Since the presidential election in 2018, growing social instability has further exacerbated women’s low participation in national and local decision-making processes. Women continue to be under-represented in politics at both the national and local levels.

For 36 months, in partnership with the 50/50 group, Search mobilizes and trains women interested in political representation, sustainably increasing their interest in politics and their chances of success in the 2023 general elections.

Our EU-funded project positions 225 women politicians and aspiring politicians as catalysts for change in the country by increasing their participation in local and national decision-making and governance in rural Sierra Leone. Leveraging women’s groups and structures created in previous

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**Search for Common Ground (Search)** is one of the largest conflict transformation organizations in the world. Our mission is to transform the way that the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative solutions. In Sierra Leone since 2000, our programs have opened a space for dialogue on critical and sensitive social and political issues, while promoting social cohesion and reconciliation throughout the post-war period.
 projects, we work with current MPs, councilors, members of the All Political Parties Women Association (APPWA), and women politicians of other political parties in the districts of Kenema, Kambia and Tonkolili. Our action is in twofold:

- To improve women's capacity and confidence to participate actively in political and public life
- To create an enabling environment for increased participation and leadership of female members of diverse political parties

**ENCOURAGING WOMEN PARTICIPATION**

Our activities contribute to developing a better understanding of women's opportunities to engage in political leadership exchanges and increase their participation. Ultimately, they increase their confidence to demand equal participation and representation within parties. At the same time, to complement our expertise, our partner builds the capacity of women politicians and aspiring politicians through political leadership training, digital marketing, and mentoring networks.

**18 political leadership clinic/talks and symposiums**

Political leadership clinic/talks and symposiums for women at the local-level, provide a space to learn how to participate in discussions on public issues confidently. These public debates bring together women activists and women political leaders to share their experiences with their peers on improving women's political participation. These events also contribute to community and men's buy-in to women's aspirations.

**120 radio episodes**

Our radio magazine Uman for Uman provides a stable platform for women politicians to amplify their voices and improve their debate and communication skills. Produced by our in-house radio production house, Talking Drum Studio, this 120-episodes magazine popularizes women's political profiles and mobilizes other women around their aspirations and hopes. We also train our radio partners broadcasting our programs to encourage them to give airtime to women.

**INCREASED MAINSTREAM OF GENDER EQUITY**

Through a series of national conferences, the 50/50 Group is working to create an enabling environment for women's effective political participation and collaboration by building the capacity of women's sections of political parties and elevating their role in communities. Besides, we support these women's political leaders by creating spaces to discuss and propose solutions to the social norms that impede women's political participation.

**16 participatory theater performances**

Our participatory theatre activities enable communities to express themselves, even in the most remote areas, on issues of women's exclusion and social and cultural barriers. By combining entertainment and education, we provide a safe space for communities to discuss particularly sensitive or divisive issues. Our performances address social and cultural norms within communities and mobilize them to understand the negative impact of women's political exclusion. After the play, citizens and actors discuss the topics and challenges presented, thus allowing collective brainstorming to develop non-adversarial and collaborative solutions.

**18 multi-stakeholders engagements**

Every six months, Search convenes traditional rulers, members of parliament, local council authorities, secret societies, traditional healers and rulers, young leaders from constituencies resistant to women's political participation. Together with members of the “Women in Politics” (WiP), a platform to support women politicians and their progress in future elections, they discuss obstacles and challenges to women's participation. During these meetings, they define a set of action points to address, that Search and WiP members monitor for success.