Appeal remains critical to these efforts – funding the majority of these exercises.

This report contains a summary of key findings and recommendations from a range of evaluative exercises conducted by DPPA over the past year.<sup>1</sup> Links to non-confidential full reports are also provided. These reports span both cross-cutting issues as well as lessons learned from specific country-contexts. Of note, in 2022, DPPA conducted its first-ever artificial-intelligence assisted self-evaluation (on gender-sensitive analysis, p. 11). Moving forward, the Department will continue to explore ways to incorporate innovative practices in all aspects of its work.

The Department is committed to incorporating insights from these self-evaluative exercises, as well as from external oversight bodies, into its operations and strategies as part of its commitment to continuous learning. Efforts to implement recommendations from these exercises are already underway.

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<sup>1</sup> Further Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)-related evaluations, supported by DPPA’s Peacebuilding Support Office, can be found on the PBF website.

# Lessons Learned Study: UN Engagement on the Quota for Women in the Indirect Federal Parliamentary Elections in Somalia (2020-2022)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This study does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, or of the United Nations. For inquiries, please contact the DPPA/PMD Guidance and Learning Unit at [dppa-policy@un.org](mailto:dppa-policy@un.org).

# Background

From July 2021 to May 2022, Somalia conducted an indirect electoral process for selection of the 11th Federal Parliament, and thereafter, elected a new President by a joint session of the upper and lower houses. The indirect electoral process was based on two key political agreements (September 2020 and May 2021), in which a 30 per cent quota for women's representation was stipulated. Key stakeholders, especially the women's movement, expected that the quota agreement, though limited in scope, would facilitate women's participation in the process as candidates and as electoral officials.

However, the eventual outcome saw 20 per cent (54) women's representation in the House of the People (HoP) and 26 per cent (14) women in the Upper House for a combined total of 21 per cent representation. This not only fell short of expectations to reach the minimum 30 per cent quota but also placed Somalia behind the global average and regional averages of approximately 26 per cent.



Female Members of Parliament cast their vote during the presidential election held in Mogadishu, Somalia, on 15 May 2022. UNSOM / Fardosa Hussein

The outcome of the electoral process for women against the backdrop of concerted efforts by the United Nations and other actors to secure the quota, prompted this lessons learned study, conducted by an independent consultant. The objective of the study was to review the efforts and achievements of the United Nations in Somalia, in partnership with other actors (donors, gender ministries, and civil society), to support Somalia in achieving the 30 per cent quota for women, draw lessons from these and offer forward-looking recommendations for future engagement. The methodology included a thorough review of existing documents such as government and United Nations plans and strategies on women's political participation in Somalia and efforts towards attaining the 30 per cent quota. Extant literature on the subject matter from other contexts are woven into the narrative. Preliminary processes were complemented by field visit to Somalia to interview field stakeholders, including among the United Nations, key Somali counterparts, civil society actors, women MPs and unsuccessful women candidates, and members of the Committee of Goodwill Ambassadors (GWAs). Women leaders and stakeholders and men were given equal consideration during the consultations. All interviews were conducted under the Chatham House rule.

## Main findings and conclusions

This study identified a mix of several factors as key contributors to the decline from 2016 and below the 30 per cent target. They include gaps in the legal and policy environment for gender equality and women's empowerment and the lack of a binding legal framework and implementation mechanisms for a women's quota, enduring resistance to women's participation in leadership, the nature of the electoral system, and the tense political situation which demanded greater attention towards ensuring a peaceful political process that would not compromise the relative stability in the polity.

While also present in the 2016 indirect elections, the following factors were more pronounced in the 2020-22 electoral process:

- In 2016, several institutions, many of which composed of women members, played a key role in monitoring implementation of the gender quota from the inception of the electoral process, often overturning decisions that did not comply with the quota. Notably, the Federal Electoral Implementation Committee (FEIT) charged with ensuring compliance to the 30 per cent quota in candidate nomination lists – amongst other things – had 32 per cent women members. Backed

by advocacy from civil society and women leaders, as well as technical support from the UN, they closely monitored candidate and delegate lists for gender parity, rejecting those that did not meet the criteria. By contrast, in 2020-22, the belatedly established and politically contested FEIT and the state-level bodies had an average 22 per cent women representation and did not reject any of the lists on account of their failure to meet the quota.

- The domestic political and security situation deteriorated considerably in 2022, leading to serious concerns from the international community that civil war could resume. Also in that context, the prioritization of the quota by international actors diminished somewhat.
- In 2022, donors' willingness to leverage funding to ensure implementation of the quota seemed to have decreased as compared to 2016. Funding for women's participation in the 2022 elections was ad hoc (in the absence of a concrete programme framework) and reached less than 4 per cent



UN technical election experts and officials of Somalia's National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) in a group photograph at the opening of a workshop to discuss lessons learned in the area of electoral dispute resolution mechanism, in Mogadishu, Somalia on 18 June 2022. UNSOM / Fardosa Hussein



of the overall election support budget. In 2016, an international partner support group named the C6+ had been pivotal in advocating for the quota. In 2022, initial pressure by donors to condition funding on progress towards realizing that commitment waned in the face of political tension, with conditionality gradually applied to merely “partial” compliance with that goal.


The UN’s Gender and Elections Task Team was relevant and strategic to supporting advocacy for women’s participation and efforts to secure the 30 per cent quota in the electoral process. High-level advocacy by United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) senior leadership and UN Headquarters was considered pivotal in sustaining attention to the women’s quota on the agenda of the National Consultative Council, in securing the 26 per cent representation of women in the Upper House of parliament and a 50 per cent reduction in registration fees for women, which opened the door to less affluent candidates.

## Recommendations

Recommendations for support towards more positive outcomes for women in future elections fall into three categories: recommendations for advocacy and support towards universal suffrage elections; recommendations for UNSOM’s leadership in support of women’s participation in future elections overall, and recommendations for United Nations joint programming on women’s political participation in Somalia. They are summarized below:

- The United Nations to continue deploying its “good offices” as well as high-level advocacy to encourage and support Somalia to complete the constitutional review process and adopt a gender-responsive constitution, revise and complete the Electoral Law to include a quota for women, and begin investments in other key legal, policy and administrative requirements towards universal suffrage in 2026.
- UNSOM to continue providing leadership to UNCT in Somalia to:
  - Sustain advocacy and provide technical support to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS) towards constitutional review, electoral law review and other legal, policy and administrative reforms to complete the preparations towards universal suffrage in 2026.
  - Starting immediately, sustain support to electoral management bodies towards 2026, including gender-responsive civic education and voter sensitization.

- Advocate for stronger donor pressure, making support for elections conditional on accountability for women's participation and proportional representation.
- Advocate to the FGS to incorporate lobby bodies like GwAs within existing institutions such as the Human Rights Commission or Ministry of Women Affairs. This will allow for high-profile personalities to operate within an organized permanent structure and work throughout the electoral cycle to engage with civil society, clans and religious leaders to sustain long-term advocacy on social norms transformation towards gender equality overall and special attention to women's political participation.
- UNSOM to:
  - Deploy evidence-based analysis to anchor the mission's existing strategy (or develop a new one) to promote the political participation and representation of women, in line with the mission's mandate and capacities, and based on the electoral cycle approach.
  - Foster stronger coordination between the United Nations and donors, the government and civil society organizations (CSOs) on a women's leadership and empowerment strategy.
  - Sustain long-term communication and outreach on gender equality and social norms transformation, including components on women's leadership and political participation.
  - Develop more long-term strategies and programmes for gender equality advocacy, social norms transformation and support to women's empowerment in diverse areas, including political participation. Specifically:
    - Adoption of specific legislation on affirmative action to secure a quota for women's political participation at all levels and across all institutions in Somalia.
    - Long-term leadership and empowerment programmes for women, especially young women and identify and provide support to potential women candidates.
    - Support to elected women to play their role effectively, engage with their local communities and add value to social issues such as good governance, education, and health, to better project them as role models for leadership and secure public support for their presence in parliament.
    - Support to women's political participation at the local/district levels, in all stabilization and federalization processes, as well as all peacebuilding efforts.
- United Nations entities, alone and in coordination, to strengthen their internal capacities for gender equality and women's empowerment programming as well as gender mainstreaming.



# Self-Evaluation: A Systematic Review of DPPA Analyses With a Gender Lens

# Background

Advancing the women, peace and security agenda is a core priority for DPPA. In this regard, staff are expected to incorporate a gender perspective and ensure women's participation, protection and rights are centrally reflected in all their work. This includes developing gender-sensitive analysis as the foundation for DPPA's engagement.

In 2021, DPPA commissioned a two-member external evaluation team to conduct a systematic review of the degree to which "gender-sensitive analysis" is applied across its Headquarters analytical products and ascertain its quality. To conduct the exercise, the team applied a semi-supervised machine learning/natural language processing approach to systematically analyze over 3,600 analytical products produced by DPPA between 2019 and 2021 to identify the presence or absence of gender-sensitive analysis by division, analytical product, topic and length. This was the first time DPPA utilized artificial intelligence in conducting a self-evaluation.

There were four main areas of work. The first was to clarify the definition of "gender-sensitive analysis" and the core elements that constitute sufficiency of adequate gender-sensitive analysis. The second was to conduct a systematic review of Departmental analyses against a set of criteria. The third was to develop a systematic method to analyze the performance of Departmental divisions and determine factors influencing the performance in integrating gender in analysis. The fourth was to provide recommendations for leadership and staff to strengthen gender-sensitive analysis.

The assessment had three key questions:

1. To what extent have divisions integrated gender into their analyses?
2. What barriers existed in producing gender-sensitive analysis amongst divisions?
3. How can DPPA make its analysis more gender-sensitive?

A DPPA Advisory group was convened to support the initial design of this review. Consultations were held with the Gender, Peace and Security unit in DPPA's Policy and Mediation Division, as well as with Departmental Planning Group focal points throughout the exercise.

# Main findings and conclusions

- From 2019 to 2021, close to half (or 46.3 per cent) of DPPA’s analytical products reflected some form of gender-sensitive analysis. At the same time, over half (or 53.7 per cent) of their analytical products also did not contain any gender-sensitive analysis.
- The percentage of analytical products that contain some form of gender-sensitive analysis across all divisions increased from 2020 and remained constant in 2021: 2019 (36.1 per cent), 2020 (51.4 per cent), and 2021 (51.4 per cent).
- “Gender-blind” analytical documents and documents with a minimum threshold of gender-sensitive analysis represented were the two most common types according to the gender-sensitive analysis scoring rubric developed in Annex I.
- Shorter analytical products with word limits did a relatively poorer job of integrating gender, especially those providing information and updates to the Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General.
- Analytical products for senior level officials apart from the Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General, and directed to groups outside of DPPA that have demonstrated some form of gender-sensitive analysis include Secretary-General reports, analytical products for the Executive Committee and Deputies Committee, and Regional Monthly Reviews notes, as well as key messages with background notes for the Deputy Secretary-General, regional Assistant Secretaries-General, and for the Assistant Secretary-General of Peacebuilding Affairs and the Deputy Head of PBSO.

# Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Harmonize the way divisions report on the indicator “% of analyses (background notes, notes to the USG/SG, background papers to EC/DC, RMRs, SG reports) that are gender sensitive” for Objective 1 in the DPPA Results Framework:
- **Recommendation 2:** Develop guidance on integrating gender-sensitive analysis for analytical products that commonly do not feature it.
- **Recommendation 3:** Run a machine-learning exercise every five years to analyze progress over time.
- **Recommendation 4:** Directors of divisions should be accountable for the quality in the integration of gender-sensitive analysis in their analytical products through their performance appraisal.


## DPPA Results Framework

### End-Year Data (as of 31 December 2022)

Note: Indicators in blue also appear in the Peace and Security Reform Benefits Tracker

**Theory of Change:** If DPPA deploys the full range of its resources based on cross-cutting analysis, in collaboration with others within the UN system, and in partnerships with regional, national, and local stakeholders, drawing on an internal culture shaped by a commitment to learning and innovation, it will contribute to the prevention and resolution of violent conflict and to sustainable peace.

**Goal 1:** Contribute to preventing and resolving violent conflict and building resilience




**Strategic Objective 1:**  
Action-oriented analysis

Risks and assumptions: conflict trends will continue along current trajectories identified in key documents (e.g. Pathways for Peace), including the important role of transnational criminal networks, role of violent extremism, impact of climate change, and the role of socio-economic drivers of conflict; sufficient resources will be made available for DPPA to undertake early warning analysis on priority areas, though resources will not grow beyond current levels; key parts of the UN system (e.g. EOSG) will continue to treat DPPA as a lead entity for identifying early warning risks; geopolitical and national positions are likely to remain a challenge to some multilateral efforts at conflict prevention. DPPA has the capacity to conduct multidimensional analysis internally, but is intending to increase its collaboration with other departments and partners. Despite the pandemic, DPPA will continue to adapt and deliver against its Strategic Plan.

Expected Accomplishment	Indicators of Achievement	Source(s) of data	Responsible Division for reporting	Baseline (end 2019)	Target 2022	End-year results (as of December 31, 2022)
1.1 Strengthened multidimensional, gender-sensitive analysis	% of analyses (background notes, notes to the USG/SG, background papers to EC/DC, RMRs, SG reports) that are gender sensitive	All Divisions incl. PBSO	All divisions PBSO	51%	70%	61%
	# of analyses (background notes, notes to the USG/SG, background papers to EC/DC, RMRs, SG reports) that consider regional dimensions	All Divisions incl. PBSO	All divisions PBSO	2108	2625	3894
	% of analyses (background notes, notes to the USG/SG, background papers to EC/DC, RMRs, SG reports) incorporating inputs from other UN departments including OCHA, the human rights and development pillars, and/or the World Bank	All Divisions incl. PBSO	All divisions PBSO	57%	63%	64%
	# CCAs informed by departmental analysis	Regional divisions, PMD	Regional divisions, PMD	21	23	35
1.2 DPPA proposes courses of action	# of analyses (background notes, notes to the USG/SG, background papers to EC/DC, RMRs, SG reports) that contain recommendations for action	All Divisions incl. PBSO	All divisions PBSO	1239	1411	1865

A screen shot of DPPA Result Framework End-Year Data (as of 31 December 2022). The percentage of analytical products that contain some form of gender-sensitive analysis across all divisions has increased. The document can be found here: [https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/dppa\\_results\\_framework\\_2022\\_year\\_end\\_results.pdf](https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/dppa_results_framework_2022_year_end_results.pdf)



# Self-Evaluation: New York-based DPPA Training

# Background

Faced with new contextual demands and increasing expectations going forward, DPPA identified the need for an assessment of its training offer, its key training priorities, and how best to bridge the gap between them.

Training is central to the Secretary-General's 2021-2025 UN Secretariat Learning Strategy, which provides a framework for how learning at the UN should prepare staff for the future of work. All United Nations staff have access to training opportunities across and outside the Organization. In addition, DPPA staff have access to foundational and specialized courses coordinated by the Guidance and Learning Unit (GLU) in the Policy and Mediation Division (PMD), some of which are led by other DPPA divisions and sections, and some of which are supported by external partners. Other DPPA-DPO trainings are managed by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and the Office of the Director for Coordination and Shared Services (ODCSS) within the DPPA-DPO Shared Structure.

The assessment took stock of the working practices, internal structures and content of the Department's training portfolio in the context of the Secretary-General's Peace and Security reform, which gave DPPA and DPO joint oversight over eight regional divisions and established ODCSS to provide additional policy and administrative support. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which shifted many training offerings to a fully online format, it assessed how different training modalities fit with staff needs and expectations.

Based on a document review, consultations with Department leadership, division managers and staff, and a survey sent to all DPPA-DPO staff in New York, the evaluation provided the foundations for a vision of the Department's strategic training needs through 2026. This vision was rooted in (i) the 2023-26 Strategic Plan, particularly those objectives linked to Goal 3; (ii) the Secretary-General's reform; and (iii) related cross-cutting strategic initiatives: the Quintet of Change, the Future of Work, and the forthcoming New Agenda for Peace.



# Main findings and conclusions

The assessment found that, overall, while staff highly valued the Department's training opportunities, the Department's training portfolio did not fully meet staff needs and expectations on two fronts. First, and most importantly, there were key skills-based and thematic gaps that needed to be filled to meet the demands and expectations faced by the Department. The evaluation divided these according to a set of five core areas, which are presented below. Of lesser importance, but still significant, the Department's training offer was not meeting staff expectation for career exploration and advancement. The evaluation's key findings are summarized below:

## **Staff demand is outpacing supply, although expectations for career growth are not being met.**

The Department must recognize the link between training, staff morale and career exploration, while at the same time manage expectations as to the potential and ultimate purpose of the training portfolio, including clarity that opportunities for career growth are largely dependent on the rules and regulations of the Organization and not within the ambit of the Department or its training portfolio.

The main selection criteria for trainings should not depend on contract type, post level or prior training, but on **whether the skills imparted will be directly employed**. At the same time, DPPA-DPO staff should benefit from alternative learning opportunities, such as on-the-job training or short-term mobility schemes, to further their career growth as an alternative to training courses.

Department staff are generally aware of individual trainings on offer but lack an overall sense of how individual DPPA courses fit together and how staff members should best take advantage of trainings outside the Department. A **leading body and focal point** are needed to provide strategic leadership and be a champion for training, a role for which the Guidance and Learning Unit (GLU) in the Policy and Mediation Division is well suited. At the same time, the ratio of staff time spent by GLU on logistical support to training may at times limit the Unit's ability to play a strategic role in assessing needs vis-à-vis capacities, including looking ahead to future workforce needs, and developing and imparting new trainings in response to identified needs.

Staff are sceptical of the utility of fully online courses and highly value in-person training and on-the-job learning, indicating a need for flexibility and creativity around training modalities.

The Department's core training needs revolve around **five core skills**: (1) political/conflict analysis, (2) mediation (3), communications and drafting, (4) management, and (5) data analytics and innovation. Coverage for the latter three categories could be strengthened. All could be further improved. Additional trainings and staff capacity are needed, but the development, dissemination and promotion of the Department's training portfolio are all constrained by limited resources under the Multi-Year Appeal (MYA), limited staff resources, and the requirements of training administration.

## Recommendations

### Training Portfolio

- **Recommendation 1:** To fill the gap between the current training portfolio and its core training needs, the Department should strengthen its training offer in analysis, communications, management, data and innovation and, to a lesser extent, mediation.

### Structure & Strategy

- **Recommendation 2:** The Department should address the perception that the training offer is geared more toward early-stage staff, establishing new opportunities for more mid-level staff, especially more mid-career Professional staff.<sup>3</sup> This could be achieved with more awareness-building targeted at these staff, along with new offerings in some of the more technical skill areas identified in this evaluation, such as data analysis or drafting.
- **Recommendation 3:** The Department should recognize the desire among staff to build their careers and explore career options but manage expectations around the ability of training courses to fulfil them. Instead, the Department should identify on-the-job and short-term mobility opportunities for staff to learn and develop skills while supporting other Offices, particularly where exchanges between HQ and the field are possible.
- **Recommendation 4:** The Department should regularly update its training strategy in alignment with its Strategic Plan to build a concise vision and shared culture around training, with GLU well placed to lead on this effort.
- **Recommendation 5:** GLU and ODCSS should work closely together and coordinate with DPO to ensure that DPPA staff are accessing ODCSS trainings where relevant, particularly those addressing the Department's management needs, and that there is good information-sharing and a division of labour between DPPA and DPO on training.

<sup>3</sup> In the staff survey, this was defined as staff with between two and nine years of experience in the Department.

## Delivery

- **Recommendation 6:** To fully unlock the efficiency and effectiveness of online training, the Department should ensure that staff feel enabled to fully focus on online training content without the distraction of their day-to-day work responsibilities, including through policies, working practices and awareness-raising where necessary.
- **Recommendation 7:** The Department should be agile and flexible in its approach to training modalities, including through hybrid, in-person and online options. Other, less time-intensive modalities like mini-courses, learning exchanges, in-house mentoring and brown bag discussions should be incorporated into the Department's training repertoire, as should other creative approaches to learning like on-the-job and short-term mobility opportunities.

## Resources

- **Recommendation 8:** The Department should proactively seek out external partners to develop demand-driven partnerships that offer financial and logistical support, with a view to diversifying its range of training partners.
- **Recommendation 9:** The Department should explore the feasibility of investing additional MYA resources in training opportunities and additional staffing resources to ease the logistical and administrative burden of organizing and supporting trainings.



# Mid-Term Review of the Peacebuilding Fund's Strategy (2020-2024)

# Background

In 2022, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) commissioned an independent Mid-Term Review of the Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) Strategy 2020-2024. This PBF Strategy is the most ambitious yet, designed to ensure the Fund is a core instrument at the heart of the UN's peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts. This Mid-Term Review of the Strategy took stock of results achieved from 2020 to mid-2022 and allows the Fund to make necessary adjustments.

The Review had the following objectives:

- Assess the relevance, appropriateness and early indications of effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategy, homing in on the Strategy's Priority Windows, experimenting with new country-based Strategic Results Frameworks (SRFs), and peacebuilding partnerships.
- Assess to what extent the PBF is aligned with other country frameworks, including the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and how well it has supported governments to advance achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Assess the PBF's efficiency regarding its institutional arrangements, including its direct funding to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), as well as its management and operational systems and value for money.
- Document good practices, innovations and lessons.
- Identify potential areas of needed course correction in the implementation of the Strategy and provide actionable recommendations for future programming.

The Review applied a mixed method approach. Data collection tools included:

- **Document review** focused on documents relevant for assessing the current state of the implementation of the PBF Strategy, including relevant strategy and policy documents, country-specific documents (United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, Strategic Results Frameworks, eligibility requests, annual reports by Joint Steering Committees, conflict analyses/Common Country Analyses etc.), project documentation and additional academic and other thematic literature.

- **Key informant interviews** with 81 stakeholders, including representatives of PBSO's leadership and staff, Resident Coordinator's Offices (RCOs), Peace and Development Advisers (PDAs), members of PBF's Advisory Group, PBF Secretariat Coordinators, representatives of other UN Secretariat entities, the PBF Programme Support Team, fund recipients (UN and non-UN), government and civil society partners and donors.
- **Online Survey**, which was distributed via email to 968 country-level contacts including government partners, UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and civil society. PBF Programme Officers and in-country Secretariats provided the contacts. The survey was rolled out between 19 August and 10 September 2022. Participation was voluntary and respondents were asked for written consent. There were 188 respondents (37 per cent women) from 39 countries.
- **Stakeholders Workshop** with a representative group of key PBF partners in New York on 25-26 October 2022. The participants were representatives of RCOs, PBSO and other DPPA staff, recipient UN agencies, government, international and national civil society organizations, and donors.

## Main findings and conclusions

The Review found a strong consensus that the priorities identified by the PBF in its Strategy remain relevant in the current context. They also remain appropriate insofar as the major developments since the development of the Strategy (the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, the (more) urgent action on the climate crisis, increased polarization and the shrinking of civic space) provide challenges that can appropriately be addressed under the current Strategy on the basis of context-specific analysis of peacebuilding needs, even without being elevated to the rank of an explicit funding priority.

Strategic Results Frameworks (SRFs) constitute the most important innovation under the current strategy to increase portfolio coherence at the country-level. Key stakeholders have supported this introduction based on the widespread realization that a projectized approach to peacebuilding will only yield limited results and SRFs are one – if not the only way – of strengthening a programmatic approach.

**Priority Window 1:** Supporting Cross-Border and Regional Approaches, the PBF continues to build on its niche and positions itself as a United Nations convenor and driving force. Between 2020 and mid-2022, the Fund approved approximately \$60 million spread across 17 cross-border and regional projects covering 33 countries, which despite a significant increase still falls short of the 20 per cent funding target. Recognizing the significant efforts and the flexible, sometimes bold approaches taken by the Fund to support cross-border and regional programming, the Review highlights the importance of dedicating more attention and resources to regional strategic reflections and the operationalization of genuinely transnational projects. Transaction costs in the development and coordination of this type of projects are reasonably higher due to their complexity, however, additional avenues for exploring more value for money could be explored along the lines suggested by the Review.

**Priority Window 2:** Facilitating Transitions is the biggest priority in terms of volume and in 2021, the PBF exceeded its 35 per cent funding target, reaching 39 per cent through support to 9 transition contexts. A more robust evidence-base regarding PBF support to these contexts is required, however, preliminary findings by this Review suggest that PBF has demonstrated good results in its initial support provided to transition contexts, while strategic links to a transition rationale of subsequent investments seem to decrease over time. In addition, PBF should further refine the definition of transition contexts and ensure that it is widely understood by all stakeholders and its niche and types of support to transition contexts are further refined.

**Priority Window 3:** Gender and Youth Empowerment continues to be overwhelmingly supported by all stakeholders due to its focus on fostering inclusion. Over the period under review, PBF met and exceeded its ambitious goal of 30 per cent related to investments in gender-responsive peacebuilding by allocating 40 per cent (2020) and 47 per cent (2021) of its resources to gender equality and women's empowerment. PBF continues to show a commitment to learning more about how it contributes to this Priority Window as evidenced by the Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding Thematic Review (2021) and the Local Peacebuilding Thematic Review (2022), with a strong focus on youth. The Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI) 2.0, rolled out in 2022 in four pilot countries, has been a major innovation in PBF programming. The Review suggests continued learning from and scale-up of this initiative as a vector for increasing national ownership and strategic engagement at country-level, with the potential of reducing some of the transaction costs associated with a global call with comparatively low acceptance rates due to demand drastically surpassing available funds.

# Recommendations

While this Review did not identify the need for major course corrections for the second half of the PBF Strategy 2020-2024, it developed several recommendations to further increase the efficiency and effectiveness of PBF engagement in the realization of objectives set out in the Strategic Plan:

## a. Strategic country support:

- Ensure appropriate timing and accompaniment of SRF development and implementation.
- Ensure the formulation of ambitious yet realistic strategic outcomes.
- Focus on capturing change at the portfolio level.
- Develop clear criteria where the development of an SRF provides a clear added value.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and reporting.

## b. Regional and cross-border programming:

- Optimize transaction costs.
- Deepen the involvement of national/local governments and national civil society actors at the design and implementation stages.
- Update knowledge base of cross-border/regional projects.
- Provide more systematic upfront support (financial and technical) for the development of cross-border projects.

## c. Facilitating transitions:

- Clarify the definition of transition settings.
- Articulate the niche of PBF transition support.
- Strengthen the strategic approach to transition support and leverage PBF-funding for greater impact.
- Adapt PBF support to transition settings based on a more robust evidence-base.

## d. Gender and youth empowerment:

- Rollout GPI 2.0 and consider launching a Youth Promotion Initiative (YPI) 2.0.
- Increase the contribution and integration of GYPI projects in PBF's SRFs or other existing country priority plans.
- Move beyond the focus on strengthening positive vectors.
- Experiment with bolder approaches to directly or indirectly engage typically overlooked or seen as hard-to-reach groups.



#### **e. CSOs support:**

- Further explore ways of increasing CSOs' engagement.
- Be more intentional about building institutional and operational capacities when collaborating with national/ local CSOs as implementing partners.

#### **f. Catalytic effects:**

- Better articulate the catalytic nature of PBF's engagement.
- Encourage the set-up of more partnerships.

#### **g. National ownership:**

- Undertake a process of JSC revitalization.
- Seek alternative ways of ensuring national ownership and leadership in exceptional situations.

#### **h. Cohesive UN strategies:**

- Leverage the integration of PBSO into the DPPA for more coherence and greater peacebuilding impact.

#### **i. DM&E and learning:**

- Clarify the scope and intended use of M&E generated information.
- Strengthen support to Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.
- The PBF Management Response to the Mid-Term Review can be accessed [here](#).



# Thematic Review on Local Peacebuilding

# Background

The 2022 Thematic Review on Local Peacebuilding, commissioned by DPPA's Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) in partnership with PeaceNexus Foundation and UN Volunteers (UNV) programme, provides a comparative analysis of local-level peacebuilding initiatives funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) from 2015 to 2021, and situates the Fund's work against global research and practice of local peacebuilding. Informed by four case studies led by young researchers recruited through the National UN Volunteers modality in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, and the Western Balkans, the Review offers insights into how local peacebuilding is conceptualized and operationalized in a range of contexts and regions, with emphasis on the involvement of young people and volunteers in local peacebuilding initiatives. The Review outlines practical recommendations for the PBF and its fund applicants and recipients, as well as the community of peacebuilding practitioners at large to help guide the design of future local peacebuilding programming.



Community members meet to provide feedback on project impact in Umm al Khairat, Yassin locality, East Darfur.  
DPPA PBSO

# Main findings and conclusions

The definition of “local peacebuilding” may seem intuitive, but in practice there is a lack of clarity about what distinguishes the local from other types of action. Although a clearer distinction between the local and national levels within United Nations policy documents has begun to emerge in recent years, the terms “local” and “national” are still occasionally used interchangeably. Consequently, the voices, goals and concerns of actors within conflict-affected communities may become muted while national leaders speak on their behalf. In contexts where tension between national authorities and local communities is the driving force behind conflict, conflating “national” with “local” peacebuilding in this way threatens to contribute to underlying exclusion and grievance.

Within PBSO, local peacebuilding is commonly described as efforts at the sub-national level or as actions that engage local civil society. This should be distinguished, however, from the narrower definition of “locally-led” peacebuilding which entails that peacebuilding interventions are both designed and implemented by local actors – a definition that applies to a smaller proportion of PBF-funded projects. Consultations with local actors as part of the Thematic Review also showed that local actors in areas not affected by recent fighting frequently reject the term “peacebuilding” altogether and instead focus on ways in which legacies of past conflict may still be at play. Given these sensitivities, initiatives that explicitly label themselves as “peacebuilding efforts” and employ jargon or associated diffuse concepts such as “social cohesion” frequently face resistance or incomprehension by those local communities.

The Review identifies two predominant approaches used in PBF-funded peacebuilding projects at the local level: (1) supporting local peace structures, and (2) improving inter-community and state-society relationships. While local peace structures supported by PBF-funded projects have been mostly effective at resolving local conflict, these mechanisms often have limitations on the type and number of conflicts they can resolve. Nonetheless, through training and key action-oriented activities, and in the context of a structured mechanism, members often build their confidence and skills to resolve localized conflicts. The Review also highlights that PBF-funded local peacebuilding projects that aim to improve inter-community relationships primarily focus on creating individual-level change, therefore, the impact of such interventions with regards to scale and contributions towards long-term conflict resolution remains unclear. However, such initiatives often bring together diverse

groups of individuals for the first time which, in turn, helps elevate the role of particular segments of society, such as women or youth. Local volunteerism also helps enhance inter-community trust, build social capital, promote inclusion, and enhance overall effectiveness of local-level relationship building interventions by international or national actors.

The Review further notes that state-society relationship building is often difficult, particularly in circumstances of conflict where the state has eroded the social contract or has been the perpetrator of harm. The Review finds small grant facilities particularly helpful to build trust between citizens and government representatives as they work on co-creating concrete and tangible initiatives. Nonetheless, the Review warns about sustainability concerns, pointing out the extreme fragility of the trust that is built during the relatively short duration of projects which do not always provide enough time for this new trust to take root.

The Review also notes that many local peacebuilding projects focus on measuring change narrowly at the activity level (such as the number of people trained), or at the output level (for example, whether training participants learned new information measured through pre- and post-training tests) and miss the more meaningful peacebuilding change that those actions were meant to produce. It is important, however, to be able to identify the strategic contribution of a given project to a larger peacebuilding landscape at the outset of project development. The Review also highlights concerns about the quality of indicators used to measure local peacebuilding which often miss the mark in measuring peacebuilding change that is meaningful to community stakeholders. The Review therefore encourages more support to community-led processes of measuring peacebuilding change at the local level, including through encouraging the bottom-up development of “everyday peace indicators”, conducting community-led perception surveys, as well as amplifying the voices of beneficiary communities by meaningfully engaging them in peacebuilding community-based monitoring and evaluation processes.

# Recommendations

The Thematic Review uncovered trends and factors that may affect the effectiveness of local peacebuilding interventions. These trends highlight the need to continue improving project design and implementation while working towards ensuring the sustainability of outcomes, all of which should be underpinned by more meaningful partnership with local communities themselves. As a result, the Review proposes the following recommendations for the PBF, fund applicants and recipients:

## **a. Investing in local peacebuilding organizations and networks:**

- Commit to longer-term financial partnerships as sustainability and durability of local CSOs appears to be a building block of effective and efficient local peacebuilding.
- Encourage partnerships between local governments and local civil society, including volunteer-involving organizations, as volunteers appear to be key to sustainability of project results and can be a driving force behind early warning networks, local peace committees, or advocacy efforts beyond the project's scope and duration.

## **b. Partner selection and project design:**

- Increase transparency and diversity in partner selection, for example, through open calls, ensuring wider outreach and clearer communication through multiple channels about the call for local partners.
- Strengthen country-wide stakeholder mapping with a focus on local conflict hotspots to ensure that selection of partners goes beyond the well-connected, capital city-based national or local elite organizations, and extends to those who represent the spectrum of actors and social groups who are relevant to local conflict dynamics and populations.
- Explore inception phase support for more informed and inclusive project design, closely involving local stakeholders in project conceptualization and design, including in context or conflict analyses, needs assessments and prioritization.
- Connect with, mobilize, and recognize volunteers to help build sustainability, promote local ownership and leverage the networks and knowledge of local actors.
- Use terminology that reflects local views and language. Aim to avoid jargon when defining or describing the local peacebuilding changes to which initiatives aspire to contribute.

### **c. Monitoring, evaluation and learning:**

- Theories of Change should make explicit the structural, cultural, or institutional change to which local efforts aim to contribute. Changes at the level of individual beneficiaries need to be logically linked to changes at higher levels.
- Expand the use of participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation, including “everyday peace indicators”, perception surveys and community-based monitoring and evaluation tools and processes to better measure local-level results and provide feedback for adaptation.
- Promote project implementation that is more flexible and adaptive to local conditions and goals in order to drive more context-adaptive, community-responsive implementation.

### **d. Effective programmatic approaches to local peacebuilding:**

- Support financial independence and institutional strengthening of local peacebuilding partners for sustainability of project results by integrating income generation activities into projects, committing to longer-term and flexible funding mechanisms, or facilitating partnerships between local governments and local civil society.
- Keep in mind activity sequencing, reach, scale, and how best to create systemic change, avoiding one-off engagements that do not lead to concrete changes.
- Deliberately build local-national linkages into peacebuilding projects and sufficiently resource both levels of interventions, exploring ways in which local-level efforts can be catalysts for more structural or institutional change.



# Strategic Review of Peacebuilding Fund Portfolio in Guinea (2017-2022)



# Background

In 2022, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) commissioned an independent Strategic Review of the PBF Portfolio in Guinea (2017-2022). The Review examines the results achieved by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) portfolio of projects between 2017 and 2022. More specifically, it analyzes the performance of the activities carried out and the institutional arrangements for their implementation. On this basis, it draws lessons and recommendations for the Fund, the United Nations system, the government, and other relevant stakeholders for future peacebuilding interventions in Guinea.

In a political climate characterized by political tension, lack of unity, demonstrations and repression, the PBF completed its second Priority Peacebuilding Plan (PPP2) in Guinea in 2017, after the 2015 presidential election. In 2020, the president succeeded in modifying the constitution, which



The PBF portfolio in Guinea focused on immediate and emerging peacebuilding needs between 2017-2022, investing \$30 million in 24 projects. DPPA PBSO / Jelena Zelenovic

already granted him two consecutive terms, to run once again and win the presidential election. In September 2021, in a context of extreme tension, the army took power. Between 2017-2022, the PBF portfolio focused on the specific immediate and emerging peacebuilding needs, on a year-to-year basis, as a strategy to better assess the constantly changing and volatile context. Therefore, within this framework, 24 projects (8 ongoing projects at the time of the Review) were approved for an investment of around \$30 million. These projects have focused on themes relating to security and governance, the participation and empowerment of women and young people, and the preservation of the environment. The portfolio also includes three projects focused on peacebuilding activities in cross-border areas between Guinea and Sierra Leone and between Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, following the 2021 coup and capitalizing on what is considered the added value of the UN in Guinea, in mid-2022, as part of the United Nations Integrated Strategy in Guinea in Support of Political Transition, three projects were added to the portfolio for an envelope of \$7.4 million, approved in August 2022 at the request of the Resident Coordinator. The PBF portfolio for the 2017-2022 period was implemented in a context also marked by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resurgence of the Ebola virus in March 2021.

## Main findings and conclusions

The Review identified that the projects in the portfolio were rooted in knowledge of the local and national context and generally targeted Guinea's main factors of fragility in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. More generally, the PBF portfolio aligned itself well with the objectives of the United Nations in Guinea by making a substantial contribution to the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and to the national policies and priorities to which it contributes.

The Review found that 2017-2022 PBF-funded interventions in Guinea produced significant results in critical areas. Support for the security and justice sector, for example, enabled in-depth reforms that generated beneficial effects in this sector. PBF projects helped the security sector acquire capacities which, if effectively utilized, could contribute to improving the police service and, as a result, contribute to a more positive perception of the police and its service by the communities. Replicable experiences in the prevention of radicalization, conflict prevention and resolution, and approaches to setting up social infrastructures for peace (SIPs) are all noticeable results in peacebuilding.

Recognizing that socio-economic conflicts aggravate other sources of tension, the portfolio has rightly developed actions aimed at the economic empowerment of women and young people. The projects have contributed to making women and young people vectors of peace in their communities. To this end, the young people and women leaders identified have benefited from training and support aimed at improving their economic situation through income-generating activities. This approach aimed to strengthen their social leadership and has shown that it is possible to bring about structural changes in the field of conflict prevention, social cohesion, and peacebuilding at the local level through socioeconomic integration actions.

The SIPs, the Local Youth Councils (LYC), the establishment of the National Youth Council, and the involvement of young social entrepreneurs in conflict prevention initiatives and social cohesion at the community-level remain some of the notable results at the local level. In many of the targeted communities, the interventions initiated a dynamic of peace, social cohesion, and building stability within the transition. Main challenges emerged concerning collaboration between fund recipients and implementing agencies. Due to a lack of national visibility and most results remaining at the local level, many questions arise about the ability of the portfolio to provide a conducive environment that promotes a catalytic effect. There is still an opportunity for the portfolio to develop national-level results, mostly expected from those projects still in implementation.

Moreover, the projects have promoted relevant approaches in the reduction of risks linked to environmental degradation, and positive results are beginning to be observed in the target areas. The training sessions enabled young men and women at risk of radicalization to be able to identify the origins of the environmental degradation and record the arising local conflicts in their localities. This approach led to the identification of corresponding mitigation measures which are now being implemented. In addition, the projects have tested and validated an approach to reducing both radicalization and conflicts induced or accelerated by environmental degradation by providing at-risk youth with “green” socio-economic opportunities.

Important milestones have been laid in the sense of the establishment of a sustainable mechanism for the settlement of recurring conflicts between farmers and herders linked to transhumance. In this context, an innovative initiative for the production of fodder plants is being tested in the Guinea-Sierra Leone border area which could provide a lasting solution to uncontrolled transhumance – one of the main sources of cross-border conflict. In addition, by supporting the improvement of migration governance (construction of a border post in a busy passage between Guinea and Sierra Leone), the projects promoted socio-economic integration between the countries, thus contributing to peacebuilding.

In addition to the relevance and innovative nature of PBF programming, interventions also aimed to promote national ownership and ensure take-up and scale-up by other development partners. The projects have tackled conflict factors that the country's traditional partners, including within the UN system and international donors, are not usually inclined to address. The establishment of strong partnerships with local communities and local implementing organizations, as required by the PBF guidelines, also promoted sustainability. However, sustainability largely depends on resource mobilization efforts, while funding from other donors is not always guaranteed. Some projects, especially those relating to institutional reforms and those requiring a change in behaviour, must necessarily be long-term and therefore require financial support after the closure of PBF-funded projects. For example, support for the many structures set up and strengthened at community-level for the promotion of peaceful coexistence, conflict prevention and peacebuilding are often necessary after the projects' end dates in order to ensure their impact and durability. The consolidation of achievements therefore poses a concern.

## Recommendations

Recommendations to PBSO, the RCO, UNCT and the Government include:

- Promote coherence and coordination between UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes.
- Continue to support the security and justice sectors.
- In the fields of conflict prevention, social cohesion, and peacebuilding: capitalize on the achievements and projects on emerging issues such as the threat of violent extremism and higher risk of land-related conflicts.
- As part of the empowerment of young people and women: decouple the two groups and carry out a systemic analysis to understand the constraints of each group in terms of empowerment for better project efficiency.
- At the operational level: improve the collaboration of agencies in the execution of projects and strengthen the design and reporting capacities (in the spirit of results-based monitoring).
- Invest in scaling up evidence-based decision-making.
- Use implementing partners' experiences and learnings to strategically invest in peacebuilding.



# Further Resources

# Previous Reports

## 2021 Evaluative Exercises Report

- Maximizing complementarity between peacekeeping operations (lessons learned study)
- Religious actors leading political processes: The case of CENCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (lessons learned study)
- Lessons learned study on the United Nations Transition in Haiti (2017-2019) (lessons learned study)
- The feasibility and desirability of an anonymous dissent channel (self-evaluation)
- Mid-term review of the DPPA 2020-2022 Strategic Plan (self-evaluation)

## 2020 Evaluative Exercises Report

- The United Nations mediation of the boundary dispute between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon (lessons learned study)
- The UNDP/DPO/DPPA Project on UN Transitions in Mission Settings (self-evaluation)
- UN support to local mediation: Challenges and opportunities (lessons learned study)
- DPA's engagement in the Maldives (2014-2018) (lessons learned study)
- The experience of UN special political missions in Colombia on women, peace and Security (2016-2010) (lessons learned study)
- DPPA Multi-Year Appeal: Value-for-money assessment (self-evaluation)

## 2019 Evaluative Exercises Report

- The experience of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG (lessons learned study)
- DPPA liaison presences (lessons learned study)
- UN engagement in Kenya (lessons learned study)
- United Nations Mission in Colombia (lessons learned study)
- DPA 2016-2019 Strategic Plan (evaluation)
- UN's preventive diplomacy in Gabon and the Gambia (evaluation)



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