

FINAL REPORT

20TH JANUARY 2017 – 19TH JANUARY 2018

PROMOTING SECURITY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN WATERLOO COMMUNITY



Combating impunity around Human Right abuses and Promoting Women and Girls' access to fair and timely Justice in the Waterloo Community



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Around the world, more than four billion people are living outside the protection of the law. They are unfairly driven from their land, denied essential services, excluded from society, and intimidated by violence. Responding to the global mandate of ‘**access to justice**’, the **Open Society Foundation (OSF)** and **Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)** has started a new initiative on **Legal Empowerment** to turn that tide round. This initiative works by enabling ordinary people even the most marginalised **know the law** and are able to **use the law** themselves to find concrete solutions to their day-to-day justice problems and to hold authorities to account. It aims to institutional responsive, accountable, credible and financially secured systems offering community-based justice services. The model of this community-based justice’s service is to combine lawyers and non-lawyers to solve individual and community problems using a combination of tools ranging from legal literacy and assistance to mediation, community organising, litigation, and other forms of advocacy effort to strengthen service delivery while simultaneously advancing systemic reform in the interest of the poor. >>>

Sierra Leone is amongst nine countries across the world to benefit from the OSF new legal empowerment initiative; and LEWAF is one of the first National Nongovernmental Organisations recruited by OSIWA to test the model in Sierra Leone. Moving forward, in January 2017, **LEWAF** was tasked by OSIWA to test the model through a project titled ‘**Promoting Security and Access to Justice for Women and Girls in Waterloo**’ under its LEGAL EMPOWERMENT SHARED FRAMEWORK initiative. The project was designed to provide ‘*Paralegal Service and Institutionalize basic Legal Service delivery*’ for Women and Girls in the Waterloo community. >>>

After the **twelve months** of project implementation, LEWAF is **confident** to say that, Legal Empowerment using community-based paralegal service model can WORK. To date, LEWAF has recruited and trained **Six (6)** persons as PARALEGALS and are now providing paralegal services to the residents of Waterloo especially Women and Girls. Using a combination of tools including: Paralegal-led Legal Education in communities; the dissemination of specific designed POSTERS with Legal messages; doing Live RADIO talk shows discussing common community issues/problems with legal consequences; and having produced JINGLES in Krio, Theme, Limba, Fullah and Mende and AIRED on all the 3 existing community-based radio stations - carrying information on the existence of Paralegals in Waterloo; common offences perpetrated by people in communities, the services paralegals provide and where to seek legal advice and redress; **MORE THAN 5000 RESIDENTS IN AND AROUND THE WATERLOO COMMUNITY HAVE IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER BEEN LEGALLY EMPOWERED AND ARE WILLING TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS AND PROMOTE LEGAL EDUCATION.**

The project empirical data have revealed that out of these 5000 residents, **2,212** people have physically visited the paralegal offices either to seek more information about their services or to report a case or seek legal advice. Within the **twelve months** duration of the project, a total of **296** cases were admitted by the paralegals out of which, **247** cases were resolved and closed. Incredibly, a total of **172** (out of the 247 cases resolved and closed) were brokered by paralegals through alternative dispute resolution methods mainly mediation. In addition to this achievement, a critical component of the project is to see an existence of a **viable and participatory forum** to continue supporting the work of the community-based Paralegals in the delivery of a coordinated response service to the residents of Waterloo after donor funding ends. To date, a **‘Community Oversight Committee’** structure has been **SET-UP** by the project towards this direction. >>> *To summarise “it is but appropriate to safely state that the ‘Promoting Security and Access to Justice for Women and Girls’ project has made significant achievements and changes, as more people are now aware of HOW, WHEN and WHERE to seek redress through primary justice systems.*

However, in the mist of the numerous challenges, LEWAF has learnt that getting people to **know the law, use the law** and are able to influence the **shaping of laws** that affects their welfare and wellbeing requires a long term investment and intervention. For this project, it has been unveiled that the **twelve months** period of the project intervention is short for it to make the desired changes/impact especially when the coverage of the project was limited to Waterloo thereby living-out people in other cosmopolitan communities in the Western Area Rural District to benefit from this new Legal Empowerment initiative. >>>

Thus, moving forward in the years that lie ahead, I am hopeful that with sustained financial and technical support to LEWAF, it will continue the **OSF ‘Legal Empowerment shared framework initiative’** drive to ensuring that millions of Sierra Leoneans especially Women and Girls **know the laws** and are **using the laws** themselves to solve their day-to-day justice problems, while at the same time holding authorities to account and advancing systemic reform in the interest of the poor. >>>

It is true that nothing could have been achieved for this project without the moral and financial support from our faithful partners including OSIWA, JSCO, LAB, NAMATI and above all, the **gallant** community stakeholders of Waterloo – including individuals and institutions who have in one way or the other contributed to the success of this project.>>>

Therefore, on behalf of the **Board of Directors** and **Management** of LEWAF, I extend our profound gratitude to ALL of you for your **valuable supports** and **productive collaboration** in the implementation of this project.

Signed: Mohamed Bobor Jalloh - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

ABBREVIATIONS

CSO's	Civil Society Organizations
CBO's	Community Based Organizations
COC	Community Oversight Committee
FSU	Family Support Unit
JSCO	Justice Sector Coordination Office
LAB	Sierra Leone 'Legal Aid Board'
LEWAF	Lady Ellen Women's Aid Foundation
MSWGCA	Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOC	Memorandum of Corporation
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
OSF	Open Society Foundation
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
VOPAD	Voice of Peace and Development
WARD C	Western Area Rural District Council

INTRODUCTION

In January 2017, LEWAF received a grant from the OSIWA to implement a project titled '**Promoting Security and Access to Justice for Women and Girls in Waterloo**' under its LEGAL EMPOWERMENT SHARED FRAMEWORK initiative. The project was designed to provide '*Paralegal service and Institutionalize basic legal service delivery*' for Women and Girls in the Waterloo community. The project had 2 main objectives:

1. To PROMOTE Legal Education and Equitable Access to Primary Justice System through COMMUNITY-BASED PARALEGAL SERVICES.
2. To PROMOTE Viable and Participatory systems of case management, referral, follow-ups and family reunification through LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING.

The OVERALL GOAL was '**to combat impunity around Human Right abuses and Promote Women and Girls' access to fair and timely Justice in the Waterloo community**'. The duration of the project was **twelve months** which started on the **20th January 2017** and ended on the **19th January 2018**. This document represents the FINAL REPORT and has been divided into six (6) sections. **Section 1** analyses the **progress** LEWAF has made **in achieving the project objectives** by detailing out the activities undertaken leading to the achievements and whether in fact LEWAF **initial assumption** about the project did change. With these achievements, it has remained critical for LEWAF (Implementing partner) and OSIWA (Donor) including the community stakeholders of Waterloo to know if the project has had the **desired impact/s on the target beneficiaries**; to ascertain this, **section 2** has attempted to analyse the **beneficiaries' perception** about the project. **Section 3** will bring out the activities that are seen to have **worked well** in the implementation of this project and the **broader take away** after the twelve months implementation of this project. In any project implementation, there are always the potentials to experience challenges and lessons, thus, **section 4** has attempted to analyse some of these **key challenges** and **lessons learnt** throughout the duration of this project. Over the past twelve months duration of this project, LEWAF has worked with OSIWA on diverse activities with different outcomes; **section 5** looks at these activities and ends with pitching-out the LEWAF' general **assessment** on collaboration with OSIWA with candid **recommendations**. The **6th and last section** sets out to providing information on OSIWA's extended **opportunities** that LEWAF have subsequently utilised and has apparently strengthens LEWAF **organisational weaknesses** mentioned in the proposals for this project. Finally, the section highlights LEWAF **follow-up plans** after the project.

SECTION 1

ATTAINMENT OF OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVE: *The Progress Analysis* and LEWAF INITIAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT: *The View Points*

1.1. ATTAINMENT OF OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVE: *The Progress Analysis*

- a. LEGAL EDUCATION PROMOTED: - MORE THAN 5000 RESIDENTS IN AND AROUND THE WATERLOO COMMUNITY HAVE IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER BEEN LEGALLY EMPOWERED AND ARE WILLING TO PROMOTE LEGAL EDUCATION.

‘Promoting legal education’ is the **first-part** of objective 1 of the project. The successful implementation of the following activities designed by the project sets-out the road map towards achieving this first part of objective 1.

1. *Six (6) persons recruited and trained as PARALEGALS are now providing paralegal services to the residents of Waterloo especially Women and Girls.*

The project started with recruiting people residents in Waterloo and who are seen to be literate and have high moral reputation with a good background of the culture, tradition and social problems of Waterloo. After the recruitment, in collaboration with **NAMATI** and the **JSCO**, OSIWA coordinated the requisite paralegal trainings for all the six newly recruited



persons (4 men and 2 women). In total, 3 comprehensive trainings sessions were completed with the paralegals. In addition, this project realised that PARALEGALS ARE NOT LAWYERS but needs to be **efficient** and **effective** in the delivery of justice services within the ambit of the laws, so a **LAWYER** was recruited and has provided technical **guidance, mentoring** and routine **supervision** to paralegals throughout the duration of project implementation. *The trainings and technical guidance of the Lawyer laid the foundation for Paralegals to have acquired the requisite knowledge and skills to start work in the delivery of community justice services in Waterloo.*

2. *Paralegal-led Legal Educations.*

Moving forward, the well equipped paralegals had conducted **6 (six) defined legal education meetings** in and around the Waterloo community. Within the twelve months period of project implementation, a total of **813** women and girls as DIRECT beneficiaries have participated and benefited from the legal education. This is

slightly over the project target of 800. Detail analysis of the above **figure** can be found in the first and second interim progress report for this project.

In accordance with project plan, all the 6 paralegal-led Legal education meetings *targeted specific interest groups with defined legal education topics*. To boost up the credibility and probable adherence to the laws, paralegals were joined by the appropriate external individual experts *as resource persons* in some of these legal education meetings. These are as follows:

- The first legal education targeted school pupils (Girls and Boys) from 5 Junior and Senior Secondary schools. In total, **117 pupils** including **14 teachers** benefited from a legal education on the **Child Right and Sexual Offences acts**. Jenneh Foray the head girl of St Raphael Secondary School said - quote *“this legal education is unique, now I know ‘Consent is not relevant’ for a man to have sex with a girl below the age of 18 years – it is a crime; also I have learnt that making persistent unwelcome communication with a girl is a crime – this is common in our schools, we need more of this kind of education to create awareness in other girls and even boys”* end of quote. It was inspiring to have heard the Lorenzo Gorvie memorial secondary school intending to set-up a **LEGAL CLUB** in their school. Also, the *Sahid High school* intended to organise *legal education tours* to other schools through drama and skits.



- In another related legal education meeting, **30 Women Petty Traders** were targeted by the paralegals as **‘Peer Educators’**. All of them are chairladies and secretaries of their various associations in and around the Waterloo community. The topics covered included **‘Domestic Violence and Devolution of Estate’**. The strategy to target the chairladies and secretaries was based on the assumption that, they will serve as **‘peer educators’** in their various women groups and associations. Madam Marie Barrie pictured standing



is a **widow** and happens to be the chairlady of **Masiyandae Women's Association** of Waterloo (a LEWAF supported group under its Women Economic and Social Empowerment initiative). She said, *this legal education came too late for me - had I known before this time that I am entitle to my husband's property after he died, I would not been selling petty goods in the market to sustain my life and the Children*. In tears, she narrated her story which created emotional scenery. Madam Barrie said - quote ***"all the properties we acquired together including the diamond I had for him were taken away by his family - worst of it, I had to physically resist to keep even the bed we used to sleep-on; thank you LEWAF, we need more of this kind of education to help other women who are now vulnerable to this kind of inhumane attitude – we will go and pass-on the knowledge,*** madam Barrie concluded.

- Realising the benefit of the legal education, these women leaders/ peer educators supported Paralegals to mobilise other women petty traders' ***in-mass*** for another Legal Education on ***Devolution of Estate and Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce***. Amidst the daunting challenge to get the petty trading women OFF their business tables, however, a total of **221** women were in attendance and benefited.



- In the last two months towards the end of the project, paralegal-led legal educations targeted community settlements in the Waterloo vicinity. For instance, in the Kissi Teng community majority of whom were Women benefited from legal education on ***devolution of estate in cases of husbands' death without living a WILL (INTESTATE) and the 'RIGHTS to Register' Customary marriage***.



- Also, with technical supports from drivers union and traffic division of Waterloo police, the Paralegal targeted drivers and inhabitants in and around Tombo lorry Park in Waterloo. The topics covered include – **domestic abuse and traffic offences** etc.



- The Masorie community (lovers' corner) of Waterloo is known for issues of land grabbing, falsification of land documentations etc and a good number of these cases have been common not only in the Waterloo magistrate courts but also in the Paralegal offices and other local courts. Most of the cases has remained unsolved which often see parties resulting to brutal palaver. Therefore, based on popular demands and the apparent availability of money under the budget line for legal education, the Paralegals and the **Lawyer** conducted one more legal education for the Masorie community on **proper documentation for land acquisition and Landlord/tenant relationship**.



3. **POSTERS with Legal messages developed and dissemination:** In almost all the legal education conducted in the second quarter of project implementation, 1000 posters carrying **legal empowerment information** has been used and disseminated. Also, posters were pasted in



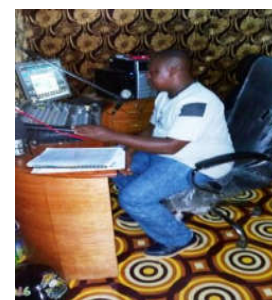
strategic places including, the paralegal offices, schools, police/FSU, Local courts, market places etc. The five main messages are (1) *Devolution of Estate (when a man dies Intestate)*, (2) *Registration of Customary Marriages*

(*RIGHT Messages - types and where*), (3) *Domestic Violence – Types & Penalty* (4) *Sexual Offences Types & Penalty* and (5) *Teenage Rape & Penalty*. [See sample of posters on page 11.](#)



4. **JINGLES Produced in FIVE local languages and AIRED:** Jingles were produced in five local languages including *Krio, Mende, Themne, Fullah and Limba*. In accordance with project plan, **200 slots** of the jingles were aired on all the three community-based radio stations including **radio VOPAD; radio Lion Mountain** and **Viacity radio**. The messages in the jingles carried information on the *existence of Paralegals in Waterloo; common offences perpetrated by people in communities, the services paralegals provide and where to seek legal advice and redress*.

5. **Live RADIO talk shows:** Lastly, over the last twelve months of project implementation, the paralegals have lead and facilitated **6 live radio talk shows** also engaging all the community-based radio stations. The topics covered included but not limited to the following: *Child rights, Wife and child Neglect; Court Proceedings and documentations; update on the work of the paralegals; 'Avoiding Electoral Violence': the contribution of women to supporting peaceful election process etc.* To boost up the credibility and probable adherence to the laws, paralegals were joined by the appropriate individual experts as resource persons in the radio room. *Photo above right is 'Lead' Paralegal moderating one of the radio discussions sessions.*



SUMMARY: 1st part of objective 1: **Legal Education Promoted**

IF all things been equal, considering the **wide scope of coverage** of legal messages disseminated via ALL the 4 planned activities as analysed under sub-topic 1.1a, it is practical to assume that **'Awareness on access to primary justice, rights and existence of functional support services has been RAISED'**. Therefore, it is **prudent** to report that more than **5000 residents** (direct and indirect beneficiaries) which include men, women and girls of waterloo have in one-way or the other been legally empowered and are potentially willing to claim their rights, **thus PROMOTING Legal Education in the Waterloo community**.

b. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PRIMARY JUSTICE SYSTEM PROMOTED: - MORE THAN 2000 RESIDENTS OF WATERLOO ARE MORE AWARE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF PRIMARY JUSTICE SUPPORT SERVICES TO SEEK REDRESS; AND 247 HAVE BENEFITED FROM EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY-BASED PARALEGAL SERVICES FREE OF COST.

'Promoting Equitable Access to Primary Justice System' is the **second-part** of objective 1 of the project. The successful implementation of the *'JSCO supported case record forms and data management system'* project and the *'LEWAF Visitors sign-in registers'* were both fundamental to securing the *empirical data* that have substantiated the assertions towards the achievement of this **second-part** of objective 1. Below are the outcomes analyses:

1. **Number of people visiting the paralegal offices:** Over the last **twelve months** of project implementation, that is, between January 2017 and 15th January 2018, a total of **2,212** people compare to **1,086** (*from January to July 2017*), **more than 100%** have physically visited the paralegal offices either to seek more information about their services or to report a case or seek legal advice. *Ref: LEWAF Visitors sign-in registers'*
2. **Number of Cases Admitted:** Throughout the **twelve months** duration of the project, a total of **296** cases compare to **173** (*from January to July 2017*) **more than 90%** additional cases, were admitted by paralegals. *Ref: JSCO case record forms & Data system.*
3. **Number of Cases Resolved and Closed:** Out of the 296 recorded cases, a total of **247** cases compare to 106 cases (January to July 2017) **about 84%**, have been resolved and closed. *Ref: JSCO case record forms & Data system.*
4. **Number of Cases resolved through 'Alternative Dispute Resolution' methods:** Out of the **247** cases resolved and closed, incredibly, a total of **172** cases were brokered by paralegals through alternative dispute resolution methods, which is **about 58%**. *Ref: JSCO case record forms & Data system.*
5. **Average time taken to resolve a case:** Exceptionally, the maximum **average time taken** to resolve a case is 3 weeks. *Ref: JSCO case record forms & Data System.*

SUMMARY: 2nd part of objective 1: Equitable access to primary justice system Promoted
 With the massive awareness raised as outlined under sub-topic 1.1a, more residents of Waterloo and its surrounding communities have visited the paralegals offices to seek more information, advices and other forms of support. The analysis under sub-topic 1.1b reveals the empirical data that have substantiated the *TENET* that to a larger extent, **equitable access to primary justice system** has been promoted in the waterloo community

Overall, it is practical to report that with the comprehensive analyses of both the **first and second parts** of objective 1, LEWAF is proud and confident that objective 1 of the this project which is *to promote legal education and equitable access to primary justice system through community-based paralegal services* has been achieved

c. A COMMUNITY-BASE INSTITUTION ESTABLISHED: - THE 'COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE' SET-UP AND ARE SUPPORTING PARALEGALS IN DELIVERING PRIMARY JUSTICE THROUGH CASE MANAGEMENT, REFERRALS AND FOLLOW-UPS.

Objective 2 of this project is **to PROMOTE Viable and Participatory systems of case management, referrals, follow-ups and family reunification through LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING**, the successfully implementation of the following activities designed by the project has contributed and did sets-out the road map towards the achievement of Objective 2.

1. Community stakeholders KNOWLEDGEABLE on the project and their WILL to support the implementation ENHANCED.

The project implementation started with a 1 day consultative meeting bringing together key Community Stakeholders of Waterloo. This activity set outs to achieve two key desirable outcomes: (i) To foster community ownership and enhance local participation in



Stakeholders at the Initial Consultative meeting.

project activities and (ii) To solicit guarantees from the community that they will work with LEWAF and OSIWA to bring justice to the doorsteps of Women and Girls in the Waterloo Community. A total of **91 people** (out of 120 official invitations) attended the consultative meeting (**over 75% attendance rates**). All the participants are residents of Waterloo and its environs. These included the following: government ministries and institutions, district council, Law enforcement entities, individual stakeholders including head-men and government councillors; international, national and community-base non-governmental organisations, district unions, civil society organisations, tribal heads, traditional/cultural groups

and societies, academic institutions including secondary and primary schools, religious Leaders and community-based media organisations. Overall, the participants who attended the meeting cut across all sectors residents in the Waterloo community.

A significant part of this Stakeholders consultative meeting was participants to learn a bit more about OSIWA, the OSF and rationale for the New 'Legal Empowerment share framework' initiative of the OSF and how Sierra Leone became a beneficiary. This was well articulated by a representative from OSIWA office. All the presentations were ideally meant to trigger the hearts and minds of community stakeholders to start thinking and open up discussions on how to sustain the STRUCTURES that the project will be establishing so that even after OSIWA funding, the provision of paralegal services in Waterloo will continue.

In responding, participants including the **Gender Officer** of the *Waterloo Rural district Council*, the **Director** of *Women Advocacy and Agricultural Development Organisation*, the former sitting government councillors of Waterloo, the chairlady of Waterloo Women petty traders, the secretary general for the Waterloo Drivers' union, the public relation officer for the



Mr Whenzle – former headman of Waterloo

Waterloo Commercial Motor Bike Riders Association, the Former Headman of Waterloo etc... all made valuable comments, suggestions and opinions. For instance: **Mr Lesley O. Whenzle** – Former Headman of Waterloo who have served for over 25 years, formerly started his contributions with a questions to the participants/stakeholders: ***'my people of Waterloo, do you accept this project'?*** The response from the participants was a resounding **YES**, followed by a long standing-ovation. The former Headman said ***"This project has been handed to us, and let's put all party politics aside and work with LEWAF to successfully implement this project for the lasting benefit of the Waterloo community but more especially for our Women and Girls"***. He concluded by saying ***"For me, I pledge my unflinching support to LEWAF"*** end of quote.

2. Paralegals fully recognised by key stakeholders and by the people of Waterloo.

In another related engagement toward triggering interest in establishing a community-base institution to galvanise support to paralegals in delivering community justice services, the project conducted an **introduction ceremony** where all the 6 **Paralegals** and **Lawyer** were introduced to the people of Waterloo. The occasion attracted over **200 participants** (both organisations and individual key stakeholders) from all sectors residents in the Waterloo community. This ceremony raised the visibility and official recognition of the paralegals by the people of Waterloo.

In her key note address, the **Executive Director** of the LAB - **Ms. Fatmata Claire Carlton-Hanciles** called on the people of Waterloo to complement the efforts of LEWAF, LAB

and OSIWA to implement the project. She observed that the challenges Waterloo face in reducing the crime rates and promoting access to justice can be attributed partly to the fact that the area receives little attention from non-governmental organizations compared to other parts of the country. She is quoted to have said **“These organizations jump over Waterloo and take assistance to other parts of the country; as a strategic partner to the**

LAB; I applaud LEWAF for the bold initiative to intervene into Waterloo. She continued to say that **this will no doubt compliment the effort of the LAB and the government of Sierra Leone’s initiative to ‘scaling down access to justice leaving no one behind’ - LAB will continue to seek support for LEWAF to spread its activities in**



Participants at the introduction ceremony of Paralegals



LAB Director flanked with Paralegals, Lawyer and LEWAF Director in front



Paralegals flanked by Headmen and councillors of Waterloo.

the most deprived and marginalised communities right across the Western Area Rural Districts” end of quote.

Furthermore, to galvanise *buy-in, support* and *ownership* for the project; and to inject a spirit of **networking, collaboration** and **coordination** into community-based justice service providers to supporting the work of the paralegals during project implementation, the Paralegals were introduced to defined key stakeholders within the Waterloo community. These included the ‘chairman’ of WARD C, the community health centre; the SLP and FSU of Waterloo; the Sierra Leone Arm forces - Waterloo division; the ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs (MSWGCA) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) of the Waterloo division; the Traditional Healers Association; the Cultural Secret Societies for both men and women; Religious Institutions; the Commercial Bike riders and Motor drivers Unions; the Attare Base Union; Community Based Organisations etc.



Paralegals meet with WARD C Chairman



Paralegals meet with SLP/FSU high ranks

3. *Community fully embraced the idea of an Oversight Committee*

The defined introduction of the PROJECT and PARALEGALS to key stakeholders and institutions in Waterloo as outlined in point 2 above, increased the momentum to establishing a **viable and participatory forum** to support the work of community-based Paralegals in the delivery of a coordinated response service to the residents of Waterloo. This saw the establishment of the COC with a membership of 30 individuals of good character holding influential positions in their various domains/works of life in the Waterloo community.



Cross section of the COC membership

To ensure a **‘viable and participatory’** local institution, the need for CAPACITY BUILDING was at the heart of this COC initiative which sets out to achieving the objective of LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING. Adapting a curriculum from **‘TIMAP for Justice’**, one-day training was conducted for COC



Training session for the COC Membership by Project Officer

members, Paralegals and other staff. In total 32 out of 47 people invited participated in the training. The key topics covered by this training includes - *primary justice service delivery models; case types and management, referrals and follow-up systems; the need for networking, collaboration and coordination; the Human Rights provisions in the Constitution; the structure and working of the Sierra Leone legal system; and significantly, the roles and responsibilities of the COC; what Paralegal do and tools they are using; their working relationship with external stakeholders etc* were also exhausted by this training.

SUMMARY: objective 2:

Promote Viable and Participatory system of case management, referral, follow-ups and family reunification through LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

At this stage, it is pertinent to report that the successful implementation of activities 1, 2 and 3 of objective 2, as designed by the project has contributed to the establishment of COC, with the aim of supporting Paralegals in the delivery of primary justice through case management, referrals and follow-ups.

To substantiate the effect of objective 2 to the success of this project, over the **twelve months** period of project implementation, a total of **65** out of the 296 cases admitted by paralegals **were referred** by other community institutions including the SLP, FSU, local chiefs, the waterloo magistrate court, the headman of waterloo etc. (*Source: JSCO supported case record forms 2017*).

In addition, the *Max Stone’s report on LEWAF’S Engagement with Local Judicial Authorities 2017*, stated that, quote **“despite the short period they have worked together, the magistrate praised the work LEWAF had done on 5 interlinked cases with a total of 21 accused”** end of quote. Further substantiating the effect of objective 2 to the success of this project, *LEWAF First Interim progress Report (January - July 2017)*,

revealed that Chief *Alimamy Kamara Bethem Beng II* - a *Temne Tribal Head*, had officially referred 12 cases to the LEWAF Waterloo Paralegal office.... He said - quote ***“all the cases I have sent to the Paralegal office were resolved successfully and will continue to do so, because I trust LEWAF Paralegals,*** end of quote.

OVERALL, IT IS PRACTICAL TO REPORT THAT THE COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSES OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES UNDER OBJECTIVE 2 OF THIS PROJECT, LEWAF IS PROUD AND CONFIDENT THAT OBJECTIVE 2 OF THE THIS PROJECT WHICH IS ***TO PROMOTE VIABLE AND PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS OF CASE MANAGEMENT, REFERRAL, FOLLOW-UPS AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION THROUGH LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING*** HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

1.2. LEWAF INITIAL ASSUMPTION ABOUT THE PROJECT: *The View Points*

Generally, LEWAF initially assumption about the project's expected results has remained unchanged. The following are evident that substantiate our positive assumption:

- ***Promoting Legal Education:*** Evidently, after the completion of all legal education meetings, the dissemination of posters, live radio talk shows and the airing of jingles in five local languages on all community-based radio stations of waterloo, it is prudence and realistic to report that more than 5000 people in and around Waterloo would have benefited from legal education/empowerment either DIRECTLY or INDIRECTLY as the case maybe. Thus contributed to achieving objective OS1.
- ***Promoting Equitable Access to Primary Justice System:*** It is prudence and realistic to report that from the analysis articulated above, *Equitable Access to Primary Justice System* through COMMUNITY-BASED PARALEGAL SERVICES has been promoted, thus also contributed to achieving objective OS1.
- ***The establishment of a community-base institution:*** A community-base institution – the ‘community oversight committee’ has been established and is supporting paralegals in delivering primary justice through case management, referrals and follow-ups, thus achieving objective OS2. *However, the task to ensure its ‘viability and full participation’ is substandard and remains a work-in-progress.*

SECTION 2

BENEFICIARIES' PERCEPTION ABOUT THE PROJECT: *The Synopsis*

Towards the last phase of project completion, it has remained critical for LEWAF and OSIWA including community stakeholders of Waterloo to know if the project has had the desired impact/s on the Women and Girls of Waterloo. To reveal this, in the first week of January 2018, the WARD C with support from LEWAF, sets-out to assess the impact of the project in its prefecture. This assessment which lasted for four (4) days was lead by the Council's *Monitoring and Evaluation* officer and the *Social Welfare, Gender and Children's affairs* Officer. The report is titled - **Western Area Rural Council Impact Assessment REPORT on LEWAF/OSIWA funded project 2018**. (Short named - *WARD C Impact Assessment Report 2018*).

The OVERALL OBJECTIVE of the assessment was *to identify whether the desired changes or expected results planned by the project have been realized and above all the project objectives achieved*. The eight page report concluded that - quote *"To summarise, it is but appropriate to safely state that the 'Promoting Security and Access to Justice for Women and Girls' project has made significant achievements and changes, as more people are now aware of HOW, WHEN and WHERE to seek redress through primary justice systems....."* end of quote. To **substantiate** this conclusion, this section has attempted to show the analyses in **PERCEPTIONS** of both the DIRECT and INDIRECT beneficiaries of the project. In doing so, the **WARD C Impact Assessment Report 2018** and other **related research findings** have been referenced throughout to validate the assertions of this section.

The assessment TARGETED BENEFICIARIES from different communities in the Waterloo vicinity including Six Mile, Devil hole, Benguma, Lumpa, Camp market and lover's corner. Also targeted were institutions such as WARD C, traditional healers, CSO's, tribal chiefs, CBOs, FSU, COC, SLP, Magistrate Court, Local Court, Drivers Union, Schools pupils etc with designed questionnaire.

Three (3) Techniques were employed to carry out the impact assessment exercise.

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** – engaging DIRECT beneficiaries of the project.
- **Open Discussions Meetings** – engaging Communities that have benefited from Legal education.

- **One-to-One interviews** – engaging key community stakeholders including Headmen, the COC chairman; tribal chief, drivers union, FSU; traditional healers; school pupils etc.....

Below are the analyses of both the DIRECT and INDIRECT beneficiaries' perceptions in relation to each technique that was employed.

2.1 Focus Group Discussions

With this technique, the direct beneficiaries of the project were divided into groups to brainstorm and discussed set of multiple questions in rotational order. The following opinions stood out as most common:

- **When ask how the service has benefitted them or changed their situation**, the general response is *'the service has helped to facilitate peace especially in the homes; and has reduced fighting and the use of abusive languages in the community'* etc....

- **When asked about the 'quality' of service compare to other service providers**, all



respondents said the *LEWAF/OSIWA Paralegal service is very easy to access, free of cost and at the same time clients are received with open hands and treated with care and respect beyond expectation.* Madam

Veronica Jalloh was emphatic about this perception because she has referred cases to the LEWAF paralegals office and all the feedbacks from all the clients she had referred are as she termed it **'inspiring'** and **'relieving'**.

- This is consistent with their experience when asked about **how long it took for their cases to be resolved.** All respondents were cognisant of the different nature of their matters but overall, it was astonishing to have learnt that *almost all of the respondents said it took maximum 3 days to 4 weeks* for their matter to



be **done-and-dusted**. For instance, one of the participants of the *focus group discussion* is a Muslim cleric and was involved in a brutal leadership and ownership

struggle of a mosque in Waterloo. The matter took over **6 months** but still remained unresolved after having passed through high profile institutions such as the national council of imams, office of the national security, local authorities etc. They finally ended up in front of the magistrate court of



The mosque case mediation session at Waterloo Paralegal office

Waterloo and out of frustration, the members of both parties - 21 in total, were remanded in police cell for a week. They were released and referred to LEWAF paralegals for MEDIATION. After two successive meeting sessions each lasting not less than five hours, in **3 weeks**, LEWAF paralegals were proud to face the presiding magistrate to declare '*resolution reached*' and demanded '*withdrawal*' from court for peace monitoring. Acknowledging the **swift and timely** trial, the **Max Stone's report on LEWAF'S engagement with local judicial authorities 2017'** reveals how the magistrate praised the work LEWAF paralegals had done on **5 interlinked cases** with a total of 21 accused despite the short period she has worked with the LEWAF Paralegal Office.

- With the positive opinions already expressed above, it sounds ironical to have asked **if they have confidence in the system**. All respondents said '**YES**', as according to them, *the paralegal service has help resolve a lot of conflicts in their communities*. In addition, all the respondents said *the service needs to continue as it helps the less privilege to access free, fair and timely justice*. To further substantiate this **confidence** and **satisfaction**, it looks practicable to have noticed that out of the 296 cases admitted by paralegals throughout the twelve months duration of the project, **117 (40%)** of the cases were **referred by FORMER CLIENTS**.
(Ref: JSCO supported case record forms data 2017).



2.2 Open Discussion Meetings

This technique was used to engage communities that have benefited from Legal education. The following opinions were revealed as the most common:

- When asked, **did you learnt a bit about the law?** The general opinion from all respondents was **YES**. Sighting topics like *referral system, devolution of estate, right of land and tenancy, marriage laws and the child right act* etc. All respondents proved to have for example learnt *the importance of referral, the consequences of violence, the channels of making complaints* etc.
- A good number of the respondents said, they have **used their new knowledge to solve personal problems or have provided help to another person**. They highlighted forms like *their limited involvement in violence, giving advices to people*. Others said, *they now know where to make complaint or seek support in case of a problem* when asked **in what forms they have used their new knowledge**.
- Some headmen and leaders were asked about their opinion on the peoples' **knowledge of the laws**. The general opinion of the respondents was - quote *"Though it was clearly pointed out that the LEWAF intervention has made significant change, it was stated the majority of the people were not knowledgeable about laws; more intensive legal education is to be done for the long term and should take the form of training workshops, radio programmes and television programme....end of quote*. This is consistent with the perception of the presiding magistrate of the Waterloo court during an interview with 'Max Stone'. Quote - *"Education on the law is a problem which needs to be addressed in the Waterloo district with many accused unaware they have broken laws and also unaware of the minimum and maximum sentences for certain crimes"*, the magistrate stated – *(Max Stone's report on LEWAF'S engagement with local judicial authorities 2017')*.



Open Discussion meeting at Masorie Community



Headman of Kissy Teng community - Waterloo

2.3 One-to-One Interview

This technique was applied to key community stakeholders including individuals and institutions, like the Headman of Waterloo, FSU, the Magistrate of Waterloo court etc. The following opinions stood out as most common:

- When asked - **How did you know about the service?** Generally, all respondent said they are fully aware of the existence of the LEWAF/OSIWA paralegal service in

Waterloo. When asked **HOW**, the most popular medium according to the report are through courtesy visits, launching ceremony, meetings, radio etc.

- When asked, **have you worked with the Service?** All respondents answered ‘YES’ and continue to say that *workshops, launching of the project, referral, mediation, outreach and awareness raising programmes, legal education, etc* are the most popular ways they have worked



LEWAF Board member with Chief in July 2017

with the LEWAF/OSIWA paralegal service of Waterloo. For instance, Chief Alimamy Kamara Bethem Beng II - Temne Tribal Head – was emphatic about the support he has received from LEWAF paralegals in resolving complex civil matters. **Chief is pictured in a joint mediation effort of the masque case mentioned under the ‘focus group discussion’.** This also represents the same perception of the presiding magistrate of the Waterloo court as reveal in *Max Stone’s report on LEWAF’S engagement with local judicial authorities 2017’.*

- As revealed by the report, all respondent acknowledged that the LEWAF/OSIWA paralegal service of Waterloo has supported their work in so many ways. Instances included: *the service has help people to be opened minded to discuss issues affecting them and has increased the level of sensitisation.* To be more specific, it was resonating to have heard the FSU of Waterloo saying - quote ‘*LEWAF paralegal service has reduced the waste of time previously experienced pursuing matters of similar nature*’.



Assessment Team meets the Heads of Waterloo FSU

- **Before the project intervention, what was the general perception?** The headman of Waterloo said – quote “*Matters were not concluded reasonably and access to fair and timely justice was difficult*”. Overall, all respondents especially the chief, headman and COC Chairman said ‘*Government agencies and local authorities were over burden with work load in terms of cases*’. This is consistence with the perception of the Waterloo headman when he was visited by LEWAF board members during the first technical field visit in July 2017 – he was



Assessment Team meet the Headman of Waterloo

quoted to have said *“I am now experiencing sign of relief because of the existence of the paralegals in Waterloo, all the cases reported to me are now referred to the Paralegal office”* end of quote. **(Ref: LEWAF First Interim Report, January - July 2017).**

- All respondents were practical in their opinion on the question **how they can compare the service of LEWAF to other service providers?** The most common responses includes - *LEWAF paralegals are resident in beneficiaries’ community and are more closer to the people; have facilitated easy access to justice; LEWAF is rated high because of the free, fair and timely service they offer....etc.*
- All respondents particularly the chairperson of the COC and a local chief acknowledged that the LEWAF/OSIWA paralegal project has *helped in improving the mindset of the people in terms of their knowledge of domestic laws; but sensitisation on the laws needs to be robust and ongoing.*



Assessment Team meet with the COC Chairperson

When asked about their opinion on the continuity of service, all respondents were emphatic of their opinion that *the offices has served as a point of call for minor cases and that the services should be extended to other communities* in the rural district.

Below are photos of some of the success cases ranging from *wife abandonment, child neglects, landlord and tenants disputes to neighbourhood palaver etc.....*



To conclude, all the responses as revealed by *WARD C Impact Assessment Report 2018; Max Stone’s report on LEWAF’S engagement with local judicial authorities 2017; LEWAF First Interim Report, January - July 2017 and the JSCO supported case record forms data 2017....* clearly articulated the positive perceptions of both the **direct and indirect** beneficiaries about the LEWAF/OSIWA community-base paralegal project intervention in Waterloo.

SECTION 3

WHAT WORKED WELL and BROADER TAKEAWAY

3.1. WHAT WORKED WELL IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT

As clearly established in the subsequent chapters of this report, all activities undertaken as planned by the project were productive, but ideally, the activities that proved to have worked well are as follows:

- ***The Initial Consultative meeting with community stakeholders:*** Opening up to beneficiaries and involving them in planning and implementation from the word ‘GO’ was KEY to promoting community ownership and sustainable participation. This was achieved through the ‘*Initial Consultative meeting*, with community stakeholders. For instance, LEWAF believed that incorporating the suggestion of the Councillors of Waterloo to include a member of the Waterloo Community in the recruitment process for Paralegals went a long way to winning the confidence of the people of Waterloo.
- ***The Introduction ceremony of Paralegals to the Waterloo community.*** The event triggered the interest of key stakeholders to galvanise the WILL to fully embrace the idea of an oversight committee to support the paralegals in delivering community justice services. This saw the establishment a community-base institution that set-out to have achieved objective 2 of this project.
- ***Using of ‘External Expertise’.*** What was incredible and did worked well was the use of ‘*external expertise*’ ***as resource persons*** by LEWAF Paralegals in most of the community legal education and radio talk show activities. This initiative went a long way to *boosting the credibility of the topics covered and also boosted adherence of participants to the laws* as applicable in the context of a situation. For instance, the community legal education on ‘***proper documentation for land acquisition and Landlord/tenant relationship***, a resource person from the ministry of lands, housing and country planning joined the paralegals. Also, the radio talk show on ***Court Proceedings and documentations***, two guest speakers - the court clerk and Prosecutor from the Waterloo magistrate court were members of



the panellists. Furthermore, it was edifying and resonating to see drivers' union bosses and the traffic division personnel of Waterloo police partnering with LEWAF Paralegals and did legal education on ***domestic abuse and traffic offences*** that targeted drivers and inhabitants in and around the Tombo lorry Park of Waterloo. This will be applied going forward into other related projects in the future.

3.2. THE BROADER TAKEAWAY

- a. *Community fears of project 'Continuity' and 'Sustainability'*: At the initial consultative meeting for this project way back in January 2017, a sitting government councillor re-echoed the views of many Waterloo residents on *concerns around the sustainability of the project after donor support*. Narrating his experience from the past, councillor Sesay said quote ***"Many great projects that have the potential to change the lives of the waterloo people has ended up down the drains after donor support ends"***, end of quote. This is consistent with the opinions of both the direct and indirect beneficiaries revealed in the ***WARD C Impact Assessment Report 2018*** when asked about their opinion on the continuity of service; all respondents were emphatic of their opinion on ***continuity and extension of the paralegals service to other communities*** in the rural district. The same view was expressed by the presiding magistrate of the waterloo court in ***Max stone's report - to improve the scope of legal education***.

SECTION 4

KEY CHALLENGES and LESSONS LEARNED: *The Outlook*

Generally, all the activities undertaken by this project were intended and did achieve the *desired impacts* we have hoped. However, in the face of these achievements, some challenges and lessons have been encountered. Some challenges falling within the capability of LEWAF have been addressed whilst others still remain unaddressed.

4.1. KEY CHALLENGES

a. *LACK OF FUNDING to getting the COC Robust, Functional and Sustainable:*

In the first interim progress report (January to July 2017), it was concluded that this project will work to support the building of a **'Viable, Transparent and Accountable'** institutional governance and administration of the already established *'Community Oversight Committee'* structure. The 2 key activities identified by this project to have realised this were (i) a **sustainable fund raising strategy** and (ii) a **Memorandum of Corporation (MOC)** document.

LEWAF had hoped that, the **sustainable fund raising strategy** would have seen a financially viable community-base structure with a probable **transparent and accountable** financial capacity to be supporting its work and that of the community-based Paralegals for the foreseeable future **after** LEWAF intervention in Waterloo; AND the **MOC** document would have seen *the people of Waterloo well positioned to demand accountability from COC members and other service providers* as it would have enclosed the **PLEDGES** in the form of **commitments** of membership toward supporting the paralegals in the delivery of community justices services.

Unfortunately, the project designers and directorate of LEWAF have acknowledged that a budget line that would have been **primarily** directed towards supporting the 'setting-up' of this COC structure to be robust and functional, was **inadvertently** lost sight-of. So, as this activity remained a *work-in-progress* in the second phase of project implementation, that is, from August to December 2017, efforts to secure funding to make-up proved futile. **Clearly, this is one activity that was undertaken by the project but did not have the impact that LEWAF had hoped.**

b. *LEGAL EMPOWERMENT INTERVENTION IS SHORT for the Women and Girls to know the laws and have the confidence to use the laws and the capability to shape laws.*

After the **twelve months** implementation of the project, the **WARD C Impact Assessment Report 2018** was clear on the tenet that - *the project has helped in improving the mindset of the people in terms of their knowledge of domestic laws, than it was at the initial phase of the project.* At the same time, the **Max Stone's report on LEWAF'S engagement with local judicial authorities 2017** revealed the 'perception' of the presiding magistrate of the Waterloo court. She was quoted to have said "Education on the law is a problem which needs to be addressed in the Waterloo district". The bases of her perception is premised on the multiple cases that has appeared before her and at the end realized that many accused persons are not only unaware they have broken laws, but also unaware of the minimum and maximum sentences for certain crimes. The magistrate mentioned the scope for improving legal education and also, the **WARD C - project impact assessment report 2018**, revealed that *some direct and indirect beneficiaries had recommended more intensive legal education on the laws and needs to be robust and on-going not least for the long term.*

4.2. KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- a. *More MEN now showing interest in Legal Empowerment:*** More men than expected showed interest in receiving legal information. For instance within the **twelve months** of project implementation, 49.7% of clients that visited the paralegal offices are men (*Ref: Visitors sign-in Registers (January 2017 – 15th January 2018)*). This finding is consistent with the many questions asked by male participants as to why men are not targeted by this project.
- b. *Alternative Dispute Resolution methods are now seen to be more ideal for sustainable peaceful settlement:*** Clients were initially unwilling to settle for **mediation** and other forms of **alternative dispute resolution** methods. They preferred litigation – "tit for tat" justice as a means of asserting revenge on their offenders. However, the OSIWA funded project as much as possible has been helping clients to come to terms with **alternative dispute resolution** methods as means of promoting peaceful and sustainable settlements. This can be substantiated

with the **172 (58%)** cases brokered by Paralegals through other alternative dispute resolution methods mainly ‘mediation’ within the **twelve months** period of project.

- c. *Training sessions more idea to entice participation:* Working Sessions in the form of **TRAININGS** are more likely to entice participation compared to holding normal meetings. For example this strategy was used after several failed attempts to get prospective COC members to attend meetings. At some point into the project implementation, the announcement of a training package for the committee members saw the attendance of over 30 representatives for one-day training. This eventually heightened the participation and commitment of COC members to supporting the work of paralegals.
- d. *Beneficiaries’ knowledge of project from the ‘Start’ has the potential to promote community ownership and sustain participation:* Opening up to beneficiaries and involving them in planning and implementation from the word **GO** is important to promote community ownership and sustain participation. For instance, LEWAF believes that incorporating the suggestion of the Councillors of Waterloo to include a member of the Waterloo Community in the recruitment process for Paralegals, went a long way to winning the confidence of the people of Waterloo.
- e. *PASSION can enhance steadfastness and efficiency:* This proved to be true during the recruitment process of the paralegals. Always consider persons **PASSION** as a key requirement in recruitments. This can also be probe into further during the interview. Consider **PASSION** as a whole mark point.

SECTION 5

LEWAF COLLABORATION WITH OSIWA: **THE ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1. LEWAF COLLABORATION WITH OSIWA: The Assessment

LEWAF have being into full scale operations for less than half a decade and during this period, it had continually sets-out to seeking opportunities to advance its capacity to deliver its programming mandates. Over the last **twelve months** of collaboration with OSIWA in the implementation of this project, it is appealing to state that LEWAF has been able to utilise all the appropriate opportunities offered by OSIWA. Below are some vital instances:

- a. **Expert Trainings:** Within the year 2017, all the six newly recruited persons completed the requisite trainings for paralegal. At that time, since LEWAF as an organisation hasn't the capacity (in-house resources like training manual, expert trainers etc); OSIWA extended the opportunity to support LEWAF on this crucial activity of the project. In total, 3 (three) comprehensive training sessions (initial and refreshers) was coordinated by OSIWA in collaboration with **NAMATI** and the **JSCO**.
- b. **Expert Recruitment:** This project realised that PARALEGALS ARE NOT LAWYERS and if the paralegals were to dispense their legal services more efficiently and effectively within the ambit of the relevant laws/acts of Sierra Leone, the need for a qualified and experienced LAWYER that will provide **mentoring, guidance** and **supervision** to paralegals throughout the duration of project implementation was KEY. Also, it was extremely appealing to see OSIWA offering and subsequently provided it expertise to LEWAF in recruiting a Lawyer. OSIWA help to fine-tune the legal interview questions and participated in the interview exercise.

- c. **Organisation Capacity Building:** After submitting the first Interim progress report within 7 months of project implementation, OSIWA saw the need to ENHANCE the **capacity** and **expertise** of LEWAF to be better positioned to continue the mapping, designing and implementation of innovative legal empowerment projects. To achieve this, OSIWA extended the opportunity to LEWAF to participate in a '**Legal Empowerment Leadership Course**' in Budapest, Hungary. The Executive Director of LEWAF was amongst 60 participants from across 31 countries who participated. **Photo: LEWAF Director with colleague course participant in Budapest.**



d. *Credible Data Recording and Management System*: Prior to working with OSIWA, LEWAF has been struggling to maintain a credible and well informed data management system, despite the hundreds of cases it has handled over the years. Fortunately, over the last **twelve months** of engagement with OSIWA, LEWAF was opportune to benefit from the JSCO **classified data recording and management** project. LEWAF is proud to say that all the **empirical data** used to substantiate the positive outcomes of this project has been sort from the instituted JSCO data recording and management system supported by OSIWA.

Overall, it is candid to state that LEWAF's collaboration with OSIWA over the last twelve months of project implementation has been **REMARKABLE** and **EXCELLENT** beyond expectation.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS.

Thus far, the LEWAF candid recommendations to OSIWA if it was to fund similar project in the future - regardless the organisation, will be as follows:

- a. Were dearly needed, *OSIWA to Continue with all the points mentioned in 5.1 above*.
- b. *Timely Disbursement of Funds*: However, OSIWA should endeavour to **improve** on the timely disbursement of fund to implementing partners. By so doing, it will NOT ONLY contribute to partners planned activity implementation within **time-lines** but will also reduce **undue pressure** on partners in their bid to achieving the overall objective of OSIWA with regards to **timely** and **quality** project deliverables.
- c. *Show Consideration for Inadvertent Omissions*: OSIWA to be considerate in providing timely support to partners in case of **inadvertent** omissions of budget-lines for critical project activity that would have otherwise contributed to achieving expected outcome of a project. This moral recommendation is in line with LEWAF missed opportunity to secure funding to support the building of a 'Viable, Transparent and Accountable' institutional governance and administration of the already established COC structure mentioned in point 4.1 of this report.

SECTION 6

OPPORTUNITIES THAT HAVE STRENGTHENS LEWAF ORGANISATIONAL WEAKNESSES and FOLLOW-UP PLANS AFTER PROJECT

6.1. LEWAF NEW STRENGTHS WITH OSIWA OPPORTUNITIES.

More generally, LEWAF internal opportunities and strengths stated in the proposals have been very helpful towards the implementation of this project. With regards to institutional weaknesses, as outline in 5.1, LEWAF had continually sets-out to seeking opportunities to advance its capacity to deliver its programming mandates. Over the last **twelve months** of collaboration with OSIWA, it is appealing to state that LEWAF has been able to utilise all the appropriate opportunities offered by OSIWA toward this direction.

Below are few of the productive outcomes of the new opportunities utilised by LEWAF.

a. LEWAF now leading a COALITION of 'Community Justice Service Providers'

LEWAF management team have continued to provide their expertise especially around primary and formal justice systems. For instance, the LEWAF as an organisation has now taking the lead and has establish a **COALITION** of primary justice service providers in the Western Area of Sierra Leone named '**Western Area Network on Community Justice' (WAN-CJ)**. With support from OSIWA, the JSCO facilitated the setting-up of '*Regional Platforms' of Community Justice Service Providers in the Western, Northern, Southern and Eastern regions of Sierra Leone.*

b. LEWAF has continued to maintain its strong Association with the relevant Partners and Community Stakeholders.

These included but not limited to the following: the *LAB*, the *MSWGCA*, the *FSU*, the *SLP*, the *WARD C*, the *Motor Drivers Union*, the *CBOs*, *women's group*, the *magistrate court of Waterloo*, *community-base radio stations*, key community stakeholders like the *headmen*, *councillors*, *mammy queens*, *tribal heads*, *local chiefs*, *traditional healers*, *secret society heads* etc...These partners and key community stakeholders has continued to support paralegals navigate authorities in their pursuit to deliver justice to Women and girls in Waterloo.

c. LEWAF is gradually getting the required resources and expertise:

The OSIWA funded project has supported in providing the **required resources** and **expertise** that have contributed immensely to mitigating the institutional **weaknesses** of LEWAF. All the areas mentioned in 5.1 are some vital instances.

Without a stint of doubt, these new resources have been instrumental towards the successful implementation of this project.

- d. *LEWAF maintained quality Personnel*: With all these supports, LEWAF has been able to acquire and maintain **quality intuitional strengths** in the areas of program related personnel and expertise and even logistical resources like motorbikes, relevant reading materials etc needed not only for the success of this project but also for future projects to come. *Photo Left: Managers training in Makeni - LEWAF Director (middle), Project Officer (left) and Legal Officer/Lawyer (right).*



6.2. FOLLOW UP PLANS AFTER THIS PROJECT

- a. *Getting the COC robust, functional and sustainable*: LEWAF is still determine to work towards getting the COC robust, functional and sustainable. If funding is secured, this activity will be one of the top follow-up plans of LEWAF, despite the official end of the project.
- b. *LEWAF to EXPAND on it Legal Empowerment Drive*: LEWAF has learnt that getting people to **know the law, use the law** and are able to influence the **shaping of laws** that affects their welfare and wellbeing requires a long term investment and intervention.

This FINAL report has been able to unveil **two** key notable facts about the **twelve months** duration of the – ‘Promoting the Security and Access to Justices for Women and Girls in Waterloo’ Project.

1. That the period for the intervention of the project is short for it to make the desired changes/impact.
2. That the coverage of the project was limited to Waterloo making it impossible for people living in other cosmopolitan communities in Western Area Rural District to know the law and are able to access free, fair and timely justice.

Furthermore, the **Max stone report** was also clear on this when it sighted the opinion of the sitting **Magistrate** of the Waterloo court - *to improve the scope of legal education to cover the Western Area Rural District in its entirety.*

Moving forward in the years that lie ahead, LEWAF will continue with the **OSF** ‘Legal Empowerment shared framework *initiative*’ drive to ensuring that millions of Sierra Leoneans especially Women and Girls **know the laws** and are **using the laws** themselves to solve their day-to-day justice problems, while at the same time holding authorities to account and advancing systemic reform in the interest of the poor.

- c. *Engaging established Women’s Group and SCHOOLS*: It is no coincident to have seen the max stone report concluded that - quote “**perhaps LEWAF in the future could look to engaging schools in legal education to ensure the next generation has an improved knowledge of the judicial system**”. In the same vein, the conclusion of max stone’s report buttresses the already **defined plan** of LEWAF to introduce legal education into its already established Women’s Economic Empowerment groups in 2018 and the subsequent years to come.

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