**Safe in the City II**

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| Danish organisation | Dreamtown |
| Title of the intervention | Safe in the City II |
| Partner name(s) | Youth Dream Center Sierra Leone & YMCA-SL Sierra Leone |
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**1. Objective and relevance (the world around us)**

**Introduction:**In February 2019, President Julius Maada Bio declared a State of Emergency over sexual and gender-based violence in Sierra Leone. The president’s concern was echoed by our partners in Sierra Leone. As stressed by Youth Dream Center Sierra Leone (YDC-SL) and YMCA Sierra Leone (YMCA-SL), violence against women and girls was skyrocketing in poor urban areas. Since young women represent our core target group, we felt obliged to respond. In 2020, Dreamtown, YDC-SL and YMCA-SL therefore started the project Safe in the City. For Dreamtown, this was our first project focused explicitly on safety. In the last 2,5 years of Safe in the City, we have witnessed success – and we have been faced by failure. And most importantly, we have experienced firsthand the immense need to continue this work. Through this follow up project, we therefore strive to keep fighting against the violence young women and girls face in poor urban areas – with a focus on the cities Freetown, Makeni, and Kono. We will do this by building on our strengths and addressing the challenges of the previous intervention; and by investing in our capacity to design and implement violence against women and girls (VAWG) programmes, which will create an impact in Sierra Leone, but will also strengthen our capacity to apply a gender perspective across our broader work with young people in cities. We will take a close look into the global evidence base that exists around VAWG; and devise a strategy for how this follow-up intervention will link strategically with planned future interventions. The second phase of Safe in the City will thus builds a bridge from the learning accumulated in the first project, towards our long-term strategy for working on violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone. This includes a thematic outcome on safety in the CISU programme modality, which Dreamtown will be applying for in 2023, as well as the ‘Børnenes U-landskalender’ project, which Dreamtown will implement in Sierra Leone from 2024 in partnership with FANT-DK, FANT-SL and YDC-SL. The model below presents an overview of how this intervention is integrated into Dreamtown’s larger vision of a *Safe Communities* flagship programme in Sierra Leone.

**1.1. Reflections over extension of previous intervention**

**Results achieved so far – reflections from Safe in the City:**

In the first project, ***YDC-SL*** facilitated several activities in collaboration with non-formal education institutions. These included engaging young people through school Safety Clubs; increasing the awareness of school management and teachers on national gender policies and SGBV referral pathways; facilitating community engagement through drama plays and radio shows; and facilitating accountability dialogues between young women and duty bearers on safety. At the institutional level, YDC-SL and the partner NFEIs co-designed a curriculum on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) which has been made mandatory within all the partner NFEIs. Through the activities led by ***YMCA-SL***, youth groups developed creative projects focused on safety. These included community awareness campaigns; streetlights; community policing; socio-economic business development; and counselling services. From these actions, YMCA-SL experienced a great interest from youth to be part of the project and have seen a positive change towards youth being encouraged to carry responsibilities in their communities. ***Cutting across partners***, one of the major achievements we have seen has been young women expressing a gain in confidence to talk about and act on issues of violence, and a change in mindset due to being trusted with community responsibilities. This is all part of a process where we are increasingly seeing young people act as change agents, taking lead in community development. Collectively, the partners built on their network among stakeholders, service providers, and local authorities and ended the first project with a big learning conference where experience was shared and discussed with political actors from local to ministerial level.

An external evaluation was facilitated at the end of the project (July-August 2022), which reflected on the successes and challenges experienced across project teams, right holders, and stakeholders[[1]](#footnote-2). The collaboration around the evaluation has provided us with a strong set of learning, informed by experts in the field of VAWG. This evaluation has helped inform and set the direction for how to prioritise and strategize phase 2 of Safe in the City. Overall, the evaluation found that Dreamtown, YDC-SL and YMCA-SL have strengthened their understanding of the specific challenges and drivers of VAWG in the targeted communities, with a primary focus on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), as well as the multi-faceted barriers to help-seeking by survivors. In the first phase, important steps were taken toward capacitating young people to engage on SGBV issues. The evaluation showed that youth respondents consistently spoke positively about the knowledge they gained relating to different types of violence and referral pathways and provided numerous examples of positive actions they had taken in response to incidences of violence, which they attributed to their improved knowledge. Furthermore, the evaluation data suggest successful collaboration with government and traditional authorities on reducing violence in the target areas, with institutional stakeholder referencing positive interactions with YDC-SL, YMCA-SL and the youth groups, and engagements in review meetings and conferences during which their experiences and learning were shared. This leaves us with a good platform for continuing the collaboration and engagement with government actors and community authorities in a second phase.

The challenges that remain after the first phase of the project are presented in section 1.3. below.

**Changes in objectives and strategic approach:**

***Strategic approach:*** The overall strategy of this intervention is guided by the experience from the first project, as well as the global evidence base of what works to combat VAWG. This means continuing to support school-based interventions (in our project through collaboration with non-formal education institutions) and continuing to support community-based interventions undertaken by women-led youth groups. These strategic approaches are broadly recognized as having an impact in the prevention of violence. As emphasized by ‘What Works’ – a renown global initiative to prevent violence against women[[2]](#footnote-3) – part of the most effective interventions is ‘Combined economic and social empowerment interventions that take a gender-transformative approach’; ‘School based interventions using participatory approaches’, along with ‘community activism approaches to shift harmful social norms and support survivors’.

***Changes in objectives:*** Like the first project, the development objective of this intervention focuses on the safety, inclusion, and empowerment of young women. The overall design of the intervention follows the logic of the first project with specific objectives focusing respectively on: *i)* partners’ capacity; *ii)* NFEIs; and *iii)* women-led youth groups. However, though working within a similar logic as the previous project, in this intervention we have sharpened the strategies for each of the objectives within the following dimensions. Within Specific objective 1(focused on partners’ capacity), we will adopt a programme specific strategy which includes a focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and addresses unequal power relations between women and men and between different social groups. This is an entirely new capacity building approach within the consortium, which will lay the foundation for the other activities undertaken in the project. Thus, the capacity building among the partners will bring the partners to a higher level in terms of understanding the context, dynamics, and actors related to VAWG. Within Specific objective 2 (focused on NFEIs), we will scale up the role of NFEIs. In the previous project the core focus was on the internal dynamics of these institutions. In this intervention the NFEIs will play a much larger role within the surrounding communities. Within Specific objective 3 (focused on women-led youth groups), we will not only focus on technical skills related to VAWG. We will likewise support women led youth groups to develop into stronger and more sustainable organisations. Furthermore, we will widen their networks with established women-led organisations and socio-economic enterprises who can work as role models and allies. Cross-cutting focus on advocacy: When it comes to the project’s advocacy approach, we have narrowed down the focus. In the previous intervention, we applied a wide approach focused on establishing a good relationship with an array of actors working on gender-based violence. From these interactions, we have identified some advocacy focus areas important and realistic to zoom in on. These includes problematic practices within the referral system, and absence of awareness of VAWG in education institutions. To pursue these advocacy goals, we will use this project to establish a larger network of NFEIs, formal schools, and women-led organisations working on VAWG and develop evidence-based advocacy cases which combined will create a strong point of departure for future advocacy.

***Changes in target groups:*** In this intervention, we will work directly with the same target group categories as in the previous intervention, which cover NFEI students and women-led youth groups. However, there will be a change when it comes to who the specific students and youth groups are. In the NFEIs this change comes naturally, as students pass through the education programmes. With regards to the youth-groups, in this project we will only target women-led groups and women-led enterprises. ‘Youth groups’ will therefore be understood as a wide group of young actors, with the common traits of being led by young women, and work for a mission that aligns with the Safe in the City project. Furthermore, since this project will adopt a much stronger approach towards working in communities surrounding the NFEIs, we will likewise develop a stronger bond with young people who are not necessarily students in the NFEIs. At the same time, the need remains to scope out established women-led organisations with expertise on VAWG and explore potentials for collaboration. This could include women’s rights organisations and women-led institutions that focus on the legal aspect of VAWG and larger socio-economic businesses that empower women. Therefore, this project opens for a potential new group of civil society actors with shared visions on VAWG.

**1.2. Main purpose with the intervention and the challenges addressed**

***The intervention’s development objective*** is *To increase the safety, inclusion, and empowerment of young women*. This is supported by the ***three specific objectives***, which are:

* Specific objective 1: Strengthen Safe in the City partners´ capacity to address VAWG
* Specific objective 2: NFEIs play an active role in addressing VAWG at community level
* Specific objective 3: Women-led youth groups deliver impactful VAWG interventions

Below is a more detailed outline of the challenges addressed – which also represent challenges that remain after the implementation of the first phase of Safe in the city. The challenges in the field of VAWG in Sierra Leone are many, and severe. In the following section, we highlight some of those that this follow-up intervention seeks to address – both challenges that exist internally, as well as externally. It is also mentioned which objectives are linked to each of the challenges.

**VAWG in Sierra Leone**

In February 2019, President Julius Maada Bio declared a State of Emergency over sexual and gender-based violence. It has now been more than two years since this state of emergency was raised, but unfortunately violence against women and girls continues as a massive issue in Sierra Leone. Since the declaration, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and sexual violence against women and girls has increased globally. We see no indication that the development has been any different in Sierra Leone. Between January and July 2021, 1.691 cases of sexual and gender-based violence, mostly against women, of which 1.522 were sexual assault cases and 169 were physical assaults, were recorded in the cities of Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema and the district of Kono[[3]](#footnote-4). Adding to these high numbers is the fact that due to the social norms and stigma around sexual violence or “the culture of silence” as Charles Vandi, Director of Gender at the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affair puts it, many are reluctant to report cases[[4]](#footnote-5). Therefore, it is important to notice here is that due to the extreme stigma the prevails, disbelief and trust in the system, and severe barriers for reporting violence and abuse, numbers are, in reality, much higher than these. Approximately 50 pct. of Sierra Leonean females endure sexual or physical violence during their lifetime. 40 pct. of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 years have experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months. 86 pct. of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years have undergone Female Genital Mutilation or circumcision[[5]](#footnote-6). Sierra Leone ranks 155 (of 162) on the Gender Inequality Index[[6]](#footnote-7) (reflecting inequality between women and men in dimensions of reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market participation) and 121 (of 156) on the Global Gender Gap Index[[7]](#footnote-8) (reflecting national gender gaps on economic, political, education and health criteria). The data and statistics presented here demonstrate clearly that Sierra Leone faces severe challenges in the areas of gender inequality and violence against women. It is clear that there is an acute need for investing and intervening in this, as well as continuing to scope out effective solutions and approaches. The project plays into the challenge of VAWG in Sierra Leone with its ***overall objective*** to increase the safety, inclusion, and empowerment of young women.

**The complex factors influencing VAWG**

VAWG is one of the most widespread forms of abuse worldwide. Estimates published by WHO indicate that globally, about one third of women have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime[[8]](#footnote-9). There is no single factor to explain VAWG. The causes of VAWG are highly complex and can be attributed to a range of biological, economic, cultural, social, and political factors[[9]](#footnote-10). Discriminatory rules, laws, social norms, traditions, and customs shape the way people think and behave. In turn, people who are socialized within these structures go on to preserve them. This makes it particularly challenging to change the belief that men’s violence against women is acceptable within certain settings or situations. In Sierra Leone, VAWG pervades the political, economic and social structures of society and is shaped by its history of conflict, i.e., the Sierra Leone civil war; strongly patriarchal social norms; and a legal system where VAWG is regarded as a personal matter that requires a resolution within the confines of a home. The need for a better understanding of VAWG by non-partners: There is ample evidence to support that intimate partner and sexual violence causes serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health problems for women, while also affecting their children’s health and wellbeing. However, when it comes to sexual violence by non-partners, there are fewer studies on the effects of sexual violence[[10]](#footnote-11). Also, the true prevalence of sexual violence from a non-partner is doubtful. Globally, 6 pct. of women report they have been subjected to sexual violence from someone other than their husband or partner. However, considering the stigma related to this form of violence, the true prevalence of non-partner sexual violence is likely to be higher[[11]](#footnote-12). All this points to the need for getting more insights and data on sexual violence by non-partners, especially in Sierra Leone where sexual violence against women and girls during the civil war has spilled over into the post-conflict Sierra Leonean society, becoming commonplace among the female population in the present day[[12]](#footnote-13). From the evaluation of the first phase of Safe in the City, the evaluators noted that, generally within the gender-based violence (GBV) sector, there is much less evidence of what works to prevent non-partner sexual violence, and the ideas established under the Safe in the City programme could represent interesting innovations in the field. The need to challenge social norms: To fight VAWG, programming in the development sector today focuses mainly on the individual, material, or structural factors. These include empowerment programmes focused on building the agency of women and girls (individual level); alleviation of women and girls’ lack of economic opportunities (material level); and advocacy strategies to change discriminatory laws or introduce new laws and legal procedures to protect women and girls (structural level)[[13]](#footnote-14). However, even if you succeed in influencing these levels, there is considerable evidence that traditional views and gender-biased social norms can hinder change. In Sierra Leone, we see that the patriarchal social norms enable that domestic violence is considered acceptable, and in some cases even part of a healthy marriage. In a UNFPA case study on gender-based violence in Sierra Leone, there were cases where women even suggested that domestic violence can be an indication of a husband’s love for his wife[[14]](#footnote-15). The need to go beyond awareness raising activities: Awareness raising is often seen as the best approach to change attitudes and social norms, because it is a way to generate knowledge of relevant issues and reach many people at a low cost. In programming, awareness raising activities are widely used and have an important role to play in preventing VAWG. However, the evidence that awareness raising activities on their own can significantly reduce VAWG is limited[[15]](#footnote-16). Thus, to address fundamental values and norms, awareness raising should play a supplemental role to other effective components such as participatory group interventions and sessions, critical reflection to address power and gender inequality, experiential learning, relationship skills building, and efforts to support empowerment[[16]](#footnote-17). The project plays into the challenge of VAWG in Sierra Leone with its ***overall objective***, and also with a sharpened approach that addresses the needs mentioned above, which will be rolled out in ***specific objective 2 and 3***, building on an increased knowledge and understanding from the capacity process of ***specific objective 1***.

**The need for a strategic approach**

While the evaluation of the first phase of the project highlighted good achievements, and overall success with achievement with its objectives, it also puts forward a need to strengthen the strategic assessment of approaches used in our partnership’s work on violence against women and girls (VAWG). This is part of the design of this follow up, where an aim is to take the programme forward from ‘awareness raising’ into more strategic approaches to address patriarchal norms and power imbalance between men and women. While awareness-raising is still a need, we will increasingly work towards using it as part of multi-component approach towards VAWG. Internally in the Safe in the City consortium, as well as among the target groups and in the environment in Sierra Leone, there also is a need to better understand difference between response and prevention when it comes to interventions to tackle gender-based violence, as while response and prevention are interlinked, their logic is different, and therefore they call for different strategies. When we further strengthen our understanding of the many different types of violence faced by young women, we will be in a stronger position to deliver interventions that combat them. In the learning process around the evaluation, this challenge has been recognized across the partnership, and moving forward, this will form part of the capacity building of the Safe in the City partnership (also referencing the complex nature of working with VAWG). Linked to this need for an even stronger understanding of types of violence and their drivers, we have decided to use the term VAWG (violence against women and girls[[17]](#footnote-18)) rather than SGBV (sexual gender-based violence) in our starting point with this project, to stay open towards the multitude of violence faced by young women and girls in our target areas. This specific challenge will be the focus of ***specific objective 1*** where we will invest in the capacity building of all CSO partners, which includes Dreamtown, to develop a stronger strategic foundation around the long-term work to address VAWG in Sierra Leone.

**Limited civil society capacity and action on WAVG**

Another key challenge we have experienced during the first project is the capacity and space for civil society to engage in VAWG programmes. Though many organisations are extremely motivated to create a change, the complex nature of the subject makes it difficult to act. Among other issues are challenges to understand what constitutes violence against women; how to prevent and respond to cases; and how the referral system works. Besides these knowledge gaps, there are several issues to be mindful about within the actual implementation of WAVG actions. These include codes of conducts when working on sensitive matters such as ensuring confidentiality between survivors and e.g., youth groups and NFEIs who receive their reports. Furthermore, there are few strong organisations in Sierra Leone working on VAWG. Thus, there are few organisational role models to link with, and be inspired by. This is not to say that they do not exist. But there is a need to invest time and resources in identifying civil society organisations at both national and community level who we can learn from and collaborate with. In this intervention, across ***specific objective 2 and 3****,* we will continue to invest in the capacity of civil society groups (youth groups sand NFEIs) and at the same time expand the network of these actors in a bid to include new partners, who have knowledge and expertise that we can learn from and engage in alliances with around joint advocacy work.

**Lack of political will and barriers for help seeking survivors**

Another massive challenge that continues to affect the context of the project is the lack of political will and poor legal system for dealing with VAWG in Sierra Leone, which is inadequately responding to the needs of survivors of violence. There are massive barriers to help-seeking by survivors, which mean that many people have little faith in the system that is supposed to support them. Institutional barriers are extremely complex and affect front liners' ability to deliver services to survivors of violence. To tackle this, a multifaced pool of methods is needed, which includes looking at the gendered and personal beliefs held by service providers, the budgeting of services, equipment and systems used, etc. This again keeps many from even reporting cases of violence, and therefore referral on its own does not necessarily help prevention of violence. In addition, evidence from the first project also shows the continued need for popularisation of policies on gender-based violence, including the Three Gender Act, Child Right Act, the SGBV male involvement national strategy, the National Disability Act and other treaties on SGBV. It was striking to experience that despite the, in many cases well developed, gender policies in Sierra Leone, the actual knowledge of what they entail and give rights to is extremely low amongst local authorities who are mandated to uphold and implement them. In addition to his, getting government stakeholders on board the project is a challenge that also needs continued attention. One of the Safe in the City consortia partners reflected on this in the evaluation of the first project, and gives a good outline of how this plays out as a challenge:

*“One key issue is the political will. Our poor legal system here. Sierra Leone has a poor legal system. So that has hindered the work of NGOs. You might have done your best to channel the case to court level, but they keep postponing until the victim is discouraged and gives up the case. The prosecution process is very slow. Also, the issue of compromise is very big in communities, there are cases that come in that because of compromise the perpetrator will be someone influential in society or it’s a family person they will just handle that case at their own level so the victim will not get the required for that particular abuse. Another challenge is the aspect of misuse of powers. People feel that they can violate women as they feel because of their power and influence over others so they feel they won’t be prosecuted. The knowledge is there now but then the people have to have the reports now but because of the setting the limitations are there”.*

As indicted from the challenges presented above, engaging government to fulfil their mandate is an extremely complex advocacy task. A task where one can quickly get lost since there are so many critical areas to address. In this intervention advocacy work is integrated across ***specific objective 1, 2 and 3.*** As described in more detail in section 3.5., a central focus in our more long-term advocacy is to address the direct barriers survivors of VAWG are faced with when they engage the formal system to seek support.

**1.3. Context of the intervention**

We consider the context of this project as stable, however, we are aware of key challenges in Sierra Leone that must be paid attention to throughout implementation. In the following, we highlight some of the key contextual conditions relevant for the project’s focus, its target groups, and goals. To a large extent, the challenges described above in the previous section should also be seen to make up this context.

**Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone has for decades been one of the most impoverished countries in the world with more than half of its 7,97 million population (Worldbank, 2021) living below the international poverty line of 1.90 US Dollars a day (UN, 2019). The economy remains challenged by pervasive corruption and undeveloped human capital. The country has experienced its share of hardships over the past 30 years including a devastating civil war from 1991-2002, recurrent flooding, the outbreak of the Ebola virus in 2014, the 2017 mudslides in Freetown, and, most recently, Covid-19. Democracy is slowly being reestablished after the civil war that resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than 2 million people. Sierra Leone is further leveled as 'Low human development' in UNDP's human development index (2020). Recently (in August 2022), protests escalated violently across the country – protests over rising costs of living (especially spikes in rising fuel and food prices), and the impact of the war in Ukraine and the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic have had cascading effects on economic and social stability in the country. In June 2023, Sierra Leone will hold the next general election. As the time around elections can bring unrest and generally makes the political environment even more difficult to engage and navigate than normal, we stay aware that the election will take place in the middle of the suggested implementation period of this project. In this regard, we see a strength in building upon relations to key stakeholders and actors in local government structures that have already been established in the first phase of the project – but at the same time have to level our expectations for advocacy efforts to fit the context and time. ***The project´s target locations in Sierra Leone:*** The project takes place in low-income communities located within Western and Eastern Freetown, Makeni and Kono. YDC-SL will be responsible for the activities taking place in Western Freetown, Kono and Makeni and YMCA will focus on the project activities taking place in Kissy. Across these locations the intervention zooms in on vulnerable communities with a high prevalence of VAWG.

**Political and legal system for VAWG in Sierra Leone**

Since the civil war in Sierra Leone ended, political and legal measures have been taken to improve gender inequality and stop violence against women and girls. However, due to lack of resources, high levels of corruption and shifts in the political discourse, the good intensions and reforms have often been followed by setbacks. In the postwar Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2004, reforms were called to increase women’s representation in politics and reduce women’s marginalization in education and health care. In 2007, new laws were passed addressing child marriage, domestic and sexual violence, and women’s inheritance, and property rights. However, due to the outbreak of Ebola, the enforcement was uneven, since women were disproportionately affected by Ebola[[18]](#footnote-19). With government resources funneled into handling the Ebola health crisis, there were less resources available to respond to violence against women. This was a setback and a reminder that to sustain the Sierra Leonian women’s postwar gains require dedicated resources and long-term commitments from all corners of society[[19]](#footnote-20). In 2019, following the raise of a state of emergency on sexual and gender-based violence in Sierra Leone, though unconstitutional, this led to some legal amendments. The Sexual Offence Act 2019 mandated a minimum 15-year sentence for rape convictions and up to life in prison for child rapists. The government also promised to enhance psychosocial support and protection for victims of sexual violence, and a Sexual Offences Model Court was set up to expedite prosecutions. These amendments have generally been welcomed as a positive step, but also criticized for its emphasis on sexual violence, at the expense of other types of gender-based violence[[20]](#footnote-21). Some observers are concerned that the legal system continues to generate leniency for perpetrators, contributing to the prevalence of abuse toward women. A recent court ruling has shown that the legal system failed to guarantee a rape victim the right to remedy and access to justice. A volunteer of Amnesty International followed the case and observed a lack of willingness on the part of the authorities to prosecute the accused[[21]](#footnote-22). If the public gets the view that cases of rape linger in courts without justice, there is a considerable risk that rape cases will go unreported. However, it should be also noted that some progress has been achieved. The number of Family Support Units (FSUs) has increased from about 40 to over 70 centers; a toll-free hotline has been established to report cases of SGBV and receive counselling and referral services; and one-stop centers have been established in Kailahun, Pujehun, Port Loko, Koinadugu, Moyamba and the Western Urban districts, where survivors can receive free medical care and certificate to prove the assault in a court of law. The one-stop centers have reached 532 survivors[[22]](#footnote-23). Many of these measures have been taken with the support and involvement of civil society actors showing that there is a willingness in Sierra Leone to make a change, but also a huge need for civil society to support this change.

**1.4. Strengthening of civil society organising to advance social justice**

The role of civil society in combatting VAWG is extremely important. As these issues are largely structural, advancing social justice is going to require changing societal and harmful norms. Both in society in general, and within the political and legal systems. With the gaps that exist between decision makers and what happens at the grassroots level, we have a role to play to encourage the conversations on VAWG to happen so decision makers know, and are made accountable for, what victims and survivors of violence are going through. The civil society actors in Safe in the City have a role to play in terms of action, documentation, mobilization, advocacy, and empowerment. We need to continue to make sure that communities and the people who live there know their rights, and what kinds of support is available to them. Young women need to understand their rights and be able to get help when they find themselves as victims of abuse and violence. Outside the gap of knowledge then comes the issue of gaps in the support and legal system in place to handle cases. In Sierra Leone, there is very poor access to justice, as described above. A stronger network among civil society actors working on VAWG in Sierra Leone is needed to stand together to provide critical feedback to the relevant policies when we see gaps or problems in their implementation. There is a need in the context to enable women’s organisations to be able network and strategize collectively to accurately reflect the diversity and interests of Sierra Leonean women[[23]](#footnote-24). In the scope of this project, both the women-led youth groups and the NFEIs have a role to play as safe spaces where women can exchange their experiences, seek support, and collectively find solutions that benefit their community. Solutions that we back up through direct support to youth groups and NFEIs initiatives.

**1.5. Response to climate- and environmental conditions**

In the practical planning of the project, we try to keep activity and monitoring trips at a minimum to have the least possible number of flights while balancing the undeniable positive gain of being able to be in country, with our partners and target groups. Since we are running several projects in Sierra Leone, and can combine visits, we have been able to include only one flight in this project. In-between the monitoring trips, we continue to improve our skills in digital and long-distance monitoring.

**2. The partnership/ collaborators (our starting point)**

**2.1. Partners ‘experiences, capacities and resources, and contributions, roles, and responsibilities**

**Dreamtown**

***Experiences, capacities, and resources:*** Dreamtown is a Danish NGO that works for the wellbeing of young people in cities, with a key focus is on slums, informal settlements, and low-income neighborhoods and a mission to create safe, green, and creative communities together with young people. Dreamtown runs projects in Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Kenya, all with a focus on strengthening the organisational capacity and collaboration of civil society groups working for and with youth and supporting these groups to undertake direct action and change in their communities. Thus, Dreamtown has developed a strong set of learning and best practices that helps guide and ensure the quality of our projects, which includes using different types of flex fund and micro grant mechanisms to maximise ownership and empowerment among youth- and community-led civil society structures. Dreamtown’s secretariat is comprised of nine staff: CEO, Head of Programmes, Head of Finance, Financial Controller, Head of Research and learning, Urban Designer, Youth Engagement Lead, Strategic Partnership Lead, and Head of Communications and Stories. In addition to the paid and professional secretariat, the board and a small group of volunteers also support the work of Dreamtown. Dreamtown has a strong Finance-, Programme- and Communication department that work closely together around quality programme implementation, effective documentation, and inspiring communication of results. Dreamtown has recently (first half of 2022) finalised a capacity assessment and a financial check through CISU. In relevance to this project, Dreamtown’s team has people with strong knowledge about Sierra Leone and the context of young people in urban communities, and a very close working relationship with our colleagues in YMCA-SL and YDC-SL, which has been developed through the continuous scale up of activities in the country.

***Dreamtown’s specific contributions, roles, and responsibilities:***Dreamtown is responsible for the overall management of the project, which includes regular monitoring of the activity flow and follow up with YDC-SL and YMCA-SL on project progress and challenges, disbursement of funds for the partners, and reporting and management of the grant in relation to CISU.From Dreamtown, Head of Programmes Nina Ottosen will act as the project manager. Nina is also lead on Dreamtown’s other activities and partnerships in Sierra Leone. Below is an outline of the roles and contributions of the Dreamtown team.

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| Positions | Role and responsibilities |
| Project Manager | Overall and day-to-day responsibility for project implementation; Partnership contact, support, and management; Monitoring of project success and challenges; Reporting; Data collection; Inspiration on links to other projects and opportunities. |
| CEO | Strategic and technical support and advice; Support to monitoring risks and handling changes in context; Inspiration on how to link to other funding sources. |
| Head of Finance and Admin | Financial management of the project; Oversees financial reports; Disbursement of funds; Project audits; Financial monitoring and capacity support to partners.  |
| Head of Research and Learning | Planning of data collection approaches; Linking to ToC; Advising on indicators and impact measurement; Collecting cross-cutting learning; Research analysis and publication. |
| Head of Communications and Stories | Development of communication material and stories from projects; Advice on communication strategy. |

*Justification of Danish payroll costs:* A total of 278 hours are allocated towards the necessary Partner Activities and Project Monitoring. These hours will cover one Dreamtown visit to Freetown (participation in training workshop in Sierra Leone and monitoring activities), hours for Dreamtown’s Head of Programmes to support the activities, and hours for Dreamtown’s Head of Finance and Administration to undertake financial monitoring of and support to the partners in the project. In addition, a total of 225 hours is allocated for Partner Project Support Costs. These costs cover a fair share of the following support costs: 8,2% of Dreamtown’s Head of Finance and Administration salary in the project period (supporting general administrative and financial duties); 2,5% of Dreamtown’s CEO’s salary in the project period (covering organisational management duties); 2,5% of Dreamtown’s Head of Programmes’ salary in the project period (covering partnership development duties) and 2,5% of Dreamtown’s Head of Research and Learning’s salary in the project period (covering cross cutting learning and documentation duties).

**YMCA-SL**

***Experiences, capacities, and resources:***YMCA-SL has worked in Sierra Leone for more than 100 years. They have 80 full time paid staff, regional offices across the country and projects within 23 communities. They have a strong presence in Freetown, where they focus on youth participation. YMCA-SL aims to empower young people and make them productive citizens in their communities, with a strong focus on youth governance and participation. Essential to YMCA-SL’s youth empowerment work is their commitment to building safer and stronger platforms that give youth the opportunity to build leadership skills and participate in decision-making processes. YMCA-SL has great experience in managing youth-focused interventions, cutting across technical and vocational education and training, provision of small grants for business development, establishment of disaster risk reduction committees, and youth-led advocacy interventions. Of specific relevance to this intervention, the YMCA-SL World Alliance has produced different types of resources that focus on youth and GBV, including the Transformative Masculinity approach, which supports young men in shifting to a masculinity informed by respect, rather than one that relies on dominance.

***YMCA-SL’s specific contributions, roles, and responsibilities:***YMCA-SL is in charge of the implementation of project activities under specific objective 3. This includes the responsibility of the day-to-day project management, mobilising, organising, and supporting the women-led youth groups across Kissy in Freetown, facilitating project activities, and coordinating with relevant local stakeholders and mobilising their network in Freetown. YMCA-SL will develop narrative and financial reports, which will be shared with Dreamtown on a quarterly basis. Below is a more detailed outline of the roles and contributions of the YMCA-SL team. This team setup is made based on YMCA-SL’s experience from the previous projects, which have shown that to be successful, projects with a large and diverse youth target group increases the need for monitoring and mentoring. The project from YMCA-SL’s side will be managed by a Project Manager, a Community Development Worker and two volunteers, and supported by the National General Secretary and the Finance Officer. Across this team is a strong knowledge about and understanding of the community in Kissy. In the budget is a more detailed outline of the roles and responsibilities of the YMCA-SL team. All together, these persons will run and support the project and coordinate activities to fit into the overall programmes of YMCA-SL. The team from YMCA-SL will keep Dreamtown updated on project progress and challenges on a regular basis and coordinate with YDC-SL on collective activities.

**Youth Dream Center Sierra Leone**

***Experiences, capacities, and resources:***YDC-SL is an NGO that has existed since 2007. YDC-SL works to promote education amongst disadvantaged youth, women, and children by conducting free non-formal education programmes. They also facilitate youth empowerment programmes at community level, by supporting community youth groups to play a leading role in community development. Educational services provided by YDC-SL include Non-Formal Education, Technical Vocational Skills Training, and Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Media Training. In addition, YDC-SL has solid knowledge on psychosocial counselling and social work targeting vulnerable youth, including young women. YDC-SL has also strong experience with working in the nexus between development and humanitarian aid. Together with Dreamtown YDC-SL has implemented two successful DERF grants. One focused on the Freetown flooding in 2017, and one focused on the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In addition, YDC-SL was able to deliver an impressive response to the Ebola epidemic in 2014-15, in partnership with Dreamtown and the Ministry of Health. Finally, YDC-SL has successfully worked with other organisations, such as Handicap International on EU grants. The organisation is run by 12 staff in total. A management group is lead on the day-to-day management of the organisation and on the facilitation of technical workshop and trainings such as project management, financial management, leadership, and organisational policy development. In addition to the staff group, a team of 26 volunteers support YDC-SL’s work who receive a monthly stipend. YDC-SL’s staff and volunteers are experienced in operating in the fragile context of Sierra Leone’s urban environments. YDC-SL has in 2022 achieved the position of regional presidency in the Western Area of Technical Vocational Institutions in Sierra Leone. This means an amplified platform at the level of the Ministry of Education to play into the integration of VAWG as a theme in schools more broadly.

***YDC-SL’s specific contributions, roles, and responsibilities:***YDC-SL is in charge of the implementation of project activities under specific objective 2. This includes the responsibility of the day-to-day project management, mobilising, organising, and supporting the NFEIs and Safety Clubs across Freetown, Makeni, and Kono, facilitating project activities, and coordinating with relevant local stakeholders and mobilising their network across the target locations. YDC-SL will develop narrative and financial reports, which will be shared with Dreamtown on a quarterly basis. The project from YDC-SL’s side will be managed by a Project Manager and three Project Officers and supported by the Director, the Finance Manager, and the M&E Officer. Across this team is a strong knowledge about and understanding of the communities In Freetown, Makeni, and Kono. In the budget is a more detailed outline of the roles and responsibilities of the YDC-SL team. All together, these persons will run and support the project and coordinate activities to fit into the overall programmes of YDC-SL. The team from YDC-SL will keep Dreamtown updated on project progress and challenges on a regular basis and coordinate with YMCA-SL on collective activities.

**2.2. Experiences, capacities, and resources of other actors**

Based on a conducive learning process with the consultancy leading the external evaluation of the first project, we have developed a partnership with Amanda Bangura and Lusunga Kalanga who will be brought on board as technical advisor team and deliver customised training to boost capacity for VAWG programming. ***Lusungu Kalanga (GBV Specialist)*** is a feminist and Gender Specialist with 15 years’ programming experience in Girls and Women’s rights. As Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Prevention and Response Lead under the FCDO-funded Malawi VAWG Prevention and Response Programme (£17m over 6 years), Lusungu worked directly with the Women’s Rights Organisations leading the adaptation processes for SASA! Together and Moyo Olemekezeka (a Women’s Economic Empowerment Intervention). Specialising in VAWG, Lusungu has worked with numerous organisations from the grassroots to international agencies, including SDDirect, Prevention Collaborative, World Education/Inc., ActionAid International. Lusungu has substantive experience in capacity strengthening for organisations, with notable skills in working with WROs. Lusungu will be the GBV Specialist for the technical advisory support, providing technical guidance to the team in all aspects of delivery. ***Amanda Bangura (Theory of Change and Learning Specialist)*** is a Strategy and Learning Specialist with 15 years’ experience working at strategic level on development and emergency programmes in complex settings. Amanda brings research, civil society partnership and delivery expertise in VAWG and youth leadership, with expertise in behaviour change, gender equality and social inclusion, and safeguarding. Amanda is well-networked in Sierra Leone and has the diplomatic skills to gain buy-in from key stakeholders. Worth mentioning is also that Amanda is fluent in Krio (which is preferred by many youths among the target groups over English) and therefore will be able to facilitate training in Krio when needed. Amanda will lead the Theory of Change development and the development of the Ethical Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework and delivery. For full disclosure, Amanda was one of the lead consultants on the evaluation process of the first Safe in the City project. This means she already had a good understanding of the context of the project and its partners, which will enable us to quickly move into action mode upon starting the project.

**2.3. Previous cooperation between the partners**

They key partners, Dreamtown, YDC-SL and YMCA-SL have worked together through the first phase of the Safe in the City project since 2020. Outside this consortium, Dreamtown has worked with YDC-SL since 2010, and with YMCA-SL since 2019. Collaboration among the partners has focused broadly on youth programmes – in education, skills building, community engagement, support to local youth groups, and specifically for the Safe in the City project (ref.nr. 19-2452-UI-sep) on responding to the alarming situation around sexual and gender-based violence in Sierra Leone. Outside Safe in the City, Dreamtown and YDC-SL collaborate on the CISU-supported project Spaces for Youth (ref.nr. 21-3370-CSP-UI) and a project focused on non-formal education supported by Erik Thunes Legat. Dreamtown and YMCA-SL collaborate on the CISU-supported project Urban Space Makers (ref.nr. 22-3861-CSP-UI). There are already strong working relationships across the partnership, and a growing potential for cross-cutting learning from a continued engagement through Safe in the City and into our other projects.

**2.4. Strengthening the collaboration between the partners and their relations to other actors**

In our internal structure of the partnership, both YDC-SL, YMCA-SL, and Dreamtown are committed to improve on the structure of ongoing monitoring and learning meetings to further secure learning benefits the entire consortium. This will entail more sharing of resources and networks, which will be prioritized and motivated from the get-go of the project, starting with cross-partner capacity building as part of specific objective 1, as well as collaboration on collective advocacy across the project. Working with the area of VAWG naturally puts us in contact with the actors and institutions that operate on related issues at a legal and political level. An important actor to continue building relations with is the Family Support Unit (FSU) – a specialized unit of the police, whose duty is to investigate Gender Based Violence and all forms of abuse and violence against children. In the first phase of Safe in the City, both YDC-SL and YMCA-SL have worked closely with, and supported, the local FSUs to support improvement of services and referral mechanisms for youth in the target communities. We will also continue collaboration with the Rainbo Initiative that offer a comprehensive package of services of medical treatment, legal services, and psychosocial support to both male and female survivors of violence.

In acknowledgement of the gaps in the system of support to survivors of violence, we will focus on scoping out other access to justice programmes or services being delivered in Sierra Leone to determine if other avenues of support for survivors are available. This will be part of the preparatory support on VAWG and strategy planning under specific objective 1 but will remain a focus all throughout the project period. Another strategic goal is to also scope out women’s rights organisations and women-led organisations working with VAWG in Sierra Leone. Women-led organisations with a commitment to gender equality can have a particular

role to play in tackling VAWGs and can contribute to both creating and sustaining change in Safe in the City. At the community level, there is also a number of stakeholders that are key to continue strengthening collaboration with, which include the local chiefs, women’s leaders, parents, and councilors, as their buy in in the project is a way to gain more attention and is important in order to access the needed platforms for communication and advocacy. Basically, focus will be on building relations to the community-level actors to come on board as supporters of the intervention and assist in advocacy towards decision makers in political positions with a mandate to affect implementation of VAWG services. At national level, The Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs and the Non-Formal Education Directorate are integral partners where we will strengthen relations to ensure a concerted effort on the fight against VAWG.

3. Target groups, objectives, strategy, and expected results (our intervention)

3.1. Composition, participation, and benefit of the target groups

The table below outlines the composition, participation, and benefit of the target groups:

|  |
| --- |
| **Primary target group** (people who participate in activities) |
| **Obj.**  |  **Description**  | **Compositions**  | **Participation and benefits**  |
| **Specific objective 1** | **29** staff members from YDC-SL, YMCA-SL and Dreamtown | DT: 9 (4 f/5 m); YDC-SL: 10 (5 f/5 m); YMCA-SL: 10 (5 f/5 m) | Participate in all activities; Directly through capacity training in activities under Output 1.1. Partners will strengthen capacity to design and implement interventions to prevent and respond to VAWG; Become stronger advocates on behalf of young women in Sierra Leone on the area of VAWG; Expand on their networks; Increase capacity to diversify funding base for VAWG interventions. |
| **Specific objective 2** | **98** people (management, staff, teachers) in partner NFEIs  | 98 people (60 f/38 m)  | Participate in activities under Output 2.1; 2.2 and 2.3. NFEIs will increase capacity to address VAWG; Receive support for community projects; Strengthen their role in surrounding communities. |
| **100** young people in Safety Clubs in NFEIs | 100 youth (100 f) | Participate in activities under Output 2.1. Young women in Safety Clubs will increase knowledge on VAWG; Gain confidence to champion the VAWG cause; Act as role models for other young girls in their schools; Take lead in Safety Club events.  |
| **50** people (management, staff, teachers) in associated NFEIs and schools  | 50 people (25 f/25 m) | Participate in activities under Output 2.3. Other NFEIs and selected formal schools are engaged through advocacy network and events; and inspired to work with how they can include focus on VAWG.  |
| **Specific objective 3** | **100** youth in 10 women-led youth groups and businesses | 100 youth (80 f/20 m) | Participate in activities under Output 3.1; 3.2; and 3.3. The women-led youth groups and businesses will have their capacity strengthened and be inspired on how to improve their sustainability; Will take lead on VAWG community initiatives; Receive micro-grants for sustainability and VAWG initiatives; Build network with women-led organisations. |
| **20** people in women-led organisations and institutions in Sierra Leone | 20 people (16 f/4 m) | Participate in activities under Output 3.3. Women-led organisations and institutions will be engaged through advocacy network and exchange with the women-led youth groups; Will increase network with other VAWG-focussed actors.  |
| **Cutting across** | **40** local authority representatives across Freetown, Makeni, and Kono: These include (not limited to) local chiefs, women’s leaders, religious leaders, councillors, FSUs. | 40 people (15 f/25 m) | Participate across activities; Directly through Output 1.2; Output 2.3; and Output 3.3. as both participants in and targets of advocacy activities. Community stakeholders and local authorities will benefit from the alliance to strengthen their own role in implementation of existing policies and strategies; Become stronger community ambassadors.  |
| **Total 437 (310 f/127 m)** |
| **Secondary target groups** (people affected by activities, without participation) |
| **Specific Objective 2** | **758** students in NFEIs | 758 youth (697 f/61 m) | Are affected by activities under Output 2.1. NFEI students are engaged through the events of the Safety Clubs and the initiatives of the NFEIs. |
| **1500** people from communities around partner NFEIs (parents/caregivers and other community members) | 1500 people; 150 per partner NFEI(750 f/750 m) | Are affected by activities under Output 2.2. Community members are engaged in and benefit from community projects by the NFEIs, and the introduction of community monitoring teams, where their feedback will inform strategies moving forward. |
| **Specific** **objective 3** | **1000** young people in Kissy who are target groups of the women-led youth groups and businesses | Youth; 100 per youth group (600 f/400 m) | Are affected by activities under Output 3.2. Young people at community level make up the target groups of the women-led groups and will be engaged through community action plans and youth groups’ VAWG projects. |
| **Total 3258 (2047 f/1211 m)** |

Across the project’s target group of “youth”, we define a young person to be between 15 and 35 years old. This follows the official youth definition in Sierra Leone and will cut across young women in both youth groups and in NFEI Safety Clubs. As seen in the table above, a vast majority of the target group members that are young people are female. This is part of the project’s strategy to invest in and empower young women. However, we also engage young men as part of the activities, acknowledging their important role in addressing VAWG and changing social norms.

3.2. Strategy for engaging the target groups

The project applies a catalytic approach towards engaging the different target groups. ***YDC-SL*** will be lead on engaging the different target groups associated with the ***NFEIs***, based on the following process. At the beginning of the project YDC-SL will engage the 10 partner NFEIs[[24]](#footnote-25). Subsequently, each partner NFEI will commence work on strengthening their Safety Clubs. The Safety Clubs will undertake VAWG initiatives which engage the larger student body in each institution. At the same time, each NFEI will facilitate VAWG projects and support monitoring within their surrounding communities and expand their network with other schools and government authorities for the purpose of advocacy. NFEIs deliver educational activities carried out outside the framework of the formal school system, including literacy and numeracy programmes, technical and vocational skills training (e.g., cooking and catering, computer and IT, sowing and tailoring, etc.). ***YMCA-SL*** will be lead on engaging the target groups associated with the ***women-led youth groups***, based on the following process. At the beginning of the project YMCA-SL will engage 10 groups. These groups will be supported to undertaken VAWG projects in their local communities. Through these projects, a larger network of youth in the community will be reached and involved. At the same time, YMCA-SL will identify other women-led CSOs working on VAWG and link these organisations with the 10 youth groups. YMCA-SL will also engage relevant authorities through advocacy. An important learning from the first project with regards to our targeting approach was the conceptualisation of civil society actors to include small women-led businesses, which increased female participation compared to only focusing on more classical notions of youth groups and community-based organisations. Therefore, in this project, we again embrace and target women-led businesses as well as more classic youth group structures that have a (or have the potential to develop) socio-economic structures, who work as a group, and who make an impact for other women in their community. We have yet to identify which specific women-led groups will make up the target group for this follow-up project, however, among them will be some of those that showed potential for further development and impact as part of the first phase. The groups work on a range of different activities in support of women, including community campaigns, savings clubs, business, counselling services, etc.

***Notes on potentials for disability inclusion:*** An area for attention that came up in the evaluation of the first project was inclusion of people with disabilities. Women and girls living with disabilities face increased levels of all forms of violence, and from a broad range of perpetrators, compared with women and girls without disabilities. Understanding how interventions include women with disabilities, their barriers to participation, and how to tailor and adapt interventions to ensure they are disability specific, is an area of attention for moving on with Safe in the City. While we have not designed activities specifically with this scope, we will feed the focus on disability into the general strategy and keep being conscious of how we can be more active on this agenda and strengthen the potential for disability inclusion in the programme. This can include developing models where people of disability as active agents of change, rather than people we need to help.

**3.3. Involvement of target groups and relevant actors in the development of the intervention**

This intervention is developed based on input from across the consortium of partners from the first phase of Safe in the City. The strategy of the intervention is designed based on multiple learning meetings and workshops with the partners, with project staff and volunteers, with right holders from the first phase of the project and taking into account the recommendations and advice from project evaluation, which engaged actors at all levels of Safe in the City. From the evaluation of the first phase of Safe in the City, we had positive feedback on the inclusion of key stakeholders and target groups in the programme. The evaluation found that meaningful engagement from inception through implementation was accredited to the commitment of YDC-SL and YMCA-SL to work in partnership and was linked to the commitment of the partners to respond to the ideas and needs shared by the project participants. A high level of involvement will continue to be a major priority, moving from design of this intervention to implementation throughout the second phase. We will keep uptransparency and good communication to create genuine partnerships with other local actors; and ensuring that our target groups participate across all levels of the project.

**3.4. Partners’ legitimacy to act as champions of cause of the target groups**

The project continues to take place in locations where the partners already work and where access and legitimacy amongst the target group of vulnerable young women is already well established. YMCA-SL and their work with women-led youth groups will be grounded in Kissy community in Freetown, and YDC-SL and their work with NFEIs will be grounded in communities in Western Freetown (Lumley), Makeni and Kono. Legitimacy towards young people in these target areas is strong as both partners have supported local youth initiatives for several years. Both YDC-SL and YMCA work with a large body of young volunteers. Several of them grew up in the specific communities where the project takes place. ***YDC-SL*** has more than 10 years of experience delivering non-formal education to vulnerable youth. In addition, YDC-SL has managed to grow from being a small informal CBO, to a formalised organisation working across the country with community development and education advocacy. This implies that the organisation has a good understanding of the operating environment of NFEIs and has credible experience and capacity to engage the NFEI network and take lead in capacity building. ***YMCA-SL*** has been working in Kissy in Freetown in support of youth and community development for many years. Through our collaborations, YMCA-SL have managed to mobilise a large network of youth groups across Freetown. Many of these are either women-led or work with issues relevant to women and girls. YMCA-SL has successfully managed to mobilise government authorities at both community and national level to support and participate in their work. By working with the same NFEIs and some of the same youth groups in the first project, we build on a momentum that was created in the first phase of Safe in the City and build on all of the knowledge and relations created. In the long-term perspective, there is a huge potential in supporting these structures to be strong partners capable of addressing VAWG. In this regard, we also perceive the NFEIs and the women-led youth groups as part of the whole Safe in the City partnership that carry great legitimacy among young people within their reach.

**3.5. Strategy and activities of the intervention**

The model below presents an overview of the project´s overall strategies for addressing VAWG in Sierra Leone, which are aligned with the logical framework. Within these strategies, we seek to consolidate the work we have started, while at the same time expanding each of the strategies’ potentials. Below follows a short presentation for each of the project’s overall strategies, where elements of organisational capacity strengthening; strategic services; and advocacy cut across in all the project’s three specific objectives. *Capacity building* is included in the strengthening of the Safe in the City partners, NFEIs, and women-led youth groups. The *strategic services* include the elements of micro-grants for NFEIs and women-led youth groups, as well as the support for survivors of violence. Finally, the *advocacy* elements include collaboration on advocacy for prioritisation of needs of survivors of violence, and expansion of advocacy networks among education institutions and women-led organisations to build alliances around VAWG advocacy initiatives.



*Capacity building:* In support of the first specific objective, we have chosen to bring in a GBV Technical Advisor team. They will help ensuring the design and delivery of the project is guided by the global evidence bases of effective approaches on VAWG. The consultants will adopt an all-around approach, which will include the development of an evidence-based programme strategy which includes a Theory of Change, a learning Framework and a gender equality and inclusion (GESI) Strategy. This programme strategy will not only guide this project. It will likewise inform the design of future interventions in Sierra Leone such as the planned CISU programme and Børnenes U-landskalender. Furthermore, the learning and methods derived from these experiences will also inform the work Dreamtown is doing with partners in other countries.

***School-based approach and intervention:*** Schools influence children’s views on gender relations through their curriculum, peer norms on gender, as well as through policies and staff–student interactions. Schools can either reinforce harmful norms on gender relations and the use of violence or contribute to transforming them. School systems provide an opportunity to reach many students, teachers, and parents in a teaching–learning environment, and thus hold great potential for taking VAWG prevention to scale. In this project, we want to build on good experiences from working with non-formal education institutions that have a very wide reach among especially vulnerable young women in the target communities. This includes continuing the good practices of working with Safety Clubs within the education environment and fostering healthy relations and interactions between students and teachers. At the same time, we will also explore what role the NFEIs can play in engaging the surrounding communities of parents, care takers and other community members. What we know from the evidence is that in order to be effective, school-based interventions need to use participatory learning approaches, including critical reflection and skills building, and be based on theories of gender and power.

***Empowerment of women-led community youth groups:*** There is sound evidence that VAWG can be prevented through well designed multi-year interventions with an intense focus on community activism and mobilisation[[25]](#footnote-26). Such interventions have the capability of shifting harmful gender attitudes, roles, and social norms. At community level, our intervention continues to support the work of women-led youth groups. Through a combined approach of economic and social empowerment, the goal is to boost the sustainability of these groups, as well as their role in designing and implementing VAWG projects. While these projects will be different, their cross-cutting focus on VAWG plays into community activism that shifts harmful norms. Our experience shows us that it is extremely important to design platforms in our projects where young people can feed in their own passions and energy, and interventions need to relate closely to their own lives to be meaningful for them to participate in. Women’s economic insecurity and poverty is closely linked to VAWG, as this can leave them vulnerable to sexual violence and discrimination. Therefore, empowering women to be financially independent and providing viable options for income-generation can increase their personal safety. Keeping this in mind, we will continue to support youth groups to deliver interventions that are likely to have the biggest possible impact in addressing VAWG – and at the same time support the sustainability of the groups and income of individual members.

***Cross-cutting advocacy:*** Engaging in government advocacy on VAWG is a complex process. The advocacy priorities that need attention are many, and the advocacy strategies to engage in are countless. For us, engaging in advocacy on VAWG has been a challenging endeavour. We have been forced to critically reflect on our own position, capacity, and role for engaging government through advocacy. And we have seen the need to zoom in on what is most critical and at same time realistic to pursue. Based on learning from the first project we have identified two advocacy goals to help guide our more long-term work on VAWG in Sierra Leone. Our strategy zooms in on the community level, where we work, and where we hope to make a tangible change. *The first advocacy goal* focuses on the contact points for survivors of violence in the referral system. From our first intervention it is clear that women and girls who report a crime (e.g., at the nearest police station/ Family Support Unit) or seek medical and psychological treatment are met by a range of barriers. Our long-term strategy is to develop a stronger understanding of these barriers and work together with relevant authorities on addressing them. *The second advocacy goal* focuses on access to information regarding prevention of and response to VAWG. From the first intervention it is devastating to learn how few educational institutions integrate these issues as part of the school curriculum. In this and future projects we will work towards an integration of curriculums in schools that deal with gender-based violence. Overall, we see our advocacy strategy to consist of three phases. In the model below, we give a short overview of the envisioned advocacy trajectory of Dreamtown´s Safe Communities programme, where this intervention is placed.



**3.6. Objectives, activities, expected results and indicators of the intervention**

|  |
| --- |
| **Development objective:** To increase the safety, inclusion, and empowerment of young women |
| **Specific objective 1:** Strengthen Safe in the City partners´ capacity to address VAWG***Indicators:*** *Partner staff demonstrate an understanding of the evidence-based programme strategy in place for Safe in the City*; *Partner staff demonstrates and understanding of how to handle reported cases of violence*  |
| **Outputs** | **Activities** |
| **Output 1.1.** Evidence-based programme strategy in place for Safe in the City (including a Theory of Change, Ethical Learning Framework and GESI Strategy) | **Activity 1.1.1.** Remote preparatory support and strategy planning**Activity 1.1.2.** Programme strategy workshop**Activity 1.1.3.** On-going technical support |
| **Output 1.2.** Needs of survivors are prioritised and strategically met | **Activity 1.2.1.** Survivor Support Fund |
| **Activity 1.2.2.** Advocacy on counselling and referral services |
| **Specific objective 2:** NFEIs play an active role in addressing VAWG at community level***Indicators:*** *Students and community youth perceive NFEIs as important actors in addressing violence against women* |
| **Outputs** | **Activities** |
| **Output 2.1.** Safety Clubs are anchored in 10 NFEIs across Freetown, Makeni, and Kono | **Activity 2.1.1.** Training on VAWG for Safety Club members and Teacher Coordinators**Activity 2.1.2.** Safety club events  |
| **Output 2.2.** 10 NFEIs have expanded VAWG initiatives within their local communities  | **Activity 2.2.1.** Micro-grants for NFEIs community projects**Activity 2.2.2.** Introduction of community monitoring teams |
| **Output 2.3.** Advocacy network on school-based interventions on VAWG expanded | **Activity 2.3.1.** Outreach to other NFEIs and selected formal schools to inspire engagement on VAWG |
| **Specific objective 3:** Women-led youth groups deliver impactful VAWG interventions***Indicators:*** *Community youth can identify concrete initiatives undertaken related to VAWG*  |
| **Results** | **Activities** |
| **Output 3.1.** 10 women-led youth groups have undertaken capacity development process  | **Activity 3.1.1.** Organisational capacity development of youth groups**Activity 3.1.2.** Micro-grants for women-led youth groups’ sustainability initiatives |
| **Output 3.2.** 10 women-led youth groups have implemented VAWG interventions in their communities | **Activity 3.2.1.** Youth-led development of community action plan**Activity 3.2.2.** Micro-grants for women-led youth groups’ VAWG projects |
| **Output 3.3.**  Advocacy network of women-led youth groups and organisations expanded  | **Activity 3.3.1.** Collective stakeholder mapping (youth and YMCA-SL)**Activity 3.3.2.** Women-led youth group excursions undertaken to women-led organisations and social enterprises |
| **Cross cutting activities in pursuit of all objectives:**0.1. Internal inception workshop YDC-SL0.2. Internal inception workshop YMCA-SL0.3. Collective inception workshop YDC-SL, YMCA-SL and Dreamtown0.4. Monthly learning sessions with technical advisor team |

**Activity descriptions**

Below is an outline of the activities in each of the objectives. Activities are aligned with the project budget. Several of the activities include direct support for the target groups in the form of micro-grants; to be used for VAWG initiatives, community activities, outreach, and advocacy drives. With these funds, we are purposefully keeping the scope of their use and the detailed activities open. This is because we remain conscious of the strategies that will be outlined as part of the development of the programme specific strategy as part of objective 1 (see Activity 1.1.2), which will determine how best to prioritise funds for these activities. The flexibility of the funding and space for decision making over the funds among the target groups are also key to support local ownership, and empowerment through the role of managing these small budgets.

**Activities contributing towards specific objective 1:**

**Activity 1.1.1. Remote preparatory support and strategy planning:** Remote support will be provided by the technical advisory team (described in the partnership section in detail) to the Safe in the City partners through online sessions. These sessions will cover: i) Introduction into the evidence base on violence; Forms of violence; Prevention and response; ii) Causes to solutions: Mapping socio-ecological model and risk factors, reviewing data on violence in Sierra Leone to determine which form of violence to focus on; iii) Prevention Strategies: Reviewing the evidence-based prevention strategies.

**Activity 1.1.2. Programme strategy workshop:** The technical advisory team (Lusungu and Amanda) will travel to Sierra Leone to facilitate an in-person workshop, which will take forward the preparatory online sessions into a programme specific strategy. Given the need for critical, in-depth thinking, and group work, we prioritise to have this process take place in-person, rather than online. The workshop will guide the development of a Theory of Change on tackling violence against women and girls for the Safe in the City programme and provide basis for development of an ethical learning framework and a GESI strategy. Documents will be drafted by the consultants with full inputs from the consortium partners. The workshop in Sierra Leone will also include discussion of and co-design of the programme’s Complaints and Feedback reporting mechanism, including information flows across partners, and roles and responsibilities in investigating complaints.

**Activity 1.1.3. On-going technical support:** During the implementation of the project, Amanda and Lusungu will be available as the technical advisors for check-ins and troubleshooting as issues arise. Based on assessment of the needs in the project, this could be formally structured, through regular monthly meetings, or could be delivered as and when needed.

**Activity 1.2.1. Survivor support fund:** In any work done on VAWG, we must take into consideration how to respond to any persons that come forward with the need for support. In acknowledgement of the lack of services provided by government to victims of violence in Sierra Leone, the project facilitates a survivor support fund to be able to prioritise and meet the needs of survivors of violence. This fund, as part of the project’s strategic services, is included to enable survivors of violence to access services in recognition of the increased demand which is expected to come from breaking the culture of silence around VAWG and creating awareness of rights and opportunities for support. Support could include, but is not limited to, funding for transportation, legal and psychosocial support and assistance, documentation, etc. The survivor support fund is included as an important do-no-harm measure, and the need for such has been evident in the first phase of Safe in the City. Experience shows that demand is very high for this type of support. And in the balancing of the budget, it is extremely challenging to determine how far such support should and can go. While this will to some extent need to happen at a case-by-case scenario, we will consult the technical advisory team on how to develop the most appropriate and effective management strategies moving forward.

**Activity 1.2.2. Advocacy on counselling and referral services:** In line with the activity of the survivor support fund, this project will put focus on advocacy for availability and accessibility of support for survivors of violence. Tackling the barriers for support that exist in communities is critical to the women as community level systems and support is closest to their daily challenges. It is also our belief that community level action is critical for the success of interventions at other levels. As mentioned in the context and challenges addressed, localised social norms and practices make it difficult for women to formally report violence and seek justice. Therefore, our main targets for advocacy will focus on services that should be available at community level. Part of this advocacy could also include targeting the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs to advocate for acceleration of the GBV 116 toll-free hotline to provide counselling and referral services to survivors of violence and working with other local contact points such as the FSUs. YDC-SL and YMCA will team up with local service providers such as the Rainbo Initiative.

**Activities contributing towards specific objective 2:**

**Activity 2.1.1. Training on VAWG for Safety Club members and Teacher Coordinators:** The training will set the stage for both old and new Safety Club members and use the SGBV curriculum developed in the first project (will be revised before use). The trainings will serve as a platform to engage participants in the ToC developed in Objective 1, and other relevant technical areas. As part of YDC-SL’s training with NFEI teacher coordinators, they will explore potentials of establishing school-based mechanisms to record, report, and monitor violence in and around education institutions. This focus feeds into YDC-SL’s work to develop inclusive and non-discriminatory school regulations and procedures to address school-based violence prevention and response mechanisms. This could include a school personnel and a learners’ Code of Conduct which addresses harassment, violence and abuse and includes focus on confidential complaint procedures.

**Activity 2.1.2. Safety club events:** The Safety Clubs will be supported to design and implement their own events – which can be for other students in their schools and also at community level. Teacher coordinators will support the Safety Clubs in this process. In the previous project, we had really good experience with the young women in the safety clubs being put in the lead of activities, which helps their empowerment. Guided by the programme strategy (developed as part of objective 1), the Safety Clubs will take lead in designing what typed of events and activities they want to implement. In the past, we have seen activities include entertainment events, quiz competitions, drama plays, and arrangement of community dialogue meetings.

**Activity 2.2.1. Micro-grants for NFEIs community projects:** To boost the role of NFEIs as actors to make a difference in addressing VAWG in the communities around them, the 10 NFEIs are supported to undertake community level projects. We stay open to which exact community interventions the NFEIs will engage in, as this will largely be informed by the co-designed programme strategy. However, from the previous projects we have already identified local markets vendors and motorcycle unions as important focus points, since these are actors that are very visible and active in the community space and could potentially play an important role in addressing VAWG. A role of the community projects is also to target men and boys to change attitudes and end harmful practices – contributing towards a change in social norms.

**Activity 2.2.2. Introduction of community monitoring teams:** YDC-SL will, in collaboration with the NFEIs (based on their increased community action) explore potentials of introducing community monitoring teams. This is something new and will be explored in collaboration with relevant and appropriate local authorities and service providers. Together, we will explore monitoring tools that can be used at community level to ensure the safety and protection of young women and girls. Establishing and supporting community mechanisms to monitor violence can play an important role in offering support to women experiencing violence.

**Activity 2.3.1. Outreach to other NFEIs and selected formal schools to inspire engagement on VAWG:** YDC-SL will identify schools in each project locations (Freetown, Makeni, and Kono), where they spot a potential for collaborating around the role of the broader education sector in addressing VAWG. They will inspire these schools based on the Safety Club approach and support them in building similar structures. The members of the established Safety Club will serve as mentors for members of the new Safety Club and support them with the required skills to responsibly engage their peers in the schools and communities. Reaching out to other schools is also part of the project’s goal to expand the advocacy network. Actors who can be interesting to look at in this context include the Ministry of Education who provides a supervisory role and regulates activities of education institutions. They could be resourceful in getting feedback on the programme ToC in the interpretation and identification of gaps in existing education policies related to mitigating VAWG.

**Activities contributing towards specific objective 3:**

**Activity 3.1.1. Organisational capacity development of youth groups:** To boost the work and impact of the women-led youth groups and their engagements, YMCA-SL will take lead on an assessment and planning process for the groups. This will lead to a tailor-made training based on the assessment of their organisational needs. Training will focus on increasing their skills to enable them to function better and do more in their communities for other women – but will also have a key focus on how to develop business models and savings strategies for the groups. As some of the groups have similar operations, it can make sense for them to come together around such models to inspire each other. Cross-cutting capacity building for the women-led youth groups that are expected to be relevant include social cohesion, community building and mobilisation, conflict management, social entrepreneurship, advocacy, and local fundraising.

**Activity 3.1.2. Micro-grants for women-led youth groups’ sustainability initiatives:** As a next step after the capacity development and planning, a grant will be made available to women-led youth groups to support them in putting learnings into practice. Focus will be on sustainability and growth. The process of making use of the funds will be closely monitored by the YMCA-SL team. They will give support to the groups around how to use the funds in clever ways that can lead to a stronger foundation for them post-project. With this kind of funding mechanism we have seen some of the biggest changes come about in previous projects. The combination of the capacity building and the micro-granting mechanism is a great way to motivate the youth groups. The groups will be able to invest in the implementation of their own business models, which can amplify their possibilities to raise funds or support an income for their group and its members.

**Activity 3.2.1. Youth-led development of community action plan:** The 10 women-led youth groups will work together to develop an action plan which can act as a collective mission for their community efforts against VAWG. By working together, they can become stronger actors on issues and challenges faced by their fellow young women. Working together can inspire further informal community activism where change is led by community members – where the long-term aim is to build a critical mass of individuals and groups who do not tolerate VAWG.

**Activity 3.2.2. Micro-grants for women-led youth groups’ VAWG projects:** Based on their collective planning, a small grant will be provided to each of the 10 women-led youth groups for them to implement activities in line with their action plan. These small projects have to address VAWG in Kissy. The groups will submit action plans and budgets to YMCA and Dreamtown before implementation for guidance. A key requirement will be to get some community stakeholders and local duty bearers onboard during implementation. Young women play a crucial role in effecting positive transformative change by challenging political and social norms and addressing stereotypes that perpetuate VAWG. By giving the young women in the groups responsibility of their own projects, we want to position them at the center of the action process as experts. This will also develop their skills and perspectives, and future actions.

**Activity 3.3.1. Collective stakeholder mapping (youth and YMCA-SL):** An important lesson from the previous project is the need to develop a better understanding of who the most important stakeholders are, driving the agenda on VAWG in Sierra Leone. This includes identifying strong women led organisations (including CSOs and businesses), who can play an active role in advocacy activities and provide mentoring for the women led youth groups we work with. To support this process, we will facilitate a stakeholder mapping process, where YMCA-SL and the women led groups collectively identify the thought leaders on VAWG in Sierra Leone. This includes scoping the local environment in Kissy, as well as organisations operating at the national level. Relevant stakeholders identified will be involved in activity 3.3.2 below.

**Activity 3.3.2. Women-led youth group excursions undertaken to women-led organisations and social enterprises:** The women led organisations identified during the collective stakeholder mapping (Activity 3.3.1), will be linked with the women-led youth groups in Kissy. To foster learning and interaction we will undertake inspiring excursions where the women led groups, -CSOs, and -businesses can exchange experiences and ideas. This has the dual purpose of presenting the women-led youth groups with inspiring role models who can act as mentors; as well as for the Safe in the City partners to build our network of women-led actors on VAWG in Sierra Leone.

**3.8.** **Implementation plan**

The project will run from January 2023 until March 2024 – a total of 14 months. Below is an outline of the preliminary timeline of the project’s activity clusters (categorised in outputs).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **23** | **24** |
| **Activities** | **Q1** | **Q2** | **Q3** | **Q4** | **Q1** |
| **Project start-up** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 1.1.** Evidence-based programme strategy in place for Safe in the City, including a Theory of Change, Learning Framework and GESI Strategy |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 1.2.** Needs of survivors are prioritised and strategically met |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 2.1.** Safety Clubs are anchored in 10 NFEIs across Freetown, Makeni, and Kono |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 2.2.** 10 NFEIs have expanded VAWG initiatives within their local communities |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 2.3.** Advocacy network on school-based interventions on VAWG expanded |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 3.1.** 10 women-led youth groups have undertaken capacity development process |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 3.2.** 10 women-led youth groups have implemented VAWG interventions in their communities |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Output 3.3.**  Advocacy network of women-led youth groups and organisations expanded |  |  |  |  |  |
| **End of project learning and transition strategy**  |  |  |  |  |  |

**3.9. Contribution to sustainable and lasting improvements for the target groups**

The project contributes towards sustainable and lasting improvements for the target group through several important actions*. i) Partners VAWG capacities:* The intervention includes a strong focus on building the technical capacity of the lead partners on VAWG. To support this process, we will work with a technical expert team. While these activities will consume a significant portion of the budget, it is deemed key for creating lasting improvements for the target group. Not only is it expected to build the partner capacity. The goal is to institutionalize new policies and practices, which will continue to have a positive impact on the target group after the project through the partners general activities. *ii) Strengthening existing structures:* An important principle in this project is to strengthen the leadership and ownership of exiting initiatives and structures, rather than creating parallel initiatives. This includes supporting existing youth-led groups and NFEIs as catalysts for enhancing the strength, resilience, coping mechanism and agency of young women and girls living in the targeted areas. Our approach to youth-led groups will include a focus on women-led businesses who carry a social responsibility. Investing in these businesses presents an interesting case for supporting structures that are engaged in positive community development while at the same time being anchored in business models, which is key for creating sustainable and lasting improvements. *iii) Enhancing advocacy networks:* By identifying new experts in Sierra Leone working on VAWG and linking these actors to the women-led youth groups and NFEIs we work with, the ambition is to facilitate a larger network with the potential to build a stronger alliance that can engage in joint advocacy in the future. *iv) Long-term plan:* While this project contains actions expected to lead to lasting improvements for the target group within the scope of the project, we at the same time acknowledge the need to invest in this field for the long run. We aim to sustain the partnerships and change in Safe in the City, beyond a single-project cycle. This is important for building trust and increasing positive change long term, given the reality that changing social norms, values, behaviors, practices, and attitudes is a slow change journey. We therefore see this project as a bridge towards future intervention on safety for young women, why we will also use this project to gather lessons learned and evaluate results which will inform future strategies for prevention of and respond to VAWG. Some of the questions we will develop a better understanding of in this project, which will inform the more long term plans (anchored in Børnenes U-landskalender and an anticipated CISU programme) include: How formal and informal justice services handle VAWG cases; How to ensure duty bearers have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to prevent and respond to VAWG; How to establish or strengthen local level mechanisms in target areas to support VAWG survivors to access justice and related support services; How to give men and women, boys and girls the knowledge, skills and attitudes to prevent and respond to VAWG; How to improve evidence and communications on what works to prevent and respond to VAWG.

**3.10. Risks and mitigation**

The table below outlines key risks identified which can potentially affect project implementation and those involved, along with mitigation actions. We will evaluate the development of these risks, and others that might occur along the way. As part of the initial capacity building at the start of the project guided by the technical expert team, we will conduct a risk assessment focusing on SEAH and other forms of harm, which will also help determine more specific and technical strategies that need to be put in place along the way.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Risk factors** | **Mitigation actions** |
| Focus of the project further traumatises and risks harm towards survivors of violence*Likelihood:* Almost certain*Impact:* Major | * Project staff experienced in psychosocial counselling and have knowledge about support services
* Safe in the City adopts Ethical Framework and effectively manages Survivor Support Fund
* Seek out partnership with service providers
 |
| Backlash and violence to individual women as a result of community interventions *Likelihood:* Possible *Impact:* Major | * Building strong relationships with community members and securing the backing of local leaders and officials
* Support network-building and coordination between groups
* Continuous monitoring of women’s safety
* Support funds to respond to the risks of violence
 |
| Local authorities, stakeholders and duty bearers unwilling to prioritise engagement*Likelihood:* Possible*Impact:* Major | * In all activities, focus is on collaboration, engagement and active involvement of local authorities, stakeholders, and duty bearers
* They will be directly targeted through community activities with both NFEIs and youth groups
 |
| High expectations of youth groups and community members regarding benefit from project resources*Likelihood:* Almost certain*Impact:* Minor | * Managing expectations from the beginning
* Ensure necessary cost-recovery for project participants
* Project’s focus on building on sustainability models of youth groups’ projects and interventions
 |
| Sierra Leone election in 2023 causes violence and conflict with and among youth*Likelihood:* Possible*Impact:* Medium | * Project platform can incorporate focus on peaceful elections and prevention of violence during political tension
* YMCA-SL and YDC-SL have vast experience with peace building for youth and operating in political tension
 |
| COVID-19 continues as a health risk*Likelihood:* Possible*Impact:* Major | * Implementation in line with standard operating procedures, and activities conducted considering social distancing, availability of protective gear and hygiene materials
* Re-allocated funds for internet connection for participants
* Working with toll free services to ensure access to support and mentoring for the target groups
 |

***Management of a Survivor Support Fund as a risk mitigation mechanism:*** A survivor support fund (Activity 1.2.1.) is implemented to centre survivors of violence and prioritise their needs which is key for the intervention’s ethical approach. This activity contributes to important learning. Sierra Leone is a complex context to operate in when it comes to ensuring access to relevant and appropriate services for survivors of violence. Experience from the first phase of the project showed us that it is very difficult to foresee the level of costs related to responding to cases. In this light, the Survivor Support Fund is implemented to ensure (as far as possible in the scope of the project’s budgetary constraints) that survivors’ needs can be met. This is best practice as we often find survivors will reach out for help when doing prevention work. Therefore, a substantial amount is prioritised in the budget as we need to be able to appropriately support them if/when they do.

**3.11. Plans for monitoring and learning**

Below is an overview of Safe in the City’s monitoring, evaluation and learning elements, which also cut across all Dreamtown’s projects. These approaches are put in place to be able to monitor project progress at an ongoing basis and adjust were needed.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MEL elements** | **Timing + Methods used** | **Responsible**  | **Data shared with** |
| Baseline  | Start of project: Capacity assessment tools | All partners and technical expert team | All partners |
| Activity reports  | Weekly: Participant registration; Participant activity evaluations; Activity photos | YMCA-SL and YDC-SL project team and M&E team | Feed into narrative reports to Dreamtown; Photos and updates shared on WhatsApp |
| Narrative and financial progress reports | Quarterly: Dreamtown format for narrative and financial reports | YMCA-SL and YDC-SL project managers | Dreamtown |
| Monitoring visits | Yearly: Project community visits; Informal interviews with target group; Dialogue with partners | Dreamtown project lead | YDC-SL and YMCA-SL; Feed into reports for CISU and development of documentation for communication and evidence |
| Stories of change/community interviews | Ongoing: Photos and videos; Written stories | YDC-SL and YMCA-SL project team in collaboration with Dreamtown | Feed into development of documentation for communication and advocacy efforts |
| Learning sessions with technical experts | Monthly: Online learning sessions between YDC-SL, YMCA-SL, Dreamtown and technical experts | Technical expert team and Dreamtown | YDC-SL, YMCA-SL and Dreamtown internally |
| Partner monitoring and learning meetings | Quarterly: Physical and online reflection meetings between all partners | YDC-SL and YMCA-SL project teams and Dreamtown project lead | YDC-SL, YMCA-SL and Dreamtown internally |
| End of project report | End of project: Target group interviews and end of project survey; CISU format for final report | YDC-SL, YMCA-SL and Dreamtown | CISU; Target groups |

***Notes on impact measurement:*** We have purposefully not set out any specific goals regarding reduction of cases of violence, as measurement of this goes beyond the scope of this project. In addition, mobilising data on cases of VAWG is an extremely sensitive area. Official data in this field is highly unreliable, and therefore there is little chance that such attempted measurement would as well be reliable. Therefore, we do rely on more qualitative means of measurements when it comes to evaluating the project’s impact on the empowerment, inclusion, and safety of young women. Here, we look for changes in young women’s perceived empowerment and safety, based in their own self-assessment, along with changes observed by the project partners and community actors around them.

***Monitoring changes in partners’ and actors’ capacity:*** In our monitoring of the Safe in the City partners’ capacity to address VAWG, we will focus on knowledge gain, shifts in personal beliefs, and application of knowledge over time. We will use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to measure this – this could e.g., include a quantitative tool used to assess knowledge, whilst qualitative tools such as vignettes and PRA tools (e.g., scenario or case-based tools) are better when it comes to understanding shifts in personal beliefs. Focus of the monitoring will be to incorporate the knowledge and opinions of people in the planning and management of the project all along.

***Complaint mechanisms and safeguarding:*** YMCA-SL and YDC-SL both operate with Safeguarding policies in all projects, to help detect actual or suspected wrongdoing within the organisation, to protect anyone who reports such incidents, and to address issues raised appropriately. Dreamtown operates according to our Code of Conduct, which outlines principles and practises for our activities. Dreamtown has an online complaint mechanism where anyone can submit reports on misconduct. In this project, as part of the capacity building under specific objective 1, we will collaborate across the partnership to develop Safe in the City specific safeguarding principles and clear, accessible, and well-understood Feedback and Complaints Mechanisms at a project specific level. The capacity building training will also include a focus on developing an Ethical Framework outlining approaches to monitoring data that protect the confidentiality and dignity of survivors of violence.

**4. Project-related information work in Denmark**

The overall purpose of the information work will be to broaden the understanding among the Danish population about the issues and context of safety for women in Sierra Leone. The final content and formats of the intervention-related information work will be developed by Dreamtown’s Communication and Engagement team, led by Simon Sticker, Head of Communication and Stories. Materials could include photos, case stories, and short videos for web and social media – which will feed into Dreamtown’s overall communication strategy. The communication will be directed towards young urban people as well as other organisations, who make up Dreamtown’s two key target groups in Denmark. The information work will focus on building strong cases around the young people’s work and change stories and be developed into inspirational case stories that show how young people take lead in creating safer communities.

**5. Supplementary financing -** N/A

1. *Safe in the City External End-Line Evaluation by Amanda Bangura and Saiku Bah;* At the time of submitting this proposal, the final version of the evaluation report of Safe in the City is under review. Throughout this proposal, references are made to the evaluation to give a good insight to final learnings of the first phase of the project. The final evaluation report will be submitted to CISU along with the final project report following the project milestones. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls is a global programme working across the world building the evidence base on What Works to prevent violence in low-middle income settings (<https://www.whatworks.co.za/about/about-what-works>). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Data from Rainbo Initiative [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Sierra Express Media (2022): https://sierraexpressmedia.com/?p=89463 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. UN Women (2020): https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/sierra-leone [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. World Economic Forum, the Global Gender Gap Report 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. WHO (2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Heise, L. (1998). Violence against women, an integrated, ecological framework. Violence Against Women 4(4), 262-290. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Nandini, Singh R.; Prem, Shankar; Kshitij, Raj; Ravi, Shankar; Mohan, Majhi M. (2022): Non-partner sexual violence victimization among female medical undergraduates. Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. WHO (2021): On behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence Against Women Estimation and Data [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2004) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. UK Aid (2016): Shifiting Social Norms to tackle Violence against Women and Girls [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. UNFPA (UN Population Fund) (2005) ‘Gender-based Violence in Sierra Leone: A Case Study’. New York: UNFPA. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. R. Jewkes, S. Willan, L. Heise, L. Washington, N. Shai, A. Kerr-Wilson and N. Christofides (2020). Effective design and implementation elements in interventions to prevent violence against women and girls. What Works to Prevent VAWG? Global Programme Synthesis Product

Series. Pretoria: South African Medical Research Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Jewkes, et al. (2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Violence against women and girls is defined by UN Women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. UN Women (2004): https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/9/ebola-outbreak-takes-its-toll-on-women [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Beoku-Betts J., M’Cormack-Hale F. (2022): War, Women and Post-conflict Empowerment - Lessons from Sierra Leone [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. https://theconversation.com/we-used-performing-arts-to-map-out-gender-violence-in-sierra-leone-what-we-found-164167 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Medium (2022): https://medium.com/@sesaypremier/sierra-leone-campaigners-disappointed-as-govt-fails-to-guarantee-rape-victim-right-to-remedy-bd9e264c74df [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. https://sierraleone.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-based-violence-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. https://www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sierra-Leone-Gender-Based-Violence-EN-2007.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. The NFEIs engaged through the project include: *Kono:* Women Development Initiative; Konomusu Skills Training Center; Progressive Women Association Skills Training Center; Women Technical Vocational Center. *Makeni:* Abako Vocational Training Center; Sierra Leone Adult Education Association; Makama Baptist Vocational Traning Center. *Freetown:* Youth Dream Center; Women in Action Vocational Training Center; Beaconfields Vocational Training Center. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. [file (whatworks.co.za)](https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/374-evidence-reviewfweb/file) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)