FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

*The WAY Forward for Peace: Women and Youth Unite for Peace and Violence Prevention in Bayelsa State*

By

Pro-active Research and Development International

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<td>CI</td>
<td>Confidence Interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>Search for Common Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARDI</td>
<td>Proactive Research and Development International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Conflict and Stabilization Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPF</td>
<td>Nigeria Police Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSCDC</td>
<td>Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Evaluability Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<td>KII</td>
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<td>ODI</td>
<td>Overseas Development Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>Population Proportional to Sample techniques</td>
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<td>ToC</td>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
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<td>WAY</td>
<td>Women and Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOTD</td>
<td>Women Only Transformative Dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOTD</td>
<td>Youth Only Transformative Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCD</td>
<td>Transformative Community Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAD</td>
<td>Peace Architecture Dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>EWER</td>
<td>Early Warning Early Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>Higher National Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMEL</td>
<td>Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>National Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OND</td>
<td>Ordinary National Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCVE</td>
<td>Preventing and Countering Violence Extremism</td>
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<td>PMF</td>
<td>Project Monitoring Framework</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>RF</td>
<td>Result Framework</td>
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<td>PT</td>
<td>Participatory theatre</td>
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<td>INEC</td>
<td>Independent National Electoral Commission</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisations</td>
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<td>NCDC</td>
<td>Nigeria Centre for Disease Control</td>
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Executive Summary

The report presents the findings from the evaluation of the WAY Forward for Peace: Women and Youth Unite for Peace and Violence Prevention in Bayelsa State project funded by the United States Department of State’s Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO). The project which seeks primarily to strengthen community resilience to violence during the pre- and post-election period in high-risk areas of Bayelsa State, by accomplishing two specific objectives namely: (i) To foster youth- and women-led platforms for violence prevention during the pre- and post-election period; and (ii) To build community resilience to violence, including cult violence, for the pre- and post-election periods and beyond.

The final evaluation collected data in 5 communities across 5 LGAs in Bayelsa State namely: Twon Brass in Brass LGA; Ogbolomabiri in Nembe LGA; Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA; Sagbama town in Sagbama LGA and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw LGA, to assess implementation strategy, performance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and to track the prevailing status of the key project implementation performance indicators, against which progress was assessed. The final evaluation study was conducted over a period of 8 weeks between 28th September and 28th November 2020. The study adopted a mixed research design and utilised both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect primary data, whilst also drawing from systematic desk review of relevant project documents including the project proposal and logical framework to collect secondary information. Quantitative approaches utilized Community Survey techniques to administer, collate and analyse data from 338 respondents of which 188 are male and 150 females, whilst Qualitative approaches including key informant interviews and focus group discussions gathered data from 44 KII respondents and 15 FGD sessions comprising 120 discussants.

Key Findings

Findings from KII with project staff and FGD with key stakeholders revealed that the project adopted a participatory, inclusive, and multi-stakeholder approach in implementing the activities outlined for the project. Women, youth, other marginalised groups and CSOs were integrated in the programming. Media, community dialogues and capacity building were used to achieve the project’s goal and objective. Survey findings evidently indicate that a majority of the respondents (64 percent) agree that collaboration exists between diverse stakeholders aimed at mitigating election related risk. This confirms that the WAY forward project design was not only appropriately suited to the context of implementation but properly implemented to achieve its aims and objectives.

Findings from the evaluation revealed that the project leveraged the capacity of women and youth to influence conflict and violence dynamics in the various communities. Survey responses show a significant increase in the number of local women playing key roles in peace building processes and actively supporting peaceful electoral processes as collaborated by a majority of the respondents representing 72 percent.

Survey responses revealed that youth aged 18-35years have played a positive and active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes in their various communities as indicated by 76 percent respondents. This was collaborated by the significant increase in the number of youth actively participating in the various youth led peaceful advocacy on prevention of electoral violence, political thuggery and the need for peaceful co-existence in communities as indicated by 49 percent of respondents who strongly agree that the community has witnessed an increase in the number of youth engaged in civic activities to promote peace.
The youth and women of this community are part of the WAY ambassadors, EWER and other dialogue platforms of the Search for Common Ground and they have been very much involved in the awareness campaign for peaceful processes in the community like never witnessed before in our community. We now have more youths and women taking the lead in preaching messages of peace and encouraging nonviolent processes”. FGD with EWER beneficiaries/Male/ 31years/Ekeremor town. The evaluation also showed positive changes even among community members who did not participate in the project, suggesting a strong multiplier effect.

Findings revealed an increase in the number of people participating in Search for Common Ground (Search) activities such as training and events designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation as indicated by 29 percent of the respondents. KII and FGD discussants also suggested an increase and expansion in Search activities to reach more communities and individuals so that a larger proportion of the communities can be reached as more people indicate willingness to participate.

The study revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an observable impact on the conflict dynamics, project objectives, implementation, and sustainability of the project as indicated by 39 percent of survey respondents. Majority of the respondents (79 percent) are of the opinion that the impact is negative on the communities while only 21 percent view the impact as positive.

Negative Impact of the Pandemic

- The intra-state lockdown and movement restriction imposed by the state government affected the project's field visits and activity implementation schedule for about 3 to 4 months. This in some cases distorted the activity calendar. It also affected the occupation and means of livelihood of residents of the project target communities as people were unable to provide their basic needs.

Due to the COVID-19 movement restrictions, project staff adopted a contingency plan of implementing activities by proxy as field trips were no longer possible, "our coordinators from Search could not always be present during the lockdown period due to the travel restrictions set by the government. So we found it difficult to implement some of the things we were taught. You know we are still learning, and we always looked forward to their inputs in the implementation of the program. (FGD discussant/female/Sagbama town/Sagbama LGA).

Positive Impact of the pandemic

- The health advisories and enlightenment campaigns all over the media created awareness on personal hygiene.
- Relationships between community members were strengthened during the lockdown.
- The situation led to the adoption of innovative techniques of activity implementation which were not thought possible before. Furthermore, the change in context led to activity modification, incorporating the use of radio, social media and other virtual platforms.

On the sustainability of the project, respondents observed that having successfully built the capacity of community, women, and youth leaders to effectively facilitate dialogues and mediation, they will use the knowledge and skills acquired to sustain community peacebuilding processes currently in place. Also, the established WhatsApp group will continuously be used as an early warning platform and for coordinated communication between community focal persons and platforms such as; the WAY Ambassadors, the EWER mechanism, WOTD and YOTD platforms.
The major study limitation is the inability of the evaluation team to physically reach Twon Brass of Brass LGA due to the heightened criminal activity of sea pirates, kidnappers and robbers on the community major access road.

The study learnt that youth rely heavily on social media for information and only a few of them listen to radio. Therefore, projects should be designed to incorporate the use of social media and other virtual platforms to easily reach the youth.

The assessment recommends that the project be extended to other LGAs and communities where there are strained relationships, violent conflicts, thuggery, and cultism. The study suggested the addition of livelihood components to future project design and implementation in the state and the use of local dialects to facilitate project activities and events.
## Key Findings on Indicators

### Table 1: Key findings on indicators

<table>
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<th>Impact</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Final Evaluation Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.1. Women and youth play a positive and active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes.</td>
<td>GNDR-10: % increase in number of local women participating in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process supported with USG assistance. % increase in number of youths engaged in civic activities to promote peace</td>
<td>Findings revealed that the project leveraged on the capacity of women to influence conflict and violence dynamics at the various communities. Survey responses show a significant increase in the number of local women playing key roles in peace building processes and actively supporting peaceful electoral processes as collaborated by a majority of the respondents representing 72 percent. Survey responses revealed that youths aged 18-35 years have played a positive and active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes in their various communities as indicated by 76 percent respondents. This was collaborated by the significant increase in the number of youths actively participating in the various youth led peaceful advocacy on prevention of electoral violence, political thuggery, and the need for peaceful co-existence in communities as indicated by 49 percent of respondents who strongly agree that the community has witnessed an increase in the number of youths engaged in civic activities to promote peace. The evaluation also showed positive changes even among community members who did not participate in the project, suggesting a strong multiplier effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Diverse stakeholders (community, local authorities, and civil society) jointly collaborate with women and youth to mitigate and respond to election-related risks.</td>
<td>PS.6.2-4 - % increase in the number of people participating in USG-supported events, trainings, or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation</td>
<td>Findings revealed an increase in the number of people participating in Search activities such as training and events designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation as indicated by 29 percent of the respondents. KII and FGD discusssants also suggested an increase and expansion in Search activities to reach more communities and individuals so that a larger proportion of the communities can be reached as more people are willing to participate.</td>
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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In Bayelsa state, widespread violence, mass election rigging, killing, and destruction of properties were witnessed in the runoff to the 2019 presidential elections. Over time, LGAs such as Southern Ijaw, Ekeremor, Brass, Nembe, and Yenagoa witnessed increasing political violence and were at high risk for election violence in the upcoming gubernatorial elections of October 2020.

Within this context, vulnerable and at-risk youth require positive alternatives to violence. Search for Common Ground’s recent conflict assessment in Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta states, found that cultism and the struggle for political power were the top conflict drivers in Bayelsa, with core drivers of violence being youth unemployment and youth marginalization from decision making and public life. Male youth were highlighted as being most involved in perpetuating violence. Notably, Bayelsa state had the highest number of responses indicating that female youth, boys, and girls support violence particularly linked to cultism. Young women were identified as providing information to and hideouts for cultists and their weapons, while boys and girls as young as 13 years, serve (knowingly or otherwise) as messengers and arms carriers for cultists. Reportedly, these boys and girls are being groomed to join the cults when they are older.

Increasing poverty levels due to the misappropriation of public funds by government actors, leaves youths susceptible to political manipulation through financial reward by politicians who rely on them to perpetrate violence, especially through existing cult groups. Proliferation of arms and the predisposition of these cult groups to violence, intertwine and create a precarious situation for violence in the months before the elections. It is therefore critical to present these youth with resources for information, influence, and empowerment to play positive roles during the elections as key contributors to violence prevention as well as gatekeepers of sustained peace in the aftermath of elections.

Marginalization of women and girls in public life combined with few socio-economic opportunities also fuel grievances. Bayelsa State has not elected women to the National Assembly - and the only woman from Bayelsa State sitting in the assembly was nominated to replace a representative. In the last election, only nine women were cleared to contest for the State House of Assembly seats as against 135 men. The composition of the 2019 House of Assembly is predominantly male in all the declared results of the election. Out of 24 seats, only three women were elected into the last State House of Assembly in 2015. And only one woman - has ever contested as party flag bearer in the State’s gubernatorial election. Political appointments into the State Executive Council have offered no reprieve for gender equity in the state, as women have been marginalized. The 35% affirmative action that was supposed
to offer a better representation to women in the different institutions seems not to have been institutionalized in Bayelsa State. In the context of persistent marginalization in political and public life, women’s needs, concerns, and viewpoints remain unaddressed. Recent trends indicate that women who hitherto where victims of violence related to elections, have now been incorporated into this violence, likely in reaction to lack of constructive roles to play in the electoral process.

With funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), Search implemented a 12-month project from September 2019 to November 2020 to strengthen community resilience to violence during the pre- and post-electoral period in high-risk areas of Bayelsa State.

As part of the project’s conclusion plan, Search commissioned an independent final assessment to provide objective measures upon which to track project implementation and benchmark implementation effectiveness and impact at end phase.

This report provides the comprehensive findings of the evaluation assessment. It is organized into seven sections as follows:

► Section 1: Introduction
► Section 2: Project Description
► Section 3: Evaluation Purpose, Ethics, and Quality Assurance
► Section 4: Methodology
► Section 5: Respondent’s Background Characteristics /Socio-demographic
► Section 6: Main Finding
► Section 7: Conclusion
► Section 8: Recommendations

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SECTION TWO: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project overview

The project, the WAY forward for Peace (Women and Youth Unite for Peace and Violence Prevention in Bayelsa State project) was implemented in five communities across 5 LGAs of the State (Twon Brass in Brass LGA: Ogbolomabiri in Nembe LGA; Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA; Sagbama town in Sagbama LGA and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw LGA). The project capitalized on Search’s existing conflict prevention programming in Bayelsa State, to elevate women and youth as leaders of peace and security in their communities. The project’s overall goal is to strengthen community resilience to violence during the pre- and post-election period in high-risk areas of Bayelsa State, oriented around accomplishing two specific objectives namely:

1. To foster youth- and women-led platforms for violence prevention during the pre- and post-election period
2. To build community resilience to violence, including cult violence, for the pre- and post-election periods and beyond.

The project aims to achieve this through, scaling up impact, supporting violence free elections and building longer term resilience to violence. To accomplish its goals, four major activity strands were ingrained under the specific objectives of the project, focused on addressing identified drivers.

Table 2: showing project objectives, specific activities and expected outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Expected Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. To foster youth- and women-led platforms for violence prevention during the pre- and post-election period | 1. Peace Architecture dialogue  
2. Capacity support to women and youths (WAY) peace ambassadors  
3. EWER training to communities, Government, and Civil Society  
4. Creation of situation room | 1. Women and youth play a positive and active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes.  
2. Diverse stakeholders (community, local authorities, and civil society) jointly collaborate with women and youth to mitigate and respond to election-related risks. |
| 2. To build community resilience to violence, including cult violence, for the pre- and post-election periods and beyond. | 1. Peace and unity campaigns  
2. Youth-led participatory theatre  
3. Transformative Community Dialogues  
4. Women only and youth only transformative dialogues | 1. Communities have greater access to peace messaging and accurate information about the elections.  
2. Communities have strengthened dialogue platforms to build community resilience to violence. |
2.2 Project’s Theory of Change (ToC)

2.2.1 Synoptic Overview
For a desired change, the underlying logic of the project, is to strengthen the capacity of women and youth who have potential and influence over conflict and violence dynamics at the community level in order to play positive role for peace and violence prevention in collaboration with other key stakeholders aimed at reducing risks for election related violence in Bayelsa State.

As illustrated in the ToC model in Box 1, the project relies on integrating youths, women, civil society, government and security agencies to accomplish the desired goals, with the expectation that community resilience to violence will be strengthened and risks for election-related violence will be reduced. The three approaches adopted are outlined below

I. implement awareness raising and sensitization techniques;
II. empower marginalized and at-risk populations, particularly women and youth, to positively participate in the election process; and
III. strengthen community-led, collective action towards non-violence through a multi-stakeholder approach.

If women and youth who have potential or existing influence over conflict and violence dynamics at the community level, have strengthened capacity to play a positive role for peace and violence prevention in collaboration with other key stakeholders;

THEN community resilience to violence will be strengthened and risks for election-related violence will be reduced;

BECAUSE women and youth are critical actors for supporting
SECTION THREE: EVALUATION PURPOSE, ETHICS, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.1 Overview
The purpose of the final evaluation is to ascertain the prevailing situation of the main elements (strategy adopted, performance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact) of the project quantitatively and qualitatively in target communities after the period of implementation. The survey is also expected to review the project’s key indicators (Annex 1) with a view to updating the indicator framework, where appropriate, and providing an effective basis upon which to monitor project performance.

3.2 Scope of work
In conducting the final evaluation, the five targeted LGAs and communities of implementation were selected for primary data collection (Twon Brass in Brass LGA; Ogbolomabiri in Nembe LGA; Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA; Sagbama town in Sagbama LGA and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw LGA). Data collection in Twon Brass of Brass LGA was done remotely via telephone due to insecurity.

3.3 Purpose of the Evaluation
The evaluation seeks to examine the extent to which the project’s objectives were achieved. The specific objectives of the evaluation are as thus:

i. To determine the outcomes and impact of the project since inception to date in building community resilience to violence.

ii. To determine the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the project, including who contributed to or hindered these, and what lessons we can learn.

iii. To determine to what extent the project built and/or leveraged on the capacity of women and youth to have potential or existing influence over conflict and violence dynamics at the community, LGA and state level, and the impact of this influence.

iv. To examine the extent the intervention has been coordinated with the efforts of the communities, LGA and government in ending electoral violence.

v. To determine the extent to which the COVID 19 pandemic affected the conflict, project objectives, implementation, and sustainability.

3.4 Evaluation Ethics and Quality Assurance

3.4.1 Ethical Considerations
Stringent ethical considerations were emphasized throughout the period of data collection.

- The anonymity of evaluation respondents was guaranteed, and their recruitment was based on voluntary and informed consent.

- Deliberate and conscious measures were taken to ensure, promote and preserve the principles and tenets of gender equality, sensitivity, and responsiveness throughout the study process.

- The cultural norms and values of the project communities was respected and acknowledged through the study. Gender disaggregated consultations were held with community respondents and direct project target populations.

- Enumerators were trained on the principles of respectful consultation and do-no harm. Tools were designed and delivered in conflict sensitive ways to not only ‘do no harm’ but also ‘do better’. Integrating appreciative inquiry was one method used to ensure conflict sensitivity.

- Prior to the commencement of interviews, participants were informed of the ultimate benefits that the study would have for them. They were also informed of their right to withdraw their consent from the study at any time whilst being clear that refusal to participate, will not impact on their suitability to receive ongoing or future project support from Search.
3.4.2 Gender and Conflict sensitive considerations

- The study team liaised with the Search team to ensure that community mobilization and initial introduction of the study team was led by Search staff. This ensured that evaluation staff were accorded the best possible community support during field data gathering.
- The study team clarified its role as independent and impartial experts hired by Search, with no political affiliations to parties involved in the prevailing conflict.
- In the selection of respondents, the team worked closely with Search’s community mobilisers and community leaders or their mandated representatives to ensure open, transparent, and equitable as well as gender responsive targeting and respondent selection.
- Considering sensitivities around conflict, violence and extremism, survey and interview instruments were carefully framed and administered to avoid inflammatory questions. Very sensitive issues will as much as possible be discussed with adequately debriefed individuals or small groups.
- In cognisance of existing cultural and political as well as gender and age based social hierarchies in the context and the attendant differential power relations, the principles of participatory and inclusive approaches were employed to ensure safe and empowering spaces are facilitated to promote free and open respondent consultations.
- Cognisant of the fact that the presence of an external evaluation team could raise both tensions and expectations amongst the community respondents, prior to community entry and data gathering, the study team were introduced to key community leaders and village authority figures to inform them of the study, its objectives, respondent groups, targeting criteria and implications as well as garner their support and permission to conduct the study.

3.4.3 Quality Assurance Strategy

A multi-level data quality assurance strategy was employed as thus;

- Survey tools were developed in strict compliance to the requirements of the ToR and harmonized to the key indicator areas in the Project Monitoring Framework.
- To ensure that the specific themes of interest to Search are sufficiently captured in the study tools, draft tools were shared with Search’s M&E Manager for review and approval before deployment for data collection.
- Local enumerators conversant with the local language and culture where recruited and trained on the study tool administration process, child safeguarding, gender, and conflict sensitivity. Following the training, a field test was conducted to allow enumerators experience data collection in contexts like the enumeration communities. Feedback from field testing was used to review the tools for quality and user-friendliness.
- Prior to field deployment, questionnaires were coded onto Kobo-collect software and programmed in such a way that skip patterns are designed in and data errors are easily flagged up for enumerators to correct before the software will allow access to subsequent questionnaire sections.
- A field data supervisor was recruited and trained to monitor data collection activities including enumerator/interviewer performance via spot observation of interviews with participants. Through this, the supervisor ensured that questions were asked appropriately whilst providing non-intrusive on the spot feedback to data collectors.
- As the data collection was real-time, a research assistant was recruited. He designed and implemented daily quality control checks on the data sets that are automatically uploaded from the field and provide feedback to the Lead Consultant for daily debriefing of field supervisors and field teams. The foregoing is expected to enhance data accuracy, as the process adds onto similar daily checks that will be conducted by lead researcher and research assistant.
approach ensured a system of early detection of data errors, rapid feedback and quick response to rectify errors in real time while the data collection continues uninterrupted.

SECTION FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview
A mixed study design was adopted for the evaluation. The method incorporates the use of qualitative and quantitative result-based approach and which brought the perspectives of different stakeholders together through a participatory and solution-oriented process that includes women, youth, and other marginalized groups. Project’s result framework/indicator framework served as a survey guiding document. The study was implemented in three sequenced stages as illustrated in figure 2. Ancillary information on the context and project elements was collected through systematic document review, followed by primary data collection using survey and interview techniques Key Informant Interview” (KII) and “Focus Group Discussion” (FGD) techniques. Whilst survey techniques community survey questionnaire designed onto kobo collect software, KIIIs and FGDs were respectively conducted using pre designed paper based semi-structured discussion guides covering the key themes of the study. To mitigate the risk of gathering a high load of asymmetric data, as well as to ease both the documentation and comparability of responses collected, the study adopted a common data collection approach, such that the structure of respondents’ consultations across the communities visited was streamlined. In-depth interviews were also conducted with three key project staff including the Project Coordinator, DMEL officer and Field Officer to assess context, strategy of implementation, efficiency and effectiveness of implementation.

Stage 1:
Systematic documentary review of existing contextual data, project strategy document, monitoring framework and project proposal documents

Stage 2:
Field data collection using pre-designed, tested and approved baseline study tools

Stage 3:
Data collation, cleaning, analysis and synthesis including the development and finalization of draft

Figure 1: Process framework used in conducting the evaluation
As shown in table 3 above, a total of 400 respondents were targeted but 338 were reached across 4 of the 5 communities targeted. The evaluation team were unable to physically reach Brass LGA due to the heightened criminal activity of sea pirates (kidnapping for ransom and hijack of boats).

**Qualitative data collection**
Table 4: KII and FGD Sample Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
<th>Communities in LGAs of Intervention</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twon</td>
<td>Ogbolomabiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant Interview (KII)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional leaders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Leaders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Leaders aged 18-35years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWER Focal points</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key INEC Official</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of security agencies: NSCDC and Police DPOs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFCG project staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA officials</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Focus Group Discussions (FGD)          |      |              |               |               |         |
| WAY ambassadors                        | 0    | 1            | 1             | 1             | 1       | 4     |
| Participants of Women Only Dialogue platform | 0    | 1            | 1             | 1             | 1       | 4     |
| Participants of TCD                    | 0    | 1            | 1             | 1             | 1       | 4     |
| Youth Only Dialogue                    | 0    | 1            | 1             | 1             | 1       | 4     |
| TOTAL                                  |      |              |               |               |         | 16    |

A total of 45 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders within the project communities including four (4) Search project staff. Also, a total of 16 FDG were conducted instead of the 20 targeted with critical stakeholders at four of the five project communities. The survey team could not reach Brass
LGA to conduct the FGDs due to insecurity, but more interviews were conducted in Twon Brass LGA via telephone to collaborate findings. A total of 8 discussants participated in each of the 16 FGDs conducted reaching a total of 128 discussants.

**Data Analysis**

The study adopted an integrated analytical process. Firstly, quantitative data was transferred from Kobo and collated in excel for cleaning; following which the data was transferred to the social statistics analysis software SPSS, where elements related to the key indicators of interest were analysed at univariate and bi-variate levels to reflect simple percentages and then synthesized for triangulation with other data sources. All quantitative analytical tests were subject to a 95 percent Confidence Interval (CI) and 5 percent margin of error. On the part of the qualitative data, the interview notes and manuscripts from the various consultations were first transcribed and translated, then categorized before being analysed by traditional ethnographic approaches categorization and summarization of responses. Summaries were compared to identify common trends and these were triangulated with findings from survey and desk review to synthesize study perspectives.

**4.2 Limitations and Challenges**

The major study limitations were operational, relating mostly to difficulties encountered with regards to the mobilization of study respondents and the inability of the evaluation team to physically reach Brass LGA due to the heightened criminal activity of sea pirates (kidnapping for ransom and hijack of boats). Also, there were delays in conducting KIIIs with stakeholders due to the processes followed for clearance before the interview could be conducted. These impeded the keeping to timelines of the survey.
SECTION FIVE: RESPONDENTS’ BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

5.1 Respondents Geographical Distribution
The study covered five communities across 5 LGAs in Bayelsa State covering Twon Brass in Brass LGA: Ogbolomabiri in Nembe LGA; Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA; Sagbama town in Sagbama LGA and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw LGA.

A total of 338 respondents were reached across the five communities of project implementation. 23.1% of the respondents were reached in Ogbolomabiri of Nembe LGA, 29.6% in Ekeremor town of Ekeremor LGA, 25.4% in Sagbama town of Sagbama LGA and 21.9% in Oporoma community of Southern Ijaw LGA. Questionnaires were not administered in Twon Brass of Brass LGA due to the inability of the team to access the locality due to the increased activities of sea pirates and kidnappers.

The study interviewed 30 critical stakeholders via telephone interview to assess the current context and trend in the various communities of the LGA.

5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

5.2.1 Gender and Marital distribution
Comparatively, there was a slight male dominance (56 percent) to female (44 percent) in the evaluation despite a consciousness to accomplish equal gender sampling (Figure 4). The seeming less availability of women in sampling areas may however reflect the influence of existing cultural constraints on women’s availability and participation in matters of conflict, violent extremism, and peacebuilding. The margin of difference in gender response is not as it was in the project inception, there has been a significant improvement as revealed from desk review of project documents.

Marital Status
Findings reveal that a majority of the respondents representing 57% are married while 39% are single basically youths aged 18 -35years. Only 4% of the respondents are widowed, separated, and divorced.
5.2.2 Disability and type of disability distribution
The population of the differently abled in the overall sample was noticeably low with 3 respondents representing 1 percent and the remaining 99 percent are abled.

Findings also reveal that out of the 3 persons living with disability interviewed, 1 respondent, representing 33% is blind while the remaining 2 representing 67% are crippled. This shows that data was collected in an inclusive manner by including Persons Living with Disability (PLWD).

5.2.3 Age distribution
The age distribution in the sample is distinctive of a youth burgeoning population. There was a predominance of youths in the 18-35 years bracket representing 52 percent, compared to older adults aged 36-69 years representing 48 percent of the respondents.
The WAY Forward for Peace: Women and Youth Unite for Peace and Violence Prevention in Bayelsa State

Final Evaluation Report
November 2020

Figure 6: shows the age distribution of respondents

Considering the vulnerabilities of youths to conflict and electoral violence, the project targeting mostly youth and women is quite appropriate and reflective of Search’s conversance of the sociodemographic dynamics bellying violent conflicts in Bayelsa State.

5.2.4 Occupation and employment status of respondents

In terms of socio-economic profiling, findings indicate that most respondents (49 percent) are self-employed (trader/small business owners) and have rarely worked in the 12 months prior to the study, those that have worked within the period were mostly employed part-time. Of these, a majority (52 percent) are youths (18-35 years). Amongst the other occupation category, most respondents (28%) were predominantly daily informal labourers who seek jobs in the bigger towns surrounding their communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (Trader/small business owner/Farmer/Herder/Motorcycle rider)</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector employee (Company, Bank, etc.)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development worker (CSO/NGO/Agency employee)</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government worker (Public/Civil servant, Teacher, Nurse, etc.)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily labourer, Hunting, fishing</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: What is your major occupation?

Figure 8: Have you worked in the last 12 months?

Figure 9: Status

Figures 7: Occupation and employment status amongst respondents
Figure 8: shows responses on work period
Figure 9: shows the employment status of respondents.
The employment profiling of the sample population seemingly confirms that Search’s project intervention is well suited to the context of implementation. Indeed, the link between the vulnerability of unemployed youths to conflict and electoral violence cannot be over emphasized. Of equally remarkable insight, is the very high unemployment rates (lower socioeconomic level) amongst women and youths together with their very low level of educational attainment hints at the unique vulnerability of women and youths to electoral violence, as witnessed in recent times. This finding further presents a distinctive opportunity to intensify efforts in employment creation through the inclusion of livelihood programmes in future project design and implementation in the state.

5.2.5 Ethnicity/Religion
Findings from the study revealed that majority of the respondents representing 95 percent are Christians, 2.6 percent are traditional worshippers, 0.2 percent practice Islam while the remaining 1.2 percent did not affiliate themselves to any religion. This shows that Christianity is the most prominent religion in the project target communities’, reflecting the picture in the wider context of the state.

In terms of ethnic extraction as depicted in figure 6 below, Ijaw accounted for the vast majority (62 percent); followed by Izon (19 percent), then Nembe (15 percent); with Igbo accounting for 4 percent.

![Figure 10: Tribe/ Ethnic distribution of respondents in the study sample](image)
![Figure 11: Shows the distribution of respondents based on religion](image)

The ethnic and religious patterns in the context of Search’s project communities gave an insight into the vulnerabilities associated with ethnic and religious perceptions of bias amongst project beneficiaries around access to or level of participation in project interventions. Ethnic or religious differences (whether imagined) can increase social tensions, agitations, and violent contestations particularly in a context where traces of historical legacies of ethnic bias and perceptions of injustice endure amongst some of the prevailing ethnic groups. Review of project documents reveals an inclusive selection of project beneficiaries in different target communities to reflect the various ethnic groups and religions.

5.2.6 Educational profile of respondents
Most respondents (42 percent) have secondary school certification, about 20 percent have OND, NCE and ND, 16 percent are graduates with HND and B.Sc., 1 percent are postgraduate degree holders, 2 percent are undergraduate, and 8 percent have primary qualification while 11 percent have no qualification at all.
Figure 12: Level of educational accomplishments of respondents

This shows that a majority of the respondents representing 81% have the educational acumen to properly digest and respond to questions asked during the study with answers precisely tailored to questions. It also strengthens the validity of findings.
5.2.7 Number of years lived in the Community of Study

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents based on the Number of Years they have lived in the Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than six Months</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six to 12 Months</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings revealed that 73.6 percent of the respondents have lived for more than 5 years in their current community of residence, 12 percent have lived for 3 – 5 years, 6.2 percent have lived for 1-2 years, 5 percent lived for less than six months, and 2.9 percent of the respondents have lived in the community for six to 12 months. As revealed, a majority of the respondents (73.6%) have lived for more than five years in the project target communities and are very conversant with the context and conflict dynamics which equips them with the relevant knowledge to give valid information about the changes in context.

5.3 Respondent’s Knowledge of the Project

5.3.1. Response on awareness, participation, and usefulness of project activity

Figure 13: Awareness of the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14: Have you participated in any of the project activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: Did you find the activity useful?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13, 14 and 15: shows the distribution of respondents on awareness, participation, and usefulness of project activity
**Awareness:** Findings reveal that 62 percent of respondents are not aware of the WAY Forward project recently implemented by Search in their community, 30 percent are aware of the project while 8 percent of the respondents do not know anything about what is being discussed.

**Participation in the project:** Findings from the analysis of participation of respondents in the project activities reveals that; out of the 30 percent respondents that stated that they are aware of Search’s project implemented in their communities, 58 percent have not participated or benefited from the project activities implemented in their communities’ while 42 percent have benefited from the project activities implemented in their various communities’.

**Usefulness of the activities:** 98 percent of the 42 percent of the beneficiaries found the activity to be useful while only 2 percent did not find the activity useful.

A respondent of KII has this to say:

“All the activities are very effective and useful, the youth are more involved in these programmes and when others see the change it has impacted in them, they all want to be a part of it”

*(KII with Participant of Youth Dialogue, Oporoma, Southern Ijaw LGA)*

In conclusion, having a majority of the respondents (62 percent) not aware of the project gave the study a very good standing to objectively analyse the context and the current trend as it relates to the dynamics in their various communities in comparison to the inception period of intervention.
SECTION SIX: MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 Evaluation Objective 1:
To determine the outcomes and impact of the project since inception to date in building community resilience to violence

6.1.1 Project Objective 1:
To foster youth- and women-led platforms for violence prevention during the pre- and post-election period

In order to achieve project objective 1, a series of activities were implemented aimed at fostering youth- and women-led platforms for violence prevention during the pre- and post-election period. The activities, target and achievements are described using indicators as thus;

Peace Architecture Dialogue (PAD): This platform was set-up in January 2019 by Search with funding from German Cooperation before the commencement of the CSO project being evaluated. Security issues and concerns collated at community and LGA level were discussed and resolved at the PAD. The platform also serves as a state-wide platform for early warning reports by relevant stakeholders.

The project leveraged on the existence of the platform to engage critical state level actors (INEC, Security activities etc.) during the election period to tackle or resolve some of the observations and issues raised at the community level (Twon Brass in Brass LGA, Ogbolomabiri in Nembe LGA, Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA, Sagbama town in Sagbama LGA and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw LGA). Desk review of project documents revealed that 4 monthly PAD meetings were implemented throughout the duration of project implementation.

Capacity support to women and youths (WAY) peace ambassadors: Findings from desk review of project documents and KII with project staff reveals that the activity adopted a training approach where Women and Youth from communities of project implementation were equipped with soft skills on Early Warning Early response, Leadership, Common Ground Approach (CGA) and non-adversarial communication. This was done in a bid to build the capacity of the young people ahead of inducting them as WAY peace ambassadors in their communities. These activities were instrumental in the mobilization for and facilitation of the transformative dialogues implemented in the various project communities.

Output Indicator 1: Number of training held:
Review of the log-frame and KII with the DMEL officer reveal that a total of 2 trainings were targeted and implemented during the project life span.

Output Indicator 2: Number of Peace Ambassadors Identified:
A total of 50 WAY ambassadors were targeted, identified, and trained with 10 from each of the community of project implementation (Twon Brass in Brass LGA, Ogbolomabiri in Nembe LGA, Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA, Sagbama town in Sagbama LGA and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw LGA).

Output Indicator 3: % Change in knowledge and skills of trained participants:
The project targets a 30% change in knowledge of the project participants after a training. Findings revealed that there was a 16% change in knowledge of the activity participants as result of the training.
Findings from discussion with WAY ambassadors revealed a significant change in perception, knowledge, and skills of women in facilitating dialogue. This was evident in the dialogue session organized and facilitated by Women in Ekeremor community in which several women, community leaders and youths attended. This singular act led to the recognition of the WAY ambassadors by the community and traditional leaders as a major peacebuilding network in the Ekeremor community of Nembe LGA. The women who are active members of the network are usually given tasks to resolve conflict at the community level.

There was a time the king gave us an assignment to reconcile one of our members that was having issues in her marriage. We were able to talk to both her and her husband and the situation was resolved.

(FGD with Women at Ekeremor Town)

The WAY ambassadors took initiative and organised dialogues with key stakeholders in their various communities

(KII/SFCG project staff DMEL officer)

**EWER training to communities, Government, and Civil Society:** findings from desk review of project documents revealed that a total of two (2) EWER trainings were organised for stakeholders from the various project communities comprising government officials and Civil society partners with 50 stakeholders in attendance. Survey respondents revealed that the EWER training has been very useful to the communities as they now use the skills acquired in identifying early warning signs and reporting through the right channels.

**Output Indicator 4: Number of training sessions held:**
Findings from the review of project documents reveal that a total of 2 EWER training were targeted and implemented during the project life span.

**Indicator 5: Number of participants trained:**
A total of 30 participants were targeted and 35 were reached. Participants were selected from each of the community of project implementation (Twon Brass in Brass LGA, Ogbolomabiri in Nembe LGA, Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA, Sagbama town in Sagbama LGA and Oporoma in Southern Ijaw LGA).

**Output Indicator 6: % change in knowledge and skills of training participants:**
The project targets a 30% change in knowledge of the project participants after a training. As revealed by Search’s DMEL officer there was a 19% change in knowledge of the participants because of the training.

Findings from KII with community leaders and FGD with participants of EWER reveal that the existence of Early Warning Early Response mechanism and the involvement of training of youth has tremendously helped in preventing violent crimes resulting from political thuggery, cultism and gangsterism.

The youths now pay attention to sign and signals of early warning and report to us (KII with Community Leader in Ogbolomabiri)

“The training taught us about signs to look out for, the response to give and the right authorities to make these reports before it turns to violence”.
From the knowledge that we gained from the various lectures that we have attended we were able to reach out to the various groups in the community, especially the youths with the message of peace and the need to give peace a chance.

(FGD with EWER beneficiaries/Male/30 years/Ekeremor town, Ekeremor LGA)

Findings reveal that the different project beneficiaries (WAY ambassadors, EWER mechanism, YOTD and WOTD) are beginning to build synergy to collectively tackle issues affecting their communities using the skills acquired from the training sessions and workshops attended.

The EWER mechanism set up in Nembe LGA observed an increase in the sales and consumption of Indian hemp, the issue was flagged and reported to the police and the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). The women who are beneficiaries of Search activities followed up with the traditional leader urging him to prohibit the sales and smoking of Indian hemp which he did, and anyone caught contravening that law was dealt with accordingly.

(FGD with Women, beneficiaries of WOTD at Ogblomabiri Community of Nembe LGA)

Creation of situation room: findings from desk review of project document and key informant interview with Search project staff revealed that a virtual platform (WhatsApp) was created to serve as a situation room during the election in Bayelsa State. Critical stakeholders were selected to serve in the situation room, they gave on the spot reports of events as they unfold in their various communities in which swift actions were taken by Search in reporting to the relevant security agencies.

Situation Room report:

WAY peace ambassadors across the communities reported 0 deaths on election day, 3 injuries, 9 incidences of ballot snatching/destroying, 12 incidences of attacks and clashes, 13 incidences of threats against voters, 1 case of mass voter migration because of the threats, 3 reports of rumours, 6 reports of vote buying and 1 case of Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWIP).

Actions Taken by Search:

Reports of attacks were forwarded to the relevant security agencies for further action at the point of reporting. Search held a post-election review with stakeholders in Kaiama and held a press review in Yenagoa to ascertain the opinion of the populace on the conduct of the election. The press review had feedback from 18 callers, 17 of which were commendations to the work that Search and other NGOs have put in towards a peaceful election.

“I am aware that a situation room was created, and the information collected was used to prevent violence. For example, during the elections, there were flashpoints in the local government and the information supplied by the situation room was provided to security agencies to keep things under control.”

(KII/Male/community leader/Twon brass/Brass LGA)

“I am aware that there was a situation room, but I am not a politician and I don’t belong to any political party, so I don’t know if any information was obtained and used to prevent violence. I only know that there’s a building they call information house in town, but it is always locked.”

(KII/Women leader/Twon Brass/Brass LGA)
Output Indicator 7: Number of situation room reports and workers:
One (1) virtual (WhatsApp) situation room was created during the electioneering period. A total of 25 WAY ambassadors were selected and trained, they served as focal persons in each of the project LGAs and communities.

6.1.2 Project Objective 2:
To build community resilience to violence, including cult violence, for the pre- and post-election periods and beyond.

In order to achieve the objective and deliver on the expected outcomes of communities having a greater access to peace messaging and accurate information about the elections, strengthened dialogue platform to build community resilience to violence, the following activities were implemented:

1. Peace and Unity campaigns: finding from the evaluation of the updated logframe reveals that 56 slots of radio jingles were aired on the dangers of electoral violence, cultism, and the need for peace. The campaign also involved a door-to-door (keme to keme) peace campaign in the project communities. A total of 1,000 residents were reached with positive peace messages and IEC materials (stickers and facemasks). Face Masks were produced and distributed amid the COVID-19 pandemic, this served as an opportunity to enlighten the public on the dangers of the pandemic and the need to curb the spread of the virus through the use of face masks.

Output Indicator 8: Number of People reached through keme to keme (door to door) campaign:
The project targeted 825 participants but reached 1000 participants

Output Indicator 9: Number of People reached virtually (Radio jingles):
The radio coverage for Bayelsa is calculated as 1,550,013 and it is thus assumed that the jingle has been able to reach at least 1,550,013 residents of the State irrespective of geographical location.

Respondents’ perception of the role of media in conflict resolution and peace building processes

Survey findings reveal that 23 percent of the respondents perceive the media to sometimes play a positive role in conflict resolution and peace building processes, 7 percent are of the opinion that the media has never played any positive role in conflict resolution and peace building processes, 14 percent believe that the media has always played a positive role in conflict resolution and peace building processes while majority of the respondents representing 55 percent don’t know whether or not the media plays a positive role in conflict resolution and peace building processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has sometimes played a positive role</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has never played any positive role</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has always played a positive role</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16 shows the description of respondent’s base on radio listenership
As observed in the course of the study, the project communities are very rural in nature and in most cases without electricity and poor radio frequency or coverage. This might have affected the ability of the respondents to give an informed opinion on the role the media plays in peace building and conflict resolution.

The respondents who suggest that the media sometimes play a positive role in peace building as reflected by (23 percent) are mostly youths aged 18-35 years. Observations from the study suggest the increasing prominence of social media as a source of information for youth. This was collaborated by the responses from the interviews that youth get access to radio programs via their mobile handsets.

**Respondents’ opinion on whether they are regular radio listeners**

Survey findings reveal that 79 percent of the respondents do not describe themselves as regular radio listeners while 21 percent describe themselves as regular radio listeners.

![Figure 17: Would you describe yourself as a regular radio listener?](image)

**Figure 17 shows the description of respondent's base on radio listenership**

As observed and revealed across most study communities, radio ownership and listenership is very low. Amongst self-described radio listeners, youths appear to be more regular listeners compared to adults, however, in relative terms, radio listenership is very poor when viewed from the perspective of the entire youth population.

**Respondents that have listened to Search radio Jingle and radio drama played**

In many of the study communities visited, majority of the respondents representing 89 percent have not listened to Search radio jingles played on People’s FM radio station, 6 percent have listened to the jingle played while 5 percent don’t know of any Search jingles played on People’s fm. This is unconnected to the low radio ownership and listenership in the communities.
Figure 18 shows respondents who have listened to radio Jingle played on People’s FM.

Figure 19 shows respondents who have listened to radio drama played.

Findings on listenership of radio drama reveals that majority of the respondents (89 percent) have not listened to Search radio dramas being played; 4 percent have listened to the drama being played while 7 percent don’t know of Search radio dramas being played as illustrated in figure 16 above. This is also unconnected to the low radio ownership, poor frequency, poor coverage, and poor listenership in the project target communities.

Findings from KII conducted with community leaders across the five communities of project intervention revealed that a majority of the people get their information from the town criers and community radio. It was also observed that a majority of youth get their information from social media as they were mostly seen operating android phones.

Respondents view on the impact of radio program
Figure 20: Are there any resolution of conflict issues or disputes due to the information gotten from the radio program?

- Don't Know: 28%
- No: 32%
- Yes: 40%

Figure 21: The radio program has positively changed my behavior & attitude towards conflict resolution & peaceful coexistence.

- Agree: 36%
- Neutral: 20%
- Strongly agree: 44%

Figure 20: shows the distribution of responses on resolution of conflict issues or disputes due to the information gotten from the radio program.

Figure 21: shows the distribution of responses on whether the radio program has positively changed respondent’s behavior & attitude towards conflict resolution & peaceful coexistence.

As illustrated in figure 17 above, a majority of the respondents sampled (40 percent) have resolved conflict and disputes using peace messages gotten from radio programs listened to, 32 percent have not resolved any conflict or disputes using knowledge gained from listening to radio peace programmes on radio while 28% don’t know.

Findings as illustrated in Figure 18 above reveals that a majority of the respondents (44 and 36 percent) strongly agree and agree respectively that the radio program has positively changed their behavior & attitude towards conflict resolution & peaceful coexistence while only 20 percent are neutral.

The vast majority of respondents who had listened to radio programs agreed that the positive messages from the radio program has changed their behavior & attitude towards conflict resolution & peaceful coexistence and it has also equipped them with the skills which they have used to resolve conflict. A Key informant discussant has this to say:

“Everyday we hear end cultism, political thuggery and electoral violence on radio, the consistent replay made me, and traditional council take decision to impose a curfew in the community/and banned the activity of cult groups”

(KII with community leader of Ogbolomabiri)

2. Youth lead Participatory Theatre (PT): Findings reveal that the participatory theatre was implemented using an interactive theatre performance style that allowed for spectators to play roles of characters in the presentation. Actors were selected from communities of project implementation to form a drama troupe and were trained by Search. The activity was participant driven as they were allowed to participate in the process of drafting a script on the need to shun electoral violence and cultism in communities. These performances took the standpoint of an antagonist and a protagonist and participants were endeared to come on stage and play the roles they agreed with.

Output Indicator 10: Number of People reached by live participatory theatre in communities:

The participatory theatre targeted 1000 beneficiaries and was able to reach 1029 beneficiaries across the 5 communities.
Output Indicator 11: Number of People reached by radio participatory drama:
The live participatory theatre was modified into a participatory radio drama during the peak of COVID-19. The project innovatively modified the activity to adhere to health advisories and curb the spread of the pandemic. In the same form of the protagonist antagonist, callers gave feedback via calls and SMS. The virtual version is approximating a reach of 1,550,013 persons across the state. Thus, having a reach beyond the communities of project implementation.

3. Transformative Community Dialogues: as revealed by Search’s DMEL officer, the TCD was an open forum that brought together community leaders including women and youth leaders to a forum for conversations on security and electoral violence issues bothering communities. Over the duration of project implementation, 3 dialogues were conducted in each of the 5 communities of project implementation totalling 15 dialogue sessions with a total attendance of 475 participants.

Output Indicator 12: Number of dialogues held:
A critical evaluation of the result framework reveals that a total of 15 dialogues were targeted, planned, and implemented across the five focal project communities and LGAs of intervention.

Output Indicator 13: Number of dialogue participants:
A review of the project log frame reveals that a total of 450 participants were targeted in the 15 set of dialogues planned. A total of 457 participants attended the dialogue sessions.

Findings from FGD conducted with participants of TCD reveal that the TCD beneficiaries develop and implement action plans within their communities. These action plans were developed from pressing issues identified within communities in order of importance. Some of the discussants had this to say:

“when the stealing rate was very high in the community, we passed some resolution that prohibits stealing in the community and anyone caught was dealt with severely and that has reduced the rate of stealing to the barest minimum”

(FGD with youths/participants of TCD in Ekeremor Town of Ekeremor LGA)

There was a time the community was very tense due to the activities of bandits; the CDC body called a meeting and the people agreed to impose a curfew on the town while the vigilante and security personnel keep watch.

(KII with a youth leader, a beneficiary of YOTD in Sagbama Town of Sagbama LGA)

“In my community, there was conflict between the political parties during the last governorship election. The leadership with the aid of security agencies resolved the dispute and the process is being followed up”.

(FGD with youths/Female participants of TCD in Southern Ijaw LGA)

4. Women Only and Youth Only Transformative Dialogues (WOTD & YOTD): findings from KII conducted with project staff reveals that these sets of dialogues were planned to be a single dialogue conducted 3 times across the communities at the project planning stage. However, at implementation, a need to scale up the participation of Women and Young people who were the core target of the project led to a review. This activity was reviewed and split into
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two unique activities, (a): Women-Only Transformative Dialogues and (b): Youth-Only Transformative Dialogues.

i. **Women Only Transformative Dialogues**: findings reveal that the WOTD are sets of dialogue sessions with women only. This created a safe space for women to dialogue and settle disputes amongst themselves and the community at large by empowering them with the needed skills and knowledge.

Findings revealed an observable change in attitude, behaviour, perceptions, and practices by women in their various communities.

* I now know that talking to people about violence and the dangers of it is a better approach than avoiding them.

 *(FGD with participants of WOTD in Ekeremor community of Nembe LGA)*

Findings also revealed that women are beginning to take the lead in the different campaigns for peaceful co-existence in communities.

*Women participation in the nonviolent processes has been very commendable.*

*We as mothers, we are educating the people, especially the youths that violence isn’t the way to go and we are hopeful that with the sensitization that we have done around the community, the forthcoming by-election will be peaceful”.*

 *(FGD with participants of WOTD in Ekeremor community of Nembe LGA)*

After the transformative dialogue for Women, the participants followed up with the community leadership to ensure that the agreement reached is upheld and implemented to the latter especially the content of the bye developed to establish vigilante in the community in Ekeremor town and Oporoma community.

*“when the community female youths were beaten up by their male counterparts, women within the community took up the issue and ensured that the king settled the conflicting parties”*

 *(FGD with WOTD participants in Oporoma community of Southern Ijaw)*

**Output Indicator 14: Number of Dialogues held:**
In each of the 5-project community, 3 sets of Women Only Transformative Dialogues were organised making a total of 15 dialogues.

**Output Indicator 15: Number of dialogue Participants:** a total of 388 participants were reached in all the 15 dialogues organised.

ii. **Youth Only Transformative Dialogues**: two (2) sets of dialogues were implemented in each of the five project communities across the five LGAs of intervention reaching a total of 254 beneficiaries.
Findings revealed an observable positive change in attitude, behaviour, perceptions, and practices by youths in the various communities of intervention. They currently show resentment to violence, cultism, and drug abuse etc.

“There is a big change in my community, initially during burial ceremonies in the community the youths used to capitalize on the opportunity to destroy valuables and cause havoc in the community but all those are not happening again due to the training attended by the youth”.

(FGD with WOTD beneficiaries in Nembe LGA)

Output Indicator 16: Number of Dialogues held:
Findings reveal that two (2) sets of dialogues were targeted and implemented in each of the five project communities making a total of 10 dialogues across the five LGAs of intervention.

Output Indicator 17: Number of dialogue Participants:
A total of 254 participants were reached in all the 10 dialogues organised across the project focal communities and LGAs of intervention.

Respondents’ knowledge on the existence of dialogue platforms and the effectiveness of these platforms in building resilience to violence.

![Figure 22: Existence of dialogue platforms to build community resilience to violence.](image)

![Figure 23: How effective are these platforms?](image)

![Figure 24: Respondents justification for the effectiveness of the platforms](image)
Survey findings as illustrated in figure 22 above reveal that a majority of the respondents sampled (63 percent) are of the view that dialogue platforms aimed at building community resilience in communities exist in the project target communities, 14 percent do not agree while 23 percent don’t know about the existence of such platforms.

Findings as illustrated in Figure 23 above reveals that majority of the respondents (77 percent) are of the opinion that the dialogue platforms that exist are very effective in building community resilience to violence, 21 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that the platforms are partially effective while 2 percent of the respondents believe that the platforms are not effective at all.

The majority of respondents (63 percent) who attested to having dialogue platforms in their various communities are also of the opinion that the platforms have been very effective. This implies that WOTD group, the YOTD group have been effective in resolving issues relating to peace and security in their various communities across the project areas of intervention.

Findings as illustrated in figure 24 revealed that the trainings organised by Search improved the beneficiaries’ understanding, skills and knowledge on mediation, conflict resolution and peace building as evidently observed by community members. The beneficiaries stepped down the lessons learnt to other community members not opportune to participate in the trainings, some organised peace talk and sensitization campaigns in their communities (Ekeremor, Town Brass and Oporoma communities).

“The beneficiaries of the dialogue platforms (WOTD and YOTD) in Oporoma community of Southern Ijaw organised a dialogue session to resolve a lingering conflict between the police and youth in the community which has led to the destruction of the police station. These singular acts led to the recognition of the dialogue platform in the community and the involvement of its key stakeholders in critical decision-making processes in the community.

Participating in the dialogue gave me courage, self-control, knowledge, and boldness to speak and handle issues within my environment.”

(FGD with WOTD beneficiaries (45 years) from Ekeremor town in Ekeremor LGA)

6.2 Evaluation Objective 2:
To determine the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the project, including who contributed to or hindered these, and what lessons we can learn.

Effectiveness

Findings from KII with project team and FGD with community members (women leaders, WOTD, YOTD and EWER beneficiaries) revealed that the project adopted a participatory and inclusive approach which involved critical stakeholders (traditional leaders, community leaders, women leaders, youth groups, security agencies, Government agencies INEC, CSOs, NGOs and People living with Disability) from the various communities and LGAs of project intervention. These stakeholders were involved in the planning and implementation of project activities. The team also leveraged on the various community entry points through advocacy and courtesy visits to community and traditional leaders for recognition and acceptance of the project. The media, community dialogues and capacity building were used to achieve the project’s goal and objective.
The strategy adopted was effective except the community dialogue which proved a bit difficult to bring relevant people involved together. The stakeholders identified contributed to the success of the project.

“Women were actively involved in the intervention. They served as mediators between conflicting parties (factions) and were the major mobilizers of every project activity. Gender was balanced in the sense that women who were not given room to be represented are now given fair and equal opportunity and representation with their male counterparts during implementation.

“Youths formed about 90% of character in the community theatre cast and constituted the highest population in rallies and campaigns and they form the bulk of social media users”.

“PLWDs and other marginalized groups were actively involved in the intervention, before now they feel inferior and don’t appear in public functions but today, they are Way Peace Ambassadors and participate in the campaign against violence”.

(KII with Search project Staff, Yenagoa, Bayelsa)

Findings revealed that there were no negative actors amongst the stakeholders involved in project implementation. Majority of the stakeholders worked positively to achieve the project goal and objective.

Efficiency

Findings from KII with project staff triangulated with findings from FGD and KII with the key stakeholders from the project community revealed the following:

- For efficient project implementation, 6 competent project staff with the requisite skills, technical know-how with a very sound knowledge of the project context and local languages were recruited to implement the project. The team comprises a project coordinator, two project officers, an admin and logistics officer, a DMEL officer and a media officer. The team ensured that activities were implemented in line with the project goal and specific objectives as indicated on the proposal.
- The implementation approach (involvement of key stakeholders) adopted for project implementation encouraged buy-in of the project by the project focal communities.
- At the inception stage, project activities were implemented at the scheduled timeline as indicated on the work plan, but with the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, project timeline was affected and workplan disrupted as the project team were unable to visit project communities for about 3-4 months due to travel restrictions and lockdown. This led to the change in activity implementation methodology where virtual platforms were used for meetings and other activity implementation.

As revealed from discussion with project staff, the project resources were efficiently utilized to produce expected project results.

Lessons Learnt

- In order to achieve a project goal and objective in peacebuilding, critical stakeholders must be involved. It is very important to identify key and relevant stakeholders in project
implementation and classify them accordingly as some are spoilers. The project team also realized that patience is an essential tool for gaining trust of the people.

- Social media is important in project implementation as it gives room for wide coverage.
- Peacebuilding is an intensive work, and it takes time to remould people’s attitude towards peace. Therefore, time and patience are basic ingredients in peacebuilding and as such every peacebuilding initiative should have a long-term plan. Also, interacting with project communities gave an insight to social problems serving as drivers to violence.
- It was learnt that prior to the project, the people were disposed to violence simply because they had no significant mentoring on the need for amicable settlement of disputes.

6.3 Evaluation Objective 3: To determine the extent the project built and/or leveraged on the capacity of women and youth to have potential or existing influence over conflict and violence dynamics at the community, LGA and state level, and the impact of this influence.

Critical review of project documents and findings from KII with project team revealed that the project adopted a participatory and multi-stakeholders approach which integrated youth (15 to 35 years who were marginalized and vulnerable to violence across varying socio-economic, educational, political, and ethno-religious backgrounds), Women (who have existing or potential influence over violence in their various communities in relation to cultism, gang violence, and election violence) and Civil Society Organisations (The project leveraged on existing relationships and networks with CSOs working in similar locations to integrate additional stakeholders into the project, particularly in new LGAs and/or communities).

Outcome indicator 1: % increase in number of local women participating in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process supported with USG assistance.

Responses on the role women play in supporting peaceful electoral processes

Survey findings show that just 75 percent of the respondents agreed that women play a positive & active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes, 9 percent do not agree that women play a positive & active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes while 16 percent don’t know whether or not women play a positive & active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes.
Figure 25: shows the percentage of women actively participating in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process.

Figure 26: shows the percentage of the increase in the number of local women playing key roles in peacebuilding processes.

Findings also revealed that 49 percent of the respondents strongly agree that the community has witnessed an increase in the number of local women playing key roles in peacebuilding processes, 27 percent agree, 23 percent are neutral while 1 percent disagree that the community has witnessed an increase in number of local women playing key roles in peacebuilding processes.

In conclusion, there is a significant increase in the number of local women playing key roles in peacebuilding processes as collaborated by a majority of the respondents representing 72 percent. This implies that the project which focused on uniting women to actively play a positive & active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes has made a significant impact in achieving its objective.

Findings from KII and FGD revealed that Women are beginning to play an active role in peacebuilding in their various communities by acting in their instinctive roles as nurturers, home builders and peacebuilders. These women after being empowered with knowledge and skills of mediation and conflict resolution have gone back to the grassroot and other rural communities to enlighten other rural women on the role of women in peacebuilding and the need to actively participate in community activities by lending their voice. Youths in Town Brass have this to say about the role of women in their community:

“Our mothers are beginning to caution us not to engage in violence conflicts, unlike before where parents believe that the youths are fighting for the communities. There was a dispute between the Hausa and indigenous youths in the community on the 7th of Nov 2020, which was resolved amicably using the skills acquired using the Common Ground Method. This would not have been the case if it were not for the enlightenment we received from Search.”

(KII with Female Youth Leader in Town Brass in Brass LGA)

“Women were actively involved in the intervention. They served as mediators between conflicting parties (factions) and were the major mobilizers of every project activity. Gender was balanced in the sense that women who were not given room to be represented are now given fair and equal opportunity and representation with their male counterparts during implementation.”

(KII with Search project Staff, Yenagoa, Bayelsa)

Outcome indicator 2: % increase in number of youths engaged in civic activities to promote peace

Findings from survey response 76 percent reveals that youths aged 18-35 years play a positive and active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes, 9 percent disagree by responding “no” while 15 percent don’t know whether youths aged 18-35 years play a positive and active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes in their various communities as illustrated in figure 27 below.
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Figure 27: Do youth aged 18-35 play a positive & active role in supporting peaceful electoral process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 28: There has been significant increase of youth engaged in civic activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 27: shows responses on the active role’s youths aged 18-35yrs play in supporting peaceful electoral processes

Figure 28: shows responses on the increase in the number of youths engaged in civic activities

As illustrated in figure 27 above, respondents representing 49 percent strongly agree that the community has witnessed an increase in the number of youths engaged in civic activities to promote peace, 26 percent agree, 24 percent are neutral while 1 percent of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that the community has witnessed an increase in the number of youths engaged in civic activities to promote peace in their various communities as illustrated in figure 28 above.

As revealed by the project proposal document, at inception violent conflicts and electoral violence are usually perpetrated by vulnerable and at risk youths within the project focal communities. The significant increase in the number of youths actively participating in the various youth led peaceful advocacy on prevention of electoral violence, political thuggery and the need for peaceful co-existence may not be unconnected to recent enlightenment campaigns through radio programmes, peace rallies, youth only dialogues and other project activities organised by Search. Some of the youth had this to say.

“The youth and women of this community are part of the WAY ambassadors, EWER and other dialogue platforms of the Search for Common Ground and they have been very much involved in the awareness campaign for peaceful processes in the community like never witnessed before in our community. We now have more youth and women taking the lead in preaching messages of peace and encouraging nonviolent processes”.

(FGD with EWER beneficiaries/Male/ 31 years/Ekeremor town, Nembe LGA)

“There was a particular time youth were playing football and it resulted in an argument which was leading to conflict, I came down and settled the misunderstanding to the satisfaction of everyone present and all that was from the knowledge I gained from Search for Common Ground activities”

(FGD with Youths/Male/ 28 years/Ekeremor town, Nembe LGA)

Findings also revealed that 90% of characters in the community theatre cast are youths, they constitute the highest population in rallies and campaigns organised in the various communities and they form the bulk of social media users.

Outcome Indicator 3: % increase in the number of people participating in USG-supported events, training, or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation.
Distribution of responses on whether there has been an increase in the number of people participating in Search activities.

Survey findings as illustrated in figure 29 above, revealed that 7 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that to an increase in the number of people participating in Search activities, 4 percent disagree, 14 percent strongly agree, 15 percent agree while 60 percent of the respondents are neutral which implies that they neither agree or disagree to an increase in the number of people participating in Search activities.

Findings revealed an increase in the number of people participating in Search activities such as training and events designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation as indicated by 29 percent of the respondents. KII and FGD discussants also suggested an increase and expansion in Search activities to reach more communities and individuals so that a larger proportion of the communities can be reached as more people are willing to participate.

6.4 Evaluation Objective 4:
To examine the extent the intervention has been coordinated with the efforts of the communities, LGA and government in ending electoral violence.

Findings from KII and FGDs conducted with key stakeholders in the project communities revealed that the Search in the course of project implementation collaborated with the Police, INEC, and community groups like the elders, forums women and youth groups and religious Leaders

- **Collaboration with Security agencies**

The project involved security agencies, especially the police in most of its project activities. The collaboration helped in creating synergy, recognition, and acceptance of the project activities. The involvement of the security agents in the Peace Architecture Dialogue (PAD) and the Early Warning and Early Response mechanism led to swift response to identified early warning signs and emerging conflict in the project target communities.
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“During the elections in the state, flashpoints were identified in the local government and the information supplied by the situation room was provided to security agencies to keep things under control.”

(FGD with Youths in Nembe LGA)

- Collaboration with INEC

As key stakeholders in the project, INEC were actively involved in planning and implementation of project activities such as workshops, dialogues and Town Hall meetings held. They enlightened the community members during town hall meetings on the electoral processes and operations of INEC in preparation for the state gubernatorial election.

“INEC officials enlightened and broadened our way of thinking and opened our eyes to our civic duties. This led to an increase in the community member’s turnout during the election.”

(FGD with Youths at Ogholomabiri community of Nembe LGA)

- Involvement of Women and Youth

Women were actively engaged in the entire project implementation processes. They played key roles in speaking against election related violence at Town-Hall meetings, during rallies and dialogue sessions.

The youths were very active in all the project activities organized especially rallies, door to door campaigns, theatre performances etc. they were carried along in the phases of project activity implementation as some of them serve as community mobilizers.

Responses on collaboration between diverse stakeholders

![Figure 30: Collaboration between diverse stakeholders & youths to mitigate and respond to election related risk.](image)

Survey findings revealed that respondent’s 64 percent agree that there is a collaboration between diverse stakeholders and youths aimed at mitigating and responding to election related risk, 19 percent do not agree while 17 percent don’t know whether a collaboration exists between stakeholders and youths to mitigate and respond to election related risk.

This finding conspicuously indicates that a majority of the respondents (64 percent) agree that collaboration exists between diverse stakeholders aimed at mitigating the responding to election related risk. This confirms that WAY forward project design is not only appropriately suited to the context of implementation but properly implemented to achieve its aims and objectives. Such program design and implementation approach can be well recommended for communities that bear similar context. It is essential to document the processes for future implementation.

6.5 Evaluation Objective 5:
To determine the extent to which the COVID 19 pandemic affected the conflict, project objectives, implementation, and sustainability
The World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic following the rapid spread of the virus globally. On the 27th of February 2020, the Federal Ministry of Health confirmed a COVID-19 case in Lagos State, Nigeria. The confirmed case was the first to be reported in Nigeria since the beginning of the outbreak in China in November 2019. The spread continued throughout the country as Bayelsa State recorded its index case on May 26th, 2020. In response, the state Governor, Douye Diri, ordered intrastate lockdown for one week. Since then, there were series of lockdowns as measures to curtail the spread of the disease. According to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) as of the 23rd of November 2020, Bayelsa State recorded 445 Confirmed cases; 42 cases (persons) still on admission; 382 discharged and 21 deaths so far.

The survey explored the perspective of respondents on the impact of the pandemic in their various communities, be it positive or negative.

Figure 31: shows the distribution of responses on observed impact of COVID-19 in communities

Survey findings as illustrated in Figure 31 above revealed that 39 percent of the respondents agreed that there is observable impact of COVID-19 in communities of intervention be it positive or negative, 40 percent disagreed while 21 percent don’t know whether an observable impact of COVID-19 exists in the different project communities.

As illustrated in figure 32 above, a majority of the respondents (79 percent) are of the opinion that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the communities while only 21 percent of the respondents observe a negative impact of the pandemic in the communities.

Findings from KII with project staff, FGD with women and youths reveals that the pandemic has in one way or the other impacted the conflict dynamics and project negatively and positively

Impact of COVID-19 on the Conflict Dynamics
1. Findings revealed an increase in the number of recorded cases of armed robbery and theft across communities within the state. This was attributed to the hike in the prices of basic goods and the inability of the people to provide for their basic needs.

2. In the context, inter-cult clashes and violent confrontations which were initially on the increase drastically reduced due to the lockdown and movement restrictions imposed by the State Government aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. There were conflicts and violent confrontations because of perceived bias in the distribution of palliatives by government officials in Oporoma and Ekeromor town.

“We were on lockdown, the price of transportation was hiked, and the cost of commodities were high too, but there was no positive case COVID-19 here. Even the palliative that was shared did not go round, you will just hear that they are sharing something, only 2 or 3 persons would collect and when you get there, they would say it has finished. Why won't the people steal?”

(KII/Community leader in Ekeremor Town)

Negative Impact of the Pandemic

- The intra-state lockdown and movement restriction imposed by the state government affected the project's field visits and activity implementation schedule for about 3 to 4 months. This in some cases distorted the activity calendar and the type of activity to be implemented.

- The emergence of the pandemic and government response affected the means of livelihood of residents of the project target communities. This brought about economic hardship.

“Covid-19 affected the implementation greatly because Search personnel could not go to the project areas due to travel restrictions. Also because of restriction on large gatherings even during the window periods of travel restrictions, there were no physical interactions between Search staff, volunteers like WAY Peace ambassadors and EWER on one hand, and other stakeholders and communities on the other.”

(KII/Search/Male project staff)

Our coordinators from Search could not always be present during the lockdown period due to the travel restrictions set by the government. So we found it difficult to implement some of the things we were taught. You know we are still learning, and we always looked forward to their inputs in the implementation of the program.

(FGD discussant/female/Sagbama town/Sagbama LGA)

We were on lockdown, the price of transportation was hiked, and the cost of commodities was high too. But there was no positive coronavirus case here. Even the palliative that was shared didn’t go round, you will just hear that they are sharing something, only 2 or 3 persons would collect and when you get there they would say it has finished. I don’t see anything positive about the coronavirus.

(KII with community leader in Ekeremor town/Ekeremor LGA)

Positive Impact of the Pandemic

- The health advisories and enlightenment campaigns all over the media created awareness on personal hygiene.
Relationships within and amongst community members were strengthened during the lockdown.

The situation led to the adoption of innovative techniques of activity implementation which were not thought possible before. Furthermore, the change in context led to activity modification incorporating the use of social media and other virtual platforms.

“On the positive side, the pandemic travel restrictions brought families that were hitherto separate probably due to work factors together. It also helped in controlling the spread of Covid-19 because people who were already infected were confined to an environment. Again it saved SFCG staff and other stakeholders from exposure to the disease.”

(KII/Search/Female project staff)

Project Sustainability

Survey respondents acknowledged that the project had laid down exit strategies in the form of capacity and knowledge diffusion that increased participants’ buy-in for continuity of the project’s activities. The capacity of community leaders, women, and youth leaders was built to effectively facilitate dialogues and mediation. They are expected to use the knowledge and skills acquired to sustain community peacebuilding processes currently in place.

“With the help of the various programme activities, changes in attitude, perception and behaviour will continue and with the help of social media platforms enough people have and would be reached for the change to continue beyond the life of the programme.”

(KII/CTD/male/Community Leader in Oporoma)

“When we talk about conflict in a community it all begins from the latent stage before escalation so as a member of EWER we try to reach out to the authorities (The King, CDC Chairman and the security agents) to report conflict at its infant stage before it escalates. This will continue even after the project currently being implemented by Search for Common Ground”

(KII/EWER/male/Youth Leader in Ekeremor town)

Search adopted a participatory approach in its programme implementation by involving key and critical stakeholders such as the traditional rulers and community leaders. This has helped in the institutionalization of the project activities and methodology in the various communities of intervention. Findings revealed that community leaders are beginning to use the common ground approach to resolve conflict in their various communities using the perception and perspective approach.

Findings revealed that Search had set up a WhatsApp group which is currently being maintained by the community used as an early warning platform and for proper communication between the community focal persons and the different platforms (WAY ambassadors, the EWER mechanism, WOTD and YOTD platforms), thereby increasing the collaboration between them.

After the Conflict Transformation Dialogue (CTD) training in Oporoma Community, the community members developed a bye law that led to the imposition of a curfew which is currently being imposed by the Vigilante group set up as an outcome of an advocacy carried out by the youth and women to community leadership. The Vigilante has in its membership, members of the EWER, WAY ambassadors and other community members. This is currently being led by the CDC chair who is a participant of the CTD training organized by Search.
Most of the respondents affirmed their commitment to continue to actively participate in the dialogue platforms for Women and Youths as it has proven to be effective to them as they apply the knowledge and skills they have gained to further promote community cohesion.

“There have been changes in the way conflict is addressed in my community since the formation of the WAY ambassadors’ network and the training of women and youths in dialogues. The trained youth and women have identified, reported, and resolved so many conflicts using skills acquired from the training which has led to them being recognised by the traditional and community leaders. They now serve as middlemen between the community and the leadership.”

(FGD with Youths Oporoma/southern Ijaw Local Government area)

Findings from KII and FGD with youth, women and community leaders revealed a change in perception, attitude, and character of community members as a result of project activities attended.

“Initially the concept of violence taught by parents was to exit a tensed vicinity or environment but as ambassadors we are responsible for mediating a dialogue (within our power), or report to the appropriate authorities in charge to step in. We now know signs to look out for and can tell when a conflict is about to ensue.”

(FGD with Youth at Ekeremor)

This testimony demonstrates that the project has had a multiplier effect, reaching people beyond the initial target areas. This enhances sustainability, as it has generated a larger pool of people to carry forward the project’s positive impact.

SECTION SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The study presents the findings from the evaluation of the WAY Forward for Peace; Women and Youth Unite for Peace and Violence Prevention in Bayelsa State project funded by the United States Department of State’s Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO). The project adopted a participatory, inclusive, and multi-stakeholder approach in implementing the activities outlined for the project. It leveraged the capacity of women and youth to influence conflict and violence dynamics at the various communities. Findings revealed that women and youths played a positive and active role in supporting peaceful electoral processes in their various communities including community members who did not participate in the project, suggesting a strong multiplier effect. The evaluation revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the conflict dynamics, project objectives, implementation, and sustainability of the project.

However, learnings from respondents revealed that youths rely heavily on social media for information and only a few of them listen to radio. In conclusion, the assessment recommends that the project be extended to other LGAs and communities where there is evidence of strained relationships, violent conflict, thuggery, and cultism.

SECTION EIGHT: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Survey findings highlight the importance of implementing peace projects for a longer duration to cover larger areas reaching more communities. Search should extend the implementation period because there is the possibility the communities may relapse into violence without
constant mentoring, and sustenance put in place for sustainability. This finding further presents a distinctive opportunity to add a livelihood component to future project design and implementation in the state. The survey highlights the significance of youth unemployment, and limited opportunities for upward social mobility as well as low educational achievement, and socio-political exclusion as important vulnerability factors which have the potential to fester violent extremism, thuggery and cultism.

2. Findings revealed that in the project target communities, there are so many tribes and ethnic groups of which only a few speak English fluently. Search should adopt a multilingual approach as a strategy to reach all the groups residing in the intervention areas.

3. Findings highlighting low listenership of media programming generally pose critical impediments to achieving the strategic objectives of the project. The observation that many community members particularly youth are now listening to radio on their mobile phones offers new and unique opportunities to explore and expand the range of media targeting approaches to include social media and bulk SMS.

4. The approaches to programming for youth should orientate around building capacity and empowering greater and more meaningful youth engagement with community governance systems including building more collaborative mechanisms for conflict resolution and peacebuilding actions. In this regard the institutionalization of youth and women led, community centred mechanisms are of programmatic imperative.