



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

DRIVING
NEXT GENERATION
INNOVATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS
FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE



**WEST AFRICA NETWORK
FOR PEACEBUILDING**

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR PEACE



OUR PARTNERS

Adam Smith International



African Union



AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



Brot für die Welt



CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT



COGINTA



DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

Democracy International



Diakonia People Change the World



FPP FUND FOR PEACE



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

GNWP The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders



A Network of People Building Peace

IDA International Development Association



idpc



International Labour Organization

ii Interpeace INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR PEACEBUILDING



Irish Aid Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland

ISS INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES



KAIPTC

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE la francophonie

MERCY CORPS



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK Denmark in Ghana



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



Norad



ONU FEMMES

OPEN SOCIETY Initiative for West Africa

OSIWA Open Society Initiative for West Africa



PARTNERSGLOBAL



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun svizra

Search for Common Ground

sipri



Spotlight Initiative

STAR Ghana Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness

Sweden Sverige



UNDEF FNUD



United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

unicef



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE Making Peace Possible



UNOWAS

URGENT ACTION FUND FOR AFRICA FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WARDC WOMEN ADVOCATES RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION CENTRE (WARDC)

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

World Vision





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Abbreviations / Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ACP	Austrian Centre for Peace
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
APC	All People's Congress
APN	African Peacebuilding Network
APSA	AU Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
AWP	Annual Workplan
C7-WA	Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa
CCC	Communal Peace Consultation Frameworks
CCSC	Security Advisory Committees
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFLI	Canadian Funds for Local Initiatives
COPAC	Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for Peace and Conflict Prevention in Central Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CPAID	Citizens' Participation for Accountable and Inclusive Democracy
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSC	Consultative Security Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DSRSG/RC/HC	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC)
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECONEC	ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EMB	Election Management Bodies

ESR	Election Situation Room
EU	European Union
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response
FOSDA	Foundation for Security and Development in Africa
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
I4P	Infrastructure for Peace
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IGO	Intergovernmental organisation
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPE	Active Nonviolence and Peace Education
NEWS	National Early Warning System
NNCS	National Network Coordinators
PAPS	Political Affairs, Peace and Security
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
REcAP	Research and Action for Peace
UEMOA/WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UN-CIMIC	United Nations Civil-Military Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UNPBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolutions
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WAPI	West Africa Peacebuilding Institute
WARDC	Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre
WGWYPS-GH	Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security- Ghana Chapter
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Network Programme
WODI	WANEP Organisational Development Index
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security



Organisational **Profile**

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is the leading regional Civil Society Organisation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding conceived in 1996, and officially launched in 1998 in response to the civil wars, instabilities and humanitarian crises that plagued West Africa in the 1990s. WANEP has succeeded in establishing strong National Networks in every Member State of ECOWAS, with over 700 member organisations working in peace and security across West Africa. WANEP has credibility and a wide recognition both internationally and locally due to its outstanding work in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the ECOWAS region. It is a key player in major global peacebuilding efforts.

In 2002, WANEP entered a historic partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the implementation of a regional early warning and response system referred to as ECOWARN. A standing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between WANEP and ECOWAS in 2004 guides this partnership and constitutes a major strategic achievement for WANEP and West African civil society as it offers the much-desired opportunity to contribute to Track I responses to conflicts and policy debates. In August 2015, WANEP signed an MOU with the African Union Commission to provide support to the Commission's Peace and Security Department in the implementation of the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) including the gender mainstreaming of the architecture. WANEP provides professional courses in conflict prevention and peacebuilding informed by several years of practical experience to governments, businesses, and practitioners throughout the region and beyond. Underlying its work is a commitment to professionalism and a dedication to a world of mutual respect, tolerance and peace. Capacity building remained the bedrock of WANEP's goal of enhancing the skills and expertise of ECOWAS



citizens', intergovernmental organisations, state institutions, CSOs and the business community in conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding. The West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI) established in 2002 is the official training/capacity building platform of WANEP. WAPI strives to overcome the gap in practice, knowledge and skills in peacebuilding in the region and increase the number of competent, active peacebuilding practitioners in West Africa. In addition, WANEP is also providing support to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the operationalisation of civil society organisations' components of the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC).

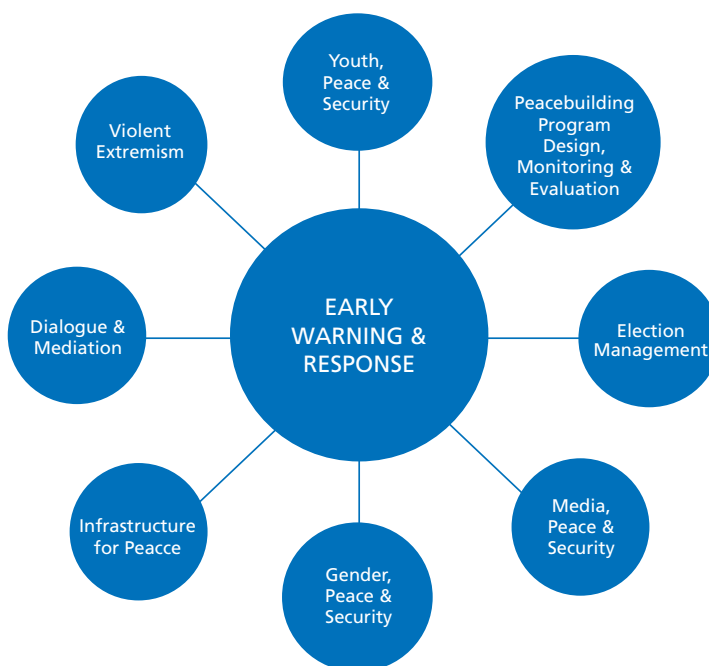
OUR APPROACH

WANEP is a think tank, training and research-based advocacy organisation with the undergirding principle of collaborative approach to peacebuilding. Instead of adopting an activist approach, WANEP functions as a professional partner of State, interstate and international actors to develop, implement and evaluate peacebuilding and conflict prevention approaches and instruments.

WHAT WE DO



The West Africa Early Warning and Response Network (WARN) is WANEP's flagship programme instituted in 2000 with the aim to provide early warning information and design timely responses to prevent the outbreak or mitigate the escalation of conflict. The National Early Warning System (NEWS) is the most viable tool for prevention of violent conflicts and generally informs WANEP's programme designs and interventions and seeks to enhance human security in the region by monitoring and reporting on socio-political situations that could degenerate into violent conflicts.



Youth, Peace and Security: Based on the conviction that the young population holds the key to future stability of West Africa, WANEP introduced the Active Nonviolence and Peace Education (NAPE) programme in 2001 to address the rising level of children and young people involvement in violent conflicts in the region. NAPE seeks to promote a culture of non-violence and social responsibility among young people in West Africa as a platform for achieving sustainable peace in the region.



Gender, Peace and Security: WANEP is focused on promoting gender-responsive peacebuilding and strengthening women's capacity for the promotion of peace and human security in the region through the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) Programme. WIPNET relies on regional and global policy frameworks including UNSCR 1325, the AU gender mainstreaming instruments and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) as guide and reference. The creation of the WIPNET programme was informed by the victimisation of women in the civil wars of the 90s and their marginalisation in the peace processes.



Dialogue and Mediation: WANEP undertakes a special intervention in dialogue and mediation with the aim of promoting inter and intra communal dialogue and peaceful coexistence as well as enhance the mediating capacities of communities and other relevant state and inter-governmental bodies. This intervention helps to transform crisis at its nascent stage before it escalates into violence.



Infrastructure for Peace (I4P): WANEP is a strong advocate for National Peace Architectures as a national and decentralised mechanism for responding to conflicts and mitigating its effects on civilians.



Election Management: WANEP engages with diverse stakeholders in promoting peaceful democratic transitions, and partner with other civil society organisations to monitor and mitigate election-related conflicts as well as promote dialogue towards the attainment of peaceful elections. WANEP's electoral management support strategy involves developing nationally led collaborative mechanisms for monitoring, analysing, reporting and responding to electoral violence under the Election Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation Project (E-MAM). The project aims to contribute to a reduction in electoral violence through strengthened regional and national capacities to enhance peaceful electoral processes in the region.



Peacebuilding Programme Design, Monitoring and Evaluation: WANEP through this platform develops and implements effective peacebuilding programme, projects and interventions reflective of the organisations' research, monitoring and evaluation experiences.



Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): WANEP has an established monitoring and analysis mechanism focused on Countering Violent Extremism both at continental and regional levels. This mechanism also supports designed interventions by WANEP in the areas of youth and women, peace and security agenda.



Media, Peace and Security: West Africa remains one of the continent's most unstable regions, with increased insurgency and cross-border terrorism broadening the scope of conflicts in the region. In the face of a wide range of social, political and economic conflicts, the media has become a pivotal influence in peacebuilding and constitutes a major human resource with the potential to help prevent and moderate violence. WANEP recognises that a comprehensive effort to build peace must take the media into consideration as an active and positive partner and thus works in collaboration with the media to ensure conflict sensitive reporting in the promotion of peace and stability.

WHERE WE WORK

WANEP has succeeded in establishing strong national networks in every Member State of ECOWAS, with over 700 member organisations working in peacebuilding across West Africa.

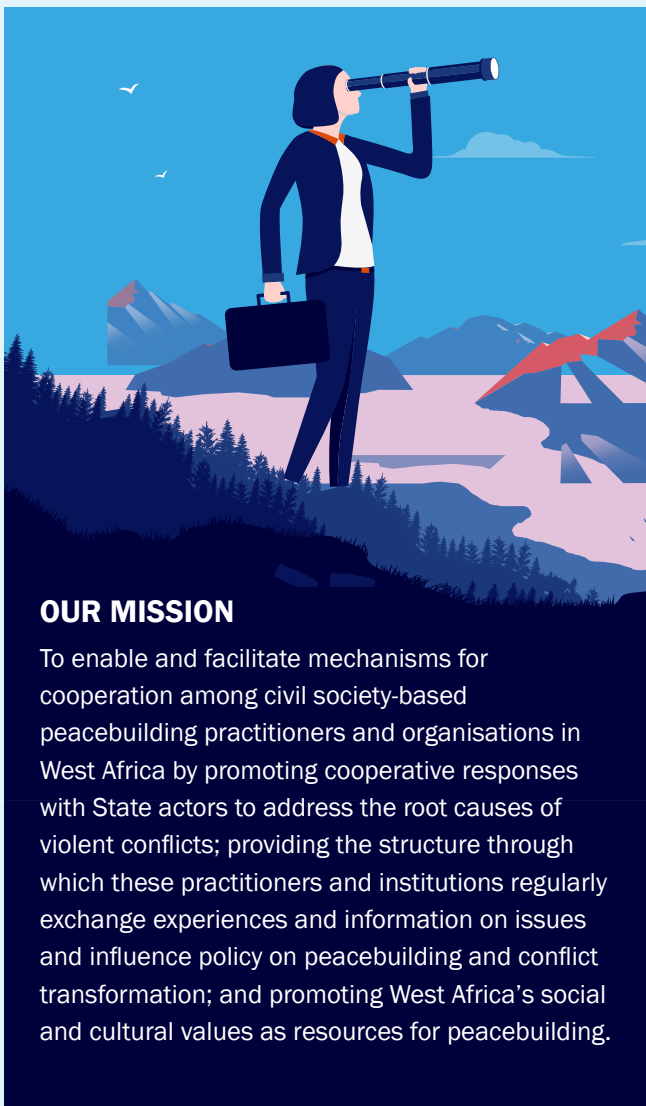
WANEP has a niche in implementing programme to equip the youth, business owners, women, traditional leaders and state agencies with requisite skills in conflict prevention and supports them to find local solutions to their unique conflict situations across the region.





OUR VISION

WANEPs' vision is a "West Africa region characterised by just and peaceful communities where the dignity of the human person is paramount and where the people can meet their basic human needs and decide their own direction".



OUR MISSION

To enable and facilitate mechanisms for cooperation among civil society-based peacebuilding practitioners and organisations in West Africa by promoting cooperative responses with State actors to address the root causes of violent conflicts; providing the structure through which these practitioners and institutions regularly exchange experiences and information on issues and influence policy on peacebuilding and conflict transformation; and promoting West Africa's social and cultural values as resources for peacebuilding.



OUR OPERATING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

- Belief in mutual respect;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Gender equality and zero tolerance to discrimination
- (sex, tribe/ethnicity, race, HIV-AIDS status, etc.);
- Collegiality, teamwork, and dedication to duty;



Message from **The Board**



In March 2023, through a unanimous decision of my colleagues, I was elected to Chair the Regional Board of WANEP and lead the highest Policy Organ of the Organisation. I accepted this arduous but fascinating task, fully aware of the high expectations and the realities of our time. While I may have assumed office at a moment when our global community and especially Africa is going through moments of volatility and unprecedented uncertainty, what continues to give me hope is our commitment to responding to these challenges and our determination to changing the narrative of our region and contributing to the global reversal of the situation. It is therefore with great joy and optimism that I deliver my maiden message and our stewardship through our 2023 annual report titled **“Driving Next Generation Innovations and Partnerships For Sustainable Peace”**.

Our region and Africa have faced many challenges during this last year and despite the funding constraints and shrinking civic spaces, we have continued to respond because of the hard work, creativity and commitment of the WANEP team, the generosity and loyalty of our partners, especially SIDA and ADA, whose commitment and core support to our strategic vision continues to sustain our regional and national offices as well as our liaison offices at the AU and ECOWAS Commissions.

2023 marked the mid-point of the implementation of WANEP’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The Board approved a Mid-Term Review (MTR) in line with the organisational policy and indenture with our partners to ascertain the level of implementation and achievements with a view to enhancing results in subsequent planning and implementation in the remaining years. The assessment revealed a clear manifestation and relevance of WANEP’s work in West Africa with specific recognition of the support it provides to the African Union and ECOWAS, especially in the sustenance of the Continental and Regional Early Warning systems.

WANEP continues to be actively engaged in collaborative initiatives with ECOWAS and its member states in key areas of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. This collaborative approach ensures that efforts are well-coordinated, in order

to avoid redundancy and promote a shared vision for peace in West Africa. Through its Warning and Response Mechanism (WARM), WANEP has improved its capacity to detect and respond to potential conflicts in the region as evident in the policy briefs it provided in the periods leading to different political fluxes in the region. This has led to timely interventions in some instances, helping to prevent the escalation of conflicts and providing contingency and preparedness in others. Equally, WANEP's promotion of cross-border collaboration complements ECOWAS's initiatives in addressing regional security challenges, building synergies between the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and maintaining cohesion in intervention and management of resources.

Importantly, in conflict societies, the question to ask to ensure inclusivity and sustainable solutions is, **'who is not within the circle?'** As an institution, we know that the inclusion of women and youth at the highest and lowest levels of decision-making in peace processes helps broaden the agenda and create a high sense of ownership. It also helps us to think and rethink more about gender-specific issues and young people's needs. This more inclusive approach helps to build sustainable peace that ensures **"no one is left behind"**. In this regard, WANEP empowered 27 young graduates from 13 West African countries through its innovative Youth Transformational Empowerment and Mentorship (Y-TEaM) Programme, launched on 27 November 2022. These youth, having completed a comprehensive nine-month curriculum, are now poised to drive transformative change and sustainable peace in their communities. Similarly, our intentional inclusion of women in peacebuilding efforts has empowered and elevated the role of women in conflict resolution, making their voices and concerns integral to peace process. The composition of our Board, management and senior level positions at national and regional levels continue to reflect our conviction and practice that a world devoid of gender inequality will create more peaceful and sustainable societies. We currently have a Board composed of 4 females and 3 males while keeping a management of 2 males and 2 females. Our National Coordinators are now composed of equal numbers of males and females, giving us gender and inclusive perspectives in our decision-making processes.

As part of our effort and commitment to the global call for climate adaptation and resilience building, WANEP alongside three other organisations are implementing a unique project dubbed "Responding to **Climate Change** as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa (C7-), funded by the European Union. In the year under review, we developed a comprehensive toolkit for addressing climate change, crime and conflict – first of its kind with community flare for ease of compression and adaptation. The toolkit is designed to enhance the understanding and capabilities of residents and stakeholders in West African coastal communities, enabling them to effectively mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

In line with our commitment to the deepening of democracy and ensuring free and fair elections, WANEP achieved significant milestones through its Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis, and Mitigation (E-MAM) programme, providing crucial technical support for the Nigerian Presidential elections, Benin Parliamentary elections, Guinea Bissau, legislative elections and the Presidential elections in Sierra Leone and Liberia. This operational success reflects the trust placed in WANEP by the European Union and demonstrated through its support for the second cycle of a four-year grant to WANEP to support the conduct of peaceful elections in 11 countries in West Africa.

In the reporting year, WANEP built the capacity of over 5,300 peacebuilding practitioners across the region in various thematic areas. The thematic areas include Dialogue and Mediation, Early Warning, Gender Peace and Security, Youth in Peace and Security, building community peace networks and resilience structures, violent extremism and Inclusivity in Governance and Peacebuilding decision-making. Our collaborative and non-activist approach to peacebuilding has proven to be the path to building trust and social cohesion between citizens and the State

and the key to transforming relationships and building synergies for peace and conflict prevention within institutions and society.

As we look back on 2023, I am filled with a sense of pride in all that we have achieved together over the last twelve months. While the year presented many challenges, the Board stayed its course; providing sound governance and supporting management to enhance the peacebuilding environment for our members.

I am looking forward with much excitement to the 25th anniversary of WANEP's operations and delighted that we have worked with very reliable partners to transform passion into impact on the causes we both care about. We are mindful that every dollar entrusted into our care represents the dream for a new West Africa and Africa and the hope and future of many young people of our continent. While the needs and the incredible potential of our region have never been greater, every day we see the impact of our donors' generosity and investments. The lasting impactful change we want to see may take time but we shall succeed. That is why we continue to prevail on our partners to invest for the long term. We know that we can do more because of their incredible faith and foresight as their legacies will continually change the futures of generations to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow members on the Board for their wisdom and dedication in guiding WANEP to fulfill its mandate. I would also like to offer a word of appreciation to the management and staff of WANEP at regional, Liaison and national offices - from the financial, administrative, and human resources teams to those who work directly in conflict-affected communities. Your conviction, commitment, and creativity have been truly inspiring to me over the last one year, but especially in these times when your work is more needed than ever. It has been my honour and privilege serving as your Chair alongside a team of professionals and to be part of this family of remarkable peacebuilders who help to make the world a better place. I am looking forward with verve to our 25th anniversary and to the work we will continue to do together to change the curves and contours of our region.

WANEP Regional Board Members

Mrs. Florence Iheme,
Regional Board Chair



**Prof Daniel K.
B. Inkoom**



**Ms. Carla Maria
Borges Bettencourt**



Mr. Gaye Sowe



**Mrs. Fatoumata
Dembele Diarra**



**Dr. Mathias
Hounkpe**



**Mrs. Adrienne
Diop**



Management Report

A reflection of the state of peace and security in West Africa in the year 2023 continues to present a region with a heightened security threat profile and yet a manifestation of steely determination and resilience of many communities across the region. From violent extremism related crises in the Sahel with its varied intersectionality and cascaded negative impacts, to incidences of electoral violence, gender and sexual based violence, ethnic, religious, and other identity and community-based conflicts, the region portrayed high levels of fragility. Other vulnerability factors included the negative effects of climate-change and other environmental security threats driving irregular migration patterns and worsening the humanitarian and refugee crises generated by conflicts and violent extremism.

Across the region, negative socio-economic indices which although were partly resultant effects of broader global crises linked to the Russia-Ukraine war and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, also resulted from faulted national-level governance processes. The consequent outcomes of the governance deficits were, among others, negative employment growth rates, loss of livelihoods, growing social tensions, especially between the State and citizens. These trends led to mass protests and contributed to the persistent phenomenon of coup d'états.

In the face of these conditions and their cascading impacts in terms of deaths, destruction of property and loss of livelihoods on communities, the region nonetheless witnessed stories of endurance and tenacity. Across the region, several communities demonstrated a high sense of resilience which has contributed to averting the full manifestation of predictions of “doom and gloom” from some analysis. This dichotomous reality underscores the importance of WANEP’s mission to build the capacity of citizens, civil society, and relevant stakeholders towards ensuring sustainable peace in the region. In one breadth, it serves as a testament of our contribution to mitigating violence and security threats in the region through community resilience building. In another regard, it has led to interrogation of effectiveness of strategies towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and reflections around what constitutes success in the face of such opposing duality. This is the drive behind our continuous institutional learning and adaptability

in how we carve out new and adequate responses towards meaningful and sustainable conflict transformation processes within a mutative peace and security landscape.

In light of the above, WANEP's focus in 2023 reflected in the theme of our annual report "**Driving Next Generation Innovations and Partnerships for Sustainable Peace**", sought to develop new spaces and systems of engagement and partnerships, leveraging technological advancements and evolving next generation analysis around the constructive agency of young people in the context of peace and security. To this end and in line with our Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025, the year under review saw the organisation expend significant resources to design and develop frameworks, tools and platforms that enable optimisation of our operations in terms of effectiveness and efficiency in responding to contemporary and emerging peace and security threats. With a high premium on innovation, we implemented the maiden edition of the Youth Transformational Empowerment and Mentoring (Y-TEaM) Programme. The nine-month programme empowered 27 young men and women using a multi-pronged approach of knowledge and skills development training workshops and internships in WANEP offices across the region, mentoring and interactive dialogue sessions.

As part of our digitalisation drive, we diversified the use of interactive digital spaces for capacity strengthening, dialogue, advocacy, and networking. Under our strategic focus area of Democracy and Governance, we developed and launched a mobile application that seeks to amplify citizens engagement with States through digital spaces. The application constitutes the core component of the Citizens' Participation for Accountable and Inclusive Democracy (C-PAID) project funded by UNDP Africa Regional Bureau through the Sub-Regional Hub for West and Central Africa. Also, under the C-PAID project, WANEP produced digital materials in the form of short, animated videos and virtual tutorial kits for the purposes of advocacy and capacity building. With core funding support from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), digital advocacy tools were produced by WANEP National Secretariats as part of its peace and security awareness in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goals 5, 13 and 16.

Through a customised online interactive platform developed under the framework of the EU-funded Research and Action for Peace (REcAP) project, WANEP in partnership with consortium partners SIPRI and DRC, facilitated the sharing of information, research and other knowledge products as well as interactive learning sessions among REcAP network members in West Africa and Lake Chad Basin countries. WANEP also introduced the use of X (formerly Twitter) Space to facilitate community level dialogue processes and to engage and amplify the voices of youth in peace and security. This dimension of driving next generation innovation was part of our efforts to reinforce our youth-sensitive and youth specific strategy at both institutional and programmatic levels. The strategy is being implemented through an integrative approach of increased youth engagement across all our strategic focus areas.

With funding from Wellspring Philanthropic Foundation, we upgraded our Early Warning system through enhancing user functionality of the system and introducing Artificial Intelligence (AI) capability to improve triangulation of data and accessibility of first line data by WANEP partners. Also, in line with our strategic objective of enhancing the use of early warning in support of response initiatives, we generated predictive peace and security risk and vulnerability analysis to determine appropriate intersectionality between next generation themes and security and inform pre-emptive responses. One such area of response incorporated into the third phase of the EU-funded Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (E-MAM III) project, is responding to the negative impact of new technologies and cybersecurity threats on electoral processes. In this regard, significant resources from the project have been allotted to fact-checking to address the phenomenon of fake news within electoral processes. WANEP also continued to pursue efforts to establish the linkage between climate change vulnerability of communities in coastal areas by

developing an applied toolkit on climate change, crime and conflict in West Africa as a resource for enhancing understanding and response actions towards building community resilience. Climate Change is also one of the two areas of focus in a Danish Embassy Ghana funded project managed by WANEP. The project seeks to build capacity and support efforts of local actors in Ghana in increasing awareness and engagement regarding climate change issues in the political debate, as well as addressing challenges within democracy, civic space, freedom of speech and human rights.

Through core funding support from ADA and SIDA, inclusivity continued to be of high priority as demonstrated through our youth-oriented approaches and strengthening the gender dimension across all our programmes and projects. We remained committed to enhancing gendered resilience-building, empowerment and participation through training, mentoring, provision of facilitated dialogue spaces and platforms for women and girls across the region. Under the Just Futures project funded by the Dutch Government, we engaged in capacity strengthening and strategic advocacy towards inclusion of more women in the transitional governance processes in Niger and Mali. At the institutional level, we continued to revel in our efforts towards gender equality and equity within WANEP's leadership and governance structures across our regional and national secretariats, the statistics of which currently surpass the average thresholds in Africa.

WANEP's strong belief in and commitment to partnerships and collaborations at regional, continental, and global levels, continued to prove indispensable in ensuring alignment with cutting edge trends and priorities at different levels in the peace, security, and development arena. Our partnership with ECOWAS and AU remained vital to achieving shared aspirations of providing timely responses to emerging peace and security threats through strengthened Early Warning mechanisms in West Africa and across the continent. A key component of this aspiration in 2023 was to support the development of Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) in selected countries in Southern and Western Africa regions under different streams of funding provided by GIZ. Under the framework of our partnership with ECOWAS, the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC) was in the year under review included in the implementing partners for the new phase of the E-MAM Project. The already existing implementing partners in the project are UNOWAS, the ECOWAS and AU Commissions. Partnerships with various decentralised agencies of the United Nations were also sustained in the year. At the regional level, within the framework of its "Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in the Atlantic Corridor" initiative, UNDP has provided new funding to WANEP to conduct baseline studies in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo. In addition to contributing to research and policy discourses on various global platforms, WANEP demonstrated commitment to exploring new trends at global level for mediating complex conflicts by hosting the 2023 annual meeting of the Mediation Support Network (MSN). Under the leadership of our research team, a key outcome from the meeting was the production of a working paper on multi-stakeholder approaches to mediating complex conflicts from a West African perspective.

Although we did chalk remarkable achievements and results in 2023, the current and emerging security dynamics in the region, coupled with the global economic crises and their implications for CSO funding, significantly tested our institutional resilience and scalability of our programmes. From an M&E perspective, these frame conditions challenged our scorecard of what constitutes success within the confines of limited resources to fully exhaust the multidimensional and multi-levelled pathways of responses. This constituted a key focus and informed the fundamental questions that underpinned the mid-term review of WANEP's 2021- 2025 Strategic Plan, undertaken by externally commissioned consultants in the year under review. In spite of these challenges, we scaled through various institutional stress tests as ascertained through

various external assessments and our own rigorous self-assessment framework, the WANEP Organisational Development Index (WODI), which continues to be a unique reference model for determining CSO capacities across Africa. We ended the year with a stronger institutional frame and a successful implementation of over 80% of our annual plan. These achievements were as a result of the unwavering support of core and earmarked funding partners, the resolute commitment and guidance from WANEP Boards at regional and national levels, the diligence of our staff and the differentiated levels of collaborations with technical partners and other relevant stakeholders.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year and look towards our 25th anniversary year in 2024, we remain steadfast in our commitment to building partnerships and supporting citizens, civil society, and relevant stakeholders towards ensuring sustainable peace in West Africa. Through our strategic objectives and partnerships, we are confident in our ability to navigate the complexities of the peace and security landscape in the region and contribute to the realisation of our overarching goal of “an enhanced citizens and state capacity for sustainable peace” in the years to come.

Management Team



**Dr. Chukwuemeka
B. Eze**
Executive Director



**Mrs. Levinia
Addae-Mensah**
*Programme Director and
Deputy Executive Director*



**Mr. Raymond Asiedu
Darko,**
Finance Manager



**Mrs. Esther
Gordon-Mensah,**
*Administrative/Human
Resource Manager*

Our Strategic Priority Areas

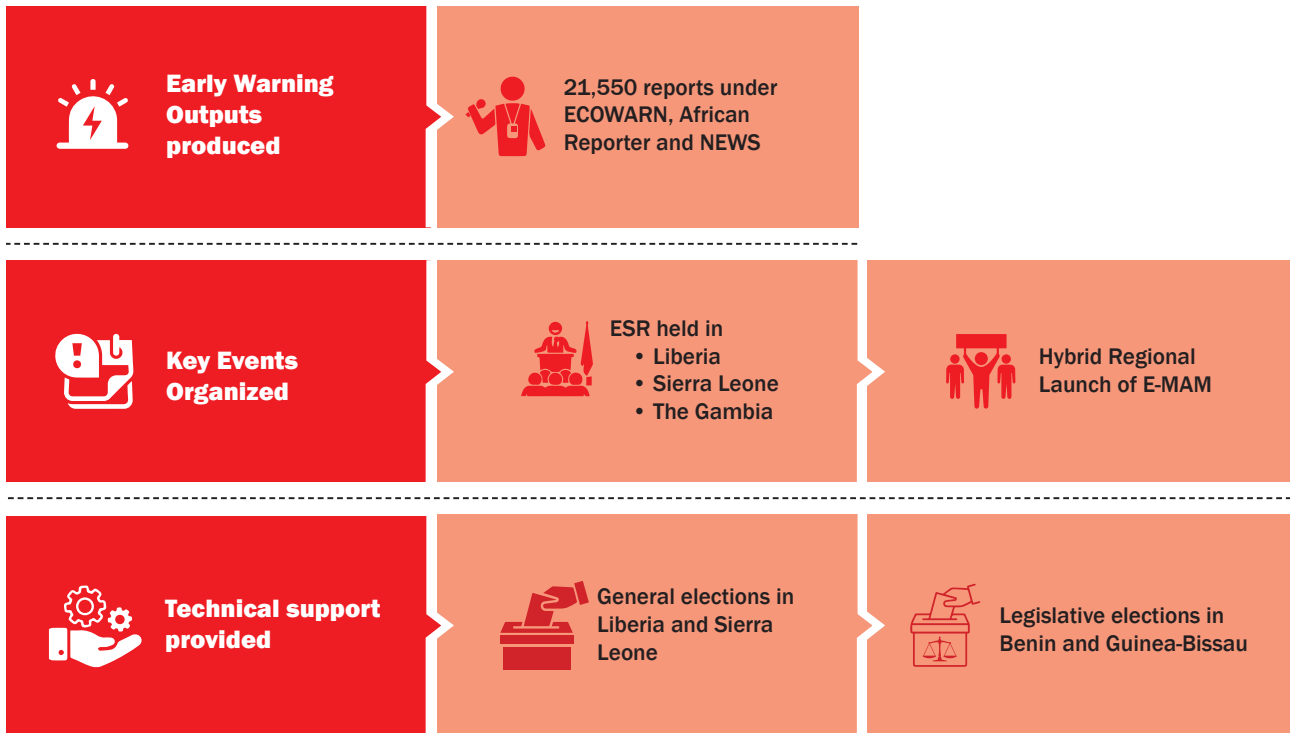
OUR PRIORITIES	OUR GOAL
 <p>Enhanced Early Warning and Response Mechanisms</p>	<p>WANEP will enhance the use of early warning to promote quality and effective early response and the effectiveness of actors in West Africa</p>
 <p>Women, Peace and Security</p>	<p>WANEP utilises international instruments including UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, the ECOWAS Conflict Resolution Framework (ECPF), the AU Continental Results Framework (CRF) and other normative frameworks, to broaden discourse on the Women Peace and Security Agenda. WANEP also relies on its ideology of Women’s Peace Activism to advance, broaden and strengthen meaningful participation and inclusion of women in governance, economic and political space.</p>
 <p>Youth, Peace and Security</p>	<p>WANEP’s peace education programme has been broadened to support youth participation in peace and security. Beyond capacity building, WANEP is increasing dialogue platforms and spaces for youth at local and national level to engage duty bearers and all stakeholders in inter-generational dialogues to address the concerns and contributions of the youth in peacebuilding.</p>
 <p>Institutional Capacity Building and Citizen-State Relations</p>	<p>WANEP builds community resilience and the capacity of institutions to perform their mandate effectively in human security. Through this mandate, the relationship between citizens and States in advancing inclusive and participatory governance and peace and security will also be improved.</p>
 <p>Research and Knowledge Management</p>	<p>WANEP undertakes research to inform capacity building, engage in policy advocacy in peace and security, and leverage on its organisational capabilities and partnerships to increase its institutional visibility.</p>
 <p>WANEP Institution Building</p>	<p>WANEP strengthens and sustains the effectiveness of its Regional and Liaison offices, National Networks and the capacity of its member organisations to perform their mandate in West African states.</p>

INTRODUCTION

As 2023 marked the mid-way year of the implementation of WANEP's regional 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, our 2023 Annual Workplan (AWP) sought to consolidate results that have been achieved in the first two years of the strategy implementation. In implementing the AWP, we reflected not only on our previous achievements, but also on challenges and lessons learnt that needed to be incorporated into our strategies to enhance results in the remaining years of the Strategic Plan. Therefore drawing on analysis of the peace and security context from our WANEP Warning and Response Mechanism (WARM), the determination of our priority actions for the year was driven by three key factors; (i) the urgency in incorporating into our response frame new and emerging peace and security threats, focusing on factors such as climate change, emerging technological innovations and cyber propaganda among others; (ii) the need to drive more inclusivity, innovation and inspirational approaches to accelerate implementation of landmark global, continental and regional frameworks on Youth, Peace and Security in ECOWAS Member States; and (iii) the imperative to leverage technological advancements and digitalization as an efficient and effective strategy to build innovative and sustainable systems and mechanisms for engaging our stakeholders. These are the various components that informed our theme of **“Driving Next Generation Innovations and Partnerships for Sustainable Peace”**. The subsequent sections of this report present highlights of key activities and results WANEP in partnership with various IGOs, development partners and other stakeholders achieved in 2023 at both regional and national levels.



KRA 1: STRENGTHENING FUNCTIONAL RESPONSE MECHANISMS



Over the years, WANEP has demonstrated proven experience and expertise in mitigating electoral violence during electioneering processes across West Africa. In the year under review, WANEP’s support to ECOWAS Member States was further boosted with the renewal of EU funding of 4.5 million Euros over 36 months for its Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis, and Mitigation (E-MAM) project. This third phase of the E-MAM project (E-MAM III) with an expanded scope, draws in more stakeholders, namely political parties, youth and women’s groups. The project also introduces new areas of focus such as responding to the phenomenon of fake news and its impact on electoral processes, as well as a more enhanced research component. The E-MAM III project is funded under the EU Peace, Stability, and Conflict Prevention theme, covering 12 West African countries. It aims to significantly reduce electoral violence by enhancing regional and national capacities for early warning processes and fostering inclusive responses to electoral threats. E-MAM III was launched as a collaboration with ECOWAS and UNOWAS, underscoring WANEP’s commitment to partnership with governments, Election Management Bodies (EMBs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), public figures, opinion leaders, and West African citizens in promoting peace, stability, and democratic consolidation in the region. The project complements other election management support initiatives that WANEP undertakes at national levels with funding support from an array of donors including ADA, SIDA, UNDP, GIZ. Below are key milestones under WANEP’s contribution to peaceful elections in the year under review:



Regional Launch of E-MAM III in Dakar, Senegal

1.1 ESTABLISHING FUNCTIONAL ELECTION RESPONSE GROUPS: WANEP provided technical support to Legislative elections in Benin and Guinea Bissau, and to Presidential elections in Sierra Leone and Liberia. To ensure rapid responses to identified threats of electoral violence in Liberia and Sierra Leone, WANEP, under the E-MAM project, constituted multistakeholder platforms, generically referred to as National, Regional or District Election Response Groups (NERG, RERG or DERG) and built capacities of the members of the Groups through different training sessions. This enabled the various institutions represented in the respective groups to effectively respond to threats of electoral violence in their localities. In this regard, the NERG and DERG platforms played critical roles in shaping and promoting a peaceful electoral environment in the aforementioned countries. In Sierra Leone, for instance, the DERG members mitigated election-related violence in the identified hotspots by engaging with political stakeholders, traditional and religious leaders as well as representatives of the Election Management Bodies. This action contributed significantly to a peaceful electoral process in those areas. In the case of Benin, similar mechanisms referred to as “*Comités de paix*” (Peace Committees) were established in identified hotspots to help mitigate threats of electoral violence in the pre-electoral phase.

1.2. PROVISION OF RAPID RESPONSE THROUGH ELECTION SITUATION ROOM

In line with our collaborative approach to peacebuilding, WANEP teamed up with key partners and other critical stakeholders to set up Election Situation Rooms (ESR) in countries whose elections were held within the reporting year. With support from ECOWAS, two situation rooms were set up and operated in The Gambia for the Local Government elections, while in Côte d'Ivoire, WANEP with financial support from UNDP, collaborated with the PEACE-CI network to set up an ESR during the Municipal and Regional Council elections. WANEP- Nigeria, leveraging technological advancement, set up virtual Election Situation Rooms for monitoring both the 2023 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections. As part of the process, impactful statements were issued to foster stability and dialogue amidst the general dissatisfaction that characterised the electoral process. The Situation Rooms served as a hub for real-time analysis and strategic interventions during the process in a bid to contribute to transparency and effective monitoring of the electoral process.

As part of the mitigation strategy, WANEP in the pre-election phase in each of the countries, engaged relevant stakeholders to map potential hotspots, trained and deployed election monitors and observers, and conducted extensive awareness campaigns using both traditional and new media platforms to foster a culture of peace, as well as encourage massive participation of the respective citizenry.



Training of Inside Mediators in Sierra Leone

Overall, the various ESRs were responsive to international and national partners' expectations in terms of response actions as accurate updates on election-day incidents, enabling timely interventions of critical stakeholders such as the electoral commission and security forces, were adequately provided. This contributed significantly to providing a conducive environment for the various elections for which WANEP received rave commentaries from visitors as captured in the box in the cases of the ESR in Benin and Liberia. To enhance functionality and ensure appropriate tracking and analysis of security dynamics, WANEP, in 2023, upgraded the technical capabilities of the WANEP Alert and Response Mechanism (WARM) with the introduction of artificial intelligence capabilities and enhanced analytical capacities. WARM continued to remain a valuable resource for the implementation of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the overall ECOWAS early warning and response mechanism in West Africa. Under this result area, key milestones were as follows:



VOICES FROM THE ESR

Thanks for the important work. The WANEP Situation Room is a very concrete and useful contribution to the democratic development in Liberia - **Urban Sjöström, Ambassador Sweden**

Well done, WANEP Team for putting up a very professional, informative and well-coordinated Situation Room. Thank you for taking the time to walk us through the Situation Room - **Comfort Lamptey, UN Women Country Representative**

Thank you for the visit and welcoming French Ambassador in the situation room. It is very impressive and positive to see the great quality of the job you are all doing here! Congratulations and I wish you and Liberia a fair and peaceful election day! - **Isabelle Le Guellec, French Ambassador to Liberia**

Congratulations on your thoroughness and the work you are doing to contribute to open and peaceful elections! - **Chloé Simard, Canadian Embassy**

I am always impressed by the professionalism and quality of your work! The European Union is proud to be your partner and remains steadfastly by your side. Always stronger together. Long live the electoral platform, long live Benin, and long live our enduring partnership. - **EU Ambassador to Benin, Sylvia Hartle**

On behalf of President Rzasaki Amouda Issifou, I am here to lend our full support to this activity, which complements that of the Court, with the common aim of ensuring the peace and regularity of the elections. - **Gilles Badet, Secretary General, Constitutional Court**

1.3. BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR EFFECTIVE MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING:

In line with its mandate of strengthening capacities for early warning and response, WANEP provided training, mentoring, advice, and other forms of accompaniment to various stakeholders across the region. At the regional level, WANEP worked extensively to strengthen the capacities of National Centres for the Coordination of Early Warning and Response Mechanisms (NCCRM) to enable them to deliver effectively on their statutory mandates within their respective states. WANEP as part of sharing its experiences in developing early warning mechanisms and institutionalising partnerships, organised in collaboration with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), an impactful experience-sharing workshop focused on conflict early warning and response systems. This gathering brought together leaders and experts from influential institutions, including the Ministry of Peace, House of Federation of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Civil Society Organisations Council, and Ethiopian Peace and Security Offices. The primary objective of the workshop was to bolster the participants' skills and knowledge in monitoring conflict drivers, collecting pertinent data, employing advanced data analysis techniques, and implementing rapid response modalities. WANEP also facilitated visits for the group to key institutions in Ghana to foster cross-regional collaboration and adapt best practices to enhance conflict management practices in Ethiopia. WANEP earlier in the year, also facilitated a familiarisation and working visit for "La Coalition des Organisations de la Société Civile pour la Paix et la prévention des Conflits en Afrique de l'Ouest" (Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for Peace and Conflict Prevention in Central Africa - COPAC) to the African Union during which they engaged the PAPS department on the Continental Early Warning System and interacted with the Governance and Conflict Prevention Division.

Working through our National Secretariats, community early warning monitors were trained to position them for quality and effective reporting into the NEWS platform. A total of 681 community monitors including election observers and data collators underwent series of trainings in the review period. In this wise, Côte d'Ivoire trained and deployed a total of 132 observers for the municipal and regional elections between September and December 2023. Sierra Leone trained and deployed 350 field monitors and 80 data collators for the June general elections and an additional 33 community monitors to enhance grassroots reporting during the period. Additionally, nine (09) monitors were trained in Togo, 10 in Burkina Faso, 25 in Mali and 32 in Niger. The trainings are geared towards improving the quality of reports submitted on the WANEP NEWS platform, the ECOWARN and the AU African Reporter. The trained monitors were also deployed to analyse conflict trends and spill over risks in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Côte d'Ivoire under the WANEP Political-Security

Watch initiative. Evidence-based recommendations from this exercise are shared with regional and international actors to guide planned political/governance projects in those countries. The regular trainings and orientation sessions have contributed significantly to strengthening capacities of the monitors and enhanced their capabilities in efficiently collating and submitting reports thus improving the overall effectiveness of the early warning mechanism.



Training of Community Monitors in Togo



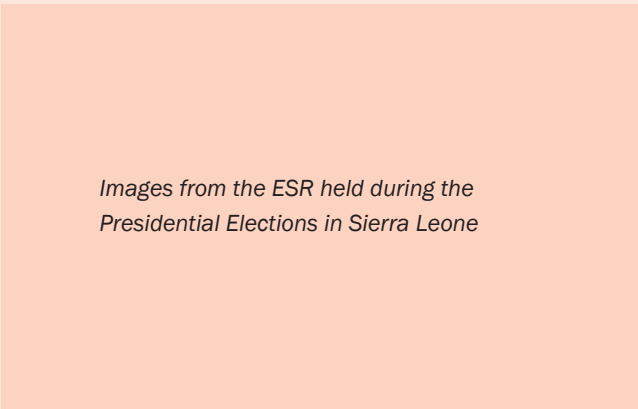
Training of community monitors in Burkina Faso



Training of community monitors, in Mali, in the context of the political -security watch initiative



ESR held in Liberia



Images from the ESR held during the Presidential Elections in Sierra Leone





COPAC familiarisation visits to the African Union in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia

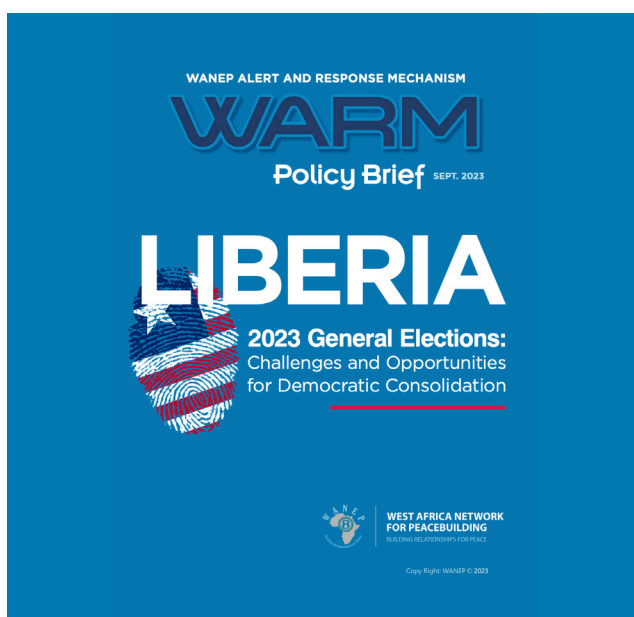


A delegation from Ethiopia on an experience-sharing workshop focused on conflict early warning and response systems organised by WANEP and ISS



1.4. POLICY INFLUENCING THROUGH EARLY WARNING PRODUCTS: WANEP continued to rely on its timely, analytical, effective, and evidence-based Early Warning products to influence policy and address complex security challenges facing the region. In August 2023, WANEP introduced the groundbreaking regional Early Warning Briefing session as part of its strategy to enhance nuanced understanding of the security landscape in West Africa. The overwhelming support for this initiative by critical stakeholders is a testament to WANEP's commitment to providing timely and relevant information for informed decision-making in the dynamic security environment of West Africa. The Early Warning Briefing sessions are a complement to WANEP's array of Early Warning products, which include policy briefs, quarterly reports, weekly updates, and incident and situation reports among others. The types and number of products churned out throughout the year are captured below:

S/N	TITLE	QUANTITY
1	NEWS SITUATION TRACKING	13
2	MONTHLY BULLETIN	168
3	NEWS SITUATION REPORTS	1,069
4	WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS	672
5	NEWS QUICK UPDATE	2
6	NEWS INCIDENT REPORTS	7,549
7	CEWS INCIDENT REPORTS	5,050
8	CEWS SITUATION REPORTS	245
9	ECOWARN INCIDENT REPORTS	6,472
10	ECOWARN SITUATION REPORTS	307
11	POLICY BRIEF	3
	TOTAL	21,550



At national level, WANEP-The Gambia validated its NEWS pre-assessment report in the presence of key stakeholders and major partners. The report will serve as a useful resource for enhancing the value of early warning and response systems. Similarly, WANEP-Togo disseminated the tri-annual Security Report 2020–2022, generated from its NEWS to the general public through media platforms. The report covers crucial security insights and findings serving as a credible source of critical security information for the public. In Guinea, WANEP under the “Contributing to Pacify the Socio-Political Climate of Guinea” project, funded by OSIWA, and implemented by the “Alliance Citoyenne pour la Transition (ACT)”, worked with other civil society organisations to make significant contributions into Guinea’s new Constitution. This effort reflects civil society’s commitment to fostering civic engagement and ensuring that diverse voices are included in the Constitution while contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and participatory political landscape in Guinea.



K.R.A 2: STRENGTHENING WOMEN AND GIRLS' CAPACITY FOR POLICY INFLUENCING



WANEP's strategy for an inclusive and meaningful engagement of women and girls in peace and security is through a continuous strengthening of their capacities to equip them with the requisite skills for effective response. This is in line with its mandate of creating a critical mass of women and providing them with dialogue spaces to influence policy and promote peaceful conflict resolution. Relying on its undergirding principle of collaborative approach to peacebuilding, under the WPS programme, quarterly coordination meetings are held to track progress of the WPS implementation across the region, identify gaps and proffer collective solutions. It is also an avenue to align regional and national WPS work plans to ensure synergy and enhance collaboration. The meetings also serve as capacity building opportunities for orientation and refresher training for new and old WPS focal persons. This coordination ensured harmonisation and coherence in our efforts towards effective WPS agenda implementation.

2.1. ADVANCING WPS AGENDA THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

2.1.1. WPS INTERACTIVE SESSION: WANEP held a focused interactive session during the year, bringing together diverse women and youth networks from civil society, faith-based and community-based groups, to discuss gender-transformative actions for advancing the WPS agenda. The session addressed the challenges and opportunities of digital technology for women, generating action-oriented recommendations. This highly interactive meeting gained widespread publicity, resulting in a set of recommendations aimed at empowering women to leverage digital technology for increased gender parity and meaningful participation in leadership. Other transformative actions recorded within the year were as follows:

- WANEP-Nigeria facilitated the participation of over 100 community women in the Ozoro¹ Peace Festival in Edo State, Nigeria to advocate against discrimination, underscoring women's role in promoting peace and stability.
- Consistent advocacy by WANEP-Niger to community and religious leaders has seen a remarkable increase in the involvement and representation of women and young persons in mediation and peacebuilding platforms. More women and youth are now participating in communal peace committees at the community level.
- WANEP-Mali, in collaboration with the National Women Coalition (NWC) sensitized over 230 women leaders comprising 47% young women, on the country's new electoral laws. This campaign aimed to empower and educate women leaders on how they can engage in the political dispensation as stipulated in the new law.
- In collaboration with World Vision, WANEP-Sierra Leone led a campaign for special protection of female candidates, voters, and observers in six identified hotspot districts in the country. The concerted efforts yielded significant results, as evidenced by the absence of reported violent incidents against women on voting day.

2.1.2. A CALL TO ACTION: WANEP played a pivotal role in advancing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda in its capacity as the convener of the Ghana Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security (GWYPS-GH), Ghana Chapter. WANEP provided technical support and guidance to the inaugural WPS conference held on 21 September 2023 on the margins of the Working Group Annual General Meeting organised by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), under whose aegis, the Working Group operates. The maiden WPS conference under the theme: "Accelerating Ghana's Implementation of UN Resolutions 1325 and 2250 for Sustainable Peace and Development," brought together key stakeholders, including CSOs, development partners, gender and peace activists, as well as government officials to discuss the crucial roles of women and youth in achieving peace and security towards addressing the security complexities in the region. In a communique presented to the media at the end of the meeting, the Group made a solidarity call to action for immediate peace in African countries affected by unconstitutional takeovers (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea) in addition to advocating for statutory budget allocation to expedite WPS activities in Ghana.



Members of the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security (GWYPS), Ghana Chapter at the maiden WPS Conference

¹ The Ozoro Festival is celebrated for peace and unity

2.1.3. GENDERTALK SERIES: The WANEP GenderTalk Series is a digital platform for peacebuilding actors and gender activists to deliberate on peace and security issues and develop strategies that would place women at the centre of conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction. It provides an opportunity for experience and information sharing among peacebuilding practitioners and experts on the WPS agenda. In 2023, three regional and five national editions engaged approximately 300 participants from diverse backgrounds to discuss a variety of topics geared towards attaining gender parity, mitigating and preventing violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls, women's participation in leadership and decision-making. The pivotal role of the media in promoting the WPS Agenda, and strategies for amplifying women's voices in peacebuilding were also explored. The editions are aligned to the themes of global WPS events, as a deliberate strategy to provide a space for amplifying women's voices and ensure that their security concerns continue to be on the front-burner.

The table below highlights key specific topics addressed during the period under review:

National	Regional
<p>Media and the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda</p> <p>Preventing and Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls in Nigeria.</p> <p>Leveraging the Relevance of Social Media and Technology in the advancement of the WPS Agenda.</p> <p><i>Femmes Et Résilience Au Changement Climatique</i> (Women and Climate Change Resilience)</p> <p><i>Projet de la Nouvelle Constitution: Une opportunité pour la Réalisation de l'Agenda Femmes, Paix et Sécurité?</i> (Draft New Constitution: An opportunity to achieve the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda?)</p>	<p>Maximising technology for bridging the gender divide.</p> <p>Strategies for Achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Environmental Action: Prospects and Challenges.</p> <p>Ending Violence Against Women in the Context of the Changing Nature of Peace and Security</p>

2.2. ENHANCING WOMEN AND GIRLS' CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

Capacity building is at the core of WANEP's mandate as it provides opportunity for building requisite skills for the attainment of organisational goals linked to SDGs and AU agenda 2063. Across the region, WANEP in collaboration with relevant partners and key stakeholders conducted several capacity building/training sessions in diverse areas of peacebuilding including early warning, dialogue and mediation, gender-based violence, advocacy and conflict management benefitting a total of 1,100 women and young girls as captured below:

- WANEP-Togo trained 237 women and youth on conflict prevention, management, advocacy and a further 46 on GBV with support from International Republican Institute (IRI), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Canadian Funds for Local Initiatives (CFLI) The trained women are now fully engaged in community peace efforts.

- WANEP-Benin under its “Gender Equality Support Programme”, trained 167 women between the ages of 18 to 67, on Leadership and political commitment as part of measures to empower women for leadership positions at the community level, foster gender equality and reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities. The project commenced in 2022 and is expected to end in 2026.
- WANEP-Guinea with funding from USAID Guinea trained 100 women on UNSCR 1325 and 2250, GBV, leadership, conflict resolution, gender-sensitive analysis, and violent extremism among others. The network further trained 100 women groups and associations on group cohesion and civic engagement with funding from the UN Peacebuilding Fund.
- WANEP-Burkina Faso trained 200 women and girls on Resolutions 2250 and 1325 as well as dialogue and mediation. The trainings are geared towards empowering them to actively contribute to peacebuilding efforts in their communities. As a result of these efforts, two online platforms have been established to foster intergenerational connectivity and collaboration in the North and Centre-West regions of the country.
- WANEP-Sierra Leone with support from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), trained 250 women across five communities on conflict resolution, mediation, dialogue, and peacebuilding.
- At the regional level, WANEP facilitated advocacy training for the Ghana chapter of the WPS Working Group to bolster their capacity in strategic advocacy. Consequently, members are adept at crafting targeted advocacy messages on critical security concerns, including gender-based violence.



Empowering women and girls in Burkina Faso through training on UNSCRs 2250 and 1325, dialogue and mediation

2.3. ADVOCACY, OUTREACH AND SENSITISATION INITIATIVES

2.3.1. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD): The 2023 International Women's Day (IWD) served as a significant occasion to acknowledge and celebrate the invaluable contributions of WANEP's female coordinators, including National Network Coordinators (NNCs), the Coordinator of the ECOWAS Liaison Office, and Regional Coordinators, to the advancement of peace and security in the region. The theme, "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality," aligned with the United Nations' 67th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) priority theme of 'Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,' marked by the hashtag #EmbraceEquity.



Commemoration of IWD2023 at WANEP's Regional Office

Across the region, WANEP networks marked the IWD with debates, social media engagements, peace marches and webinars. Some highlights are presented below as follows:

- WANEP-Nigeria ran a successful campaign on twitter to sensitize the populace on ways of maximizing technology for the advancement of gender equality.
- WANEP-Mali in collaboration with the National Women Coalition-Mali (NWC) and the "Observatoire des Droits des Femmes et des Enfants" (ODEF), led a campaign to address genital mutilation and early marriage in Mali.
- WANEP- Guinea-Bissau worked with relevant stakeholders to lobby the Parliament for improved women's rights in the country, as well as their inclusion in shaping the country's national development projects.

2.3.2. 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: The 2023 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) under the theme: **UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls**, was once again a grim reminder that GBV is a global problem, that requires global action. WANEP employed robust social media campaigns and webinars to draw attention to issues of GBV as well as showcase concrete actions taken to mitigate the problem. At the regional level, WANEP dedicated its webinar series Gender Talks, to discuss the topic: **“Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in the Context of the Changing Nature of Security!”** The Coalition of Civil Society Organisations advocating for Justice for Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Togo, coordinated by WANEP- Togo, led a campaign to get justice for a young girl who was raped and murdered by unknown assailants. WANEP-Burkina Faso with *“Association des femmes Battantes de Thiou”* referred 178 GBV cases to relevant service providers as part of ongoing efforts to address and combat GBV in the country. In Côte d’Ivoire, the network carried out robust advocacy to key partners seeking support for GBV survivors and also raised awareness on violence against women during electoral periods. Additionally, they called for fostering collective actions for an inclusive and fair electoral process in a webinar organised in partnership with the National Women Coalition (NWC). WANEP-Mali worked with the Association of Malian Bloggers (AMB) to leverage digital channels to advocate and disseminate impactful messages on GBV and electoral security. A GBV survivor from Nigeria shared her story of hope and resilience as a victim of domestic violence as shown in the box.



“Thoughts of committing suicide have gone. I feel much better and want to do more for my child and society”. My self-esteem has been restored and is building up again. I never knew I could be alive to tell my story and overcome the trauma. Now, I have peace of mind. My Hope is alive!”

“My Hope is Alive” A Survivor’s Story

Mrs. Jane Jereniah Eragbai is a 40-year-old teacher married with one child. She endured years of abuse at the hands of her husband, even though she was the sole breadwinner of the family after the husband lost his job. She survived years of physical and verbal abuse, public embarrassment, and stalking. Not willing to continue this way as the torture had made her very depressed and suicidal, Jane sought help from the Women, Youth and Children Advancement Programme (WOYCAP), a WANEP-Nigeria Network member based in Edo State, Nigeria. Edo State now has Zero Tolerance for GBV!

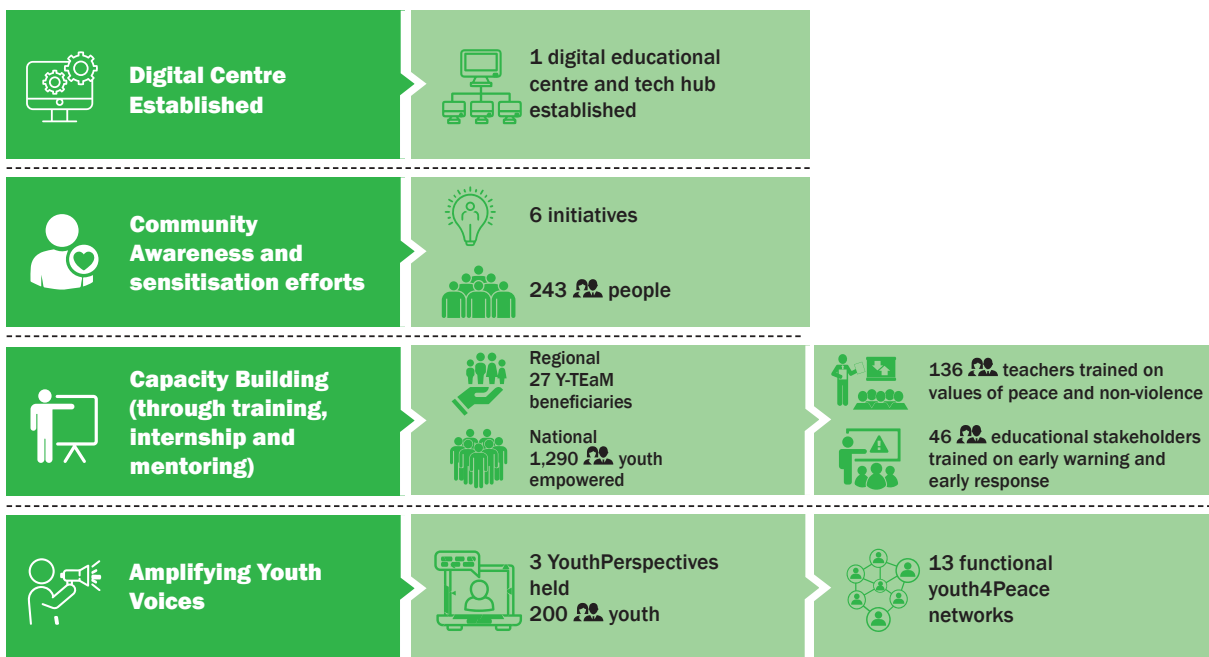
At WOYCAP, she received psychosocial counselling and was further referred to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). She and her child were eventually removed from the place of violence, and she continues to enjoy follow-up services by WOYCAP. Her advice to other victims is: “Speak up to stay alive. Silence kills!”

2.4. PROMOTING WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION IN LEADERSHIP

In line with its policy-influencing mandate, WANEP consistently engaged policymakers, politicians, and traditional/religious leaders, as part of efforts to create opportunities for women's meaningful inclusion and participation in politics and leadership. WANEP national networks are actively involved in the WPS technical and steering committees at the Ministries of Gender or their equivalent in their respective countries, where they contribute to shape national policy frameworks. WANEP's strategy for increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making is anchored on a three-pronged approach of capacity building, which involves trainings, coaching and mentoring processes, strategic advocacy and self-empowerment. For instance, in Burkina Faso, Mrs. COMPAORE Sabine, a beneficiary of the organisational and operational capacity building initiatives within the project "Supporting Cross-Border Cooperation Activities in the Liptako-Gourma Region" implemented by WANEP Burkina, was appointed a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Transition – a testament to WANEP's tangible impact on individual empowerment. In The Gambia, WANEP's consistent advocacy to duty bearers including religious/community/traditional authorities resulted in a notable increase in women's political participation in the Local Government Elections, culminating in the election of a female Mayoress. WANEP-Mali's vigorous campaign on inclusive Governance in support of the security sector reform (SSR) process contributed to an upsurge in women's involvement in the Consultative Security Committee (CSC) comprising 162 participants, made up 144 women.



K.R.A 3: STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS FOR YOUTH MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT



The overview under this result area, underscores WANEP’s holistic approach to shaping a peaceful West Africa by actively engaging and empowering youth in peace, security, and policy influencing. It presents key milestones, impactful testimonials, and collaborative ventures with regional organisations and WANEP’s national offices, emphasising the organisation’s commitment to fostering youth inclusion and participation in peacebuilding.

3.1. EMPOWERING NEXT GENERATION LEADERS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

A key strategy employed by WANEP to ensure effective youth inclusion and participation in peace and security is to build their capacity and equip them with diverse skills for optimal engagement. WANEP’s recognition of youth potentials for the promotion of peace and security in the region is evident in the capacity building initiatives carried out within the reporting year. Key milestones under this are as follows:

3.1.1 ENHANCED CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP

WANEP launched the Youth Transformational Empowerment and Mentorship (Y-TEaM) Programme in 2023 to cultivate a new generation of young graduates dedicated to driving transformative change and sustainable peace in their communities and countries. The programme, a key element of WANEP’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, provided 27 young participants (10 male, 17 female) from

across ECOWAS Member States with a combination of intensive training, mentorship and internship over a cumulative period of nine months. In 2023, the programme equipped these aged 18 to 35, with knowledge and skills relevant to the fostering confidence and laying the foundation for their requisite skills, the mentees are now committed to peace talks, and community dialogues as a form of the highly interactive programme, some of the mentees impacted by the experience. According to Patience Agala, a young person, I believe that through investment in my can help change the narrative about youth by educating non-violence to support ongoing efforts towards regional stability.” For Rachid Ouattara, a mentee from Burkina Faso, “The programme allowed me to gain some practical experiences on peacebuilding programming. The skills and knowledge acquired during the Y-TEaM Programme, as well as the mentorship component contributed to my recruitment in an International Organisation!”.

“As a young person, I believe that through investment in my personal development, I can help change the narrative about youth by educating my peers on non-violence to support ongoing efforts towards regional stability.”

- Patience Agala, a mentee from Ghana



Dr Festus K. Aubyn,

*Regional Coordinator for
Research & Capacity Building*

Reflections from WANEP on the first year implementation of the Y-TEaM Programme

The Youth Transformational, Empowerment, and Mentoring (Y-TEaM) Programme is a novel initiative of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) as part of its commitment to “Give Back to Society.” The implementation of the programme over the past year has been an incredible journey of self-discovery and growth for the mentees. One of the most fulfilling aspects of the Y-TEaM programme has been witnessing the development of mentees who have blossomed into confident, empowered individuals who are ready to take on leadership roles in their communities to make a positive impact. The focus on transformation has encouraged mentees to reflect on their own strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations to develop a growth mindset to embrace new opportunities. The empowerment element through the various trainings workshops has equipped mentees with valuable tools, skills, and knowledge to become agents of change in their communities. It is heartwarming to also see lasting relationships formed between mentors and mentees which is crucial for the professional development of the latter. However, while the journey has been rewarding, it has not been without challenges. Inadequate financial resources to run the programme smoothly to meet the expectations of our stakeholders was one of the major challenges. Nevertheless, we have diligently worked to overcome the challenges to keep the programme on track. I will therefore take this opportunity to acknowledge the voluntary contributions of WANEP staff who invested their personal resources as well as the unwavering support from our mentors and partners who contributed immensely to the successful completion of the 2023 edition.

**Mr Jean Yves Bonzi,**

*Coordination Officer, Integrated Office of the DSRSG
RC, HC, Somalia*

A MENTORSHIP JOURNEY: Reflections from a Mentor

I am thrilled to share the success story of a mentorship journey that unfolded over the past six months. As a mentor, I had the privilege of mentoring two remarkable young peacebuilders, who not only excelled in their endeavours but also taught me valuable lessons along the way. Throughout the mentorship, it became evident that both mentees were not just participants; they were determined individuals with a sincere willingness to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and their curiosity about my experiences from various peacekeeping missions around the world created a dynamic learning environment. As a mentor, I happily shared my insights, challenges, and triumphs, fostering an exchange of knowledge that transcended generational and experiential boundaries. It was heartening to witness their eagerness to absorb the wisdom gained from years of service in conflict zones.

One notable aspect of our mentorship was the mentees' focus on preparing for the employment market. Recognising their ambition, I provided practical tips drawn from my own experiences and guided them through the intricacies of the UN career portal. Their commitment to readiness was commendable, reflecting a deep understanding of the competitive nature of the field they were about to enter. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to WANEP for initiating and supporting this invaluable mentorship program. The impact it has had on these young peacebuilders is evident in their growth, knowledge acquisition, and enhanced preparedness for their professional journeys. Such initiatives play a crucial role in shaping the future of peacebuilding by nurturing the potential of emerging leaders. In conclusion, I urge the continuation of this initiative, as it not only serves as a platform for mentorship but also contributes to the larger goal of creating a cadre of capable and passionate individuals dedicated to promoting peace and harmony in our communities and beyond.

WANEP supported ECOWAS to run the “Inclusive Leadership and Entrepreneurship Boot Camp”, a five-month training and coaching sessions, targeting about 30 youth entrepreneurs and leaders from Civil Society Organisations. The programme contributed to the self-discovery, skills and talent development of the beneficiaries with the aim to help unleash their potential to contribute to social change and economic growth of the continent. A beneficiary of the programme shares her experience in the box below:



Mama Klebetesi III (Belinda Woelinam Azumah)

A beneficiary of the Youth Boot Camp programme, shares her experience

“As a young traditional leader, it has always been challenging bridging the gap between the old and young generations, especially, at community level. One of my key objectives going through this programme, was to foster young women and men’s empowerment to support their meaningful participation in decision making and peace processes in my community. Achieving this requires some skills development in leadership for effective engagement.

The ECOWAS Youth Boot Camp really helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses and strengthen my leadership abilities. I have designed various programs for women and youth empowerment and today, under my leadership, majority of them have started their own businesses and have taken up leadership positions. They are consulted and more involved in community dialogues.

An example is the Smart youth project where I organised leadership training for 10 youth to join existing committees in the community to be able to learn from the older people. Now, the youth are not scared to speak and take part in decision making in the community. Our newly elected Assembly member is a young man, who also went through this leadership training. I am also able to train some women in packaging. Through that, we have our original ‘Sasekpe Gari’, a cassava flour and corn flour, well packaged now for export. Our young women and teenage mothers were not left out. Five girls are undergoing hair dressing training as part of my young women empowerment program at the Royal Touch salon.

We have equally initiated some peacebuilding activities with the youth, but we need more assistance and support to be able to create more impact to enhance peace in our community. We have started a project on using arts in promoting peace.

I am very grateful to ECOWAS, WANEP and all the partners that made this possible.

Highlights of other capacity building initiatives at WANEP National Secretariat levels are captured as follows:

- WANEP-Burkina Faso facilitated job placements and internships for 30 young people in state institutions. An additional 10 young people got placements as volunteers in the state Ministry while two beneficiaries secured permanent employment in reputable donor organisations. Twenty young women underwent mentorship under the tutelage of

experienced women leaders who shared valuable insights and life experiences to empower and inspire the next generation of female leaders.

- WANEP- Burkina Faso collaborated with the Norbert Zongo Centre to train youth in communication and public speaking. The requisite knowledge acquired has empowered them to produce peace-themed podcasts² to articulate their perspectives to a wide audience. An additional 30 young people were trained on digital entrepreneurship. 28 of the beneficiaries are successfully operating E-commerce ventures.
- The Youth from the exchange and experience- sharing platforms (Youth4Peace, Women Community Mediators and Regional Committees for Peace and Security) coordinated by WANEP -Togo, organised community awareness dialogues in six localities of Togo situated in the Kpendjal and Oti regions of northern Togo. The focus was on social cohesion, conflict prevention, non-violent communication, and girls' education, benefiting 243 individuals, including 123 women. Subsequently, these beneficiaries collaborated with relevant authorities to contribute to countering radicalisation and addressing violent extremism in their communities.
- WANEP -Nigeria empowered 1,200 students from 45 Public Secondary Schools in Lagos State on peacebuilding skills and sensitised 16 educational stakeholders and 30 street children on non-violent dispute resolution, both within and outside the school environment. A further 30 educational stakeholders were trained in early warning and early response in collaboration with the Nigeria School-Based Management Committee (SBMC). Additionally, a free Digital Educational Centre and Tech Hub for street children was set up by the Network, in collaboration with Prince Children Foundation, aimed to equip them with essential Information Technology (IT) skills, and provide a pathway for their empowerment and integration into the digital age.



The YouthPeace Club of WANEP Burkina in action: Drama being used to raise awareness in a school setting.

² Links to the podcasts (produced in French) can be accessed here: <https://wanepburkina.org/2024/02/05/les-voix-de-la-paix-les-jeunes-des-clubs-de-paix-de-wanep-burkina-faso-lacent-des-podcasts/>

3.1.2. ENHANCED PLATFORMS FOR EFFECTIVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

The WANEP Peace and Peer Mediation Clubs provide the platform for a holistic analysis of peace and security issues from the youth perspective. The clubs promote values of compassion, equality, interdependence, and nonviolence. WANEP utilises the club platforms to regularly build capacities of the members through trainings and sensitisation activities on preventive peacebuilding initiatives to enhance their skills for effective peer mediation. Evidently, these clubs have contributed significantly to a culture of non-violence in schools while the members have utilised their skills to initiate creative ways of reaching out to their peers with peace messages. A number of activities were carried out in the reporting year under the auspices of the Peace and Peer Mediation clubs as detailed below:

- WANEP- Benin expanded the Peace Education programme to schools in Southern Benin and trained 136 teachers, including 55 women, on values of peace and non-violence.
- WANEP- Burkina Faso's trained Peace Club members have been recognized by the Ministry of Youth and are now actively involved in peace initiatives carried out by the Ministry.
- WANEP-Sierra Leone established 15 peace clubs and conducted training for 30 school peace club supervisors across 15 secondary schools in Freetown.
- WANEP-Guinea Bissau has expanded the Peace School initiative to 10 educational institutions. The network further provided professional internships to six young individuals, including three women geared towards fostering their professional development and engagement in peacebuilding initiatives.

3.2. ESTABLISHED MECHANISMS FOR AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES FOR POLICY INFLUENCING

WANEP actively amplifies young people's voices in policy discussions through initiatives such as the "Youth Perspectives Webinar Series". Three editions of the webinar held in the reporting period, which afforded opportunity for 200 young people to share their insights and perspectives on topics like electoral violence, technology in peace and security, and climate change among others. They also proffered workable recommendations, influencing WANEP's programming and advocacy efforts in the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agenda across the region.

WANEP partnered with key stakeholders to advocate for meaningful inclusion and participation of the youth in leadership and decision-making levels. Under the AU Youth for Peace Initiative, WANEP served as the lead CSO partner in establishing Youth4Peace Networks in West Africa. In this regard, WANEP played a pivotal role in advocating for inclusive and peaceful elections. To date, 13 functional Youth4Peace networks operate across West Africa. Ahead of the 2023 elections in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Liberia Youth4Peace members held online dialogues across the region, issuing communiqués with key recommendations that contributed to the peaceful conduct of the elections. In Ghana, WANEP partnered with the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) and other donors to empower young people in advocating for inclusive elections ahead of the 2024 elections. Other activities carried out across the region were as follows:

- WANEP-Sierra Leone collaborated with the Rainbo Initiative to engage young people to explore strategies to de-escalate post-election tension between the two main political parties in the country; the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's

Congress (APC). This initiative contributed significantly to a more stable and harmonious post-election environment.

- Members of the peace club in Burkina Faso produced and disseminated advocacy documents to various stakeholders within the educational environment, to articulate their issues and concerns in a non-threatening manner. Furthermore, the members produced 200 IEC materials on the dangers of drug abuse in schools.
- As an implementing partner of the “Youth of Values” project funded by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), WANEP-Côte d’Ivoire facilitated the second national conference on peace where 200 young beneficiaries were reached with messages of peace and national cohesion.



National Youth Engagement focused on GBV and post-election challenges in Sierra Leone

2023 International Youth Day: WANEP dedicated the month of August to commemorate the 2023 International Youth Peace Day (IYD) with the theme “Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Peaceful and Sustainable West Africa.” Discussions bordered on how climate change impact on peace, youth unemployment, and regional stability. WANEP Regional office collaborated with national offices and Youth4Peace Networks to carry out activities such as tree planting, webinars, radio programmes, tweet chats, and advocacy visits to commemorate the Day. The campaign significantly increased stakeholders’ awareness and commitment to inclusive climate responses and garnered visibility for the WANEP Youth, Peace and Security programme. Some of the actions undertaken by the National Networks in commemoration of the IYD included the following:

- WANEP-Benin created an educational video titled “*Appel à œuvrer pour la paix*” (Call to work for peace) advocating for peaceful co-existence. The video was widely disseminated on all social media platforms.
- WANEP-Côte d’Ivoire held a peace parade under the theme “Youth, Peace, and Sustainable Development,” to inspire and mobilise young people to play a crucial role in achieving sustainable peace through active civic engagement and peace advocacy.
- Deforestation remains a key environmental concern often fueling communal crises and disrupting peaceful co-existence. As part of measures to arrest the spill-over effects of deforestation on communal peace and security, WANEP- Senegal facilitated the planting of over 300 plants during a visit to the Guédiawaye water and forest nursery, in the Dakar region of Senegal.
- The Youth4Peace Network of WANEP-Togo planted 550 plants of various species during a reforestation activity held from 26 to 30 August 2023, in Northern Togo.

Images from IYD2023



Tree planting by some youth



Staff at the Regional office go green in commemoration of IYD2023



INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION



Maxwell Beganim
Climate Advisor

THEME
GREEN SKILLS FOR YOUTH: TOWARDS A PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE WEST AFRICA

“West African States and development partners should promote and implement green budgeting practices in funding allocations to support effective climate response in the region”

“Les États d'Afrique de l'Ouest et les partenaires au développement devraient promouvoir et mettre en œuvre des pratiques de budgétisation verte dans les allocations financières pour une réponse climatique efficace dans la région”

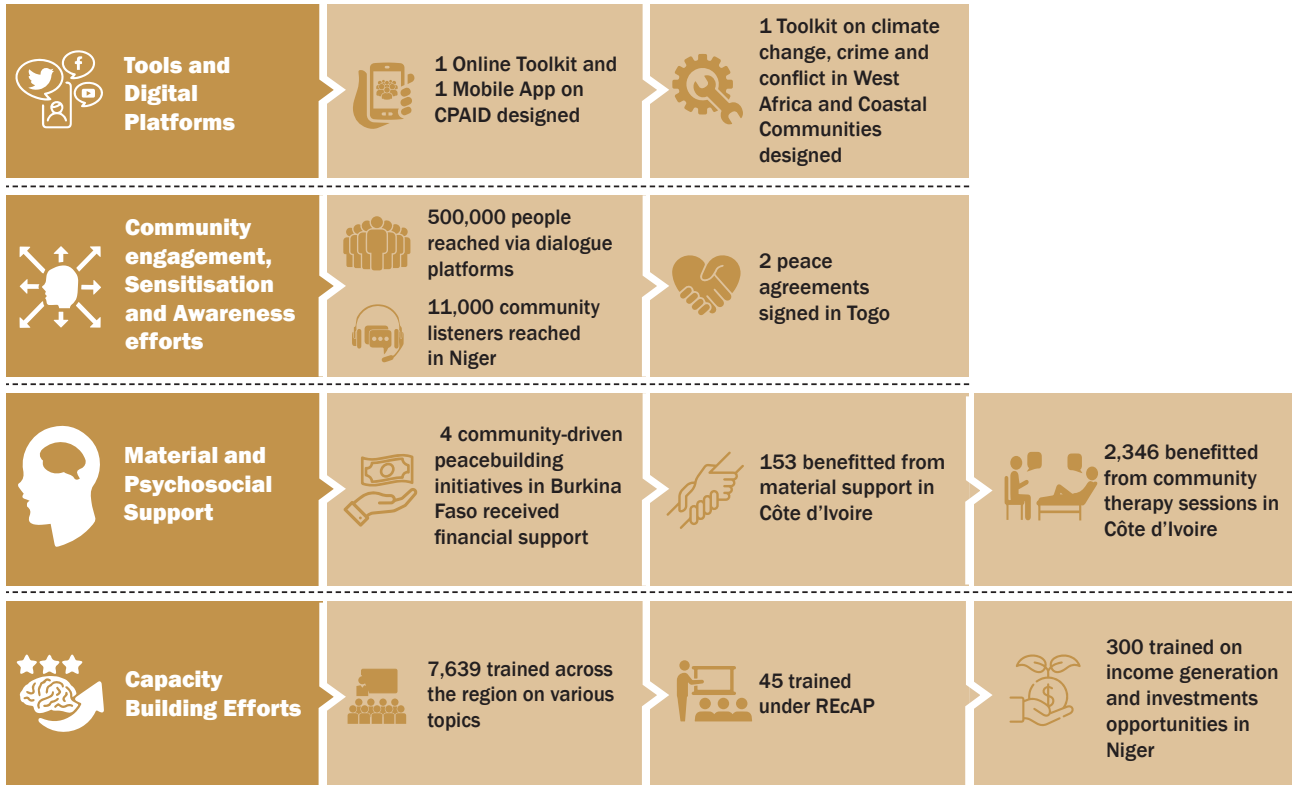
Youth Advocacy message presented during a YouthPerspectives Webinar as part of activities commemorating IYD2023

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY





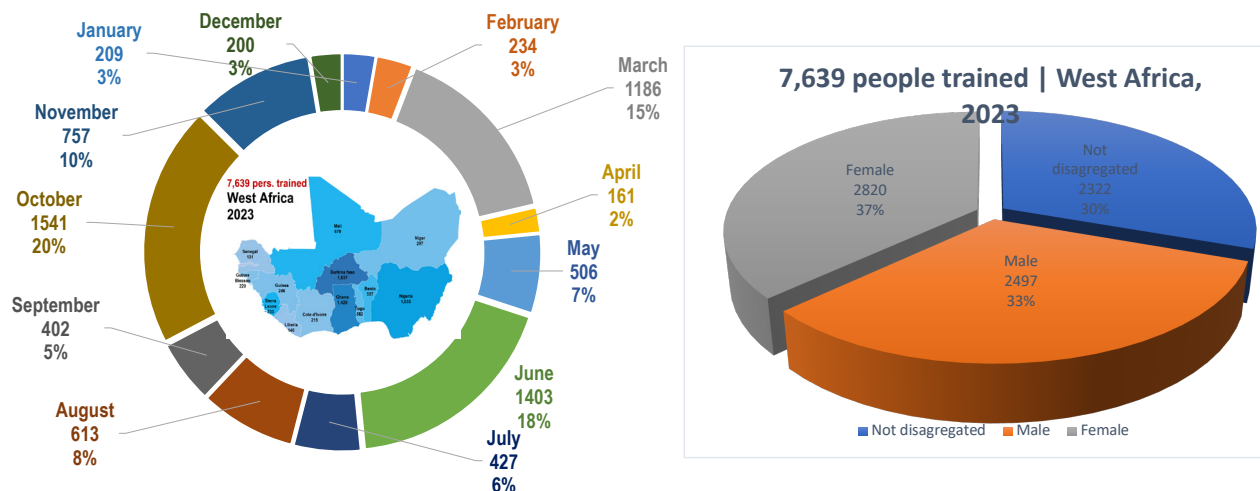
K.R.A 4: EXPANDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE, AND CAPACITY FOR OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE



Community is at the core of WANEP’s collaborative approach to the consolidation of peace and stability in the region. The organisation adopts a bottom-up-approach of effective involvement of communities to find lasting peace and ensure local ownership of conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes. This approach enables beneficiaries to gain valuable skills to navigate and mitigate conflicts within their communities and contributes significantly to improved community relations, reduced tensions, and strengthened social cohesion.

4.1. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE

In the reporting year, WANEP enhanced the capacities of 7639 persons, comprising state and non-state actors, intergovernmental agencies as well as the private sector towards ensuring the advancement of peace in West Africa. A graphical representation is provided below:



The trainings covered a wide range of peacebuilding and conflict prevention subjects including early warning, advocacy, communication, dialogue and mediation, environmental management among others. It is worthy to note that these capacity building efforts contributed immensely to improved citizens-State relationships, build community cohesion and enabled beneficiaries to develop and implement local solutions to their local problems.

Under the framework of the Research and Action for Peace (REcAP) project, implemented through a consortium comprising WANEP, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and funded by the European Union (EU), capacities of forty-five (45) people were enhanced in the following countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, and Togo.

- WANEP-Niger, with funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), trained 25 community leaders including women and youth on conflict prevention.

4.2 FACILITATED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS AND DIALOGUE PLATFORMS

WANEP carried out several community-driven activities in the reporting year geared towards enhancing local ownership and strengthening community cohesion. Key engagements are highlighted below:

- WANEP-Togo reached 500,000 actors in the Savanes region with conflict prevention messages through its radio broadcasts in official and local languages. The network also facilitated the signing of two peace agreements in Dansoupémé and Dagbati counties as summarised in the table below:

Localities Concerned	Type of Conflicts	WANEP' s role	Outcome
Dagbati (Maritime Region)	Agro-pastoral	Provision of technical support, logistical and financial resources, Capacity Building provided to Youth4Peace Network and women mediators,	Peace agreement signed among the representatives of farmers, livestock breeders, the village chief, and a town hall delegate.
Dansoupeme (Maritime Region)	Chieftaincy	Facilitation and monitoring of meetings	Signing of a peace agreement between the communities in conflict, and local elected representatives.

- WANEP-Niger messages of peace and community cohesion reached 11,000 community radio listeners.
- WANEP-Mali established 13 communal Security Advisory Committees (SACs) to boost community policing and strengthen Security Sector Reform (SSR) efforts. 630 Members of the committee received levels of training in conflict prevention, mediation, early warning etc., and are participating effectively in community peacebuilding initiatives.
- WANEP-Burkina Faso, as part of its commitment to community-driven peacebuilding initiatives, provided financial support to four (04) community projects initiated by CSO members, and partners, with the specific goal of promoting peace at the community level in the municipalities of Fada Gourma, Gaoua, Ouagadougou, and Ziniare. The financial support was extended through the Sahel Peace Initiatives Support Project (SIPaS). The Network also provided training to fifty (50) individuals, including twenty-five (25) women, in conflict analysis, negotiation, and community mediation techniques. This training took place in the South-West and Centre-East regions of the country, empowering participants to navigate and mitigate conflicts within their communities.
- WANEP- Côte d'Ivoire, within the context of the initiative titled "*Soulager les victimes de la commune de Yopougon et Abobo de la crise de 2011 pour contribuer à la cohésion sociale: Graine de paix*" (Relieving the victims of the communes of Yopougon and Abobo from the 2011 crisis to contribute to social cohesion: Seed of Peace,"), provided material support to 153 (129 women and 24 men), victims of the 2011 natural disaster in the communes of Yopougon and Abobo to engage in income generating activities. Additionally, 2,346 persons (1,932 women) benefitted from community therapy sessions held for victims of natural and man-made disasters and other forms of violence.
- WANEP- Sierra Leone played a significant role in enhancing the capacity of 2,500 officers from key security institutions. The officers were trained with a comprehensive curriculum developed by the network in conjunction with the Office of National Security. In addition, the Network in collaboration with Dignity from Denmark and MIDRIFT from Kenya, successfully established the Intersectoral Platform on Peace and Security (IPPS).
- To prevent the emergence of a new source of tensions and insecurity occasioned by the recurrent violent attacks in the Maradi region of Niger, WANEP built capacities of 101 women and 199 men on income generation and investment opportunities under the cash-

for-work³ project. This initiative has contributed significantly to women's economic empowerment by offering them sustainable socio-economic opportunities.

- Under the REcAP project, WANEP also engaged the Fulbe community and key stakeholders including traditional leaders, youth and women groups in the Bongo District of the Upper-East Region of Ghana, in a dialogue process. This multistakeholder dialogue sought to enhance understanding of security threats and foster closer community relations, especially as it relates to the dynamics around transhumance within the West Africa region. This impactful initiative was extended to Banikora in Benin, and to Bamenda in Cameroon, demonstrating WANEP's commitment to fostering sustainable peace across diverse regions.



Radio broadcasts in local languages of Togo convey vital messages on countering violent extremism, preventing radicalisation, and promoting conflict resolution.

³ Cash-for-work is a short-term intervention used by humanitarian organisations to provide temporary employment in public projects



Markala, Mali: Optimising women's participation as part of inclusive governance of the Security Sector



Côte d'Ivoire: A recipient of the Seed for Peace project showcasing her automated water-cutting machine.



Côte d'Ivoire: In the Integrative and Systemic Community Therapy sessions, survivors find solace in shared conversations. This photo captures one of these supportive rounds



Advocacy visits to traditional and security institutions in Nigeria, under the PARTNER Programme



Community Dialogue in the Bongo District of the Upper-East Region of Ghana



Community Dialogue in Banikoara, Benin



Community Dialogue in the North-West Region of Cameroon



- WANEP- Senegal and its counterpart in Guinea Bissau are implementing a project aimed at combating cross-border cattle rustling with funding from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). The project provides the platform for engaging local authorities, Defense and Security Forces, and communities to unite against cross-border livestock theft thus fostering positive community engagement.



Community Forum and Advocacy with administrative authorities for the enforcement of laws criminalising cattle rustling

4.3. RESEARCH AND ACTION FOR PEACE NETWORK (REcAP NETWORK): In 2022, WANEP signed a new partnership with the EU to serve as the lead implementing partner for the Research and Action for Peace (REcAP) in collaboration with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The core component of the project, which is the REcAP Network comprising experts in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and violent extremism from 18 countries in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin and Europe, was officially launched on 2 February 2023 in Dakar, Senegal. The main objective of the REcAP Network is to strengthen the role of civil society experts at regional, national and community levels, and to enable more informed decision-making by policymakers. Major activities under this project in 2023 were the virtual launch of the project Website and an online platform to facilitate communication and mutual learning among the REcAP members in West Africa, the Lake Chad Basin and in Europe. The research component of this project is reported under key result area 5 while highlights of capacity building initiatives have been captured in subsequent sections in this report.



Experts, Regional actors, and REcAP Network Members at the Regional Conference

4.4. MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT THROUGH C7-WA: As part of efforts to address the debilitating effects of climate change, WANEP, through the EU funded project titled: 'Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa (C7-West Africa)', developed a comprehensive toolkit for addressing climate change impact, crime and conflict. The toolkit is designed to enhance the understanding and capabilities of residents and stakeholders in West African coastal communities, enabling them to effectively mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It also aims to combat climate-related crimes and conflicts, contributing to the sustainable development of these vulnerable regions. Climate change exacerbates conflict by aggravating pre-existing and underlying tensions including weak governance and poor social cohesion, while pressuring already strained natural resources and increasing food and livelihood insecurity.

4.5. Strengthening Mechanisms for Reinforcing State-Citizen Relationships: On 15 August 2023, WANEP launched an online toolkit tagged; Citizens' Participation for Accountable and Inclusive Democracy (CPAID) and mobile application in Abuja, Nigeria. The toolkit developed in collaboration with UNDP, aims to empower citizens, particularly the youth, in monitoring and evaluating government performance across West Africa. Following the launch, a Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted on 17 and 18 August 2023, in Lagos, Nigeria with WANEP NEWS Managers across the region, to equip them with the skills to effectively utilise the CPAID toolkit and mobile application. These trained Managers are poised to play a pivotal role in championing CPAID in their respective nations, facilitating widespread adoption, and ensuring the collection of valuable data and insights from engaged citizens.

4.6. Under the Just Future Programme funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by a consortium of WANEP, CORDAID, Search for Common Ground, Women's International Peace Centre, African Security Sector Network and the Liaison Office, WANEP, in collaboration with its partners successfully established two Communal Peace Consultation Frameworks (CCCo) in Niger. The CCCo serve as consultative structures to foster citizen participation in defining and implementing local development policies and initiatives. The aim is to improve local governance and increase the involvement and commitment of women and young people in peace and security consolidation bodies.



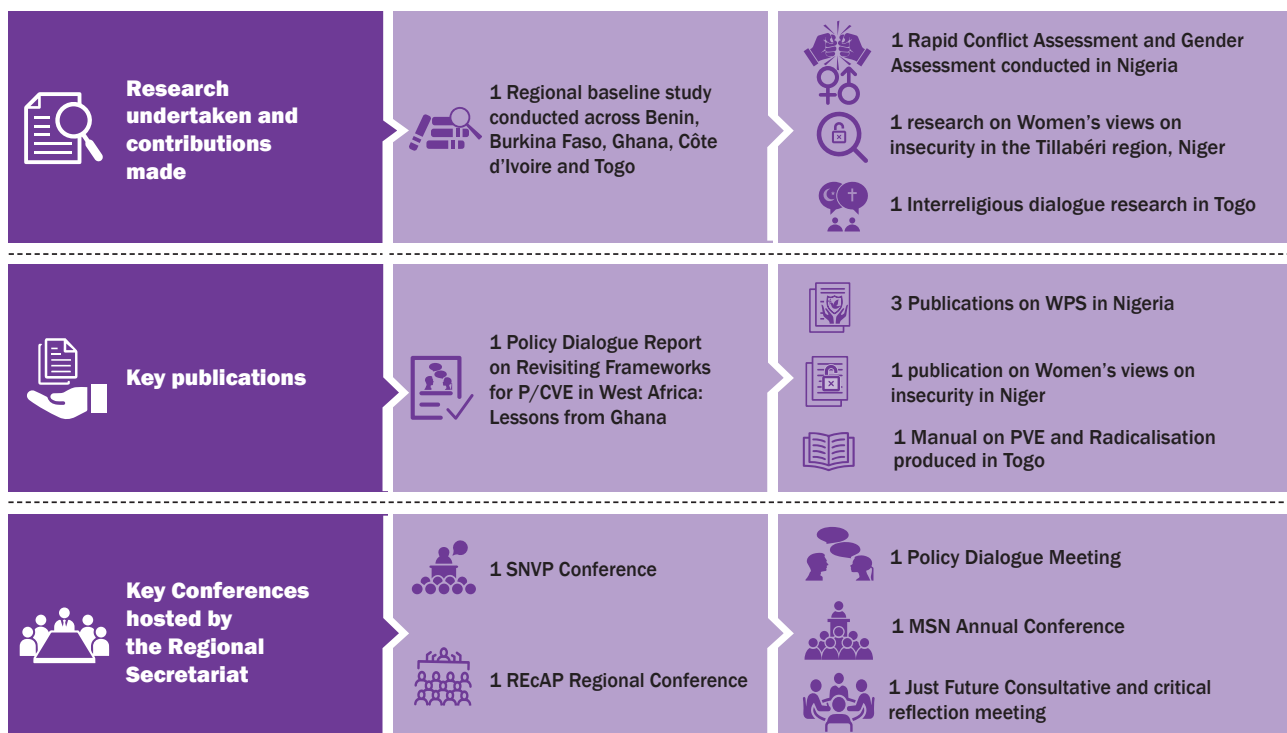
Official launch of CPAID, Abuja, Nigeria



ToT training of WANEP's NEWS Managers on the use of the CPAID mobile application and toolkit in Lagos, Nigeria



K.R.A 5: UTILISING RESEARCH CAPACITY TO SUPPORT POLICY ADVOCACY AND LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS



WANEP's commitment to shaping policy discourse and fostering positive change is exemplified in this section, highlighting key initiatives undertaken in the review year. Through strategic collaborations and impactful interventions, WANEP has actively contributed to influencing policies and facilitating evidence-based dialogue processes on critical issues across West Africa. This section unfolds a narrative of WANEP's engagement in policy dialogues, regional conferences, and critical reflection meetings, showcasing its dedication to advancing sustainable peace, human security, and resilience. From research publications to consultative forums, WANEP's multifaceted approach is geared towards making a tangible impact on policy frameworks as a critical success factor to the attainment of shared aspirations at regional, continental and global levels.

5.1. POLICY INFLUENCING INITIATIVES

In the review year, WANEP in collaboration with the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), organised a policy dialogue in Accra, Ghana, from 26 to 27 June 2023 on "**Revisiting Frameworks for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in West Africa: Lessons from Ghana,**". The dialogue session brought together high-level professionals and experts from diverse sectors, including security agencies, academia, the National Peace Council, National Commission for

Civic Education (NCCE), media, fellows of the SSRC's African Peacebuilding Network (APN) and Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa programme, as well as civil society experts in the field. Key deliberations from the dialogue were churned into a publication and widely disseminated to serve as a rich resource for key stakeholders, including from academia and other peacebuilding actors.

In November 2023, WANEP building on this policy dialogue, facilitated a two-day regional conference in Accra, Ghana, which brought together RECAP Network members and other experts from West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin to deliberate on responses to violent extremism in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin amid political uncertainties.



*Policy Dialogue in
Accra, Ghana*

Other initiatives that contributed to generating evidence-based knowledge and dialogue are captured below:

- WANEP spearheaded the production of a paper titled “Mediating Complex Conflicts in Africa: Reflections on Multi-Stakeholder Approaches” to the 2023 Mediation Support Network (MSN) Discussion Points. This paper delves into the practical application of multi-stakeholder approaches in mediating complex conflicts in Africa, using Mali and Ethiopia as case studies. The insights presented in the paper were enriched by the keynote address and discussions during the MSN Annual Meeting held in Accra, Ghana, from 26 to 28 April 2023. Drawing on WANEP’s past research and various secondary sources, including reports, articles, and web-based publications, the paper is set to be published by MSN in the first quarter of 2024 following completion of external review processes.
- WANEP- Nigeria released three key publications in the year to advance the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and Women’s Rights in Nigeria. These included Guidelines for the Localisation of Nigeria’s NAP on UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions, Coalition Building for Countering Violent Extremism and Community Resilience (A Facilitator Guide

and Training Manual), and Infographics on “Conflict Impact Assessment and Stakeholders Perspectives for a Safer Nigeria”.

- WANEP- Burkina contributed to a diagnostic report on combating drug consumption and preventing violence in schools, organised by the Ministry of Education.
- WANEP-Togo with support from UNICEF and a Peacebuilding Fund grant, developed a comprehensive manual for preventing and combating radicalisation. This manual, distributed to 47 government structures, regional international organisations, and civil society in Togo, serves as a valuable resource in the efforts to address radicalisation and promote peace in the country.

5.2. THE SOUTHERN VOICES NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (SNVP) CONFERENCE:

Facilitating regional knowledge sharing between West and North African countries serves a powerful catalyst for generating widespread interest and political support to effectively address the challenging human security issues prevalent in both regions. Recognising this imperative and the intricately connected security challenges between the Maghreb and the Sahel regions., WANEP, Sadeq Institute in Libya, and the Wilson Center Africa Programme joined forces to organise the Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding (SNVP) regional conference in Accra, Ghana, from 19-20 September 2023. The hybrid event facilitated interactive discussions among a diverse array of regional experts and thought leaders. The event provided a platform to explore evolving security dynamics in the Sahel and Maghreb regions, analyse the resurgence of military coups in West Africa, and produce actionable policy recommendations. By leveraging collective expertise and insights, the conference exemplified the power of collaboration in crafting effective solutions to enhance human security.



SNVP Conference in Accra, Ghana (19-20 September)

5.3 JUST FUTURE: WANEP organised a 2-day consultative and critical reflection meeting in Accra, Ghana, themed “Strengthening Analysis to Enhance Advocacy in Niger, Mali, and the ECOWAS Commission.” The meeting provided a platform to discuss the crucial role of ECOWAS in addressing coups and restoring democratic and inclusive governance, outlining priority actions for implementation in Mali and Niger in 2024. The meeting was strategic coming in the wake of unconstitutional changes in government recorded in the two countries.

Consultative and Critical reflection meeting in Accra, Ghana under the Just Future Programme.



5.4 SUPPORT TO EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

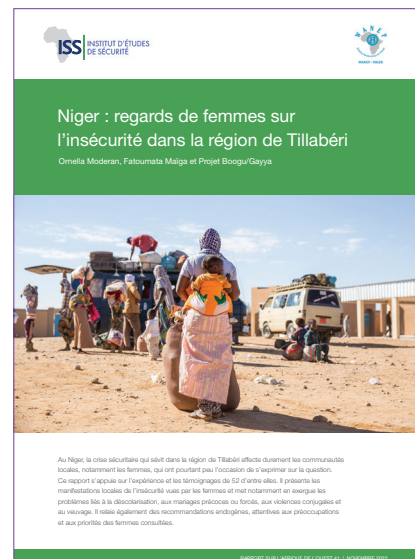
WANEP in collaboration with relevant stakeholders conducted evidence-based research on a vast array of human security issues including climate change, gender, violent extremism, migration, political governance among others. In this wise, WANEP in collaboration with the UNDP and as part of the Atlantic Corridor Project—conducted a regional baseline study across Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo. The research sought to identify vulnerability factors contributing to violent extremism and radicalisation. Simultaneously, it assessed the effectiveness of early warning and early response (EWER) mechanisms, evaluated relevant actors and structures, and scrutinised existing peace infrastructures in five countries within the region. Recommendations from the research provided actionable recommendations to guide UNDP’s strategic interventions. The final report of the research will be released in the first quarter of 2024 and is expected to influence strategic decisions and strengthen efforts in building resilient and peaceful communities in the targeted countries.



Focused group discussion within the framework of the Atlantic Corridor Project in the North of Ghana

Other research initiatives recorded in the year were as follows:

- WANEP- Nigeria, in collaboration with Mercy Corps Nigeria (MCN), conducted Rapid Conflict Assessment and Gender Assessment in Kano, Katsina, Benue, and Nasarawa states of Nigeria. This initiative aimed to guide programmatic design under the USAID funded project as it expands to new states. Additionally, WANEP Nigeria, in collaboration with the University of Lagos, conducted Research on Migration, Urbanisation, and Conflicts in African Cities (MUCA) towards peaceful urban futures.
- WANEP- Togo contributed to the interreligious dialogue research conducted in collaboration with the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) Institute across six countries, including Togo.
- WANEP- Mali disseminated results from perception surveys and local security diagnoses to members of the Security Advisory Committees (CCSC) in target communes. Recommendations from the CCSC members are expected to enhance the report and guide them in safety assessments in their communes.



- With funding support from the Netherlands Ministry of foreign affairs, WANEP- Niger and ISS jointly led research on “*Niger: Regards de femmes sur l’insécurité dans la région de Tillabéri*” (Niger: Women’s views on Insecurity in the Tillabéri Region). The participatory study involved 70 women from diverse sectors in five municipalities.



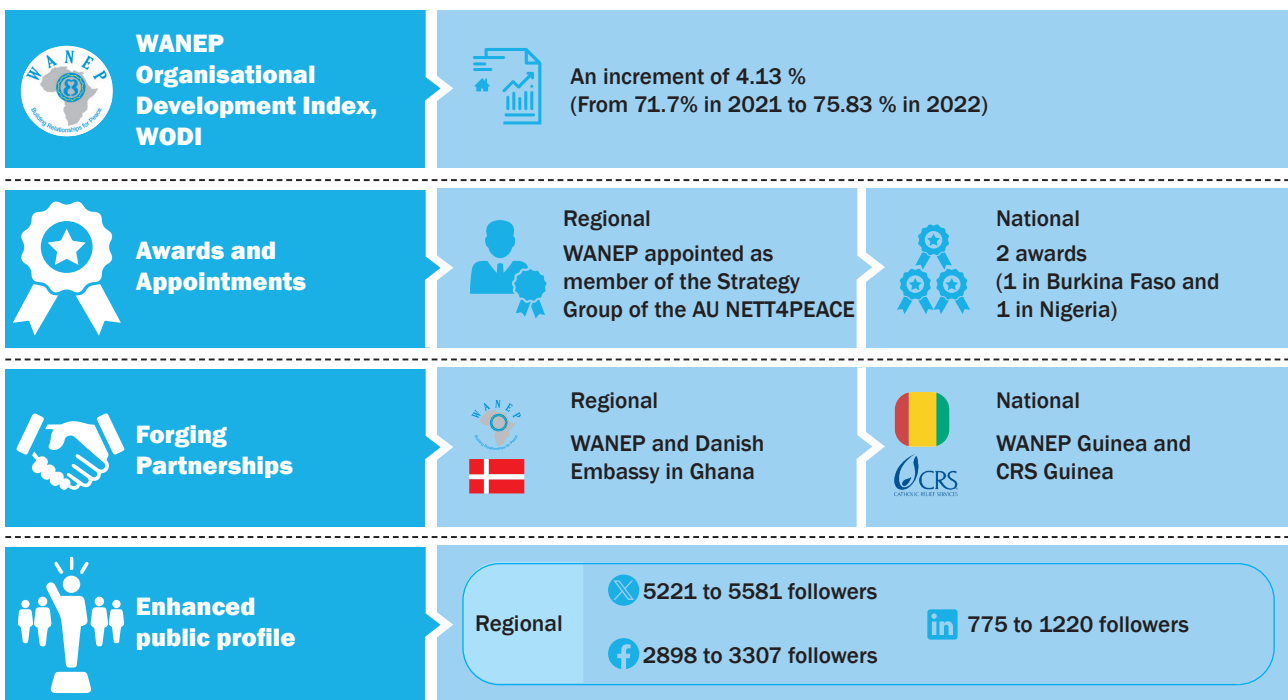
A cross-section of participants at a consultative forum in Burkina Faso

- WANEP-Burkina Faso held several consultative fora with a cross-section of community members to gather reliable data and identify prospects for utilising local resources for effective PVE response. The Network also participated in a regional study titled "Regional Study Reference on the Factors of Vulnerability to Violent Extremism and Radicalisation, Early Warning, and Rapid Response."
- WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire in collaboration with the National Human Rights Council held a workshop to validate the report on the 'State of Affairs and the Roadmap of the Regional Human Rights Forums in Côte d'Ivoire'.

⁴ The link to the French version of the publication is as follows: <http://ow.ly/rLby50MV1a7>



K.R.A 6: STRENGTHENING WANEP'S INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER ON ITS MANDATE

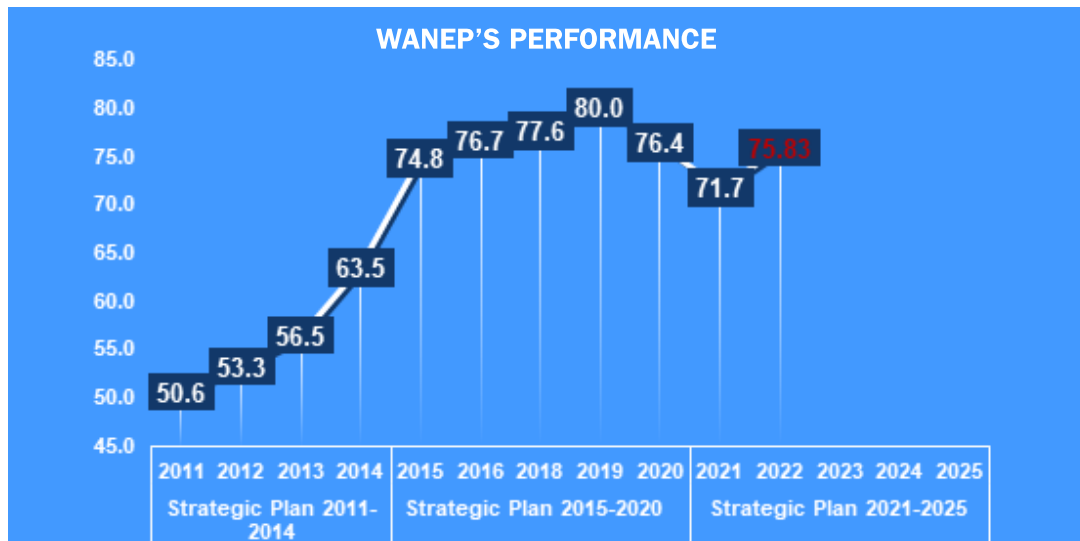


The section below, presents the multifaceted dimensions of WANEP's institutional development priorities, knowledge management, and strategic partnerships in its pursuit of sustainable peace and development across West Africa. From WANEP's Organisational Development Index (WODI) to strategic initiatives undertaken for corporate governance, human resource capacities, and enhanced staff capabilities, this section reveals a rich tapestry of WANEP's endeavour to consolidate its credibility and sustainability as a civil society partner in peace and security processes in West Africa and across the African continent.

6.1. ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

6.1.1. WANEP ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INDEX (WODI): The WANEP Organisational Development Index (WODI) stands as a fundamental institutional tool meticulously crafted by WANEP to gauge governance, accountability, institutional capacity, and the growth trajectory of the organisation and its extensive network members. The 2022 WODI findings unveiled a significant surge in WANEP's development and growth rate. Notably, the index ascended from 71.7% in 2021 to an impressive 75.83% in 2022. This pronounced uptick underscores WANEP's commitment to continuous enhancement, institutional strengthening, and sustained progress.

The organisation's steadfast dedication to fostering positive change in West Africa is mirrored in the WODI results, affirming WANEP's trajectory toward increased effectiveness, influence, and impact in the region.



Relying on the WODI, WANEP-Burkina, under the PeaceBuilding Fund project assessed 400 women's organisations covering four regions in the country in collaboration with members of the National Women Coalition, (NWC), from October to November 2023. The organisations were assessed on their implementation and operational prowess, financial stability and future projections. The exercise helped to identify gaps and establish the groundwork for tailored guidance to strengthen their organisational and institutional governance. WANEP-Liberia also employed WODI to assess 11 selected CSOs with the aim to enhance their organisational capabilities and facilitate their access to European Union (EU) funds.

6.1.2. MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE 2021-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN: In 2023, WANEP reached the midpoint of the implementation of its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and in line with best practices, conducted a Mid-Term Review (MTR) to assess the level of implementation, achievements, and identify areas for improvement in subsequent planning and execution. The MTR highlighted key outcomes, categorised under relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. Notably, the review underscored WANEP's strength in providing capacity building for peacebuilding and allied practitioners. This strategic focus reflects a commitment to empowering local stakeholders, CSOs and communities, aligning with the evolving need for a more inclusive and participatory peacebuilding process. The MTR emphasised the significance of these capacity-building efforts in strengthening the region's ability to effectively address unique challenges, fostering a robust and locally-driven approach to conflict prevention and resolution. During the MTR period, WANEP successfully reached 112,228 peacebuilding practitioners and related individuals through diverse forms of capacity building, marking a substantial contribution to the region's overall resilience and response preparedness.

6.2. ENSURING CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

WANEP 17TH REGIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of WANEP, which comes up once in two years at regional level and provides the platform where pivotal policy decisions are deliberated and decided upon. The GA in addition to enhancing corporate governance, provides an opportunity for the organisation to collectively review programme implementation, promote best practices and formulate recommendations to inform future institutional and programme development. The 17th edition of the General

Assembly held from March 20 to 23, 2023 bringing together WANEP regional and national staff, management and board. The event held concurrently with the West Africa Peacebuilding Fellows (WAPeF) Conference and Partners Forum under the theme "ECOWAS Vision 2050: Towards an Enhanced State-Citizens Relationship." Amb. Abdel-Fatau Musah PhD, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, ECOWAS Commission and a WANEP Fellow, delivered the keynote address at the joint event. This dual event served as a crucial opportunity for WANEP and its partners to refine their reflective strategies, addressing the intricate web of conflicts with profound and far-reaching implications for West Africa's progressive outlook. The General Assembly ended on a high note with the ratification of Mrs. Florence Iheme, former Director, PAPS at the ECOWAS Commission, as the new Regional Board Chair.

At national level, WANEP national secretariats of Togo, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire held their General Assembly in the reporting period. Members of the National Board, network member organisations and other key partners participated in the General Assemblies as it affords them opportunity to be familiarised with the workings of the secretariat, foster more sustainable partnerships, and contribute to the advancement of the Network.



17th edition of the General Assembly



Some WAPeF posing with WANEP's ED (far left)

6.3. STRENGTHENING STAFF CAPACITY FOR OPTIMUM DELIVERY

ENHANCING HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITIES

Staff Hires/Movement: WANEP's commitment to enhancing human resource capacities continued to remain high on its agenda for 2023 through its strategic and rigorous staff recruitment, and its dynamic internship programme. To beef up its staff strength, WANEP yearly engages interns to support implementation of its programmes while also using the internship opportunity as a way of fostering professional development of young people in the field of peace and security. At the regional level, WANEP welcomed a US Fulbright Scholar, whose nine-month engagement not only strengthened her capacities but also made a significant impact at the programmatic level. The subsequent insights shared by the scholar in the provided box offer a firsthand perspective on the enriching experiences and contributions made through WANEP's internship and capacity-building endeavours.



Micaiah Palmer,
US Fulbright Scholar

Reflections from Micaiah

Micaiah Palmer reflects on the work ethics and values she acquired during her 9-month internship programme under the US Fulbright Scholar at WANEP. While working on her research paper with a focus on the theme "Transcending Silos: Multidimensional Approaches to Supporting Youth Activism in Ghana," Ms. Palmer also actively contributed to WANEP's YPS and Research Programmes.

"Working with WANEP strengthened my work ethic and fostered a deeper appreciation for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. The experience helped me recognise the true value and power of collaboration within a team and the additional support that comes from being part of a community. My time at WANEP emphasised that relationships are crucial for enabling and sustaining peacebuilding efforts over time. I transitioned from an individualistic American work culture to embrace a more relationship-centred approach.

WANEP taught me that my value does not solely come from productivity. The organisation's approach to work and mentorship provided a level of grace that exceeded my experiences in the U.S. It helped me embrace the fact that I am still early in my career as a peacebuilder. This recognition allowed me to be more present and remain open to continuous learning about my surroundings and myself without the pressure of having to appear to have all the answers."

As the leading civil society organisation (CSO) in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, WANEP continued to provide opportunities for its staff to improve their skills and prepare them for optimum delivery on the organisational goals. As a result, WANEP staff are highly sought after by relevant stakeholders to deploy their expertise and professionalism in contributing to the attainment of sustainable peace in the region. One such instance was the WIPNET Programme

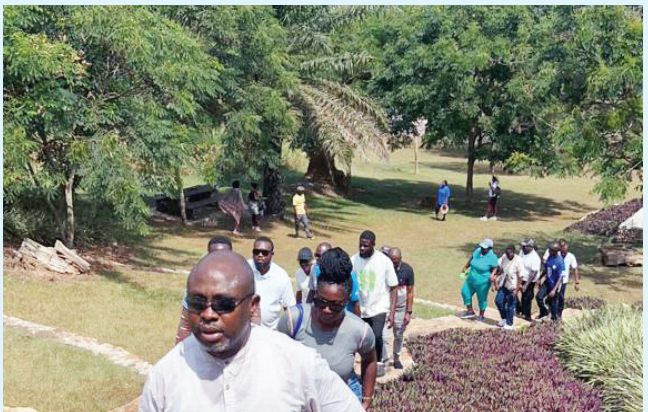
Manager of WANEP- Mali who served as a temporary instructor in the United Nations Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CIMIC) course at the “*École de Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin Beye*” Peacekeeping School from 18 to 19 September 2023. Some of the other capacity building opportunities for WANEP staff are captured below:

- The Gender Specialist of WANEP- Senegal participated in the Gender Advisor Course organised by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) with funding support from Folke Benadotte Academy (FBA).
- WANEP-Togo technical team along with members of the national coordination received training on Project Management Cycle (PMC).
- Selected programme staff of WANEP-Nigeria, under the Capacity Strengthening component of the Peace Action for Rapid and Transformative Nigerian Early Response (PARTNER)⁵ Programme, underwent a 3-month secondment to Mercy Corps Nigeria and received an intensive five-day training in Programme Management, financial, and grants management.
- WANEP- Niger benefitted from a training workshop on advocacy and resource mobilisation facilitated by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, as part of activities for the implementation of Niger second National Action Plan (NAP II). The Network further supported three youth member organisations to the Sub-Regional Youth Forum on Peace, Security and Human Rights, held in Guinea from 27 to 29 September 2023, organised by the West African Youth Network on Peace and Human Rights (RAOPDH).

ANNUAL STAFF RETREAT: Early in the year, WANEP held its second staff retreat in the serene mountainous town of Kwahu in the Eastern region of Ghana. Holding the retreat in a comfortable and creative environment was to provide opportunity for WANEP to take stock of its implementation process, identify areas of improvement, re-think strategies and programmes and design new strategies. It was also an avenue to strengthen bonding among staff, clarify roles and expectations and identify the unique contributions of each staff member to deliver on the organisation’s vision and goals. The 2023 retreat was also significant in that it heralded the third year of successful implementation of WANEP five-year Strategic Action Plan (2020-2025). Centred on the theme: “Strengthening Relationships for Efficient Delivery of WANEP’s Vision,” the retreat not only fostered a sense of unity among the staff but also provided a valuable platform for collaborative discussions and strategic planning.



⁵ The Peace Action for Rapid and Transformative Nigerian Early Response (PARTNER) programme aims to overcome challenges to early warning and early response (EWER) systems and close the gap between reporting and response, by strategically reimagining the entire EWER process whereby early warning information is analysed, formatted, and disseminated to stakeholders in the system who are positioned to receive and act upon that information. PARTNER is a USAID Nigeria-funded programme and implemented by a consortium comprising WANEP Nigeria, Mercy Corps, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC), Plateau Peacebuilding Agency (PPBA), Mambayya House, and the Kukah Centre.



6.4. INCREASED VISIBILITY, RECOGNITION AND AWARD

WANEP's contribution to the promotion of peace and stability towards the attainment of a peaceful West Africa has garnered recognition in the region, thereby increasing its visibility in the public space. Going by the laurels WANEP has received over the years, there's no doubt that the organisation is poised for greater heights. A few of these accolades are captured below:

- WANEP- Nigeria received Canada's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Civil Society Leadership Award for 2022. The award is in recognition of the Network's innovative response to climate change-related conflicts in Nigeria and its remarkable achievement in operationalising the community-based National Early Warning System (NEWS) mechanism for early conflict risk detection. It also celebrates WANEP-Nigeria's efforts of empowering women as agents of change and sustainable peace as well as its commitment to collaborative work with various government partners.
- The WANEP -Liberia WIPNET Programme was recognised on Women Human Rights Defenders Day for its commitment to end/mitigate Gender- Based Violence (GBV).
- WANEP- Burkina was elevated for the second time to the esteemed rank of Knight of the Order of Merit of Youth and Sports and presented with a Youth Clasp on 21 December 2023.
- The WIPNET Programme Officer of WANEP- Mali received a CHIWARA trophy from the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School for providing high-quality, multi-disciplinary instruction under the United Nations Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CIMIC) course.



WANEP-Nigeria, recipient of the Canada's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Civil Society Leadership Award for 2022



The WIPNET Programme Officer of WANEP- Mali presenting her trophy to the National Network Coordinator



WANEP Burkina National Coordinator striking a pose at an event where the Network was honoured with the esteemed rank of Knight of the Order of Merit of Youth and Sports

6.5. Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NETT4PEACE): WANEP’s collaborative peacebuilding approach was further strengthened with its selection to serve on the 20-member Strategy Group (SG) of the AU’s Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NETT4PEACE). This recognition by the AU is a testament to WANEP’s expertise and commitment to peace and security on the continent. The SG, on which WANEP sits, is tasked with operationalising NETT4PEACE, an initiative launched in February 2023 by the Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS). NETT4PEACE serves as a knowledge community dedicated to generating independent and evidence-based scholarship and research. The aim is to support the AU in effectively addressing the peace and security challenges facing the continent, aligning with the goals outlined in Agenda 2063 and contributing to the realisation of “The Africa We Want.” Further showcasing the depth of WANEP’s international ties, the Organisation is spearheading a one-year initiative titled “Support to SDGs 13 and 16 Opportunity Window,” in association with the Danish Embassy in Ghana. This pioneering project aims to empower Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in mitigating the impact of climate change, addressing conflicts, and alleviating tensions within the targeted region.



Symbolic signing of the agreement between WANEP and the Danish Embassy in Ghana

6.6. FORMING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIONS

WANEP bolstered its strategic engagements with key partners and major stakeholders in the reporting period with several joint collaborative and adaptive initiatives geared towards addressing the heightened insecurity in the region. The key initiatives include:

6.6.1. WANEP-Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Guinea: WANEP-Guinea achieved a significant milestone by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Guinea, solidifying a collaborative commitment for the next five years. The MoU, signed on 24 July 2023, between the two organisations, represents a declaration of deepened relationship and mutual intentions, establishing WANEP- Guinea as a strategic partner of CRS in Guinea.



Signing of an MoU between WANEP-Guinea and CRS, Guinea

6.6.2. Just Future Programme: The Just Future Programme funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs is aimed at strengthening capacity of primary stakeholders to take collective action for more inclusive, constructive and legitimate power relations. It is implemented by a consortium of WANEP, CORDAID, Search for Common Ground, Women's International Peace Centre, African Security Sector Network and the Liaison Office.

6.6.5. Mediation Support Network (MSN) Conference: In its capacity as a member of the Mediation Support Network (MSN), WANEP with support from the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), hosted the 2023 MSN Meeting from 26 to 28 April 2023 in Accra-Ghana. This gathering successfully convened mediation practitioners and experts from across the globe under the theme **“Mediating Complex Conflicts: Multistakeholder Collaborative Approach in a Changing World Order.”** The discussions during the meeting provided valuable insights into effective mediation strategies, explored the pitfalls to successful mediation and proffered workable recommendations. Notably, the event welcomed new members enthusiastic about participating and contributing their expertise and resources to the Network, further enhancing the collaborative strength of MSN.



MSN Annual Conference in Accra-Ghana (26-28 April 2023)

6.7. STRATEGIC COURTESY VISITS

As WANEP's corporate profile continue to rise, the organisation played host to several distinguished delegates, marking a year of collaborative engagements and insightful discussions. These visits affirm WANEP's relevance and signify WANEP's commitment to fostering partnerships and collaborations for sustainable peace and development in West Africa. Some of the notable delegates were as follows:

- Mr. Moritz Ehrmann, Director of the Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP), and Mr. Ortwin Gammer from the Austrian Armed Forces visited WANEP on 15 February. This visit was part of WANEP's role as a key partner in the ACP's Capacity Development for Humanitarian Assistance in West Africa (HAWA) project.
- A delegation from UEMOA, led by Mr. Paul Robert Tiendrebeogo, Délégué Général for Peace and Security were in WANEP on 21 and 22 February 2023. This was a benchmarking visit to explore WANEP's Early Warning System and discuss potential areas of collaboration.
- Ms. Kyra Buchko, Co-Executive Director of Partners Global visited WANEP on 8 June 2023 to discuss potential collaborations.
- On 29 September, WANEP engaged with Mr. Scott Weber and Ms. Donata Garrasi from Peaceinvest, who visited to explore peace-related investment opportunities in West Africa.
- Delegates from the West Africa Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA/UNOWAS) visited WANEP on 27 November. The discussions centred around Ghana's political, socio-economic, and security landscape, with a specific focus on Women, Peace, and Security, contributing to ongoing efforts for peaceful elections and democratic consolidation in the country.



A delegation from the West Africa Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA-UNOWAS) during their visit to WANEP



Dr. Chukwuemeka B. Eze, WANEP's Executive Director, is pictured between Mr. Ortwin Gammer (left) and Mr. Moritz Ehrmann (right.)



M.s Kyra Buchko, Executive Director of Partners Global, stands to the immediate right of Mrs. Levinia Addae-Mensah, WANEP's Deputy Executive Director







Peaceinvest President and Vice President in a lively discussion with WANEP's Executive Director.






UEMOA delegation, led by Mr. Paul Robert Tiendrebeogo, Délégué Général for Peace and Security, with Mr. Tiendrebeogo (second from the left)



6.8 STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

WANEP's National Networks greatly benefited from substantial support, encompassing both financial and technical assistance extended by essential partners across diverse sectors, such as women, youth, governance, election-related matters, peace education, prevention of violent extremism, climate change, and more. The table below outlines the support received by National Network Secretariats throughout the year 2023:

No	WANEP NATIONAL NETWORK (NN)	NAME OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE	PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNER
1	 WANEP - Benin	Harmonising Littoral West Africa Policy and Practice to Prevent Violent Extremism	From 20 July to 19 September 2023 (2 months)	International Republican Institute (IRI)
2		Consultations on risk and resilience assessment in Benin	From 26 April to 31 May 2023 (1 month)	World Bank
3		Supporting Electoral activities	From January to December 2023	Swiss Cooperation-Benin
4		Supporting Electoral activities	From October to 31 December 2023	Open Society Initiative for West Africa / Open Society Foundation (OSIWA/OSF)
5	 WANEP - Burkina Faso	Support for capacity-building and the role of women and girls in the transition and peace-building process	From 5 June to 31 December 2023 (7 months)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
6		Harmonising policies and practices on the West African coast to prevent violent extremism	From 27 June to 27 August 2023 (2 months)	International Republican Institute (IRI)
7		Sahel Peacebuilding Programme III	From 1 January to 30 September 2023 (9 months)	International Christian Service for Peace (EIRENE)
8	 WANEP - Côte d'Ivoire	Investigating the risks of contagion in West Africa: A political and security watch in the Sahelian and coastal states	From 1 February to 31 December 2023	INTERPEACE
9		Relieving the victims of the 2011 crisis in Yopougon and Abobo to contribute to social cohesion in Côte d'Ivoire : Seed of peace	From December 2022 to November 2023	<i>Fonds au profit des victimes</i> (Trust Fund for Victims)
10		Harmonising the policies and practices of West African coastal countries to prevent violent extremism	From July 2023 to September 2023	International Republican Institute (IRI)
11		Public awareness campaign for peaceful local (regional and municipal) elections	August 2023	Independent Electoral Commission _Côte d'Ivoire
12	 WANEP - Ghana	Strategic Partnership Initiative for Ghana and West Africa	From December 2022 to December 2024 (13 months)	OXFAM
13		Consultancy : Support in planning and organising resilience dialogue	From June to August 2023 (3 months)	Global Initiatives against transnational organised crimes
14		Harmonising Littoral West Africa Policy and Practice to Prevent Violent Incident	From June to August 2023 (3 months)	International Republican Institute (IRI)
15		Peacebuilding Education and Capacity Enhancement for West African Youth (PEACE-WAY)	From 21 November to 31 December 2024 (13 months)	GLOBAL PARTNERS

No	WANEP NATIONAL NETWORK (NN)	NAME OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE	PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNER
16	 WANEP - Guinea	Wakili - Women and Commitment	From 1 August 2023 to 31 March 2027 (44 months)	USAID via CRS
17		Girls and Women Committed to Peacebuilding in Guinea	From 1 May 2023 to 31 October 2024 (18 months)	CARE International / (UNPBF)
18		Support in organising the General Assembly and training finance staff in the use of accounting software	July 2023	Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
19	 WANEP - Guinea-Bissau	Strengthening the human rights protection system in Guinea-Bissau	From October to November 2023 (2 months)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
20		Support for the unit monitoring the electoral process for the 2023 legislative elections	From 1 May 2023 to 31 September 2023 (5 months)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
21		International Day Against Drugs	2023 Edition	International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC)
22	 WANEP - Mali	Project to support the launch of the stabilisation strategy for the central regions and the operationalisation of its National Interministerial Coordination Committee	From 6 February to 31 December 2023 (11 months)	MINUSMA
23		Increasing women's participation in Mali's ongoing electoral processes and mitigating gender-sensitive electoral violence	From May to October 2023 (6 months)	MINUSMA
24		Politico-security watch in Sahelian and coastal states "Investigating the risks of contagion in West Africa".	February 2023	INTERPEACE's West Africa Office
25		Training for the Mali monitors of the Political-Security Watch in Sahelian and Coastal States project "Investigating the risks of contagion in West Africa".	From 1 February to 31 December 2023 (10 months)	INTERPEACE's West Africa Office
26		Community involvement project for more inclusive governance of the security sector in the Communes of Koutiala and Yorosso (Koutiala Region)	From 10 October 2023 to 10 January 2024 (3 months)	The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Centre of Competence for Peace and Security in Sub-Saharan Africa (Dakar)

No	WANEP NATIONAL NETWORK (NN)	NAME OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE	PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNER
27	 WANEP - Niger	SUD MARADI (Avenant au LOA du 9 septembre 2022)	From May to September 2023 (5 months)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
28		Politico-Security Watch in Sahelian and Coastal States	From 1 February to December 2023 (10 months)	INTERPEACE
29		Civilian protection	From April to June 2023 (3 months)	CIVIC
30	 WANEP - Nigeria	Strengthening local and State level peace architectures for peacebuilding and prevention in Katsina and Kaduna States of North-West Nigeria	From June 2023 to February 2024 (9 months)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
31		Conflict Mitigation and Community Policing Project	From September 2023 to August 2024	United States Institute for Peace (USIP)
32		Effective Implementation of Safe School Policies in Nigeria (WANEP IN JOINT PARTNERSHIP WITH WARDC)	1 April 2023 - 31 march 2025 (24 months)	United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)
33	 WANEP - Senegal	Community policing approach as a means of preventing violent extremism in Senegal, Mali and Guinea (3rd phase)	From 10 October 2023 to 10 January 2024 (3 months)	Fondation Friedrich Ebert (FES PSCC)
34		Promoting dialogue and concerted response initiatives against the escalation of pre-electoral violence in Senegal's at-risk regions	From 1 December 2023 to 30 June 2024 (7 months)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
35		Peaceful elections in Casamance	From 30 November 2023 to 30 May 2024 (6 months)	Catholic Relief Service
36	 WANEP - Sierra Leone	Operationalising the NERG and Insider Mediation and Negotiation Council during 2023 Electioneering process''	From December 2022 to August 2023 (9 months)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
37		Localisation and working-Together for Peace: Repositioning Women-Focused CSOs for Sustainable Peace in Sierra Leone	From May to June 2023 (2 months)	World Vision International Sierra Leone (WVSL)/ (UNPBF).
38		Women for Water and Peace Project (Extension of Phase 1)	From September to December 2023 (3 months)	International Labour Organisation
39		Localisation and working-Together for Peace: Repositioning Women-Focused CSOs for Sustainable Peace in Sierra Leone	From May 2023 to March 2024 (11 months)	World Vision International
40		Community engagement in Waterloo and Tombo for peaceful elections.	June 2023	Government of Sierra Leone (Office of The Vice President)

No	WANEP NATIONAL NETWORK (NN)	NAME OF PROJECT/INITIATIVE	PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNER
41	 WANEP - The Gambia	Consolidating Democratic Governance for Development in The Gambia	From January to December 2023	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
42		Increasing women skills and advocacy to promote women political participation in decision making	From January to December 2023	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
43		Strengthening the national infrastructure for Peace to promote social cohesion in the Gambia. 2023-2025	From 1 September to 31 December 2023	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
44		Support to the Election Situation Room for 2023 local elections	May 2023	Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
45	 WANEP - Togo	Harmonising Littoral West African Policy and Practice to Prevent Violent extremism	From 27 June to 27 August 2023 (2 months)	International Republican Institute (IRI)
46		Strengthening community resilience to conflict in Togo	From 1 December 2022 to 30 June 2023 (7 months)	USAID/ The Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa II (REWARD II)
47		Building the capacity of women and young people in the Savannah regional to manage conflicts linked to natural resources and their ability to adapt to change	From September 2023 to February 2024 (6 months)	Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (FCIL)
48		Multi-stakeholder meeting (COSC-J2VBG) / Reflection meeting around the coordination of the collective	29 December 2023	PLAN INTERNATIONAL
49		African Union Border Programme Support Project	From 10 December 2023 to 21 March 2024	GIZ
50		Economic Resilience in the Face of Violent Extremism, Phase 1	From 21 September 2023 to 21 August 2024	Brot für die Welt (BfdW)

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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR PEACE