



**WEST AFRICA NETWORK
FOR PEACEBUILDING**

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR PEACE

**FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION:
HARNESSING
INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES
FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY**

**20
25**
ANNUAL
REPORT





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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AGRHYMET	Regional Centre for Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology
AES	Alliance of Sahel States
AFSIT	Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions
AU	African Union
AUC/AU Commission	African Union Commission
AUPAPS/AU-DPAPS	AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security
C7	Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CJID	Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COPAC	Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for Peace and Conflict Prevention in Central Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSVRA	Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID/FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
DMMU	Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (Zambia)
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EIRÉNÉ Fund	EIRENE Peacebuilding Fund
E-MAM	Election Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation Project
ESR	Election Situation Room
EU	European Union
EUCAP Sahel Mali	European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali
FOSDA	Foundation for Security and Development in Africa
GIGA	German Institute for Global and Area Studies
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)
HACT	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers

I4P	Infrastructure for Peace
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IWD / JIF	International Women's Day / Journée Internationale des Femmes
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
MARAC	Central African Early Warning Mechanism (ECCAS)
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSN	Mediation Support Network
NALPS	Network, Accountability, Learning and Planning System
NAP	National Action Plan
NAP-YPS	National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security
NAP-WPS	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
NERG	National Election Response Group
NETT4Peace	Network of African Think Tanks for Peace
NEWS	National Early Warning System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOPSWECO	Network of Peace and Security Women in the ECOWAS Commission
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PAPS/AU-PAPS	AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department
PAVE	Partnership Against Violent Extremism
PRAP	Participatory Review and Analysis Process
REcAP	Research and Action for Peace Network
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
STAR-Ghana	Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness Ghana
Y-TEaM	Youth Transformational Empowerment and Mentorship Programme
UEMOA/WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WAPI	West Africa Peacebuilding Institute
WARM	West Africa Alert and Response Mechanism (formerly WARN)
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Network (former name of WPS 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 non-governmental organisation, established in 1999 in response to the civil wars, instabilities, and humanitarian crises that affected West Africa in the 1990s. WANEP is widely recognised for its significant role as a regional civil society organisation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Over the years, WANEP has grown to become a household name in West Africa, successfully establishing national offices in 15 countries and engaging over 750 member organisations across the region.

WANEP focuses on collaborative peacebuilding efforts, engaging both state and non-state actors, and establishing platforms for dialogue, experience sharing, and learning aimed at ensuring sustainable peace and development.

WANEP holds a permanent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ECOWAS, making it the first civil society organisation to have such a status in implementing the regional early warning and response system, ECOWARN. It also has an MoU with the African Union to support its Peace and Security Department in implementing the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), including the gender mainstreaming of the architecture.

In addition, WANEP offers professional courses in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, with capacity building as its foundation. These courses aim to enhance the skills of ECOWAS citizens,

intergovernmental organisations, state institutions, CSOs, and the business community across the region.

In 2002, WANEP established the **West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI)** as its official training and capacity-building platform to develop competent peacebuilding practitioners. After about 15 years of implementation, WAPI has undergone reviews, been decentralised, and is currently being implemented at the national level across the continent.

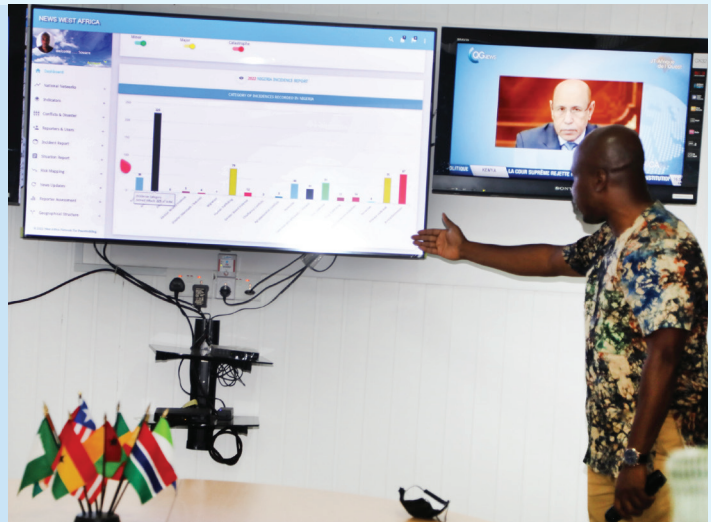
WANEP also provides support to the **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)** in implementing civil society components of its early warning mechanism, MARAC.

OUR APPROACH

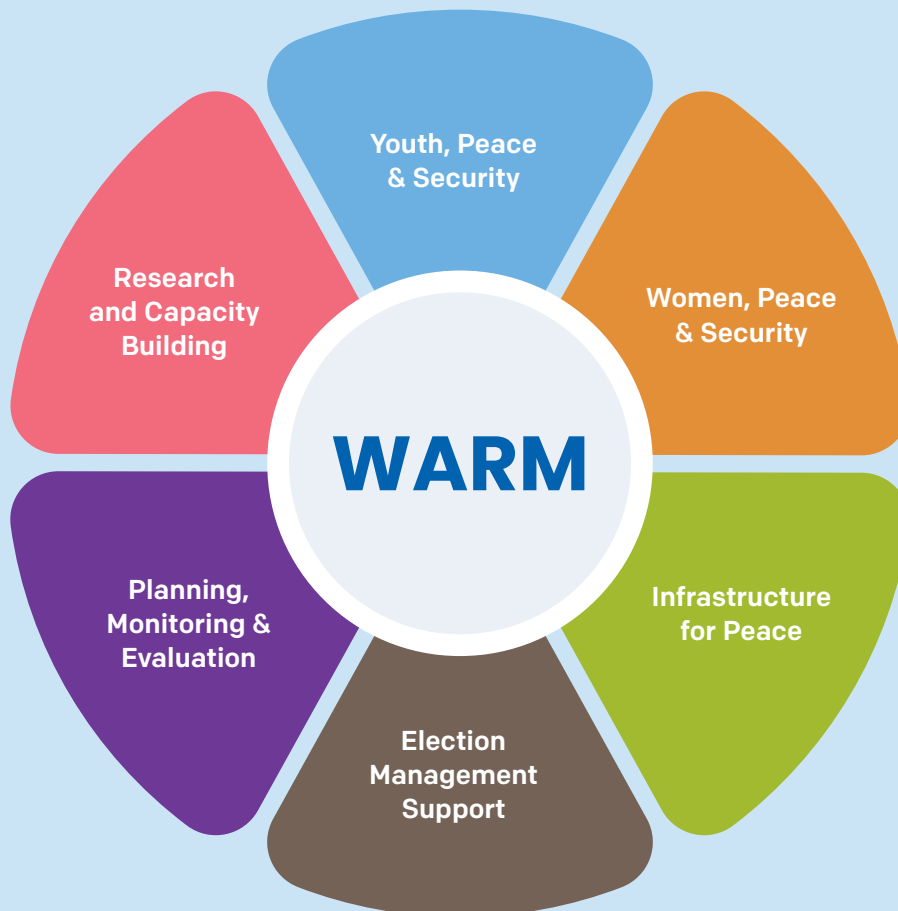
WANEP is a think-tank, training, and research-based advocacy organisation guided by the principle of a collaborative approach to peacebuilding. Rather than adopting an activist stance, WANEP functions as a professional partner to state, interstate, and international actors in the development, implementation, and evaluation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies and instruments.

WHAT WE DO

THE WEST AFRICA ALERT AND RESPONSE MECHANISM (WARM): Established in 2000, WARM, formerly known as the West Africa Early Warning and Response Network (WARN), is WANEP's flagship programme, designed to deliver timely alerts and responses to prevent the outbreak or escalation of conflict. It equips policymakers, practitioners, and local communities with actionable data to address threats to peace and security. WARM operates within a collaborative framework, engaging governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), and regional institutions, including the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).



At its core is the **National Early Warning System (NEWS)**, a decentralised platform for collecting, analysing, and disseminating critical data to support proactive responses. This innovative mechanism exemplifies WANEP's commitment to fostering sustainable peace through inclusivity, technological innovation, and capacity building. By leveraging local expertise and tailoring interventions to specific community contexts, WARM strengthens West Africa's ability to anticipate, mitigate, and respond effectively to conflicts.





YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY (YPS): The YPS Programme is implemented in 15 West African countries, mobilising more than 2,000 youth each year and building a network of young peace advocates around diverse topics, including conflict prevention, governance, violent extremism, climate change, and resilience building. Formerly known as the Active Non-violence and Peace Education Programme, it was launched in 1999 in response to the impact of conflict on children and youth, both as victims and perpetrators, and in recognition of their agency in shaping the region’s peace and

security landscape. Over the years, the Programme has evolved to reflect the changing dynamics of peace and security concerning young people. It aims to enhance the roles and contributions of youth in conflict prevention by promoting a culture of non-violence and social responsibility as a foundation for achieving sustainable peace in the region. The YPS Programme has three main components: i) Peace Education and Peer Mediation ii) Youth Empowerment and Mentorship iii) Advocacy and Policy Influencing.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS): The WPS Programme has a strong track record of mobilising women’s social networks to advocate for policy change. Notable examples of this intervention strategy include the Liberian Women Mass Action for Peace, the National Women Coalitions established in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Côte d’Ivoire, and the Community Women Mediators platforms in Togo, Benin, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Burkina Faso.



The Programme was initially designed with the primary objective of integrating a gender dimension into WANEP’s work while fostering women’s inclusive participation in peace and decision-making processes across the region. It was originally known as the Women in Peacebuilding Programme (WIPNET), launched in 2001 in response to the victimisation of women during the civil wars of the 1990s and their marginalisation in peace processes. Over time, the Programme has broadened to address emerging developments under the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda.

It aims to amplify women’s voices and contributions to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, while ensuring that their specific needs and concerns are mainstreamed into both formal and informal peacebuilding processes in West Africa. To achieve these objectives, WANEP relies on global, continental, and regional frameworks such as **UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions**, the **African Union Continental Framework on WPS**, and the **ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF)** as guides and reference points. The WPS Programme focuses on four key areas: i) Women’s Empowerment ii) Advocacy and Policy Influencing iii) Dialogue and Mediation iv) Research

These focus areas are informed by a gender-sensitive early warning mechanism developed over the years.



INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEACE

(I4P): Building resilient and peaceful societies through Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) is a core focus of WANEP. For decades, WANEP has provided technical support in establishing national and local peace infrastructures across West Africa, aiming to build nationally owned and inclusive frameworks to prevent and mitigate violent conflicts. This support also includes strengthening the conflict prevention, dialogue, and mediation capacities and interventions

of these peace infrastructures. In addition, WANEP leverages its grassroots reach and deep community understanding to contribute to the implementation and sustainability of peacebuilding initiatives facilitated by these infrastructures.

ELECTION MANAGEMENT SUPPORT:

WANEP engages with diverse stakeholders to promote peaceful democratic transitions and partners with other civil society organisations to monitor and mitigate election-related conflicts, while fostering dialogue aimed at ensuring 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 reduce electoral violence by strengthening regional and national capacities to support peaceful electoral processes across the region.



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PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

Through its **Network, Accountability, Learning, and Planning System (NALPS)**, which serves as the organisation’s Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy Framework, WANEP conducts **Participatory Review and Analysis Processes (PRAPs)** to evaluate its achievements over previous years and plan strategies for future implementation. This process is conducted in collaboration with national and regional secretariats, as well as liaison offices at the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS.



Additionally, NALPS facilitates an assessment of partnerships with programme and funding partners, aimed at enhancing WANEP’s overall performance. As part of its monitoring and evaluation processes, WANEP develops annual plans and budgets to support robust context analysis and the formulation of relevant, realistic activities addressing current and emerging peace and security challenges in the region.

The system also strengthens the monitoring of activities and their outcomes, enabling comprehensive reporting and information sharing with all stakeholders. To promote a culture of learning and continuous improvement, WANEP’s M&E framework incorporates a mandatory quarterly review and reflection process. This process identifies incremental changes, addresses challenges, and informs the redesign of actions based on lessons learned, ensuring ongoing performance enhancement and adaptability.

RESEARCH AND CAPACITY BUILDING:

WANEP conducts both qualitative and quantitative research on various thematic issues, including human security, violent extremism, conflicts, organised crime, and democratic elections, to enhance peacebuilding knowledge, support policy advocacy, and serve as a resource for partnerships and academic reference. WANEP also undertakes collaborative research with partners, including States, ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations, and the private sector, to inform national, regional, and global responses to peace and security issues.



Based on research findings and early warning data, WANEP designs capacity-building programmes to strengthen community resilience and improve citizen-state relations, advancing inclusive and participatory governance, peace, and security. These programmes also focus on enhancing the capacities of States, non-state actors, the private sector, and multinational and intergovernmental organisations to engage effectively on issues of human security, governance, violent extremism, development, environmental security, and election management.

OUR VISION

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.

For more information visit us at:
www.wanep.org



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WANEP Regional



Statement from the Board

→ Mrs. Florence Iheme
Regional Board Chair

The year 2025 unfolded within one of the most complex peace and security environments West Africa has faced in recent decades. The regional landscape remained volatile, marked by persistent political instability as several countries navigated transitional arrangements, democratic reversals, and contested electoral processes. These dynamics continued to test the resilience of governance institutions and social cohesion across the region.

Violent extremism further escalated in the Sahel, with growing spillover effects into coastal states, deepening insecurity and strengthening transnational organised crime networks. At the same time, heightened communal tensions, particularly land, chieftaincy, and identity-related disputes, placed additional pressure on already overstretched state capacities. These security challenges were compounded by deteriorating macroeconomic conditions, which intensified citizen frustration and governance pressures. Collectively, these trends underscored the urgent need for early warning, preventive diplomacy, and coordinated peacebuilding responses, reaffirming WANEP's strategic relevance across West Africa.

At the global level, peacebuilding efforts, particularly those led by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), faced mounting constraints. Donor priorities increasingly shifted toward humanitarian emergencies and geopolitical concerns, resulting in shrinking and less predictable funding for long-term conflict prevention. Civic space also continued to narrow, with heightened regulatory and administrative restrictions affecting the operational environment for CSOs. These challenges unfolded within an increasingly fragmented multilateral system, characterised by weakened consensus and declining collective action on peace and security.

Notwithstanding these challenges, 2025 also marked important advances in peacebuilding practice. The year coincided with significant global milestones, including the 25th Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the 10th Anniversary of UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). These anniversaries reinvigorated advocacy for inclusive peace processes and elevated attention to the critical roles of women and youth in peace and security. Growing recognition of community-led and human security-centred approaches, alongside increased demand for evidence-based early warning and preventive action, further reinforced WANEP's long-standing leadership as a regional trailblazer in advancing WPS and YPS implementation and policy-relevant analysis.

1. Strategic Milestones and Institutional Performance in 2025

Against a backdrop of heightened regional volatility and global uncertainty, 2025 was a year in which WANEP consolidated its role as a strategic peacebuilding actor. Guided by its Strategic Plan (2021–2025) and supported by strategic partnerships and a strong focus on institutional strengthening, WANEP translated early warning, policy engagement, and community-led action into tangible preventive outcomes. From the Board's perspective, the organisation's performance during the year demonstrated both institutional resilience and sustained strategic relevance, particularly in linking local realities to national, regional, and global decision-making spaces.

Despite geopolitical tensions, financial constraints, and evolving multilateral dynamics, WANEP sustained and deepened its role as a credible interlocutor between state and non-state actors. The organisation maintained strong strategic relationships with key intergovernmental institutions, including ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations system, preserving its convening power and technical relevance in policy dialogue, early warning, preventive diplomacy, and inclusive peacebuilding across West Africa. WANEP also consolidated long-standing partnerships with national governments, CSOs, research institutions, and community-based actors, while attracting new partnerships and funding streams.

The organisation expresses deep appreciation to its core funding partners, notably the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), whose flexible and predictable support

underpinned institutional stability, strategic planning, and WANEP's regional coordination mandate. In addition, WANEP benefited from earmarked and thematic support from partners including DANIDA, the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Bosch Foundation (Germany), GIZ, and the European Union (EU), enabling interventions across key thematic areas such as early warning and response, women and youth peace and security, election management, civic space, and community resilience which enhanced the organisation's programmatic reach and impact.

Such support also made it possible for the organisation to record high institutional financial performance, as evidenced by both statutory audits and partner-commissioned financial audits. These results reaffirm WANEP's commitment to transparency, accountability, and compliance with international financial management standards, strengthening donor confidence and institutional credibility.

From an institutional perspective, 2025 marked a transition year as the institution initiated the development of its 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. Informed by early warning analysis and lessons from the evaluation of the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan, this process is positioning the institution to sharpen priorities, strengthen coherence, and enhance responsiveness to evolving peace, governance, and human security challenges.

Collectively, these achievements underscore WANEP's capacity to adapt, remain relevant, and deliver value in a rapidly changing peace and security landscape, positioning the organisation to sustain and expand its impact in the years ahead.

1.1 Early Warning, Preventive Diplomacy, and Policy Engagement

In 2025, WANEP deepened its contribution to regional and global peace and security policy processes through high-level briefings to key stakeholders, including the United Nations Security Council, ECOWAS, the African Union, UEMOA, and bilateral missions. These engagements reinforced WANEP's role as a trusted provider of evidence-based analysis and prevention-oriented recommendations.

Electoral violence mitigation and governance support were further strengthened through policy briefs produced under the EU-funded Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (E-MAM) project. Briefs on Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea-Bissau were adopted by ECOWAS as working documents for fact-finding and observation missions, marking a significant step in institutionalising civil society

analysis within intergovernmental preventive diplomacy.

WANEP also reinforced collaboration with UNOWAS through structured exchanges on the Accra Initiative and emerging regional security threats, while timely early warning outputs, such as alerts on rising socio-political tensions in Togo, supported anticipatory engagement to prevent escalation. Participation in high-level international fora further positioned WANEP as a thought leader on early warning systems, preventive diplomacy, and CSO-intergovernmental collaboration.

1.2 Strengthening Regional Peace Architectures and CSO Capacity

WANEP continued to play a catalytic role in strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and advancing civil society engagement across regions. Targeted capacity-building initiatives enhanced early warning and conflict prevention skills within Regional Economic Communities, including IGAD, COMESA, and the EAC, promoting cross-regional learning and coherence.

The institution also contributed to continental learning by documenting lessons from the GIZ-funded initiative on strengthening multistakeholder conflict prevention architectures. These insights are informing improved early warning practices across Africa. In parallel, WANEP supported advocacy efforts to strengthen civil society cooperation between West and Central Africa, sharing good practices from the WANEP-ECOWAS partnership to inform evolving CSO-ECCAS engagement on human security priorities.

1.3 Preventing Election-Related Violence and Supporting Democratic Stability

Election-related violence prevention and mitigation remained a core pillar of WANEP's work in 2025. Through technical and financial support to national civil society partners in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau, WANEP facilitated context-specific interventions promoting political tolerance, youth dialogue, and compliance with electoral codes of conduct. These efforts contributed to the prevention and de-escalation of tensions during sensitive electoral periods, reinforcing the effectiveness of multistakeholder and locally led, prevention-focused approaches to democratic stability.

1.4 Advancing Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

The year 2025 marked a defining moment for WANEP's leadership on the WPS agenda. The Network strengthened women's participation and leadership

by enhancing the capacities of over 800 women and girls across West Africa, with trained women actively mediating community-level disputes.

At the policy level, WANEP reinforced its international leadership by briefing the UN Security Council in August 2025, ensuring that West African civil society perspectives informed global peacebuilding deliberations. The institution supported the development and adoption of third-generation National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 in Togo and Nigeria and sustained implementation in 13 additional countries. Regional learning and advocacy were further strengthened through the GenderTalk Series and related publications, consolidating a strong community of practice on women's political participation and leadership.

1.5 Empowering Youth for Peacebuilding

WANEP's commitment to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda yielded strong results in 2025. Through the Youth Transformational, Empowerment and Mentorship (Y-TEaM) Programme, the Network mentored emerging peace leaders across West Africa, with early outcomes demonstrating tangible impact in community initiatives, policy engagement, and innovation for sustainable livelihoods.

Beyond leadership development, WANEP provided strategic support for the development and domestication of UNSCR 2250 National Action Plans and strengthened the capacities of young peacebuilders through regional training and advocacy initiatives. Research collaboration on youth priorities in the Sahel further positioned WANEP as a key contributor to evidence-based youth policy engagement.

1.6 Enhancing Human Security and Dialogue Mechanisms

WANEP continued to translate policy commitments into people-centred impact by strengthening dialogue and mediation mechanisms. Support to mediation processes in The Gambia and post-election dialogue in Ghana contributed to de-escalation, public accountability, and improved community-state relations. Engagement with authorities in Guinea and contributions to national peace infrastructure guidelines beyond the West Africa region reflected WANEP's expanding influence.

1.7 Research-Informed Policy Advocacy and Institutional Positioning

WANEP consolidated its reputation as a research-informed policy actor through high-level regional dialogues, joint policy communiqués, and strategic

publications addressing West Africa’s evolving geopolitical and security landscape. Analyses on the Accra Initiative, electoral security, violent extremism prevention, and emerging digital risks strengthened evidence-based discourse within ECOWAS and APSA, while informing policy dialogue beyond the region.

2. Key Institutional and Operational Challenges

The Board notes that WANEP’s achievements in 2025 were realised amid persistent institutional constraints. Declining and unpredictable funding affected programme sustainability and operational flexibility, while growing demands for rapid response placed additional pressure on human and technical resources. Shrinking civic space in several contexts also heightened operational risks for civil society actors, reinforcing the need for adaptive strategies, diversified partnerships, and sustained advocacy for an enabling environment.

The Board assesses 2025 as a year of significant strategic contribution and institutional resilience for WANEP. Despite operating within one of the most challenging peace and security environments in recent decades, the Network effectively leveraged its comparative advantages in early warning, preventive diplomacy, policy engagement, and community-led action. As WANEP enters a new strategic planning cycle, the Board reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the Network’s institutional foundations and supporting its mission to transform lives and livelihoods through sustainable peacebuilding across West Africa.



Dr Matthias Hounkpe



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Management Report

→ Mrs. Levinia Addae-Mensah
Executive Director

In 2025, West Africa faced a complex mix of political, economic and security challenges. These drivers created a multi-layered instability with extremist groups and armed non-state actors exacerbating insecurity across the Sahel corridor as well as bordering communities in the littoral states.

It was also a pivotal year for the region as Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger officially exited the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at a time the regional bloc is struggling to counter the challenges of political, and security fragmentation while navigating the growing geopolitical competition by foreign powers in member states. It has not only undermined ECOWAS' capacity to foster a coherent regional policy but also impacts on cooperative relationship between the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) countries and ECOWAS in maintaining strong cooperation to address overlapping issues of security and economic wellbeing of West African citizens.

It was also a year that witnessed failed military coups in Nigeria and Benin and an unconstitutional change of Government in Guinea-Bissau shortly after a presidential election.

The U.S. withdrawal from soft power diplomacy through the closure of its development agency and the increasing transactional strategy, focusing more on economic interests in a shifting multipolar world order, further aggravates regional inequalities, geopolitical rivalries, and human security challenges in the region. The departure from multilateral, human rights, aid supported development has accelerated humanitarian crises in West Africa, further stifling voices of marginalised and impacted groups seeking accountable governance and inclusive policy responses.

As a regional civil society organisation, this reality has direct ramifications on how WANEP approaches and actualises its peacebuilding mandate across its networks in the 15 countries of West Africa. The emergence of AES means that WANEP is required to rethink its regional operational strategies while readapting to the new political landscape. This is

further worsened by the shrinking civic space and the decline in traditional donor funding from international development partners to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) due to reprioritisation of foreign policies and interests.

These challenges translated into key consideration for WANEP given that 2025 marked the end of its current five-year strategic plan of 2021-2025, requiring the development and transition into a new plan for 2026-2030. Therefore, operational flexibility was important to achieving results to complete the ending plan while reflecting the existing dynamics of the region and integrating these realities and lessons into the new strategic approach for the next five years.

Given that the risks and threats of peace and democracy are often interlinked or overlap across the region, it necessitated that 2025 programme implementation plan across the current institutional strategic objectives are inclusive and organic, connecting communities, national and regional stakeholders to foster stronger collaboration between appropriate state and non-state actors.

This approach was applied in WANEP's contribution to the peaceful presidential elections of Guinea in December 2025 through its **Electoral violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (E-MAM) project**. The implementation of the Project was inclusive and supported the successful political transition from a military government to democracy with the election of President Mamadi Doumbouya in Guinea. This ended four years of unconstitutional change of government as well as paved the way for the lifting of sanctions and reintegration of the country into the ECOWAS bloc. Prior to the election, the E-MAM project enabled WANEP to support the constitutional referendum as well as the October 2025 presidential and December 2025 parliamentary elections of Côte d'Ivoire. Through the E-MAM project, WANEP supported the consolidation of a peaceful environment during Ghana's post-election phase and strengthened electoral violence monitoring and mitigation systems and capacities ahead of Benin's 2026 parliamentary and presidential elections.

Collaborative action was also integral to achieving key results across the current six strategic result areas:

The **WANEP Alert and Response Mechanism (WARM)** strengthened the value chain of warning and response, especially through the early warning data products generated from the **National Early Warning System (NEWS)** to support policy actions. For instance, the policy brief published prior to the Côte d'Ivoire election was cited as an analytical reference by partners such as ECOWAS and international partners for diplomatic engagements and

deployment leading to the October elections. WANEP analytical brief on the Bawku conflict supported key mediation efforts bridging local realities with national policy responses. It also influenced the peer-to-peer learning and technical support to CSOs in Eastern and Southern Africa regions leading to the trainings, equipping and facilitated operationalisation of early warning systems in these regions. It also enabled the support to the Zambian Government for national peace infrastructure under the partnership with the African Union Department of Political Affairs Peace and Security (AU D-PAPS).

Under the strategic result area focusing on **Women Peace and Security**, strengthening the role of women and girls in policy and decision-making remains central to advancing peace and security in the region. Therefore, WANEP promotes inclusive governance and engenders political decision-making that drives gender sensitive actions for development and sustainable peace across the region. In 2025, over **1000 women** and girls benefitted from trainings, mentorship, dialogues and local peacebuilding skills that enhance their visibility, influence and contribution to the WPS agenda. It was also a year when WANEP commenced the publication of the **'Gender Connect'** series as a reference document and knowledge management resource, empowering women on various thematic areas of peacebuilding and leadership. WANEP also facilitated the adoption of third-generation United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 National Action Plans in Togo and Nigeria.

The institutional commitment to **Youth Peace and Security** in 2025 was exemplified through WANEP's technical assistance to the Governments of The Gambia and Liberia towards the operationalisation of **National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 2250** and contributing to the development of NAPs in Benin, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mali, Niger and Togo. The **Youth Transformational Empowerment and Mentoring Program (Y-TEaM)** continues to evolve and grow as it successfully graduated **27 young leaders** following an eight-month mentorship in 2025. An inspiring motivation is the grant of USD 5,000 awarded to a mentee by UNDP under the Gambia Youth Innovation challenge. It proves that the initiative is yielding dividend as we double our effort to empower a new generation of young people with the vibrancy to grow and contribute to peacebuilding efforts in their communities.

Across the region, WANEP's community capacity and resilience strengthening effort was a key objective in 2025 under its Strategic Result Area 4- Expanding Community Resilience and Capacity for optimum performance. Given the cross-border nature of violent

extremism, communal and resource-based conflicts in the region, most peacebuilding capacity building focused on local resilience to Violent Extremism, inclusive security governance and practical tools for meaningful inclusion of women and youth in local peace infrastructures. Over 1,500 state and non-state actors benefitted from diverse thematic trainings to support cross border resilience, local knowledge and adaptation skills.

The WANEP commitment to research produced key results in the past year. Some of the products translated early warning analysis into actionable insights for policy influencing, while others prodded on regional geopolitical landscape, highlighting citizen perspective on governance and political reforms. Through its partnership with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), a comprehensive situation report on the implementation of the **SDG 16 in Africa** was produced to spotlight its progress, gaps as well as its complementarity to the AU Agenda 2063. Additional partnerships with UNDP and GIZ led to WANEP led research and production of two key reports focusing on **"Interstate Boundary and Territorial Disputes in West Africa"** and **"The Dynamics of Violent Extremism in the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea"**. A total of **eight** country studies were conducted as part of a research effort to understand citizen perception for inclusive political transitions and CSOs in West Africa with the findings enabling WANEP to explore dynamic ways CSOs can contribute to inclusive political and peaceful transition processes in the region.

As part of its institutional strengthening, **WANEP's 18th biennial General Assembly** was held in Accra in March of 2025 with renewed collective resolution to enhance its programmatic and administrative priorities to inform organisational response to the identified regional threats the constraints of the evolving global peacebuilding finance landscape. The development of its **new five-year Strategic Plan of 2026-2030** advanced significantly and will be concluded and operationalised in the second half of 2026. To facilitate its completion, the Regional Board approved an extended transition period of six months for the existing Strategic Plan beyond December of 2025 to June 30, 2026.

An additional milestone was marked by WANEP's second debriefing to the **United Nations Security Council** within eight months of its previous engagement in December 2024. Delivered in August 2025 during the Council's 9974th session, the Executive Director's presentation focused on Women, Peace and Security in the region and outlined five key recommendations to strengthen gender-sensitive preventive responses in West Africa and the Sahel.

The institution's financial management also remained strong in the past year through its compliance with global accounting standards and financial statutory requirements. This was exemplified by the 2024 successful audit by Deloitte & Touche, which concluded with an unqualified opinion as well as four other project-related audits comprising UNDP Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) 2024, Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT) project, Just Future and the German Corporation for International Development-funded project.



Mr. Ifeanyi Okechukwu
Programme Director and Deputy Executive Director



Mrs. Esther Gordon-Mensah
Administrative/Human Resource Manager



Mr. Raymond Asiedu Darko
Finance Manager

New key partnerships were also forged in the past year across the national and regional level. Significant amongst them includes the new earmarked funding partnership with the **Open Society Foundation (OSF)** titled, **“Strengthening Gender Inclusive Local Governance, Leadership and Empowerment of Women and Young Women in the Sahel”**; a Robert Bosch Stiftung funded project titled, **“Enhancing Local Actions for Climate Change”**; and new cooperative partnership with the **Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)** through the Embassy of Denmark Abuja, for a project titled, **“Strengthening CSO-ECOWAS Regional Response to Peace and Security in West Africa”**

Beyond new partnerships, the WANEP regional and national impact cannot be possible without the consistent financial and technical support of its reliable partners who have remained committed to its vision. Deserving of mention include the **European Union through its Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI)**, the **Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)**, the **Austria Development Agency (ADA)**, the **German International Development Agency (GIZ)**, **Wellspring Philanthropic Fund**, **Bread for the World**,

Eiréné Fund, **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**, **The Dutch Foreign Ministry**, **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, **The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**, **STAR-Ghana** and **OXFAM**.

Our traditional partners such as **ECOWAS**, **African Union (AU)** and **United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)** have been instrumental to the institutional achievement of the past year. WANEP remains immensely thankful for the privilege and trust.

In conclusion, 2025 reinforced the necessity for strategic shift from commitment to action that effectively responds to the dynamic landscape of peace, democracy and security in the region. Embracing this reality, WANEP is re-adapting its institutional mechanisms and programs to sustain its operations and peacebuilding initiatives across its 15 networks in West Africa and beyond. It enhances its confidence that this will contribute not only to current conflict prevention approaches but also to long-term results to political, economic and human security development in West Africa and Africa.



KEY RESULT AREA 1: STRENGTHENING FUNCTIONAL RESPONSE MECHANISMS



In 2025, WANEP consolidated and expanded its efforts to strengthen functional response mechanisms across West Africa, with a focus on translating early warning into coordinated, timely and evidence-based action. By reinforcing collaboration among state and non-state actors, WANEP supported more responsive systems capable of addressing evolving conflict risks and safeguarding stability at national and regional levels.

1.1 Strengthening Early Warning Systems and Response Capacity

In 2025, WANEP strengthened the effectiveness, credibility and regional coherence of its early warning architecture by reinforcing both institutional capacities and community-based monitoring mechanisms. Through targeted refresher trainings for National Early Warning Systems (NEWS) Managers and community monitors, WANEP improved data quality, reporting consistency and the timely escalation of alerts, thereby enhancing preventive response across multiple countries. To consolidate system performance following the upgrade of the National Early Warning System (NEWS) platform, WANEP organised a refresher training for 15 NEWS Managers across its national networks. The upgraded platform strengthened data management, analysis and reporting functions, and the training ensured consistent application across countries. As a result, the quality, timeliness and reliability of national reporting improved, enhancing the effectiveness of regional early warning and early response coordination.

WANEP continued to invest in grassroots monitoring as a cornerstone of its early warning model. In The Gambia, 14 community monitors (4 women and 10 men) received refresher training to enhance observation, risk analysis and reporting skills. Under the European Union-funded Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coast Communities of West Africa (C7) Project, a refresher training re-engaged community monitors on the effective use of the C7 Early Warning portal, strengthening community-level data collection and real-time incident reporting to support analysis and informed response by Community Social Networks in Togo, Nigeria and Senegal on climate related conflicts and crime.

At the national level, WANEP demonstrated the operational value of early warning data for policy engagement and public accountability. In Togo, WANEP facilitated a multi-stakeholder press briefing to present the 2023-2024 biennial security report derived from NEWS data. The dialogue convened government institutions, international partners, civil society and media actors, resulting in actionable recommendations to strengthen national responses to violent extremism, improve coordination among defence and security actors, enhance community awareness on conflict resolution and sexual and gender-based violence, as well as reinforce rapid response mechanisms.



WANEP presents the 2023–2024 biennial security report of NEWS-Togo at a press conference

While Ghana is regarded as a stable democracy, the country faces persistent peace and security challenges, particularly in its northern belt, where recurrent communal and chieftaincy-related conflicts intersect with emerging cross-border security threats. Bawku, in the Upper East Region, remains a major flashpoint, with violence driven by protracted chieftaincy disputes, ethnic tensions, and spillover risks linked to violent extremism in the Sahel. In 2025, WANEP produced a special analytical briefing on the Bawku conflict for the African Union High Representative. The brief provided an in-depth

assessment of the conflict dynamics and drivers of instability, identified gaps in existing response mechanisms, outlined potential risk scenarios, and proposed actionable recommendations for national, regional, and international stakeholders. The analysis directly informed a presidential mediation decision, underscoring the relevance of WANEP's evidence-based early warning and policy support in advancing preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution in Ghana.

At the regional level, WANEP sustained its technical leadership by supporting the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for Peace and Conflict Prevention in Central Africa (COPAC). The Organisation provided technical guidance to national early warning focal points and community monitors across seven Central African countries to improve the quality of data submitted for regional analysis. In parallel, institutional support during COPAC's leadership transition contributed to continuity, system sustainability and strengthened cross-regional early warning coordination.

1.2 Electoral violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (E-MAM)

Under the European Union-funded E-MAM 2023-2026 project¹, WANEP played a central role in promoting peaceful electoral processes and political transitions across West Africa. In 2025, the Project was implemented in major elections and political transitions, including the constitutional referendum and presidential election in Guinea, legislative and presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, the presidential election in Guinea-Bissau, and the Nimba County by-election in Liberia.

Ahead of the elections, WANEP conducted comprehensive electoral risk analyses in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, covering 975 constituencies and polling areas. The analyses identified 269 areas (27.59%) as very high risk and a further 180 areas (18.46%) as high risk, providing a robust evidence-based analysis that guided deployments, prioritised response efforts and informed engagement by state and non-state actors. Among the key mechanisms established in the pre-election phase was the National Election Response Group (NERG), a multi-actor platform comprising state institutions, including electoral management bodies, and non-state actors such as civil society organisations and NGOs. This group was responsible for joint analysis, the formulation of rapid response measures and oversight of implementation. The NERG was institutionalised within the electoral

¹ <https://wanep.org/wanep/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/E-MAM-FACTSHEETFeb2024.pdf>

frameworks of Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau, strengthening coordination, accountability and national ownership.

As part of activities conducted around the elections, an Electoral Situation Room (ESR) was operationalised in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire to support electoral violence monitoring, analysis and response mechanisms. Building on innovations introduced in 2024, the ESRs operated using an enhanced five-room model that incorporated data collection, data analysis, decision-making, communications and a dedicated fact-checking unit. Implemented in partnership with the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), the fact-checking component strengthened the verification and debunking of false or misleading information before, during and after elections, thereby reducing the risk of misinformation-driven electoral tensions.

To support early warning and real-time analysis, WANEP deployed 300 observers each in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. These observers collected and transmitted election-related data from identified hotspot communities nationwide to the ESRs to inform rapid response. In Guinea-Bissau, 200 observers were trained; however, deployment was suspended following the cancellation of WANEP's accreditation to operate an ESR by the National Electoral Commission. Despite this limitation, WANEP adapted its engagement to continue supporting peaceful electoral processes through context-appropriate monitoring and response actions. Electoral data generated by the observers were jointly analysed within the Decision-Making Room, the highest organ of the ESR. Specifically, in Guinea, WANEP supported eight critical response actions that contributed to the prevention and de-escalation of election-related tensions. In Côte d'Ivoire, 13 targeted interventions were implemented, combining stakeholder coordination and rapid response measures. In Guinea-Bissau, WANEP supported peaceful electoral engagement through three context-adapted monitoring, analysis, and response actions.

Throughout the electoral cycle, WANEP provided financial and technical support to CSOs in the three countries to implement response actions promoting political tolerance, youth dialogue, and compliance with election codes of conduct.

Beyond electoral monitoring, the E-MAM project in Côte d'Ivoire adopted a participatory and multisectoral approach to address structural drivers of electoral violence. Through community mobilisation, collaboration with local authorities, psychosocial

support and socio-economic empowerment, the project strengthened inclusive democracy, good governance and social cohesion. These interventions enabled 439 people from marginalised rural communities to obtain legal identity documents and sensitised over 500 individuals on civic engagement, enhancing political inclusion and contributing to the reduction of pre-election tensions. In recognition of these contributions, WANEP was awarded the third prize at the 2025 National Human Rights Awards in Côte d'Ivoire for its Democracy, Elections and Good Governance programme. This national recognition underscored the project's impact in advancing human rights, electoral inclusion and peaceful political participation.



The National Coordinator of WANEP Côte d'Ivoire receives the third prize at the 2025 National Human Rights Awards in Côte d'Ivoire.

Across all contexts, E-MAM interventions supported the resolution of election-related challenges, including procedural irregularities and operational delays, through close collaboration with electoral management bodies. The project also countered misinformation through fact-checking reports, media briefings, press statements, and sustained engagement with journalists and key stakeholders during the election. Structured dialogue with political party representatives further contributed to de-escalating tensions and reinforced commitments to peaceful participation and acceptance of electoral outcomes through legal and institutional channels.

1.3 Applied Analysis and Knowledge Products for Decision-Making

During the year under review, WANEP strengthened the link between early warning and preventive response by delivering high-quality analytical and knowledge products that translated risk analysis into

actionable insights for policymakers, peace actors and regional institutions.

WANEP produced a range of thematic and situation reports addressing both structural and emerging threats. Notably, the thematic report on *Women and the Shadow Economy of Illegal Mining in West Africa* advanced understanding of the gendered dimensions of illicit economies and their implications for insecurity and social cohesion, which contributes to inclusive policy responses.

At the national level, WANEP's NEWS teams generated targeted analyses with actionable recommendations and strategic action by state and non-state actors. In Mali, in-depth monitoring of socio-political and security dynamics resulted in a thematic analysis of the nationwide strike by the National Union of Banks, Insurance, Financial Institutions and Related Trades, complemented by a rapid alert and response report for stakeholder dialogue and risk mitigation. Additional analysis on drug trafficking and substance abuse highlighted escalating risks and informed coordinated prevention, enforcement and youth-centred response strategies.

WANEP also produced policy-oriented outputs to support preventive diplomacy and inclusive governance. In Guinea, a *policy brief on the constitutional referendum process* underscored the importance of transparency and broad-based inclusion to mitigate risks associated with non-consensual constitutional reform. In Côte d'Ivoire, the policy brief "October 2025 Presidential Election: Between Risks of Violence and Hopes for a Peaceful Poll" (*Côte d'Ivoire, Élection Présidentielle d'Octobre 2025: Entre Risques de Violence et Espoirs d'un Scrutin Pacifique*) provided analysis of electoral risk factors and opportunities for de-escalation. The brief presented practical recommendations to state institutions, political actors and civil society. It served as a briefing resource for several regional and international election observation missions, including that of ECOWAS, demonstrating its contribution to preventive engagement and informed stakeholders' efforts to reduce the risk of election-related violence.

Similarly, in Guinea-Bissau, the policy brief "2025 Presidential and Legislative Elections: Hoping for Stability or Fearing a Return to Political Instability?" (*Eleições Presidenciais e Legislativas de 2025: Esperando Estabilidade ou Temendo um Retorno à Instabilidade Política?*) examined the country's volatile political environment and identified potential triggers of instability. Its recommendations sought to support preventive diplomacy, strengthen civil society advocacy and inform national and international

actors' efforts to promote peaceful, credible and stable electoral processes.

In Togo, amid growing socio-political tensions and heightened public contestation, WANEP published a NEWS Quick Update titled "Alert on Rising Socio-Political Tensions and Risk of Instability in Togo." The update supported proactive engagement by national and regional stakeholders, enabling anticipatory responses and dialogue efforts aimed at mitigating escalation and preventing further instability.

At the continental level, WANEP strengthened its strategic partnerships and policy influence by co-authoring the SDG 16 Situation Report on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions in Africa, titled "A Review of Key Developmental Challenges in Africa Through the Lens of SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions," in collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr). The report provided an in-depth analysis of progress, gaps, and entry points for advancing SDG 16 in alignment with the African Union's Agenda 2063, and informed policy dialogue among continental institutions, development partners, and civil society actors. By bridging early warning insights with governance and justice reform agendas, the report advocates more coherent, prevention-oriented approaches to peacebuilding and institutional strengthening across Africa.

1.4 Strengthening Civil Society Analytical and Response Capacities through REcAP

Under the EU-funded Research and Action for Peace Network (REcAP) project, implemented by WANEP, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 14 targeted trainings and applied learning tools strengthened civil society's analytical, advocacy and coordination capacities. These interventions enhanced participants' ability to undertake conflict analysis, engage stakeholders constructively, and contribute to policy-relevant decision-making at national and regional levels. Training modules on advanced conflict prevention and management, gender and peacebuilding, advocacy for peace, and conflict sensitivity were developed using participatory, adult-learning approaches grounded in local conflict dynamics. This approach ensured that learning was practical, context-responsive and directly applicable to emerging risks and community realities. Prioritised beneficiary communities were selected based on conflict analyses, community dialogue findings and vulnerability to violent extremism, ensuring context-

specific implementation and alignment with project objectives. A complementary implementation model between WANEP and DRC, supported by WANEP's national networks and REcAP members, strengthened regional coherence, peer learning and overall impact.

Through a mid-Term Evaluation, specific capacity gaps were identified and informed the refinement of training content and delivery. These findings guided targeted skills development in community dispute resolution, participatory training methodologies, collaboration with local authorities, and the strengthening of early warning and advocacy mechanisms. Importantly, the evaluation highlighted pathways for translating capacity development into tangible peacebuilding outcomes and more sustained policy engagement.

1.5 Influencing Policy and Preventive Decision-Making

In 2025, WANEP strengthened its influence on peace and security policy actions at national, regional and continental levels. Through sustained technical engagement and strategic partnerships, WANEP consolidated its role as a trusted civil society actor within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), bridging analysis with policy and response.

The WANEP Liaison Office at the African Union produced a strategic advisory note that informed the African Union's preventive diplomatic engagement in Guinea-Bissau ahead of the general elections. The advisory provided scenario-based risk assessments sent to continental and regional stakeholders to aid their preventive actions before the election.

Preventive diplomacy was further strengthened through WANEP's participation in key regional political processes. As part of the ECOWAS pre-election fact-finding mission to Côte d'Ivoire, WANEP supported the risk assessment process that gathered feedback from political actors, civil society, media, and diplomatic stakeholders. This input contributed to the mission report and informed recommendations for mitigation efforts ahead of the general elections.

At the continental level, WANEP partnered with the African Union Commission to co-convene a three-day civil society consultation in Dakar that focused on governance challenges, political transitions, and human security in West Africa. The consultation emphasised the centrality of human security in governance responses and the need for strengthened coherence between civil society early warning inputs and continental policy processes.

Beyond electoral and governance processes, WANEP provided technical input to strategic African Union policy initiatives. As a core civil society member of the AU Peace and Security Department (PAPS) Committee on Climate Change, Peace and Security, WANEP's contribution strengthened the AU Common African Position on Climate Change, Peace and Security on the continent.

Furthermore, as a member of the Strategy Group of the AU Network of African Think Tanks for Peace (NETT4Peace), WANEP contributed to the development of the Network's 2026 activity plan, which enhanced continental knowledge coordination.

1.6 Strengthening Regional and Continental Coordination and Response Capacities

At the regional level, WANEP contributed technical expertise to strengthen early warning interoperability and response coordination among regional institutions. During a workshop convened by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) in Ouagadougou, it supported the review and operational application of the Monitoring and Early Warning Mechanism manual, enhancing member states' capacities in data collection, crisis analysis, and response.

WANEP's institutional expertise in early warning provides leverage to sustain the operations of its NEWS while building interoperability with ECOWARN and the African Union Continental Early Warning System platforms. Through its NEWS structure at the community level, NEWS Managers regularly submitted data to the AU African Reporter and the ECOWARN platform. This strengthened the analytical rigour of early warning products and informed strategic responses at the level of ECOWAS, the AU Peace and Security Council, and the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department.

In addition, WANEP's peer review of AU early warning indicators ensured that it supported the realignment of emerging risks as well as evolving conflict dynamics.

Within its partnership with the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, WANEP strengthened regional civil society capacities in Eastern and Southern Africa to utilise early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms in their regions. The applied trainings conducted in Botswana and Uganda under the GIZ-funded *Strengthening Multistakeholder Conflict Prevention Architectures in Africa* project enhanced the skills of 40 CSOs networks affiliated

with IGAD, COMESA, SADC, and the East African Community (EAC). Lessons learned from these trainings were documented as referrals of best practices for intergovernmental-CSO partnerships in early warning and response. It also contributed to a joint AU-led continental analysis framework. In West and Central Africa, WANEP facilitated peer-to-peer learning with the COPAC network to enhance their role within the ECCAS MARAC region.

1.7 Strengthening Multistakeholder Conflict Prevention Architectures

WANEP strengthened multistakeholder conflict prevention architectures beyond West Africa through the GIZ-funded *Strengthening Multistakeholder Conflict Prevention Architectures in Africa* project. The initiative supported joint early warning analysis, system development, and capacity building for civil society, regional, and continental actors across Eastern, Southern, and Central Africa, reinforcing coordinated and preventive responses to emerging risks.

Under the same project, WANEP contributed to the design and operationalisation of an African Union-ECOWAS-civil society regional early warning mechanism within the Technical Coordination Mechanism. This engagement enhanced interoperability, joint analysis, and governance monitoring among continental, regional, and civil society early warning systems.

In 2020, Zambia voluntarily conducted the Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) under the African Union's Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF), with support from the AU and COMESA. Led by the Office of the Vice President through the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), the assessment highlighted the need for a formal, inclusive, and nationally anchored peace mechanism to coordinate state and non-state actors, enhance resilience, and ensure peace remains central to national development.

Building on these findings, WANEP, in partnership with the AU, GIZ, and SACCORD, supported a consultative forum and technical workshop in Lusaka that brought together 30 participants from government and civil society. The engagements assessed existing peace mechanisms, identified gaps, and co-developed practical guidelines for Zambia's National Peace Infrastructure (NPI), aligned with the African Union Continental Framework on NPIs.



WANEP supports the development of practice guidelines to establish Zambia's National Peace Infrastructure.

Complementary activities included multistakeholder training on disaster risk reduction for 25 participants and the documentation of lessons learned. These efforts strengthened resilience, preparedness, and institutional capacity for conflict and crisis prevention. WANEP also provided technical support throughout the NPI development process, ensuring that the mechanism was inclusive, context-specific, and anchored in national structures.

Overall, these initiatives improved coordinated responses to conflict risks and contributed to sustainable peace and security in Zambia, while reinforcing continental efforts to advance national peace infrastructures across Africa.

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KEY RESULT AREA 2: STRENGTHENING WOMEN AND GIRLS' CAPACITY FOR POLICY INFLUENCING



Strengthening the role of women and girls in policy and decision-making remains central to advancing peace and security across West Africa. WANEP's interventions leverage key international and regional normative frameworks, including United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and related resolutions, the African Union Continental Framework on Women, Peace and Security, and the ECOWAS Conflict Results Framework, to enhance Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Through targeted initiatives WANEP promotes inclusive governance, economic participation and political decision-making. This approach enables women and girls to influence policies and actions that contribute to stability, development and sustainable peace across the region.

2.1 Capacity Enhancement and Accountability

As co-chair of the ECOWAS Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Steering Committee, WANEP facilitated the capacity building of 30 stakeholders in Ghana, including officials from gender ministries and civil society organisations, on the simplified ECOWAS Continental Results Framework. Through this framework, participants strengthened their ability to report on the 2025 WPS Index. The training was subsequently replicated in eight West African countries, thereby reinforcing regional accountability and results-tracking mechanisms.

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Across the region, WANEP also trained 80 community women mediators in mediation processes and communication skills, enhancing their visibility, influence, and contributions to local peacebuilding. These applied trainings promoted peer-to-peer learning of best practices while establishing a regional platform for coordination with national and community peace infrastructures.

As part of its institutional sustainability efforts, 15 WPS Focal Points across WANEP's Networks benefitted from training in proposal development and resource mobilisation. Pre- and post-training assessments indicated that 90 per cent of participants demonstrated improved knowledge, and several subsequently secured funding to support the continuity and scaling of programme delivery.

2.2 Strengthening Women's Leadership and Mediation at Community Level

In Ghana, WANEP strengthened the capacity of women and youth to prevent conflict and violent extremism through targeted training interventions.



Training on illicit economies and trade impacts with state agencies, youth, and women from Kugri, Siisi, and Danegu border communities in Ghana.

Under the UNDP/UNFPA Peacebuilding Fund project on enhancing social cohesion, WANEP trained 561 women across 24 communities in eight districts of the Upper West, Upper East and North-East Regions

on civilian-security collaboration and conflict prevention. In addition, under the STAR-Ghana Foundation's FCDO-funded Security in Northern Ghana III project, WANEP trained 11 women from its Inter-Party Youth Dialogue Committees in conflict prevention and political conflict management across constituencies in the Savannah and Northern Regions, reinforcing democratic culture and community-level peacebuilding.

In Mali, WANEP strengthened women's leadership, participation and advocacy in peace and security governance through targeted capacity-building and engagement under the WPS agenda. In February 2025, WANEP trained 50 women leaders in Bamako on mediation, inclusive governance and advocacy strategies, equipping them with practical skills to influence political and peace processes and to jointly develop action plans to enhance women's participation in local security committees. Concurrently, 20 women activists participated in a strategic advocacy planning workshop, strengthening their negotiation and campaign skills. As a result, 78 per cent of the participants designed structured campaigns to increase women's inclusion in security governance, raise awareness among local authorities, and establish monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

In March 2025, WANEP established a Local Women's Task Force in Mali comprising 21 women leaders from six communes of Bamako. The Task Force was mandated to define roles, structure, and a strategic action plan to advance women's inclusion in local security governance. By creating a formal platform for leadership, the initiative strengthened women's agency in shaping community security priorities and enhanced their participation in local governance.



WANEP launches Local Women's Task Force for the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Mali.

This effort was complemented by an interactive forum commemorating International Women's Day, which convened 125 participants, predominantly young women, to discuss women's rights, equality, and

empowerment. The forum deepened understanding of national and regional commitments amplified the voices of marginalised women, and reinforced their critical role in peacebuilding, community mediation, and resilience in crisis contexts.

Together, these interventions advanced women's agency by creating structured leadership roles, expanding knowledge and advocacy platforms, and strengthening inclusive security practices. They contributed to more participatory governance and positioned women as central actors in Mali's peace and security landscape.

In Togo, WANEP enhanced women's and youth leadership in gender-responsive peace and security by equipping 34 women community mediators and Youth4Peace actors with practical advocacy skills. Participants improved their ability to analyse security dynamics, frame prevention-focused messages, and engage local and national decision-makers. The process resulted in a shared advocacy roadmap and the rollout of decentralised advocacy initiatives across participants' regions, including all five regions of the country and the administrative region of Lome, fostering sustained grassroots engagement and reinforcing women's and youth's influence in conflict prevention and peace consolidation.

At the community level, WANEP advanced the prevention of gender-based violence by convening inclusive dialogues with women, youth, community leaders, and local authorities. These exchanges created safe spaces to discuss violence and harmful social norms, while collectively identifying protection gaps. They also fostered community ownership of prevention efforts and generated practical commitments for collaboration with state authorities. For example, under the Equipop-funded project titled "For a Transformative Implementation of the Women, Youth, Peace and Security Programmes in Togo", the impact of these dialogues was reflected in the testimony of a 35-year-old mother from Dzrekpo, Togo, who underscored the urgency of collective action: *"In our community, many women experience violence every day, but no one dares to speak about it. This silence is killing us slowly. I would like to see the police, authorities and village leaders become more involved in protecting women and children."*

In Burkina Faso, WANEP strengthened women's leadership, mediation capacity, and advocacy influence under the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. A total of 200 women, including 100 adolescent girls from Yaadga Region in the north and Nando Region in the central-west, acquired practical skills in political and community

mediation, positioning them as local peace actors. Knowledge-sharing sessions extended these gains to an additional 1,224 community members. Complementing these grassroots efforts, WANEP trained 40 women leaders and influencers, including current and former parliamentarians, ministers, ambassadors, and local elected officials. Equipped with targeted WPS knowledge, these leaders are better prepared to advance advocacy and contribute to more effective policy engagement at national and regional levels.

To translate capacity strengthening into collective action, WANEP facilitated inclusive dialogue, networking and intergenerational exchange. Structured dialogues in Koudougou and Manga engaged 190 women and men around girls' education, youth engagement and the contribution of rural women to social cohesion. These efforts were reinforced through intergenerational dialogues involving 200 women and girls from Nakambé, Yaadga, Nando and Guiriko, fostering mutual learning, value transmission and community ownership of peacebuilding.

In Sierra Leone, WANEP played a strategic role in advancing women's leadership and policy influence by convening a Women's Round Table to mark Pan-African Women's Day under the theme *"Empower Women, Empower Africa."* women leaders, activists, community organisers and development practitioners reflected on women's contributions to peacebuilding and national development, while addressing persistent barriers to their meaningful participation in governance and security processes. The forum provided a space for experience-sharing, and networking, enabling participants to identify priority actions for strengthening women's inclusion in decision-making and policy influencing at national and local levels. It reinforced a shared commitment to mentorship, solidarity and sustained advocacy, underscoring women's central role as agents of peace, stability and inclusive development in Sierra Leone.

2.3 NAP Development and Global Policy Influence

WANEP facilitated the adoption of third-generation UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans in Togo and Nigeria, while supporting 13 countries to sustain their second-generation National Action Plans.

In Togo, WANEP contributed to the institutionalisation of the WPS agenda through sustained policy advocacy and technical engagement, supporting the development, validation and official adoption of the

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National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2026-2030).

In Nigeria, WANEP served as a member of the national technical committee on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). It supported the adoption of the Lagos State Action Plan and contributed to the development of the Edo State Action Plan (EdoSAP). Both initiatives aligned subnational priorities with Nigeria's Third National Action Plan (2024-2029). The EdoSAP provides a gender-responsive framework to address complex security challenges. These include gender-based violence, trafficking, communal tensions, and youth restiveness. It also reinforces national legal and policy instruments and strengthens women's participation in peace and security governance.

WANEP further supported psychosocial recovery initiatives for women affected by conflict. These efforts improved confidence, wellbeing, and coping capacities, enabling women to rebuild their lives and contribute more actively to peace processes.

At the international level, WANEP reinforced its role as a trusted civil society interlocutor on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda by briefing the United Nations Security Council on 7 August 2025, during the Council's 9974th. It presented persistent gaps in the implementation of the WPS agenda across West Africa and the Sahel. WANEP advanced concrete, prevention-oriented recommendations, including sustained and flexible financing for women-led peace initiatives, strengthened women's economic empowerment through land rights, access to finance and vocational training, and an increased focus on preventive diplomacy. The engagement contributed to informed discussions on peacebuilding and conflict prevention at the international level.



WANEP Executive Director briefs the UNSCR on the WPS Agenda.

WANEP also secured formal recognition of women's networks by the Regional Centre for Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology (AGRHYMET), under the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). This engagement is part of the response to growing climate-related security risks in the Sahel and West Africa, where environmental stress, resource scarcity, and extreme weather increasingly exacerbate conflict dynamics and undermine community resilience. Through this technical engagement, women networks were designated as focal points within AGRHYMET's climate-sensitive security planning and coordination framework. The outcome strengthened inclusive, prevention-oriented approaches to climate security and reinforced the role of women as key actors in mitigating climate-related conflict and advancing sustainable peace.

In Burkina Faso, WANEP contributed substantively to regional policy dialogue on women and gender within the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) by providing technical expertise to the AES experts' group convened in July 2025.



WANEP, represented by its National Network Coordinator for Burkina Faso, at the regional dialogue of the AES Expert Working Group.

Drawing on a situational analysis across the three AES countries, WANEP supported the development of a shared consultation framework and a common roadmap that identified progress, persistent gaps and priority actions for advancing women's rights and gender equality in the Sahel. It laid the strategic foundations for the ministerial process and directly informed the draft ministerial declaration. The framework and roadmap were subsequently validated and formally adopted by the Ministers responsible for the Promotion of Women and Gender from the three AES countries at a ministerial conference held on 17 July 2025, marking a concrete step towards coordinated, region-wide commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

WANEP produced the *UNSCR 1325@25 Regional Assessment Report*, which examined progress, persistent gaps, and emerging challenges in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda across West Africa, twenty-five years after the adoption of Resolution 1325. The report articulated strategic recommendations calling for renewed political leadership, sustainable financing, and strengthened partnerships, aligned with SDG 5, the African Union Agenda 2063, and ECOWAS Vision 2050.



To mark the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, WANEP contributed to the production and launch of a comprehensive national assessment of Nigeria's implementation of the Resolution. The report, titled *Beyond Commitments: A Critical Assessment of the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria*, documents twelve years of progress, identifies persistent gaps and sets emerging priorities for advancing the WPS agenda. By systematically capturing milestones in the localisation of UNSCR 1325 across states and local governments, the assessment provides lessons to guide the

implementation of Nigeria's Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2025-2030). The report also informed broader regional reviews by ECOWAS and the African Union, reinforcing Nigeria's leadership in advancing gender-responsive peace and security and contributing to regional learning and policy coherence.

2.4 Strategic Dialogues, Awareness Campaigns and Partnerships

To support learning and advocacy on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in the region, WANEP conducted a series of awareness initiatives. Four GenderTalk Series convened over 300 participants from women's groups, ministries and partner institutions to examine inclusive participation, the 2025 electoral context, the AU Convention on Ending Violence against Women and Girls, and the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. To consolidate learning and practice, two Gender Connect publications were produced, comprising *"The Effectiveness of Quota & Parity Laws in Advancing Women's Political Participation: Cases Of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, & Guinea-Bissau"* and *"Building Inclusive Democracies: Toward Diversified Approaches to Enhancing Women's Leadership and Political Participation in West Africa"*. The publications documented women's resilience and influence across the WPS agenda, strengthening peer learning, policy engagement and the GenderTalk community of practice across West Africa.

In partnership with the Australian High Commission in Accra, Ghana, and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), WANEP facilitated a platform for multistakeholder discourse that focused on *Amplifying Women's Voices in Democratic Transitions*. The outcome was documented and disseminated to inform WPS programming and advocacy in the region.



A cross-section of participants in the discourse on *Amplifying Women's Voices in Democratic Transitions*.

Recognising the growing influence of information ecosystems on women's rights and security, WANEP mobilised 24 media professionals in Togo as strategic partners to counter gender-based disinformation and promote ethical reporting. The initiative strengthened the link between disinformation, insecurity and humanitarian crises, while amplifying women's voices to challenge harmful narratives. It translated into community-level action, with sensitisation campaigns conducted across nine localities in the Savanes region, reaching 325 community members, primarily women from agricultural and poultry cooperatives. In addition, the initiative strengthened community resilience and demonstrated the multiplier effect of WANEP's integrated advocacy and partnership approach.

Through a gender sensitive approach to partnerships, intergenerational momentum was advanced across the region as follows:

- The Organisation provided support to the Network of Peace and Security Women in the ECOWAS Commission (NOPSWECO) to review and develop its five-year strategic plan, enabling the Network to refine its WPS priorities and operational action plans for greater strategic coherence and impact.
- In collaboration with the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), WANEP mobilised 200 young people for an intergenerational dialogue under the theme *"Empowering Young Women: Accelerating WPS Action"*. The dialogue strengthened mentorship linkages, fostered male allyship and generated commitments to technology-enabled advocacy among emerging WPS champions.

As part of its commitment to inclusive governance in the Sahel, WANEP convened a Regional Joint Preparatory Meeting with 20 women leaders from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The regional initiative aimed at enhancing women's leadership and participation in local governance through coordinated and strategic implementation approaches.



Regional Joint Preparatory Meeting with women leaders from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in Accra, Ghana

At national and local levels, WANEP supported the development of a strategic advocacy framework to guide the actions of women's organisations in Burkina Faso. Building on this framework, women leaders implemented 48 targeted advocacy initiatives across 26 communes in the Nakambé, Yaadga, Nando and Guiriko areas, engaging local authorities and community leaders. These efforts resulted in formal verbal commitments from decision-makers to strengthen women's participation and ensure their representation in community dialogue and decision-making platforms. Through this approach, WANEP translated capacity strengthening into tangible governance outcomes, reinforcing women's roles as active agents of local peacebuilding and social cohesion.

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KEY RESULT AREA 3: STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS FOR MEANINGFUL YOUTH INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT



Empowering young people to contribute meaningfully to peace and security is central to WANEP's mandate in West Africa. Through expanded peace education initiatives, the Network supports youth participation at local, national and regional levels. Beyond capacity development, WANEP has strengthened dialogue platforms and created spaces for intergenerational engagement, enabling young people to interact with duty bearers and key stakeholders, address their concerns and amplify their contributions to peacebuilding processes.

3.1 Peace Education and Youth Capacity Development

In 2025, WANEP implemented Youth Peace and Security (YPS) programmes through its 15 National Secretariats, empowering 2,500 young people at secondary and tertiary institutions on formal peace education through partnership with state and non-state actors. This contributed to a 25 per cent increase in the number of young peacebuilders trained in community mediation, early warning, and counter-radicalisation, thereby consolidating local capacities for sustainable peace and community resilience. In addition, 2,000 past participants re-engaged with WANEP programmes, equipping them to address emerging human security challenges such as urban violence, gender-based violence, violent extremism, drug abuse, youth unemployment, and the impacts of climate change on natural resources.

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At the national level, Burkina Faso illustrates the impact of WANEP's peace education and youth leadership approach. Peace clubs were established in six secondary schools, where 10 youth-led initiatives addressed issues such as drug abuse, gender-based violence, and social cohesion. They also promoted arts, culture, and sport as tools for peace.

A total of 1,447 students, including 808 girls, benefitted from peace club platforms that encouraged dialogue and participatory decision-making within schools. At Pabré, the peace club members successfully mediated a disciplinary case. Their intervention enabled the reintegration of a student who later passed the baccalaureate examination.

To further amplify youth voices through creative and participatory approaches, WANEP trained 43 young people, including 21 young women, in forum theatre. This resulted in four youth-designed productions addressing harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, school exclusion, and stigma around teenage pregnancy, while also strengthening participants' confidence and public-speaking skills.



WANEP celebrates International Peace Day with Peace Club youth in Burkina Faso



A participant at the 'Promoting Peace for and by Young People' (PPJ) hackathon in Burkina Faso

Complementing school-based peace education, WANEP supported youth-led innovation through the Youth4Peace network by equipping 30 young people, including 15 girls, with project design skills and training on how to present their ideas to potential supporters. This process led to the development of 13 peace projects and the implementation of five funded initiatives. These included digital peace campaigns reaching 500 young people, an arts-based peace day in a secondary school, mediation and conflict-management training for youth, and the creation of two digital applications, which together engaged more than 400 young people.

WANEP also strengthened youth participation in governance, peace, and security in Northern Ghana. Under the UNDP/UNFPA Peacebuilding Fund project, 641 participants from the Upper West, Upper East, and North-East Regions were trained in preventing violent extremism and conflict management. In addition, through the STAR-Ghana Foundation's Security in Northern Ghana III project, WANEP trained 36 young people from five northern regions on political conflict prevention and management, particularly in the context of the 2024 general elections. These initiatives reinforced democratic engagement, built community resilience, and expanded the role of young people as active contributors to peace and security in Ghana.

In Sierra Leone, WANEP contributed its expertise to a youth-centred joint roadmap that outlines concrete actions to strengthen campus security, promote prevention education, and institutionalise youth-led advocacy through a National Student Task Force, reinforcing youth participation, social stability and preventive peacebuilding. To achieve this result, a youth dialogue roundtable approach was utilised with the participation of student leaders, government institutions, as well as drug enforcement agencies.



WANEP Sierra Leone's National Coordinator speaks at the drug-free universities roadmap event

3.2 Youth Advocacy and Policy Engagement

In Nigeria, WANEP contributed to policy advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening the protection of students by engaging the Lagos State House of Assembly on the Safe School Declaration Bill. Through a targeted briefing with the Chairman of the House Committee on Education, WANEP strengthened legislative awareness and support for measures to improve the safety and security of schools across Lagos State. The positive reception of the Bill reflected growing political commitment to institutionalising safe schools within the state's education and protection framework.



WANEP engages students and teachers under the Safe School Declaration Project in Lagos State, Nigeria.

3.3 Youth Research, Innovation and Evidence-Based Engagement

In 2025, under the mentorship programme of the RECAP project, young researchers across West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin were engaged to strengthen their technical and research capacities in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Through a combination of training, coaching, and hands-on supervision, mentees received guidance from expert researchers within the consortium. This support enabled them to transform start-up research initiatives into policy briefs with practical relevance for peace and security. Training modules covered research methodology, transformative leadership, public speaking, and advocacy, equipping participants with both analytical skills and tools for policy influence.

Out of the eight mentees in the programme, five completed their mentorship in 2025, while three are scheduled to conclude in January 2026. A highlight of the programme was the official presentation of research findings by the mentees to consortium partners and expert reviewers, which provided

critical feedback and validation. This demonstrated their ability to apply qualitative and quantitative methods to generate policy-relevant outputs. Overall, the RECAP Mentorship Programme enhanced the capacity of emerging researchers to contribute to actionable strategies for peacebuilding and conflict prevention policy and practice.

3.4 Youth, Peace and Security Dialogue and Social Cohesion

In Togo, WANEP strengthened youth capacity to foster interreligious dialogue and social cohesion by reaching 313 young people, including 102 young women, through ten targeted trainings across all five regions of the country —Maritime, Plateaux, Centrale, Kara, and Savanes. Supported by the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), these trainings deepened understanding of religious diversity, tolerance, and mutual respect. Post-training assessments showed that participants expressed confidence to challenge stereotypes and act as change agents within their communities.

3.5 Institutionalising Youth Participation through NAP-YPS

WANEP collaborated with ECOWAS, UNOWAS and UNDP to strengthen the capacity of 700 young people in peace and security across The Gambia, Liberia, Benin, Togo and Senegal. These efforts were directly aligned with the strategic implementation of National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security (NAP-YPS). Key skills such as advocacy, electoral violence prevention, transformational leadership and good governance ensure that a critical mass of youth are contributing meaningfully to national peace infrastructures. As a result, WANEP YPS and Youth4Peace focal points initiated 60 youth-led peace and security initiatives across the region.

Notable among those actions are the following:

- Youth4Peace Senegal convened five regional YPS consultations (between September and December 2025), engaging 150 young people to inform the national NAP-YPS.
- In Togo, Youth4Peace hosted a YouthTalk on 26 September 2025 with 20 youth to mark the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 2250 and led a drug-abuse awareness session in Kara, on 10 December 2025, reaching 190 students.
- Youth4Peace Benin rolled out a digital non-violence campaign ahead of the 2025 elections, featuring four educational videos promoting peaceful civic engagement.

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- In Côte d'Ivoire, Youth4Peace delivered workshops on non-violence, electoral tolerance and child rights to over 1,500 scouts during the 6th Jambognan Catholic Scout Camp, on 18 August 2025, in Yamoussoukro, under the theme "Together, Let's Build a Nation of Peace and Justice."

Across West Africa and the Sahel, WANEP provided sustained technical support to Member States to advance the development and domestication of National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security (UNSCR 2250). Seven countries comprising Benin, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mali, Niger and Togo received technical assistance for the development of YPS NAPs, while The Gambia and Liberia were supported to domesticate their YPS frameworks. As a result of these engagements, The Gambia and Liberia successfully finalised and officially launched their National Action Plans, marking a significant shift toward institutionalising youth inclusivity in national peace and security architectures.



WANEP provided technical advisory support for the development of The Gambia's YPS National Action Plan.

WANEP also served as a technical member of eight National YPS Working Groups in The Gambia, Liberia, Benin, Ghana, Senegal, Niger, Mali and Sierra Leone, providing technical assistance to stakeholder mapping, capacity strengthening on UNSCR 2250, inclusive consultations, and NAPS-YPS process design. Its collaboration with the National Youth Authority and other key institutions in Ghana, contributed to the development of a National Youth Action Plan. Collectively, these interventions enhanced the credibility, inclusiveness and policy relevance of Youth, Peace and Security frameworks across the region.



WANEP supports the development of Senegal's National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security.

3.6 WANEP's Youth Transformational Empowerment and Mentorship Programme (Y-TEaM)

YTEaM delivered measurable outcomes through its 2025 cohort, strengthening a new generation of peacebuilders across West Africa. Over an eight-month mentoring cycle, 27 young leaders comprising 14 males and 13 females from 15 West African countries were trained and mentored by 23 thematic experts from WANEP, the African Union, and ECOWAS. The programme combined technical training with sustained one-to-one mentoring, reinforcing leadership, conflict prevention, and policy engagement skills.

Some mentees have initiated community-level peacebuilding actions. A mentee from Nigeria spearheaded the establishment of a peace club within their university, the Lead City University, located in Ibadan, Oyo State, promoting dialogue, non-violent engagement, and social cohesion among students. Another mentee from Guinea-Bissau represented WANEP at the Continental Conference marking the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and the African Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security, held in Nairobi in December 2025. In addition, a Y-TEaM mentee from The Gambia secured a USD 5,000 award through the UNDP Gambia Youth Innovation Challenge, translating mentoring support into tangible socio-economic impact. The winning initiative, titled "the Greenhouse Manufacturing and Distribution Initiative", is designed to promote climate-resilient agriculture through locally adapted greenhouse solutions and also address seasonal dependency, climate-related crop losses during heavy rainy seasons, as well as limited access to modern farming technologies for women and young people.



(L-R) YTEaM mentees on their first day of internship at the WANEPTOGO national offices in Togo and Niger.

“Y-TEaM was a truly transformative experience for me. The programme went beyond theory, connecting learning directly to the real political and social challenges facing countries such as my own, Guinea-Bissau. It helped me understand how peacebuilding organisations operate in practice and how youth engagement, partnerships, and ethical leadership contribute to sustainable peace. I came to see that lasting peace in West Africa and the Sahel depends on meaningful youth inclusion, community-based conflict prevention, effective early warning systems, and regional cooperation — with young people recognised as strategic actors for peace.”



Braima Camará,
Y-TEaM Mentee (2025 Cohort), Guinea-Bissau

“Y-TEaM taught me the true meaning of resilience, unity, empathy, social responsibility, and professionalism. For me, it represents both a path and a success story, shaping young peacebuilders and future leaders. The programme also inspired my vision of a Cabo Verde that recognises the potential of its youth — united, proactive, and resilient — and of an Africa that spares no effort in building lasting peace.”



Isa Gomes Monteiro,
Y-TEaM Mentee (2025 Cohort), Cabo Verde

KEY RESULT AREA 4: EXPANDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND CAPACITY FOR OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE



Strengthening community resilience and institutional capacity remains central to WANEP's human security approach in West Africa. By enhancing the ability of local institutions and community structures to perform their mandates effectively, WANEP promotes inclusive and participatory governance while supporting constructive engagement between communities and the State. This dual approach strengthens local ownership of peace and security processes and reinforces the foundations for sustainable stability.

4.1 Strengthening Community-State Coordination and Local Security Architectures

In Nigeria, WANEP contributed to coordinated, community-based responses to violent extremism through its leadership role within the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE). Building on sustained advocacy and engagement, WANEP played a catalytic role in the establishment of the PAVE Steering Committee in Lagos State, which now provides a structured platform for civil society coordination, advocacy, and engagement with national processes. Within this committee, WANEP holds a strategic leadership position that reinforces locally driven and sustainable prevention efforts while strengthening linkages between state-level initiatives and national frameworks.

In Mali, WANEP strengthened inclusive security governance by enhancing the functionality and collaboration of Communal and Regional Security Advisory Committees in priority regions, including Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu, Segou, and Koulikoro, in partnership with the Commissariat for Security Sector Reform and the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali). These regions were selected because they face heightened insecurity and intercommunal tensions, making the inclusion of women and youth in security decision-making particularly critical. Local actors were equipped with practical tools to assess security contexts, develop action plans, and advocate for meaningful participation of women and youth. These interventions strengthened collaboration between citizen initiatives and institutional responses, ensuring that community perspectives from the most affected areas directly informed local security governance strategies.

4.2 Community-Based Conflict Prevention, Dialogue and Social Cohesion

In response to the violent land conflict in Gbenyiri in the Savannah Region, the Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of the Interior, nominated WANEP to serve on a seven-member mediation committee with the responsibility to facilitate dialogue, promote reconciliation, and support the return of displaced persons following the escalation of the land dispute on 23 August 2025 in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District. The recognition and nomination of WANEP to the mediation committee on 8 September 2025 is a reaffirmation of the central role of WANEP in national peace efforts.



Some Members of the Committee

Through the Sustainable and Empowering Peace Project, funded by DANIDA through Oxfam Ghana with technical support from WANEP, a total of 45 stakeholders, including 15 herder-farmer associations, strengthened their conflict-sensitive and community response to climate-induced conflicts in northern Ghana. Priority focus was on the volatile districts of West Gonja, Zabzugu and Tatala.

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In Togo, WANEP facilitated nine community dialogues across the Savanes and Maritime regions, engaging 440 participants, including women, youth, community leaders and local authorities. The dialogues promoted non-violence during electoral periods and addressed gender-based violence, raising awareness of protection mechanisms and reporting channels. These safe spaces enabled women to speak out against violence, strengthened youth commitment to peacebuilding and reinforced social cohesion as a shared community responsibility.

In Côte d'Ivoire, as part of the *Seeds of Peace project*, WANEP addressed the enduring impacts of the 2011 post-electoral crisis in Yopougon and Abobo, two densely populated communes of Abidjan that were among the most affected by the violence. The initiative combined victim-centred rehabilitation, symbolic reparation, psychosocial support and socio-cultural dialogue to promote recovery, reconciliation and collective remembrance. A total of 283 victims received integrated psychosocial, medical and economic support, including 200 community-based therapy sessions and income-generating activities, 88 per cent of which improved participants' economic conditions. Two symbolic actions and the inauguration of two memorial sites restored dignity to victims, strengthened trust and reinforced social cohesion. A joint review workshop consolidated lessons learned and enhanced the sustainability of community-level peacebuilding outcomes.



Launching ceremony of the project "Seeds for Peace" in Côte d'Ivoire

4.3 Cross-Border Resilience, Local Knowledge and Institutional Learning

Along the Senegal-Guinea-Bissau border, WANEP applied its institutional expertise in peacebuilding and conflict prevention to address cross-border cattle rustling through community-led interventions. Drawing on its experience in early warning and inclusive security governance, WANEP conducted a field survey that identified women and young people as among the most affected by cattle theft, which informed targeted economic empowerment and conflict prevention actions. Women- and youth-led management committees were established in six border regions, operating in close collaboration with local authorities to strengthen accountability and institutional anchoring. With support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Sovereignty in Senegal, WANEP facilitated the launch of cattle theft early warning campaigns in Saré-Sissao (Kolda), Sathioum (Sédhiou), and Adeane (Ziguinchor). The provision of ear tags, equipment, and training strengthened livestock identification, traceability, and recovery, while the training of 15 community monitors supported improved reporting and cross-border coordination.



WANEP-GB maps Income-Generating Activities beneficiaries and cattle theft victims as part of the cross-border cattle rustling project

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KEY RESULT AREA 5: UTILISING RESEARCH CAPACITY TO SUPPORT POLICY ADVOCACY AND LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS



WANEP leverages its research capacity to inform evidence-based capacity building, support policy advocacy, and strengthen partnerships across West Africa. Through high-quality research outputs and collaborative initiatives, the Network generates critical insights into complex peace and security dynamics, providing decision-makers with practical options to prevent, mitigate and respond to emerging threats. This approach enhances WANEP’s institutional visibility and reinforces its role as a trusted partner in regional peace and security governance.

5.1 Evidence-Based Policy Influence and Strategic Dialogue

In 2025, WANEP strengthened evidence-based policy advocacy by translating rigorous research and early warning analysis into actionable insights for regional, continental and national decision-makers. Through high-level policy dialogues, targeted publications and strategic partnerships, WANEP ensured that citizen perspectives, conflict analysis and governance research directly informed policy processes and programme design.

As part of this approach, WANEP hosted a high-level regional policy dialogue in Accra on West Africa’s evolving geopolitical landscape and the future of ECOWAS, in partnership with the Social Science Research Council and the Conflict Research Network, West Africa. Drawing on WANEP’s early warning and analytical research, the dialogue produced a **joint policy communiqué** articulating reform-oriented recommendations for regional governance and conflict prevention. The communiqué was formally shared with ECOWAS to inform discussions linked to the Summit of the Future reforms, reinforcing WANEP’s role as a trusted regional knowledge broker.



Cross-section of participants at the Policy Dialogue in Accra, Ghana

Under the E-MAM project, WANEP conducted a Citizen Opinion Poll on Democratic Governance and Elections, ahead of Côte d’Ivoire’s October 2025 elections. It informed operational implementation and guided the strategic deployment of election observers nationwide. In addition, it facilitated the interventions by the National Election Response Group, strengthening early response, violence prevention, and responsive election management.

WANEP also led an eight-country study under the research initiative “Inclusive Political Transitions and Civil Society Organisations in West Africa,” covering Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Togo, and Senegal. The study findings inform WANEP’s interventions, appreciation and adaptable strategies to strengthen civil society engagement in inclusive transition processes, regional and national policy dialogue on democratic governance and peaceful political transitions across West Africa.

5.1.2 The 2025 MSN Annual Meeting

In October 2025, WANEP participated in the Mediation Support Network (MSN) Annual Meeting held in Basel, Switzerland, strengthening its engagement within a leading global platform of non-governmental

organisations dedicated to advancing mediation practice, standards and support to peace processes worldwide. Since joining the Network, WANEP has contributed regional perspectives from West Africa to global mediation discourse, sharing lessons from its experience in community-based mediation, early warning and preventive diplomacy.



WANEP-GB maps Income-Generating Activities beneficiaries and cattle theft victims as part of the cross-border cattle rustling project

In 2025, the focus was on multi-level mediation in today's complex conflict environments, with discussions exploring conceptual frameworks and practical applications through case studies from Colombia, Libya and Sudan. Given WANEP's institutional experience and expertise to mediation and dialogue in West Africa, its participation at the forum underscored its sustained commitment to strengthening inclusive, context-sensitive and adaptive mediation approaches at regional and global levels.

5.1.3 2025 CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding

As a member of the Dialogue Core Group of the Civil Society Organisations-United Nations (CSO-UN) Dialogue on Peacebuilding, WANEP's participation in the 3rd Annual Forum in December 2025 in Geneva was key to the development of CSO strategic pathways to peacebuilding financing, local ownership and coordination. WANEP supported the process through the coordination of preparatory regional consultations, including a survey, an online dialogue and an Africa regional consultation held during Peace Connect in October 2025, ensuring that African civil society perspectives informed the global discussions.



WANEP at the 3rd Annual CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding, Geneva, Switzerland

5.1.4 The Sahel Governance Forum

As part of its contribution to regional dialogue on governance, peace and security in fragile contexts, WANEP contributed its expertise to the Sahel Governance Forum held in Banjul, The Gambia, from 30 to 31 July 2025. Within this platform, WANEP facilitated a high-level panel discussion on *"Cohesive Societies for Stability in the Sahel – Building Lasting Security and Peace in the Sahel."* The discussion examined the state of peace and security in the region and its implications for social polarisation and cohesion, highlighting the limitations of predominantly security-centred responses. Drawing on regional analysis and field experience, the dialogue underscored the importance of inclusive, community-led approaches that rebuild trust between governments and citizens, leverage local cultures and identities, and strengthen communities and local institutions as anchors of resilience and lasting peace.

5.1.5 Berlin Peace Dialogue 2025

WANEP contributed practical, field-based expertise to the workshop *"Disinformation, Civic Space and Peace - Answers from Politics and Practice"* held on 9 October 2025 at the Berlin Peace Dialogue. Drawing on its experience in fragile and conflict-affected contexts across West Africa, WANEP examined the consequences of disinformation and its impact on civic space, social conflict, and peacebuilding challenges. The contribution strengthened policy-practice dialogue by providing context-specific insights on disinformation and also supporting informed discussions among policymakers and practitioners on integrating digital risk analysis into conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies.

5.2 Analysis and Insights for Regional and Continental Policy Processes

WANEP produced Peace Insight and Analysis and facilitated working Papers focused on electoral security, violent extremism prevention, and emerging digital risks. Through these publications, WANEP advanced policy dialogues as exemplified by the electoral security discourse of border-related risks during Ghana's 2024 general elections, drawing practical lessons to enhance preparedness, inter-agency coordination, and future electoral security planning. WANEP also finalised Peace Insight and Analysis and Working Papers under its REcAP project for publication in early 2026. Priority thematic areas include religious leadership in preventing violent extremism, civil society engagement in national security policy, implementation of the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, responses to illegal mining, and constitutional reform challenges. These analyses enrich regional policy discourse, inform programme design, and strengthen decision-making among governments, civil society, and development partners across West Africa.

WANEP contributed to the GIZ-supported *Report on Interstate Boundary and Territorial Disputes in West Africa* by providing actionable analysis of eleven border disputes. This input informed deliberations of the African Union Peace and Security Council and supported the African Union Border Programme's work on mediation, demarcation, and cross-border cooperation. In addition, WANEP played a key role in the UNDP *Subregional Spotlight Report on the Dynamics of Violent Extremism in the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea*. By analysing the southward expansion of violent extremism and its implications for coastal states, WANEP's contribution strengthened UNDP's programming, enhanced coordinated early warning efforts, and informed context-responsive prevention strategies across the region.

At the continental level, WANEP shaped governance discourse in the Sahel through its contribution to UNDP's flagship report, *The Future of Governance in the Sahel: (Re)building Social Cohesion and Public Trust*. WANEP contributed the article "Looking Back to Get the Future of Governance Right". Its contributions informed deliberations at the Sahel Governance Forum in Banjul and continue to influence policy debates and programme design, supporting a shift from security-led approaches towards governance-centred solutions grounded in inclusion, accountability and renewed social contracts.

WANEP co-authored a chapter, "Private Military Companies and Implications for Armed Forces: The Case of Mali," in Routledge's *The Evolution of African Armies: From Indigenous and Colonial Forces to Modern Military Forces*. The chapter provides critical insights into the role of private military actors, informing policy debates and supporting evidence-based decision-making on security sector reform and military effectiveness in Mali and the wider region. Building on its broader analytical work, WANEP further produced the report "Re-imagining the Accra Initiative: Lessons and Options for Policy Consideration," which draws lessons from the Initiative's 2017–2024 operations and evolving VET dynamics in coastal states, and advances practical, integrated policy options to strengthen regional security cooperation and rebuild trust.

WANEP Peace Insight and Analysis Published in 2025	
Maintaining Border Security in the Context of Elections: The Case of Ghana's 2024 General Elections	https://wanep.org/wanep/maintaining-border-security-in-the-context-of-election-the-case-of-ghanas-general-elections/
Expanding Internet Access: Ghana's Connectivity and Extremist Propaganda	https://wanep.org/wanep/expanding-internet-access-ghanas-connectivity-and-extremist-propaganda/
Guardians at the Borders: Localising Violent Extremism Prevention Through Community Watchdog Groups in Northern Ghana	https://wanep.org/wanep/guardians-at-the-borders-localising-violent-extremism-prevention-through-community-watchdog-groups-in-northern-ghana/

5.3 Research Uptake, Partnerships and Knowledge-to-Action under REcAP

Under the REcAP project, WANEP generated policy-relevant research studies on the drivers of conflict and violent extremism in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin. In 2025, this included a major research study on local madrasas, Middle East foundations and Salafism as pathways to radicalisation in coastal West African states, as well as five working papers and 10 policy briefs that strengthened the project’s analytical base. Drawing on situation analyses, community dialogues and capacity-building engagements, these outputs deepened understanding of context-specific conflict dynamics and supported more effective prevention and response strategies. Deliberative briefing sessions were convened at the national level to translate findings into policy influence, strengthening engagement between researchers, civil society and policymakers, which reinforces receptivity to evidence-based approaches.

Through the Project, three online ‘Meet-Ups’ and a Regional Conference in Dakar were conducted. The events provided platforms for peer exchange, innovative thinking, use of artificial intelligence in peacebuilding, policy dialogue, sustained partnerships and collaboration across the network.

Beyond REcAP, the Institution contributed to the evaluation of Mali’s National Security Sector Reform Strategy and its 2022-2024 Action Plan. By integrating civil society and community perspectives, WANEP strengthened the relevance and credibility of the evaluation and contributed targeted recommendations to inform the next reform cycle.



The REcAP Project strengthens civil society and peacebuilding in Nigeria (26 August 2025)



Digital poster announcing an upcoming REcAP Meet-Up

6

KEY RESULT AREA 6: STRENGTHENING WANEP'S INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER ON ITS MANDATE



WANEP continued to enhance the operational effectiveness of its Regional and Liaison Offices, National Networks and member organisations. By strengthening both institutional and financial capacity, the Network empowered these entities to implement their peacebuilding mandates more effectively across West Africa. This approach ensured a coordinated, sustainable and robust response to the region's evolving peace and security challenges.

6.1 Strengthening Governance, Strategic Leadership and Planning

As WANEP's highest decision-making body, the General Assembly (GA) is convened biennially to provide strategic direction, strengthen governance, and guide institutional and programmatic priorities. In this context, WANEP strengthened strategic governance and leadership oversight through its 18th Regional General Assembly, held from 26 to 27 March 2025 in Accra, Ghana, under the theme *"Changing Dynamics in Multilateralism and Regionalism – The Role and Prospects for Civil Society Organisations."* In line with WANEP's governance structure, 15 National Networks, the Regional Secretariat, the Regional Board were represented, as well as participation from AU and ECOWAS liaison offices, and key development partners. Discussions addressed emerging peace and security challenges

in West Africa and their implications for civil society engagement, contributing to the refinement of WANEP's strategic positioning and informing organisational responses under the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan. The Assembly was further enriched by a keynote address from Dr Philip Attuquayefio, Senior Research Fellow at the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), which anchored reflections on regional and global trends shaping peace and governance.

WANEP also initiated the development of its new 5-year strategic plan of 2026-2030, as its current plan of 2021-2025 ends in December 2025. An external consultant was contracted to facilitate the development of the new plan. As part of the assessment of the existing strategic plan, an external consultant, Conflict Management Consulting, was engaged. The findings and recommendations from their evaluation will support the completion and operational direction of WANEP for the next five years.

Across the Network, WANEP reinforced the consolidation of national structures by convening statutory meetings, renewing governance frameworks, and engaging diverse stakeholders. These processes reflected WANEP's institutional expertise in building accountable, participatory systems and ensured that national platforms remained aligned with regional priorities. Strategic recommendations emerging from members and partners were integrated into forward-looking organisational planning, guiding the Network's future priorities and strengthening its collective impact.

6.2 Institutional Performance, Accountability and Organisational Learning

WANEP reinforced accountability and performance management through the completion of the Organisational Development Index (WODI) 2024 assessment. Conducted with the participation of 14 national networks and coordinated by the Regional WODI Committee, the assessment concluded in February 2025, with results formally presented during the General Assembly. The overall WANEP Index stood at 79.18%, reflecting sustained institutional capacity within the "Good" performance category. High-performing networks were recognised, reinforcing a culture of excellence, peer learning and continuous improvement across the Network.

6.3 Strengthening Staff Capacity, Systems and Advocacy Engagement

WANEP continued to invest in staff capacity, systems strengthening and advocacy engagement across its national networks. In Guinea, WANEP supported the establishment of a strengthened Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) system through a five-day SMILER workshop conducted in partnership with Catholic Relief Services. The process resulted in updated results frameworks, implementation tools and a draft MEAL operations manual, enhancing project quality and accountability.

Capacity strengthening efforts also targeted advocacy and communication skills. In Benin, WANEP engaged in a specialised training on advocacy related to artificial intelligence, enhancing awareness of the ethical and democratic implications of emerging technologies.

Institutional systems were further reinforced through WANEP's participation in a UNDP-organised refresher training on Monitoring and Evaluation and the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) system in The Gambia. In addition, WANEP's election as Chair of the Civil Society Dialogue Platform established by the National Human Rights Commission underscored its growing leadership role in national civil society coordination and advocacy in the country.

6.4 2025 Management Report – Financial Management

Throughout 2025, WANEP Regional continued to demonstrate strong financial management, with systems and processes that ensured compliance with relevant accounting standards and statutory requirements. Management successfully implemented prior-year audit recommendations, resulting in improved internal controls and more robust financial reporting. These strengthened systems supported successful audits of key projects, including Prevention of Violent Extremism PVE 2024, the UNDP Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT) Just Future, and GIZ-AU. Furthermore, the audit of WANEP's 2024 annual financial statements concluded with an unqualified audit opinion, affirming the organisation's commitment to accountability, transparency, and prudent financial stewardship.

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Gallery

**WANEP'S 18TH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**









