Ex-post evaluation of projects by Fambul Tik and YAD, Sierra Leone

Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung

cooperation germany sierra leone

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YAD
YOUTH IN ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT
MULTIPURPOSE YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE
...working with the youth and for the youth, women and children...

September 2022

Implemented by:

movimentar
PROJECT MANAGEMENT & DATA SCIENCE

Disclaimer

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1 List of abbreviations and acronyms

BENGO	Engagement Global
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CHM	Community Hygiene Monitors
COD	Campaign against Open Defecation
Covid	Coronavirus disease
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDCC	District Development Coordination Committee
FGD	Focus-group discussion
FT	Fambul Tik e. V.
GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (limited liability company)
KCM	Konjo Community Market and Social Mobilisation Centre
KII	Key-informant interview
KYDA	Konjo Youth Development Association
LNOB	Leave no-one behind
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MCPS	Matakan Community Primary School
MYRC	Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre
NCSS	Niawa Chiefdom Secondary School
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIHP	Niawa Initiative Against Hunger and Poverty
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SLANGO	Sierra Leone Association of Non-governmental Organisations
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of reference
TTT	Train the trainers
WHO	World Health Organisation
YAD	Youth in Action for Development

2 Key facts and figures

Online survey: 11 responses

- Staff of Fambul Tik: 2 responses

- Staff of YAD: 5 responses

- BENGO: 1 response

- Local government/authorities: 2 responses

- International organisations (e.g., UN agencies): 1 response

Key-informant interviews: 85 interviews (72 individual KIIs and 13 focus-group discussions)

- Beneficiaries: 51 interviews (196 participants)

- Staff of Fambul Tik: 1 interview (1 participant)

- Staff of YAD: 6 interviews (6 participants)

- Local government/authorities: 27 interviews (27 participants)

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This ex-post evaluation assessed the seven projects co-funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ), Fambul Tik (FT), and Youth in Action for Development (YAD), and implemented by YAD/FT in Sierra Leone from 2012 to 2022. The study covered the outcomes of six finalised projects and the on-going activities of one due to be finished by April 2024. Although those projects were evaluated formatively during their implementation, none of them had been evaluated in a summative way before. Fambul Tik commissioned movimentar GmbH to conduct a thorough summative/ex-post evaluation of those projects in order to determine how sustainable, replicable, and scalable they are and how much they had contributed to the attainment of sustainable development in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The evaluation's specific objectives were: 1) collect information and data for the assessment of the seven projects implemented by Fambul Tik and YAD, with co-funding by BMZ, 2) provide recommendations and an analysis of best practices for future Fambul Tik and YAD projects, and 3) contribute to organisational learning and sharing of experiences with stakeholders. The intended audiences include BMZ, BENGO, the government of Sierra Leone, and partners.

The study used a mixed-methods approach including quantitative and qualitative data, both for data collection and analysis, allowing for methodological triangulation. To provide a quick overview of the results, we used a simple scoring system for each of the key questions, ranging from 'very good' (score 5) to 'very poor' (score 1). Data collection took place in August 2022 and included the following sources: a) document review of the project applications, b) 85 key-informant interviews (individual and focus-group discussions) with beneficiaries and staff from YAD, Fambul Tik, state bodies, and local authorities, and c) 11 participants of an online survey with institutional stakeholders from BENGO, YAD, Fambul Tik, and state bodies.

The overall performance score from the perspective of the consultancy team and considering all criteria was 4.5 ('good'). The summary of the main findings is presented in the table below by assessment criterion starting with the scores from the consultancy team and followed by those from the online survey (institutional stakeholders). The scores were calculated from the evaluative scale-based questions in the online surveys. The evaluation scores given by the consultancy team were based on the assessment of the overall quantitative and qualitative findings, considering all primary and secondary sources.

Scoring by criteria and type of source (1 = very poor; 5 = very good)		
Criterion	**Consultancy team**	**Institutional stakeholders**
Relevance	4.6	3.8
Coherence	4.4	3.9
Effectiveness	4.6	3.8
Efficiency	3.7	4.1
Impact	4.4	3.9
Sustainability	5.0	3.9
Overall score	**4.5**	**3.9**
Overall rating	**B ('good')**	**B ('good')**

Table 1. Summary of the main findings.

Relevance and design (4.6 – 'very good'): The projects have very high relevance considering the needs of their target groups. The main needs reported by beneficiaries were hunger, water-related diseases, and poor access to education. This finding is in line with the results of the sentiment analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the individual and group interviews. When asked about the relevance of the support considering the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, 75% of the key words used by the respondents were classified as positive by the sentiment-analysis algorithm. The logical frameworks of the evaluated projects are clear and show a coherent design and clear indication of the expected results to be achieved. The intervention logics explain the rationale for achieving the expected results, and the activities proposed are appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcomes. There is evidence that the design and implementation of all projects have been informed by an analysis of the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups such as women, children, youths, adolescents, and elderly. The project proposals, field observations, and beneficiary responses show that the implementation of the projects followed a human rights-based approach and the principle of 'leaving no-one behind'. Although none of the projects cite a specific gender action plan, there is evidence that gender has been integrated into the engagement model of YAD and Fambul Tik (e.g., strategy of equalising the number of male and female active agents in the projects, taking the example of the CHMs). Developing a gender mainstreaming plan that is culturally sensitive and adapted to the context could help improve the contribution to gender equality, with a focus on promoting more women in leadership positions, for example. The issue of eradicating female genital mutilation could also be explored in future projects, since it is still widely present in Sierra Leone's rural areas, which remains one of the 28 African countries that still partake in the practice.

Coherence (4.4 – 'good'): The extent of synergies between the projects and government actions, institutional strategies, and the policy scenario was very high. Several priority areas of Sierra Leone's national development plans were addressed by the projects. The project activities made relevant contributions to national policies and strategies. The inclusion of local government authorities in the project implementation, such as in the district council of Kenema, has resulted in concrete contributions to the implementation of national and institutional policies: the development plans Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Agenda for Prosperity (A4P, 2013-2018). There is evidence of synergy with the ministries of health and of education for the COD and the MCPS and NCSS projects, respectively. Results demonstrate good alignment of projects with SDGs 1, 2, 4, and 6[1]. The planned impact on child literacy rates, reduction of water-related diseases, hunger reduction, and vocational training of youths and adolescents directly fulfils the objectives of the mentioned SDGs. The results suggest that the projects had insufficient complementarity, harmonisation, and coordination with other NGOs. One example was the partnership with the NGO SEND for the realisation of COD and the work with Welthungerhilfe appointed by the Kenema district government at the District Covid Emergency Response Committee (DICOVERC). According to FT, YAD has had representatives assigned to WASH coordination meetings as well as for the Agriculture and Food Security coordination meetings. The same goes for the Technical and Vocational (TECVOC) Council, and there is someone assigned to the general District Development Coordination Committee (DDCC).

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[1] The projects contributed to SDGs 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere), 2 (end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture), 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), and 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all).

Effectiveness (4.6 – 'very good'): Planned output and outcome targets were achieved to a great extent (see annex with [Result Matrix of Progress against Indicators](#) for detailed information by project). The majority of outcome and output indicators were achieved. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected some of the project activities and delayed some indicators. The results suggest that the projects made good use of the resources made available by the donor and adapted well to the consequences caused not only by Covid-19 but also by Ebola, the rainy seasons, and the inflationary crisis. Participaction of key stakeholders during planning and implementation phases was high. Collaboration with implementing organisations, relevant ministries, and local government authorities took place. Beneficiaries participated in the project activities and took over important responsibilities. There is strong evidence that the projects have achieved their objectives, considering the evidence from primary data collection. For example, in the online survey the majority of participants (82%, 10 participants) positively rated the extent to which the objectives had been achieved. Responses to the KIIs/FGDs with beneficiaries made it clear that the support received was helpful in their lives.

Efficiency (3.7 – 'good'): The overall efficiency of the projects was good. The activities can be considered cost-efficient. Several external factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the inflation crisis made financial management difficult. However, activities involving fundraising and volunteering effectively supported self-sustainability of projects and activities. These factors included the Covid-19 outbreak, an inflationary crisis, and social disorder disrupting economic activities. Management quality and efficiency of the projects (including work planning, procurement, financial resource management, budget allocation, and timely outputs) was good. High transparency and good communication as reported by stakeholders have contributed to this. The project-management system (including technical expertise as well as monitoring, planning, and reporting systems) was moderately functional, sufficient, and goal-oriented. Key stakeholders reported positively on the project-management system. Especially the feedback system implemented by YAD and the close work with Fambul Tik can be highlighted here. Transparency and accountability as well as communication have been satisfactory.

Impact (4.4 – 'good'): The projects' impacts were very high. They contributed to the development of Sierra Leone – to a reduction in waterborne diseases, improved education, and the economy of the villages – and were aligned with national strategies. The COD project improved the health and hygiene situation of various villages and thereby reduced water-related diseases and contamination. By separating the toiles by gender, physical condition, and age, vulnerable groups were given more comfort, safety, and dignity. The impacts from the different projects reinforced each other. For example, by reducing diseases, more children were able to visit the schools. According to key informants, the schools help to literate the communities and thereby contribute to economic growth of the families. This is supported by the educational training given in the MYRC for youths, who now have a better reputation in their communities. One of the country's major problems, hunger, was tackled by the NIHP project, which enabled beneficiaries to improve their farming techniques and thus increase food production. While there were several indirect positive impacts, no negative ones were reported. Some of the unplanned impacts were, for example, increased recognition and growth of YAD as well as a sense of unity created within the villages. Based on the positive impacts that the projects had, several key stakeholders stated that the projects should be implemented in other parts of the country, too.

Sustainability (5.0 – 'very good'): The sustainability of the projects is very high due to a high level of ownership, a long-term orientation of the activities, and a very high contribution to the institutional and management capacity of local partners. The majority of key stakeholders were convinced that the projects would continue to benefit the beneficiaries after the end of the

support and even will benefit future generations. The fact that at the time of the assessment all established project facilities and activities were still active supports this. Mechanisms were established to sustain all project components such as community fundings and committees responsible for monitoring and/or maintenance and repairs. The high level of ownership by the beneficiaries leads to a high sustainability of the projects. For example, the constructed facilities such as the sanitation facilities, the MYRC, and the market are regarded as the community's responsibility and have benefits for all. Thus, the target groups are willing to put efforts into their maintenance. This level of ownership was achieved by multiple training sessions and good involvement of the beneficiaries in planning and implementation. Institutional and management capacity of local partners were very high despite the short duration of most projects. In particular, capacity-building activities for various leaders and counsellors play important roles for the enforcement of laws at community level.

We present below our key recommendations.

- Recommendation 1: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) It is highly recommended to publish this report as well as present and discuss the results of the evaluation with the beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. The plots were coloured for easy identification of results and also for people with low literacy levels. We highly recommend preparing summaries in local languages, so that beneficiaries and other stakeholders can learn about the key results in more detail and collaboratively design ways forward. This is critically important for accountability and transparency, which are especially essential for civil society organisations.

- Recommendation 2: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) We recommend improving/scaling up the outreach of the same projects to other vulnerable villages in Kenema district, as their needs are reported to be the same by the respondents of this assessment. There is evidence that residents of the non-beneficiary villages feel marginalised by not receiving the same benefits as others, which may result in possible disagreements between the beneficiary and non-beneficiary villages. This is important in terms of 'do-no-harm'. The migration of residents from other villages to the beneficiary ones, especially for the use of the toilet facilities, may pose risks to the maintenance of these structures. Expanding these projects to other communities was one of the most frequently-mentioned suggestions in the KIIs and focus-group discussions.

- Recommendation 3: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) In order to ensure that the benefits of the vocational courses of the MYRC Phase II are sustainable, it is recommended to invest in projects that facilitate the acquisition of start-up packages for graduate students, including financial education as well as business-development mentoring. Respondents to this study showed interest in opening their own business and following a professional career in the course done at the centre, however, the lack of knowledge and resources to invest in their own materials is a barrier. Some participants suggested increasing the spectrum of vocational training topics for electrical areas, for example. Additional consultations with young people, ideally involving private-sector actors in the design and planning phase, can help maximise the relevance of services to young people.

- Recommendation 4: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) We recommend scaling-up the capacity building in financial education as well as business development/entrepreneurship for the beneficiaries of the KCM and NIHP projects. The increase in the sales and goods production from the beneficiaries' farms allows them to

make an income (and savings) by selling the excess locally. The opening of the local bank account and the storage provided will gain more value if entrepreneurship and financial-education training is provided. This will help to prevent risks such as overindebtedness.

- Recommendation 5: (Responsible: FT, YAD, BMZ, and BENGO / Priority: High) Key informants suggest the need to introduce a more structured and digitalised monitoring system for on-going (real-time) information on projects. This could take place either at YAD/FT level or even at country or global level through standard forms with minimum M&E information. We recommend establishing a set of forms using safe and freely available digital tools (e.g., KoBoToolbox, ONA, or ODK Cloud) to aggregate, manage, and allow for a repository of beneficiary and implementation data. This may be composed of the following forms: 1) beneficiary registration form; 2) item-delivery form; 3) support delivery form; 4) beneficiary feedback and complaint form; and 5) monitoring and evaluation form. A separate form on the indicators of each project can help to keep track of any output indicators that are not covered by the five-form structure above. Currently, YAD staff are doing it themselves without a structured digital system, which leads to higher than necessary costs for the organisation and increases the likelihood of risks in terms of data protection and management. Future projects should include external support to set up and build capacities of both FT and YAD on the use of such tools and design an operational system to allow for better monitoring and evaluation.

- Recommendation 6: (Responsible: BMZ and BENGO / Priority: High) During the rainy seasons, the lack of food was reported as a main challenge. The farmers normally harvest at the peak of the dry season in November/December, but they usually consume all the harvest in the first four months of the year (January to April). After that, they face severe food scarcity during the farming season, which begins from May onward. While BMZ seems not to fund food distribution or 'food for work' initiatives, the food provided by YAD during the Ebola and Covid-19 outbreaks was not sufficient to feed all the project beneficiaries. Answers from implementing organisations suggest the need to either revise the policy of not funding 'food for work' activities or discussing alternatives for combating severe food scarcity (e.g., increased funding for food production, identification and referral of cases of acute malnutrition particularly among children under 5 years of age).

- Recommendation 7: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) According to respondents from the project NCSS in Gandorhun town, a headquarter for the teachers is urgently needed for the sustainability of the school as well as the payment of their teachers, including the ones in the MCPS project. Therefore, we recommend that in future projects there should be greater involvement of local governments in financial-sustainability strategies such as hiring qualified teachers for the schools as well as the construction of more classrooms in order to expand existing schools, as the number of students increases every year.

- Recommendation 8: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) We recommend adding water wells to future projects with a similar plan as the COD. As reported by respondents, in the dry season it is harder to obtain water for hygiene purposes. The use of chlorine tablets may offer an important alternative to treat water and should be considered in future projects in coordination with UNICEF and other development partners (see: https://movimentar.eu/research-on-chlorine-tablets/).

- Recommendation 9: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: Medium) We strongly recommend to conduct household surveys and use objectively verifiable scores to prioritise both villages and households. Structured group interviews (group-based key-informant interviews) can be used as part of a standard rapid assessment form. Such studies should take place in the inception phase of projects if there have not been previous studies within the past two years before the project start. Although there is evidence that the projects are based on ground needs, we did not find evidence of studies (e.g., needs assessments/feasibility studies, baseline studies, monitoring and evaluation studies) including standard development indicators (see https://www.indikit.net/), which could help to prioritise those most in need and also to justify geographical coverage based on objectively measured vulnerabilities (e.g., Food Consumption Score, Household Diet Diversity Score, or Coping Strategy Index). Such standard indicators are internationally accepted and will improve the design of logframes as well as future projects. The objective assessment of the covered villages using standard indicators will help to implement the do-no-harm approach by providing neighbouring villages with a clear justification about the selection of villages for benefits. A multi-index score (e.g., WASH, food security, and protection indicators) can be used for this purpose, ranking villages according to their vulnerability.

- Recommendation 10: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: Low) In addition to those already used by Fambul Tik and YAD, we recommend modernising the information systems used for the management of implementation and the adoption of project-management information systems in the cloud. Training will enable greater efficiency and systematisation including tasks and responsibilities. We recommend investing both in terms of staff training and in project management tools 'in the cloud' such as Teamwork Projects, Asana, Trello, or Basecamp. These commercial systems help to move away from traditional e-mail-centric processes, reducing the flow of messages while improving communication with partners. This may support the processes of modernising the management, communication, and governance of joint programmes through more automated reminders and report generation.

6   Introduction

This report presents the results of the ex-post evaluation of seven projects funded by BMZ and implemented by Fambul Tik and YAD in Sierra Leone. Data collection took place in August 2022. The research combines findings from six finished projects and one on-going, implemented in eleven villages in three chiefdoms in Kenema district (Niawa, Langurama, and Malegohun) and Kenema City, located in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone. The consultancy team evaluated the following projects based on a programmatic approach:

1. Matakan Community Primary School in Matakan village, Niawa Chiefdom, Kenema district – MCPS (2012.1598.7);
2. Niawa Chiefdom Secondary School, Gandorhun town, Niawa Chiefdom, Kenema District – NCSS (2015.5550.7);
3. Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre in Kenema City – Phase I (1784);
4. Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre in Kenema City – Phase II (2972);
5. Konjo Community Market and Social Mobilisation Centre, Ngiehun Konjo town, Malegohun chiefdom, Kenema district (4032);
6. Campaign against Open Defecation in Niawa and Langurama Chiefdoms, Kenema district (4945);
7. Niawa Initiative against Hunger and Poverty in Sendumei, Bandawor, Matakan, Golahun Vaama, Nyadehun, and Kurankoh in Niawa chiefdom, Kenema district (4995).

Project numbers 1 to 6 above were fully evaluated, while project number 7 (4995) was still being implemented and could not yet be fully evaluated. However, this report provides information on achievements to date, challenges, potential outcomes, and recommendations.

Although those projects were evaluated formatively during their implementation, none of them had been evaluated in a summative way until this evaluation report. Therefore, Fambul Tik commissioned movimentar GmbH to conduct a thorough summative/ex-post evaluation of those projects in order to determine how sustainable, replicable and scalable they are and how much they had contributed to the attainment of sustainable development in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

The ex-post evaluation took place in close coordination with the implementer's organisations while safeguarding the independence of all steps including the selection of sites for field visits. The assessment included 72 key-informant interviews, 13 focus-group discussions, and one online survey with 11 submissions. An international evaluator based in Germany undertook observation visits across 11 villages and Kenema City, supported by a team of three local interviewers and a driver. The 85 key informants comprised end-user representatives including beneficiaries (42%), and staff from Fambul Tik (26%), YAD (22%), BENGO, and local government and authorities.

This evaluation aimed to analyse the performance and replicability of the completed projects, and assess how they contribute to the sustainable development of Sierra Leone. The evaluation's target groups are BMZ, BENGO, and implementing partners such as Fambul Tik and YAD as well as other civil society organisations.

6.1 Context of the evaluation

In recent years, Sierra Leone has experienced significant economic growth in the aftermath of the 1991-2002 civil war and the Ebola virus crisis. The civil war destroyed the infrastructure and social services and therefore evoked economic, political, and social issues.[2] Despite economic and democratic gains, Sierra Leone belongs to the poorest countries worldwide and still ranks 182nd on the Global Human Development Index (2021). Around 53% of the population live below the income poverty line (USD 1.25 per day), and food production is decreasing due to deforestation, land degradation, and climate change[3]. Furthermore, people suffer from health issues related to polluted water and poor sanitation conditions.

Sierra Leone has a population of almost 8.7 million with a growth rate of 2.5% (estimation for 2022)[4]. Despite its high total fertility rate of almost five children per woman, Sierra Leone's population growth is somewhat tempered by high infant, child, and maternal mortality rates that are among the world's highest and are a result of poverty, a lack of potable water and sanitation, poor nutrition, limited access to quality health care services, and the prevalence of female genital cutting. Sierra Leone's large youth cohort – about 60% of the population is under the age of 25 – continues to struggle with high levels of unemployment, which was one of the major causes of the country's 1991-2002 civil war and remains a threat to stability today. Its estimated 60% youth unemployment rate is attributed to high levels of illiteracy and unskilled labour, a lack of private-sector jobs, and low pay. Sierra Leone has a youth dependency ratio of 71 in 100 people. The youth dependency ratio is the ratio of the youth population (ages 0-14) per 100 people of working age (ages 15-64). Such a high youth dependency ratio indicates that a greater investment needs to be made in schooling and other services for children.

Strongly connected to the poor living conditions is the high illiteracy rate, particularly among women. About 43% of the population aged 15 and over can read and write English, Mende, Temne, or Arabic.

Over 56% of the population live in rural areas, with an annual rate of urbanisation[5] estimated at 3%. In rural areas, access to water and electricity is limited and/or water sources are contaminated[6]. Sierra Leone is extremely poor, and nearly half of the working-age population engages in subsistence agriculture, with 61% of the labour force working in the agriculture sector. The country possesses substantial mineral, agricultural, and fishery resources. The main agricultural products are cassava, rice, vegetables, oil palm fruit, sweet potatoes, milk, citrus fruits, groundnuts, fruits, and pulses. In recent years, economic growth has been driven by mining – particularly iron ore. The country's principal exports are iron ore, diamonds, and rutile, and the economy is vulnerable to fluctuations in international prices. Continued economic growth will depend on rising commodity prices and increased efforts to diversify the sources of growth. Non-mining activities will remain constrained by inadequate infrastructure, such as power and roads, even though power sector projects may provide some additional electricity capacity in the

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[2] The economic problems of Sierra Leone (GraduateWay).
[3] WFP Sierra Leone – World Food Programme (wfp.org).
[4] 8,692,606 (2022 est.) as from the World Factbook 2022.
[5] The rate of urbanisation describes the projected average rate of change of the size of the urban population over a given period of time. Source: World Factbook 2022.
[6] Problems – Sierra Leone (weebly.com).

short term. Pervasive corruption and undeveloped human capital will continue to deter foreign investors[7].

Environmental issues faced by Sierra Leone include rapid population growth pressuring the environment; overharvesting of timber, expansion of cattle grazing, and slash-and-burn agriculture have resulted in deforestation, soil exhaustion, and flooding; loss of biodiversity; air pollution; water pollution; and overfishing[8].

Events such as the Ebola virus disease caused the death of thousands of people, paralysing the country for more than a year, and further weakened the already rudimentary health and education infrastructure. It showed the population's lack of trust in the government and the weakness of the country's governance.[9] Sierra Leone depended on extensive international support to combat the pandemic and had to use financial resources that could otherwise have been invested in implementing urgent political and economic reforms. Other events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war had negative impacts on Sierra Leone's economy.[10] The government has limited capacities to provide basic services such as electricity, good roads, and employment, the latter particularly difficult to access for youths, women, and people with disabilities. Therefore, many people are discontent with their economic and living situations, which can be seen by several protests and conflicts. The most recent protests in August were triggered by increasing costs of living and escalated violently, leading to several deaths. The government's response was a countrywide curfew following the protests. This highlights that a large part of the population is constantly dissatisfied with their government and their living conditions.[11]

Given this scenario, non-governmental organisations in the country are essential players to achieve the government's country agenda for development. In Kenema City, the third largest city in the country, YAD was founded in 2001, shortly after the war, by a few ambitious young citizens who intended to facilitate young citizens' participation in the post-war reconstruction, rehabilitation, and settlement programmes. After being registered with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as well as the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO) in the year 2007, YAD has been growing and engaging youth not only in Kenema City but also in other chiefdoms. Aiming at complementing the efforts of the government of Sierra Leone, Fambul Tik e.V. (FT) and YAD have worked over the years in collaboration with the support of various donors, among which is the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). BMZ has co-funded diverse projects implemented by FT since 2012. The scope of the projects ranged from smaller groups based in a single village, medium sizes of several villages, and large sizes consisting of whole chiefdoms.

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[7] Source: World Factbook 2022.
[8] Idem.
[9] M'cleod, H. & Ganson, B. (2017) The underlying causes of fragility and instability in Sierra Leone. Commission on State Fragility, Growth and Development. Sierra Leone | World Food Programme (wfp.org).
[10] Credendo beobachtet gewalttätige Proteste in Sierra Leone wegen steigender Lebenshaltungskosten, Credendo Short-Term Non-EU Risks, Pressemitteilung – PresseBox.
[11] Sierra Leone: Protests, Blood, Curfew and Crisis (thefourthestategh.com).

7   Methodology

This section summarises the methodological approach used in the evaluation. Unless explicitly mentioned, the terminology used here follows the OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation[12].

This evaluation's overall objective was to assess how projects implemented by Fambul Tik and YAD with BMZ co-funding have promoted sustainable development in Sierra Leone, including their likelihood of replicability and scalability. To achieve this overall objective, the specific objectives are as follows:

1. Collect information and data for the assessment of the seven projects co-funded and implemented by Fambul Tik, YAD and BMZ.

2. Provide recommendations and an analysis of best practices for future Fambul Tik and YAD projects with BMZ co-funding.

3. Contribute to organisational learning and sharing of experiences with stakeholders.

The evaluation report's users will be Fambul Tik, YAD, BMZ representatives and main partners. The key stakeholders included beneficiary representatives, other community members (e.g., local or traditional authorities, and other stakeholders).

7.1   Evaluation scope

The evaluation focused on the seven projects co-funded by BMZ and implemented by YAD and Fambul Tik, between 2012 and 2024 (see introduction for a list of the projects). The evaluation followed a participatory approach of the primary stakeholders at all stages of the elaboration of this study. The beneficiary villages from four chiefdoms of Kenema district and the city itself were covered, where the field visits prioritised villages with more than 100 beneficiaries per project. Data collection took place in August 2022.

The evaluation audience includes primary stakeholders (e.g., state bodies, civil society organisations, YAD, Fambul Tik, and BMZ), and it involved beneficiary representatives, other community members (e.g., local or traditional authorities and other stakeholders), the implementing team, government personnel and line ministries, NGOs, embassies/international organisations, and any relevant actors. It aimed to provide both primary stakeholders and beneficiaries with (i) evidence to improve future interventions in the country, (ii) knowledge, including best practices and lessons learnt, that could be used by the Government of Sierra Leone and other key-partners in better designing and enhancing public policies to reach and address the beneficiaries' needs and expectations, (iii) accountability and control of the implementation of future projects.

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[12] OECD (2010) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management. http://bit.ly/oecdrbm.

7.2 Key questions

The evaluation follows the principle of having few, well-focused questions:

Relevance

1.1. What is the level of relevance of the projects considering the needs and priorities of their target groups?

1.2. Was the design of the projects appropriate for achieving their objectives, including the logical frameworks?

1.3. To what extent did the design sufficiently take into account cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the environment)?

Coherence

2.1. To what extent were there synergies (or trade-offs) with government actions, institutional strategies, and the policy scenario?

2.2. To what extent have the projects been coordinated with interventions by other NGOs to avoid overlaps, leverage contributions, and catalyse joint work?

2.3. How closely are the projects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (external coherence)?

Effectiveness

3.1. To what extent have the planned output and outcome targets been achieved?

3.2. How well was the implementation adapted to the major external and internal factors influencing the achievement of the objectives and results?

3.3. To what extent do the projects ensure the continuous participation of their key stakeholders in their planning and implementation?

Efficiency

4.1. How cost-efficient were the activities?

4.2. How adequate was the management quality and efficiency (including work planning, procurement, financial resource management, budget allocation, and timely outputs)?

4.3. How functional, sufficient, and goal-oriented is the project-management system (including technical expertise as well as monitoring, planning, and reporting systems)?

Impact

5.1. Have the projects had a direct impact at their overall-objective level?

5.2. To what extent does/will the projects have any indirect positive and/or negative impact (i.e., environmental, social, cultural, gender, and economic)?

5.3. To what extent are the outcomes of the projects and the benefits attributable to the project, and if not, to which extent?

Sustainability

6.1. What is the level of ownership of the projects by target groups?

6.2. To what extent will the target groups and beneficiaries continue to use the benefits after the support has ended (long-term orientation)?

6.3. How well are the projects contributing to the institutional and management capacity of local partners?

Table 2. Key questions for online survey and KIIs.

8   Approach and methods

The evaluation was based on a **mixed-method approach** including a desk review and primary data collection through key-informant interviews, focus-group discussions, and an online survey with both qualitative and quantitative data. Our international consultant who travelled to Sierra Leone conducted interviews on-site with the support of a translator and local research assistants. Our experienced team members based in Germany conducted interviews in English remotely with stakeholders with access to phones/internet. In order to provide a quick overview of the conclusions, the evaluation employed a simple scoring system for each of the key questions. Grades and scores are explained in the following table and are supported by detailed information on the actual findings, the rationale behind the conclusions, key lessons learnt, and recommendations.

Score	Assessment	Explanation
4.6 to 5	Very good	The situation is a reference for good practice. Recommendations focus on measures to facilitate replication of good practices in other operations.
3.6 to 4.5	Good	The situation is highly satisfactory, largely above average, and potentially a reference for good practice. Recommendations are useful but not vital for the operation.
2.6 to 3.5	Regular	The situation is satisfactory, but there are important operational risks and room for improvements. Recommendations are important for increasing the likelihood of a successful operation.
1.6 to 2.5	Poor	There are issues which need to be addressed; otherwise, the global performance may be negatively affected. Necessary improvements, however, do not require major revisions of the intervention logic.
1 to 1.5	Very poor	There are deficiencies which are so serious that, if not addressed, they can lead to failure of the operation. Major adjustments of the intervention logic and revision of the strategy are necessary.

Table 3. Assessment criteria and scoring system.

In order to avoid bias and improve the validity and reliability of results, this evaluation combined multiple data sources and data-collection methods:

1. **Document review:** Desk review of documents such as current forms, annual reports, quarterly reports, past related evaluations, publications provided by the client, and any monitoring data and similar interview forms, studies, and communication materials.

2. **Semi-structured key-informant in-depth interviews** (initial numeric goal: 39 individual interviews; actual number of interviews: 85) with beneficiary representatives, other community members (e.g., local or traditional authorities and other stakeholders), the implementing team, government personnel and line ministries, NGOs, embassies/international organisations, and any relevant actors. The consultancy team developed a questionnaire, which was available in English and local languages. The individual key-informant interviews involved the following participants: beneficiaries

(53%), local government/authorities (38%), staff of YAD (8%), and staff of Fambul Tik (1%).

3. **Focus-group discussion**s (numeric goal: 10 FGDs; actual number of interviews: 13) with different groups of beneficiaries in a sample of villages from the evaluated projects as case studies. The consultancy team developed a questionnaire using KoBoToolbox as a data-aggregation platform, which was available in English and local languages to allow for direct contact with the beneficiaries and guarantee data quality. Translation of the questions and answers took place on site with the support of the local data-collection team, as some of the beneficiaries did not speak English or Krio.

4. **Online survey with key stakeholders** (initial numeric goal: at least 15 responses; actual number of responses: 11): The consultancy team developed one online survey in English that was filled out by institutional stakeholders. These included representatives from the implementing team, partners, and any other relevant stakeholder with access to the internet (e.g., representatives of donor agencies and government). The online survey had 11 responses and involved the following types of participants: staff from YAD (45%), local government/authorities (18%), Fambul Tik (18%), BENGO (9%), and international organisations (e.g., UN agencies) (9%). This data source did not aim to include beneficiaries and other local actors but focused on institutional stakeholders only. The resulting data supported the triangulation of results from the other data sources.

8.1 Data collection, sampling strategy, and analytical methods

For data-collection, the evaluation team designed digital forms using XLSForm standards and deployed them on KoBoToolbox. The tools allowed for digital data collection online and offline with any device with a browser as well as with a dedicated application for tablets and Android phones. This digital data-collection tool is being used by many international development agencies and can speed up interviews and surveys in an integrated way and use cloud platforms even in remote areas. The tool allows for real-time supervision of data collection and includes functionalities such as registration of GPS coordinates, area/distance measurements, photos, audio, video, and all types of quantitative and qualitative data. Using mobile devices to collect data allows for efficiency and quality gains, particularly concerning the prevention of data-quality issues. Data were collected using an online/offline digital form connected to a secure data aggregator in the cloud. The data-collection form and results mostly focused on questions related to access to the information outlined above and in the inception report.

The final sample sizes and the sampling approach were developed jointly with the client while preserving the independence of the evaluation team. The evaluation focused on qualitative data collection, and samples considered a minimal numeric goal of 49 key-informant interviews/focus-group discussions as reference. The actual sample for qualitative interviews includes 85 interviews and covers both local stakeholders and other stakeholders at national and international levels.

During the collection period, an effort was made to ensure that data were collected in an equivalent number of interviews in each of the sampled beneficiary villages. As can be seen below, the number of participants in this study and their experience in each project is balanced, which contributed to a fairer assessment of the results of this study, as can be seen in the charts below:

In which projects were/are you involved? (Multiple selection)
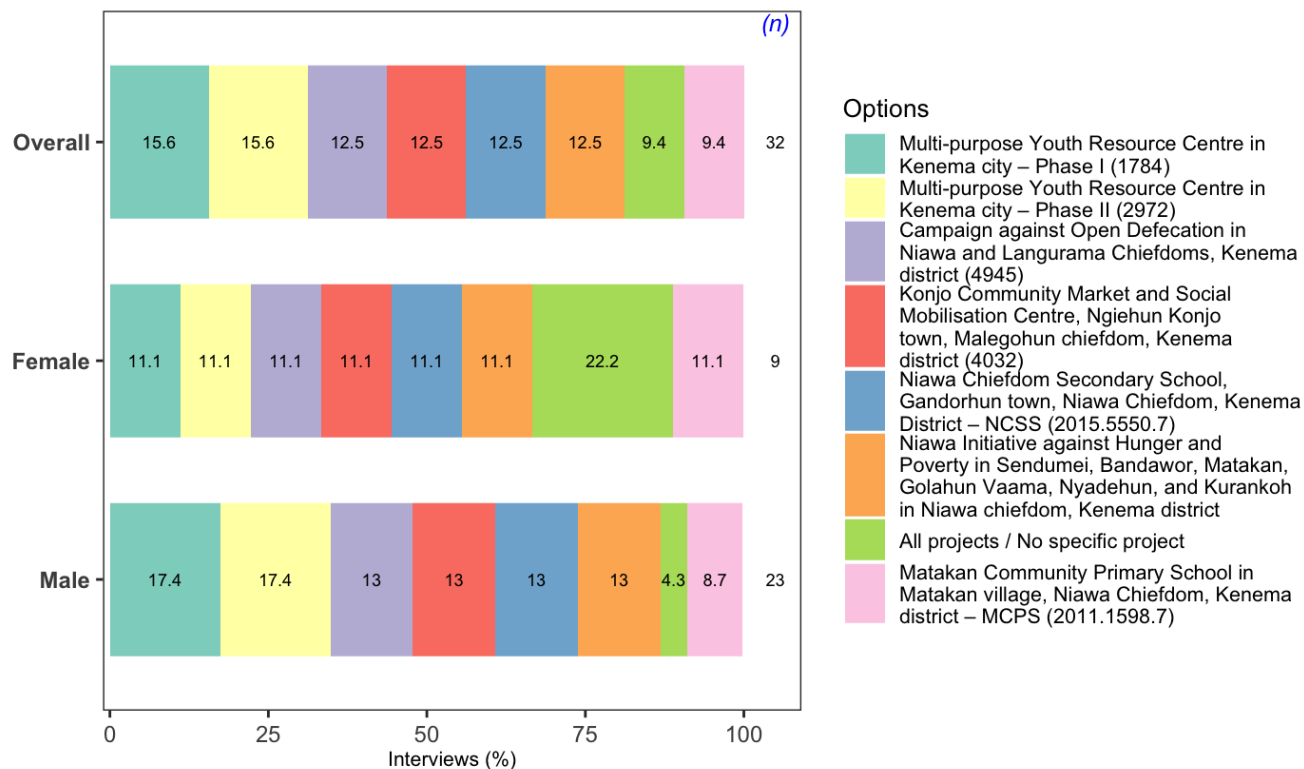
Figure 1. Project involvement of the online survey respondents.

Which project were/are you part of? (Multiple selection)

n = 85 interviews
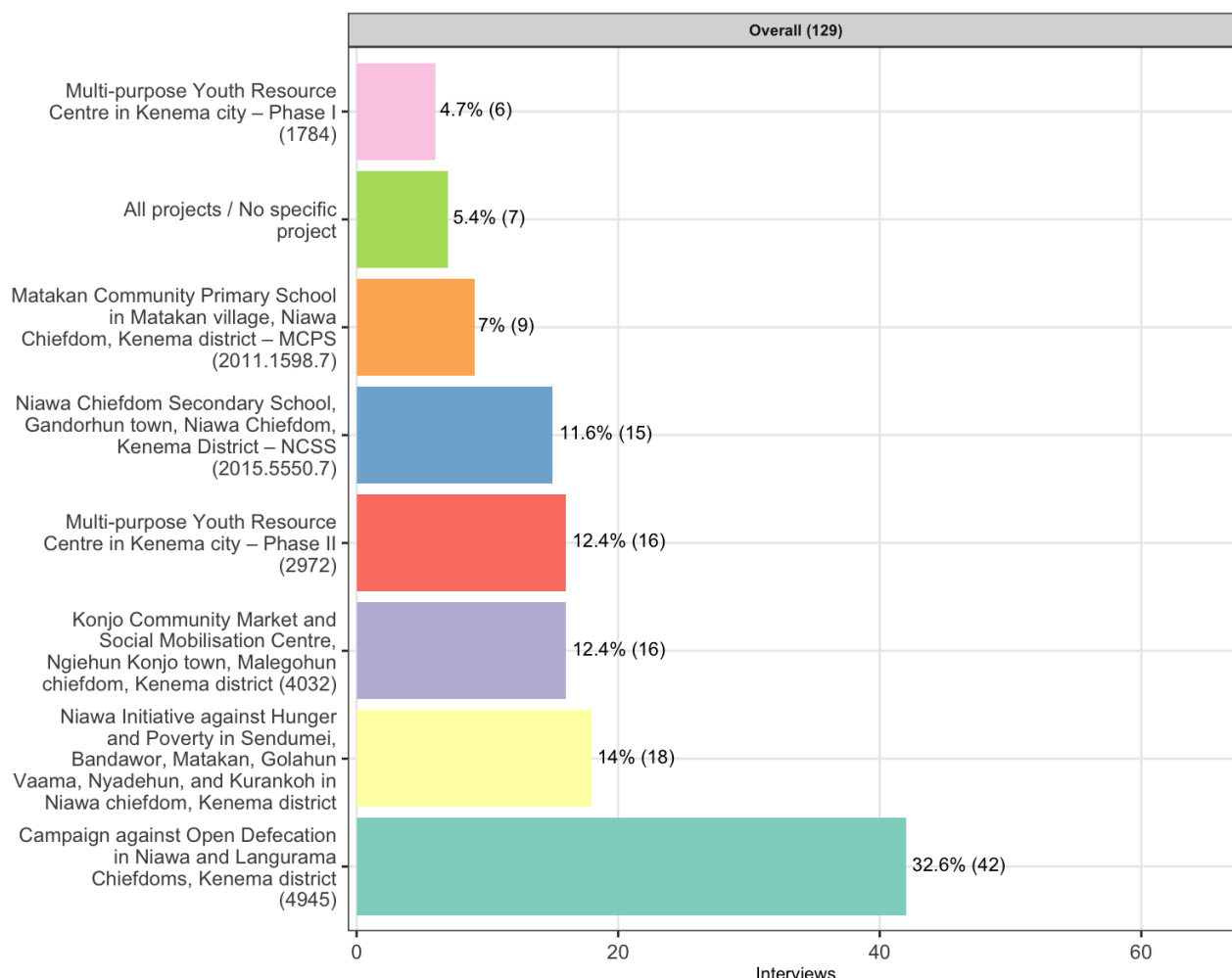
Figure 2. Project involvement of the interviewed key informants.

This reports uses the following analytical algorithms and tools:

- **Text network graphs from the text responses**: The text network shows the network of co-occurrences of the most frequent words used by interview respondents, after the so-called stop words have been automatically removed (e.g., articles, prepositions, and other words that do not convey significant meaning). The blue lines indicate how often the words occur together. The thicker the line, the more often they occur together in the dataset. The graph presents the most frequent words in the centre of the plot and groups them according to their co-occurrence. Text networks are common tools for natural language processing, namely for visualising qualitative data.

- **Wordclouds (sentiments) from the text responses**: Sentiment analysis is an important part of emotion computing, and wordcloud is a way of text visualisation. Combining the two sentiments positive and negative, we can reveal and display people's attitudes and perspectives through their comments or articles. We have used the bing[13] lexicon from

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[13] Sentiment analysis with tidy data at: https://www.tidytextmining.com/sentiment.html.

Bing Liu and collaborators. It categorises words in a binary fashion into positive and negative. We have complemented the sentiment analysis wordcloud with a barplot showing frequencies of positive and negative words.

- **Stemmed words from the text responses**: Stemming words to their core parts allows for aggregation of different words with similar structure (e.g., singular and plurals or the words with the same root or radical). This is a common technique in natural language processing and should be seen together with the network co-occurrence plot as well as the random sample below. The frequency of the stemmed words is shown in percentages. Percentages exceeding 100% indicate that the word count is more than the number of respondents. The percentages of the words are irrelevant regarding co-occurrence with other words unlike the text network plots.

- **Bayesian boot plots for scores and numeric data**: The graphs represent the average estimates using a Bayesian bootstrap (re-sampling) method with 4,000 replicates. This allows us to estimate the average and 95% confidence intervals for each one of these indicators. Bootstrapping is a useful alternative to the traditional method of hypothesis testing, as it mitigates some of the pitfalls encountered within the traditional approach, mainly in terms of assumption violations. This ensures that the results are data-driven and do not need to assume theoretical distributions.

8.2   Limitations

1. Due to budgetary constraints, the evaluation did not include household surveys with a random sample of beneficiaries, which could have helped to quantify impacts using survey methods. Despite that, the qualitative interviews together with the documentary evidence and the results from the online survey allowed for the triangulation of results and the achievement of the evaluation's goals.
2. The evaluation was conducted during the holiday period for schools in Sierra Leone, which meant that not all students from all the training courses were present in the camp for the interviews. Interviews took place only with students from the sewing course, who were active at the centre during the data-collection period.
3. Due to the rainy season, the poor condition of the roads caused delays in the arrival of the interview team in some assessed communities. For this reason, not all beneficiaries could participate in the interviews, as they had to work on the fields.

8.3   Ethical considerations

The interviews have adhered to the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) at all times. All forms included the clarification for informed consent in their introduction section. All respondents have been informed about the specific purposes for processing the data, about who would have access to data (e.g., evaluators, auditors, and project staff), and that data would be treated confidentially. Data-collection procedures ensured data security by enforcing strong password encryption of datasets or anonymous data collection.

9   Evaluation findings

This section presents the key findings holistically but grounded in the primary and secondary data. The participatory evaluation approach strongly values the inputs from the evaluation participants combined with evidence from the document review for triangulation. The annexes contain detailed information about participants' demographics.

Summary of <u>key characteristics of the evaluation participants</u>:

- The 72 individual interviews and 13 focus-group discussions (85 **individual and group qualitative interviews** in total) involved a total of 158 participants (average of 12 participants per focus group). The qualitative data collection included the following stakeholders: beneficiaries (51), local government/authorities (27), YAD staff (6), and Fambul Tik staff (1). Additional information including charts is available in the annexes.

- Among the 11 **online survey** anonymous respondents were staff from YAD (5), local government/authorities (2), Fambul Tik (2), BENGO (1), and international organisations (e.g., UN agencies) (1). Most of the participants were male (7 or 73%) and based in Kenema City and (8) and Germany (3).

9.1   Relevance

Key findings

i: The projects have very high relevance considering the needs of their target groups. The main needs reported by beneficiaries were hunger, water-related diseases, and poor access to education. This finding is in line with the results of the sentiment analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the individual and group interviews. When asked about the relevance of the support considering the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, 75% of the key words used by the respondents were classified as positive by the sentiment-analysis algorithm.

ii: The projects' designs including local frameworks were highly appropriate for achieving their objectives. This was reported by different stakeholders in the online survey and the KIIs. Despite the overall good design, there are indications from the collected data that the duration of the projects should be increased to a) enable a more sustainable contribution to capacity development and b) avoid more than one project happening at the same time in a short period, which can overwhelm the partner team. The results indicate that price increases during the project implementation have been a challenge, which suggests the need for improvement in terms of budgeting (e.g., adjusted unit prices and provisions for contingencies).

iii: All project proposals aimed at reaching vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly, and people with disabilities. They followed the human rights-based approach and the principle of 'leaving no-one behind'. Despite that, the actual implementation of cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the environment) in the projects' designs has potential of improvement considering the survey results.

The table below shows the evaluation team's conclusions based on the multiple information sources including documentary evidence.

KEY QUESTIONS – RELEVANCE	PERFORMANCE (Evaluative conclusion)					WEIGHT
	A = 5	B = 4	C = 3	D = 2	E = 1	
EQ1: What is the level of relevance of the projects considering the needs and priorities of their target groups?	5.0					40%
EQ2: Was the design of the projects appropriate for achieving their objectives including logical frameworks?	5.0					30%
EQ3: To what extent did the design sufficiently take into account cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender, minorities, persons with disabilities, the environment)?			3.0			30%
Note: A = very good; B = good; C = fair; D = poor; E = very poor	Result:				4.6	A

Table 4. Score for the criterion 'relevance' by the evaluation team.

EQ1: What is the level of relevance of the projects considering the needs and priorities of their target groups?

There is evidence that the design and implementation of all projects have been informed by an analysis of the needs and priorities of vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth, adolescents, and elderly. The main needs mentioned by the beneficiaries were hunger, water-related diseases, and low access to education. Especially during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, these needs were most urgent in Sierra Leone, as can be seen in the World Bank's 2021 report on Welfare and Poverty Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic in West and Central Africa. This finding is in line with results of the sentiment analysis of the interview question: "What is your opinion about the work done by Fambul Tik and YAD?" 89% of the keywords used by the respondents were positive (see more about sentiment analysis in section 8.1). Regarding the relevance of the support considering the beneficiaries' needs and priorities, 75% of the keywords used were positive.

In Sierra Leone, it is mandatory for all children aged six and older to attend primary school and at least three years of secondary school. According to the OCHA Sierra Leone report from 2015, the number of children in primary education has increased since the end of the civil war in 2002, but challenges such as the outbreak of Ebola and Covid-19 have led to the closure of schools, directly affecting the insertion of children in schools in a continuous manner. According to the same report, a 2010/11 school census by the Ministry of Education found that 55% of the schools were in need of repair, 38% of which have no functioning toilets.

Given this scenario, the implementation of the MCPS (Matakan Community Primary School) and the NCSS (Niawa Chiefdom Secondary School) is relevant to the needs of vulnerable children, who are periodically prevented from continuing their studies by the sanitary crises (Ebola and Covid-19) mentioned above as well as the lack of adequate structure in the schools such as toilets and drinking water. According to the plan of the two projects and confirmed by field observation, the schools were equipped corresponding to the needs of the target groups, as both projects had provided classrooms with study materials, toilets, and water wells.

With the aim to reduce poverty by rebuilding social infrastructures, promoting socio-economic development, strengthening cohesion, and increasing individual income, the KCM project (Konjo Community Market and Social Mobilisation Centre) addressed another main need in Sierra Leone: income generation. Through the construction of a community market and a social

mobilisation centre for about 16,000 beneficiaries in Ngiehun Kojo and its surroundings, the KCM project contributed to providing vulnerable women and youths with a safe place to sell their goods and hold meetings.

The MYRC (Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre) Phases I and II mainly targeted youth communities to increase their level of education, strengthen cohesion, and provide access to professional skills that could enable youths in Kenema City to become self-reliant and economically independent. Income and employment shocks are considered indirect consequences of Covid-19, according to the World Bank Report 2021, which contributed to monetary poverty in Sierra Leone. Also in Kenema City, the youths are in need of more job opportunities as they face challenges to get professional formation and experience. This was demonstrated by one of the key informants, who was asked: "What would be your two main suggestions for improvement?"

> *"I suggest that YAD expand their skills-training facilities with the incorporation of electrical courses, painting, etc. Young people have different interests, we need to cover most of them. Help people to have start-up kits, such as for the students that have graduated in the tailoring or screen-printing courses, because after training, people cannot afford to buy their own materials. In the job ads, employers always ask for years of experience, which makes young people never apply for them, so my suggestion is to YAD to plead with the institutions to provide internships for us to acquire experience. YAD is affiliated with other youth groups; we ask for more leadership training to build capacities of the executives and leaders of these organisations to be active in conducting their own projects." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Kenema City)*

The NIHP (Niawa Initiative Against Hunger and Poverty) has contributed positively to address the problem of hunger in the same communities, which are mostly made up of small farmers. This can be exemplified by one of the KII responses:

> *"The project is relevant to us because during the work YAD provided us with seeds and agricultural tools. At the same time, they provided us with food, just for us to continue our work. YAD has reduced hunger and poverty in this community." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Matakan)*

Access to water and sanitation has been improved since the end of the civil war. According to a mapping conducted by the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MoEWR) in 2012, of the 3,659 water points in Kenema, 772 were partially damaged or broken and 151 were under construction (25% non-functional).[14] The poor access to safe water and lack of basic sanitation facilities contribute to the spread of water-related diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea. According to the National Action Plan for Health Security (2018-2022), in 2013, a total of 369 cholera cases affected 12 of the 13 districts in the country. Corroborated by the beneficiaries' responses, one of the main needs was to have a safe and clean place to defecate, rather than doing so in bushes or near rivers. Thus, the implementation of the Campaign against Open Defecation is highly relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries, especially for women and children, who no longer need to feel insecure by defecating far from their homes, nor threatened by contamination from diseases.

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[14] OCHA Sierra Leone – Kenema district (2015).
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/sierra-leone.

"If I only said that it was relevant, this would be an understatement, because for me this project is extremely important and relevant. I know that they implemented WASH activities in two chiefdoms, Niawa and Langurama. These are communities that are challenged with basic toilet facilities and water issues. There were many issues of waste disposal outdoors in these chiefdoms, so having toilets for communities to use helped significantly in reducing water- and sanitation-related diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, etc." (Participant: Local government/authority, Based: Kenena city)

"Before COD, we used to go to the bushes to defecate, because we did not have any facilities like the toilets now. Having toilets brings us cleanliness, and it has reduced the rates of diseases, so this project is really relevant for us." (Participant: Beneficiary Based: Golahun Vaama)

The results of the online survey confirm the interview results and the documentary evidence. About 91% of the survey participants considered the projects' relevance regarding the needs and priorities of the target groups to be 'very high' (73%) or 'high' (18%).

EQ2: Was the design of the projects appropriate for achieving their objectives, including the logical frameworks?

In the wake of Sierra Leone's civil war, the projects promote community ownership of the peace process by invoking the efficacy of local traditions. The local engagement has become central to peacebuilding, both in theory and in practice. The main goal of the COD was, for 21 months, to improve the health and hygiene situation of 20 villages in Niawa and Langurama chiefdoms by providing them with public toilets and sensitising and educating the population about hygiene. Extensive capacity building and awareness campaigns were carried out as part of the project, explaining to people the need to use toilets, for environmental hygiene, and for cleanliness and preventing them from defecating around the villages in the future. The collected data indicate that this project has been successfully implemented, as evidenced by the results from the online survey in the figure below.
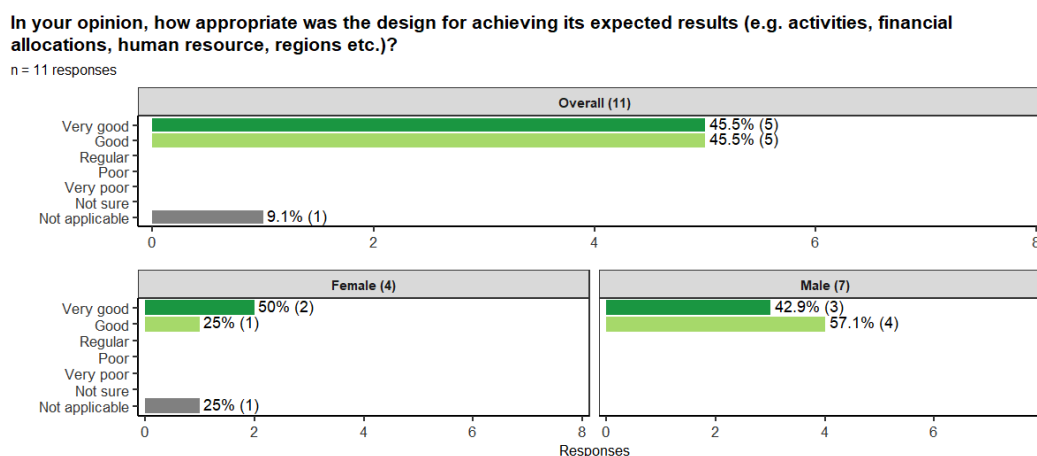
Figure 3. Opinions of the online survey respondents about the projects' designs for their output achievement.

The logical frameworks of the evaluated projects are clear and show a coherent design and clear indication of the expected results to be achieved. The intervention logics explain the rationale for achieving the expected results, and the activities proposed are appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcomes.

Despite the overall good design, there are indications from the collected data that the duration of the projects should be increased to a) enable a more sustainable contribution to capacity development and b) avoid that more than one project is happening at the same time in a short period, which can overwhelm the partner team. Some respondents suggested that projects have at least six additional months of duration.

The results indicate that price increases during the project implementation have been a challenge, which suggests the need for improvement in terms of budgeting (e.g., adjusted unit prices and provisions for contingencies). The local context has led YAD to adopt a 'food-for-work' approach, which consists of providing food for beneficiaries as incentive in exchange for their volunteer work (e.g., construction of toilets). This, however, is not accepted as an eligible cost by BMZ. To overcome that restriction, YAD has exhausted its own supplies and would need funding for purchasing food. We recommend revisiting options which can include the promotion of food vouchers with local market owners and the commissioning of construction services to worker associations, which would promote youth employment and the gaining of work experience.

EQ3: To what extent did the design sufficiently take into account cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender, minorities, persons with disabilities, and the environment)?

All project proposals explicitly prioritise reaching vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The project proposals, field observations, and beneficiary responses show that the implementation of the projects followed a human rights-based approach and the principle of 'leaving no-one behind'. In the COD project, the great need for toilets in the communities was due to the insecurity of vulnerable people when defecating in open places, near rivers, and in the forests. According to the project logframe, more than 95% of the women and children in the Niawa and Langurama chiefdoms were suffering from cholera and diarrhoea. For not having to move far from their houses to defecate at night, they used to do so close to their houses, spreading faeces all around the place. This situation became worse during the rainy season. In order to address the needs of these vulnerable groups, the structure of the toilet blocks followed the construction of five squat holes classified by gender (two squat holes each for women and men), age and physical conditions (one squat hole for children and people with disabilities). Some interviewees mentioned that to empower the women, the CHM (Community Hygiene Monitors) in the COD are mainly composed of women.

Figure 4. Block of community toilets with five squat holes separated by gender, age, and physical conditions in Matakan village, Niawa Chiefdom.

According to the project plan of the Community Market and Social Mobilisation Centre in Ngiehun Kojo, one of the goals was to end gender inequality and the marginalisation of young people in the region. The project aimed to provide capacity building to address the gap between men and women, young and old, bosses and subordinates, through the creation of a common space where they could meet and discuss social problems openly and without shame. According to the beneficiaries' responses, the project has achieved this goal, since the building is often used by children for studying and by women, who are the main business owners at the market. Regarding the other projects such as the Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre Phase II, KIIs indicate that priority was given to women in the selection of applicants for the training courses. In the NIHP, the key informants suggest that people with disabilities receive tasks such as watering the garden, proving that the ongoing project is implementing strategies for inclusion of this group. Some selected responses are presented below.

> *"The characteristics of beneficiaries we added in our proposal were the underprivileged youth and women. The toilets we built, for example, are adapted for people with disabilities and separated by gender. YAD has a strong culture of gender equality, and one of their responsibilities is to include all those cross-cutting issues in the projects. When the students apply to the courses, women receive priority on the waiting list. At the beginning of the COD, we offered training for the elected hygiene monitors, whose majority is formed by women." (Participant: Staff of Fambul Tik, Based: Germany)*

> *"They have been well considered. In the Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre, people with disabilities have the infrastructure to access the building. In the same centre, the number of girls and boys are equal." (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)*

"It was highly considered. The projects don't discriminate against anyone, in every way they have been considered. In the COD project, toilets for children, disabled, and women were built. In the Initiative against Hunger project, people with disabilities have tasks like watering the garden. In women's empowerment, you can see here in YAD that there are a lot of women, and the same happens in the projects, because there were a lot of women participating in the training." (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)

The consideration of cross-cutting issues in the projects was rated as 'very good' or 'good' by 55% of survey respondents, while a relatively high rate of 27% found it 'regular' and 18% 'not applicable'. This suggests room for improvement for the next projects, especially for people with disabilities in terms of including them more in the implementation of the activities, following the example mentioned in the third KII answer above. In the two projects about the construction of the primary and secondary schools, for instance, the beneficiaries (teachers and students) did not report adapting the classes to the needs of children with disabilities.

9.2 Coherence

Key findings

i: The extent of synergies between the projects and government actions, institutional strategies, and the policy scenario was very high. Several priority areas of Sierra Leone's national development plans were addressed by the projects. The project activities made relevant contributions to national policies and strategies.

ii: There was little coordination with interventions by other NGOs to avoid overlapping, leverage contributions, and catalyse joint work. Partnerships were created between the projects and other NGOs, for example, for WASH workshops or the construction of the MYRC. However, for education-related projects or NIHP, the coordination with NGOs needs to be improved.

iii: There was a high alignment between the projects and the Sustainable Development Goals. Especially the SDGs 1, 2, 4, and 6 were covered, responding to the fields of poverty, hunger, education, and water.

KEY QUESTIONS – COHERENCE	PERFORMANCE (Evaluative conclusion)					WEIGHT
	A = 5	B = 4	C = 3	D = 2	E = 1	
EQ4: To what extent were there synergies (or trade-offs) with government actions, institutional strategies, and the policy scenario?	5.0					40%
EQ5: To what extent have the projects been coordinated with interventions by other NGOs to avoid overlaps, leverage contributions, and catalyse joint work?				2.0		20%
EQ6: How closely are the projects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (external coherence)?	5.0					40%
Note: A = very good; B = good; C = fair; D = poor; E = very poor	**Result:**			4.4		B

Table 5. Score for the criterion 'coherence' by the evaluation team.

EQ4: To what extent were there synergies (or trade-offs) with government actions, institutional strategies, and the policy scenario?

Internal coherence is high with evidence of synergies and interlinkages between all projects and interventions carried out by Fambul Tik and partners, as described below. Through the seven projects, in their quest to complement the efforts of the government of Sierra Leone, Fambul Tik and YAD have worked to address the national government policy priority areas. During the period of implementation, they were able to approach the priority focus areas of the country's national development plans such as the economy, health, and education.

The aftermath of the civil war has required the country to develop strategies to restore its most essential structures. The health crisis caused by Ebola has posed a further challenge for Sierra Leone to fulfil its policies. National development plans, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Agenda for Prosperity (A4P, 2013-2018), were created with the end of the civil war to serve as the country's main development framework. However, with the crisis caused by the Ebola virus in 2015, it was necessary to create a third national restoration plan: the National Ebola Recovery Strategy (NERS) with the objectives of (i) sustaining zero Ebola infections, (ii) restoring socio-economic services, and (iii) turning the economy back on sustainable development tracks with the implementation of the A4P. This plan, completed in June 2017, was followed by the launch of the SDGs by the UN, which all its member states were obliged to meet in their national policies.[15] Those plans were founded on the basis of the main challenges faced by the country, which can be seen in the Advanced Draft Report on Adaptation of the Goals in Sierra Leone (2016) such as poverty, vulnerability, and inequality aggravated by Ebola, inflationary crisis, foreign-market dependency, climate change (e.g., floods, loss of fauna and flora), civil conflicts involving human trafficking, drug trafficking, piracy, and terrorism. In order to address these problems, the country's most recent Economic Development Documents – National Development Plan (2019-2023)[16] list eight policy strategies (clusters): (i) human capital development, (ii) diversifying the economy and promoting growth, (iii) infrastructure and economic competitiveness, (iv) governance and accountability for results, (v) empowering women, children, adolescents, and persons with disability, (vi) youth employment, sports, and migration, (vii) addressing vulnerabilities and building resilience, and (viii) means of implementation. The projects assessed here align well with these national strategic development frameworks.

The document review indicates the consistency of the intervention with the relevant national and international goals. The impact made on education by building schools in vulnerable villages, improving health by providing toilets and hygiene training, teaching conflict resolution, promoting vocational courses for young people, and fighting hunger by providing agricultural training provide a relevant contribution to the key national policies and strategies. The positive responses from key project stakeholders in the online survey corroborate this interpretation.

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[15] Advanced draft report on the adaptation of the goals in Sierra Leone – United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2016).

[16] Sierra Leone Economic Development Documents – National Development Plan, 2019–23. International Monetary Fund.

To what extent were there synergies (or trade-offs) with government actions, institutional strategies and the policy scenario?

n = 11 responses
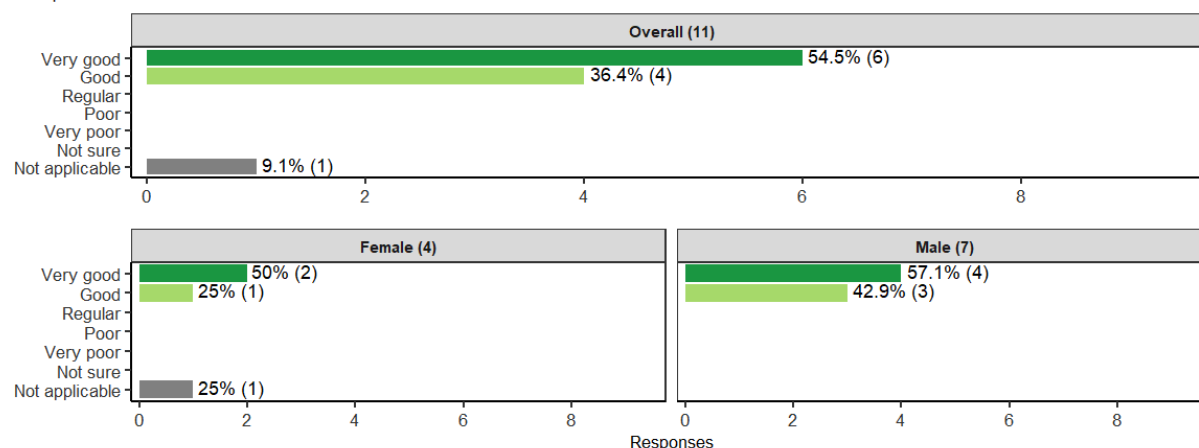
Figure 5. Assessment by the online survey participants of the level of synergies between the project implementation and policies.

EQ5: To what extent have the projects been coordinated with other interventions by other NGOs to avoid overlaps, leverage contributions, and catalyse joint work?

Results suggest that all projects complemented other government interventions. Coordination with government authorities such as ministries took place, adding value and progress to the implementation of the funded projects.

The collected evidence suggests that there were multiple partnerships with other NGOs, such the one with SEND[17], providing workshops on WASH for the COD. According to the KCM project proposal, in order to avoid duplication of efforts to combat the spread of Covid-19, a District Covid Emergency Response Committee (DICOVERC) was created to coordinate grassroots interventions. This is an example of best practice. YAD and Welthungerhilfe were appointed by the government to represent Kenema district in DICOVERC, where both worked together to disseminate information among NGOs in the district.

YAD has partnerships with other youth organisations, according to their website (http://www.yadsl.org/), such as the Burmer Youth Development Association (BYDA), Pujehun Youth Developmental Organisation (PYDO), and Action Start Youth Club (ASYC). According to the qualitative interviews, the members of the Action Start Youth have reported that they supported YAD in the construction of the MYRC Phase I and, currently, they support each other's youth activities.

For the MCPS and NCSS projects, the main partnerships mentioned in the reports are those with the Ministries of Education and Health (e.g., construction of toilets and water wells and schools). Both proposals mention the participation of PLAN International, which has, however, only acted as an observer of the activities.

Around 82% of the survey participants rated the extent of coordinating projects with other NGOs to avoid overlaps, leverage contribution, and catalyse joint work 'very good' (45%) or 'good' (36%). This shows that the work in partnership with the NGOs mentioned above was coherent

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[17] https://sendsierraleone.com/.

and generated results for the beneficiary projects, but it can be improved with the inclusion of more organisations in projects related to education, for example, and to the NIHP, since there is no evidence of partnerships with NGOs for these. According to FT staff, YAD hosts regular inter-agency meetings that take place in its premises, which are chaired by YAD's Director. In addition, YAD was officially selected by local NGOs in Kenema and approved by the central government to be there at a special meeting organised by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. Since the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO) does not have a regional representation in Kenema, YAD has been active to promote exchange among NGOs in the district. According to FT, YAD has had representatives assigned for WASH coordination meetings, as well as for the Agriculture and Food Security coordination meetings. The same occurs for the Technical and Vocational (TECVOC) Council, and there is someone assigned for the general District Development Coordination Committee (DDCC).

EQ6: How closely are the projects aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (external coherence)?

The evaluation team could not find explicit references to specific SDGs in project design and reporting documents. However, the YAD summary reports (2017, 2018, 2019/2020) refer to sustainable development goals. These reports mention that YAD's projects are aligned with SDGs and take into consideration the national strategic development framework. YAD supported the focus of the government of Sierra Leone on what it considers the country's accelerator SDGs, namely SDG4 (on inclusive education) and SDG16 (peace, justice, and inclusive societies, emphasising building strong institutions). The two goals remained leading dimensions to the transformational agenda of the state together with the SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 10.

The seven projects addressed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals[18]. The goal of the MYRC Phase II aimed at reducing poverty (SDG 1) and providing economic growth (SDG 8) in Kenema City by improving the education of 1,500 youths with professional courses. Similarly, the KCM project implemented measures to reduce poverty by rebuilding social infrastructures, promoting socio-economic development, strengthening cohesion, and increasing individual income through the construction of a community market and a social mobilisation centre for about 16,000 beneficiaries in Ngiehun Kojo community and its surroundings.

The *SDG 6 – Clean water and sanitation* was also addressed. The work done helped to improve the health and hygiene situation of 20 villages by providing public toilets and hygiene education, including in the COD project. Also, covering this topic, we may mention the implementation of hygiene facilities (e.g., water wells and toilets) at school, as was the case for the construction plan for the MCPS.

The *SDG 4 – Quality education* was addressed through increasing the accessibility of the children to a school by building the Matakan Community Primary School and the Niawa Chiefdom Secondary School. The engineering project for the school includes enough infrastructure to provide education in a safe environment.

Other projects aimed at tackling different aspects concerning the alignments of the project goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, including the MYRC in Kenema City (Phases I and II) and the KMC. Among the actions covered by these projects are the measures to *reduce inequalities (SDG 10)*, such as promoting gender equal opportunities. These projects provide strategic

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[18] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/sierraleone.

elements to improve the living conditions of the general population, but mainly the youths, to reduce the proportion of youths not in employment, education, or training. Therefore, the actions help to create the fundamentals for achieving *decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)* in Sierra Leone. The formation of the Konjo Youth Development Association (KYDA) provides a good example of the link to the SDG 8. The goal of the project was to reduce poverty by rebuilding social infrastructure, promoting socio-economic development, strengthening cohesion, and increasing individual income covering about 16,000 beneficiaries in Ngiehun Kojo municipality and its surroundings, Malegohun Chiefdom, who live mainly from subsistence farming and have an average monthly income of € 20.

In general, the support is well aligned with international development goals. This is in line with the results from the online survey: 82% of the participants rated this question to be very good and good (see below). This evaluation disaggregated by sex followed the same pattern as the general assessment involving all participants.
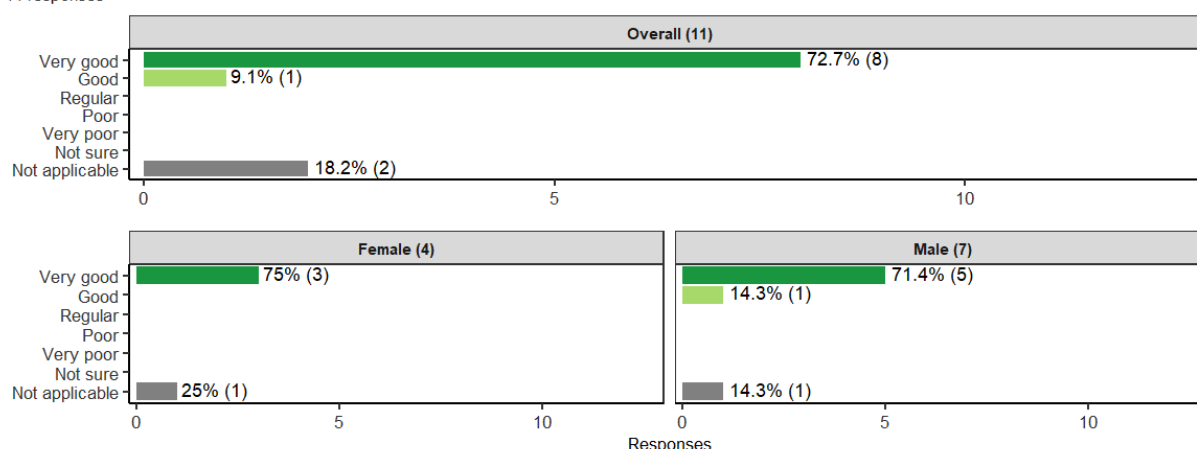
Figure 6. Opinions from the online survey participants regarding the alignment between the projects with the SDGs.

9.3   Effectiveness

Key findings

i: Planned output and outcome targets were achieved to a great extent (see annex with Result Matrix of Progress against Indicators for detailed information by project). The majority of outcome and output indicators were achieved. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected some of the project activities and delayed some indicators.

ii: The projects' implementation was highly adapted to factors influencing the achievement of the objectives and results. The major factor impacting the projects was the Covid-19 pandemic together with related increases in input prices. By rearranging project plans and financial resources, the projects were able to cope with this and other issues along their implementation (e.g., food for work restrictions).

iii: Participaction of key stakeholders during planning and implementation phases was high. Collaboration with implementing organisations, relevant ministries, and local government authorities took place. Beneficiaries participated in the project activities and took over important responsibilities.

KEY QUESTIONS – EFFECTIVENESS	PERFORMANCE (Evaluative conclusion)					WEIGHT
	A = 5	B = 4	C = 3	D = 2	E = 1	
EQ7: To what extent have planned output and outcome targets been achieved?		4.0				40%
EQ8: How well was the implementation adapted to the major external and internal factors influencing the achievement of the objectives and results?	5.0					30%
EQ9: To what extent did the projects ensure the continuous participation of their key stakeholders in the planning and implementation?	5.0					30%
Note: A = very good; B = good; C = fair; D = poor; E = very poor	Result:				4.6	A

Table 6. Score for the criterion 'effectiveness' by the evaluation team.

EQ7: To what extent have planned output and outcome targets been achieved?

To answer this question we triangulated evidence from primary data collection and available documentary evidence (e.g., project proposals and internal YAD reports). A detailed account of the progress of each project against its indicators is available in the annexes (see Result Matrix of Progress against Indicators). Considering the challenge of Covid-19, the projects demonstrated good achievement regarding outcomes and outputs. For the NIHP project[19], it was not possible to assess the achievement of the results against the indicators, as the project is still ongoing and the evaluation team did not have access to reports. YAD's team provided an update on the documented indicators that have been monitored, which are complementary to those from the NIHP project logframe.

Among the other six finalised projects, we can highlight the good performance of the Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre in Kenema City and the COD project. For the KCM project (Konjo Community Market and Social Mobilisation Centre), the delivery of the building and its use as a meeting place for approximately 5,000 youths and women from the Ngiehun Konjo community was achieved, but the objective of holding the planned number of meetings and training sessions on family conflict resolution, for example, was only partially achieved. The building structure, however, meets all the planned requirements in its design, in number of meeting rooms, toilets, well, and resources such as television, freezer, and electricity supply, as verified during field observation.

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[19] With a budget of 576,348.93 EUR, the project objective is to improve the socio-economic and nutritional situation of 300 youth- and female-headed households within 36 months from August 2021 to April 2024, reaching about 2500 family members in eight villages in Niawa Chiefdom, Kenema District, eastern Sierra Leone. Inland Valley Swamps (IVS) are irrigated at community level with a simple technology, easy maintenance, and without land ownership barriers. The main project activities include a) the cultivation of 25 hectares of IVS and 25 hectares of boldium for the cultivation of rice, cassava, and vegetables, the main staple foods in Sierra Leone, b) the construction of a grain hall and the installation of a rice mill and cassava-processing equipment to enable beneficiaries to achieve added value for their crops through processing before marketing, and c) capacity building of the beneficiaries in simple accounting, household-income management, gender equality in households, basic human rights, and nutrition of children.

In the MCPS (Matakan Community Primary School) project, of the four planned outcome indicators, three were fully achieved, while one indicator concerning the number of teachers paid by the government (ministry of education) was partially achieved. The target was that at least three teachers would be hired and paid by the government in 2013, but only two were reported. According to interview responses from this evaluation, this target still needs to be met, as residents of Matakan village reported contributing a monthly fee to pay for volunteer teachers at the school, while the number of students at the school has increased considerably over the years.

In the NCSS project, of the three planned outcome indicators, all were fully achieved. The planned secondary school structure was built, equipped, and is operational, as evidenced by field observation. The effectiveness of this project is demonstrated by the results obtained through the performance of the school students in the national education examination, as reported by one of the key-informant teachers. There is also evidence of additional public investment leveraged locally, provided to the Gandorghun community for extending the school structure with public funds. However, as with the MCPS project, the number of qualified and paid teachers at the school still needs to be improved.

For MYRC Phase I, of the four planned outcome indicators, three were fully and one partially achieved, namely regarding the number of young people using the digital library per month. Despite the target of 700 monthly library users (350 male and 350 female), the latest (2019) data indicate that the total number of monthly users was 89 between January and April of that year. The insufficient level of computer training of local young people seems to be among one of the reasons for the low usage of the library. This should be addressed by future projects.

For MYRC Phase II, one indicator was fully and two were partially achieved. The latest data are from 2019 and indicate that the planned number of students enrolled in the institution (500), the number of students for each course, and the number of teachers employed in the institution (10), were not fully achieved. The justification provided for these results were the restrictions caused by Covid-19, since the government had to put all learning activities on hold during the period to halt the spread of the virus.

In general, the achievement of objectives and results was perceived positively by interview and survey respondents (of the latter, about 55% found it 'very good' and 36% 'good'). This is in line with the results of the qualitative interviews and the documentary evidence.
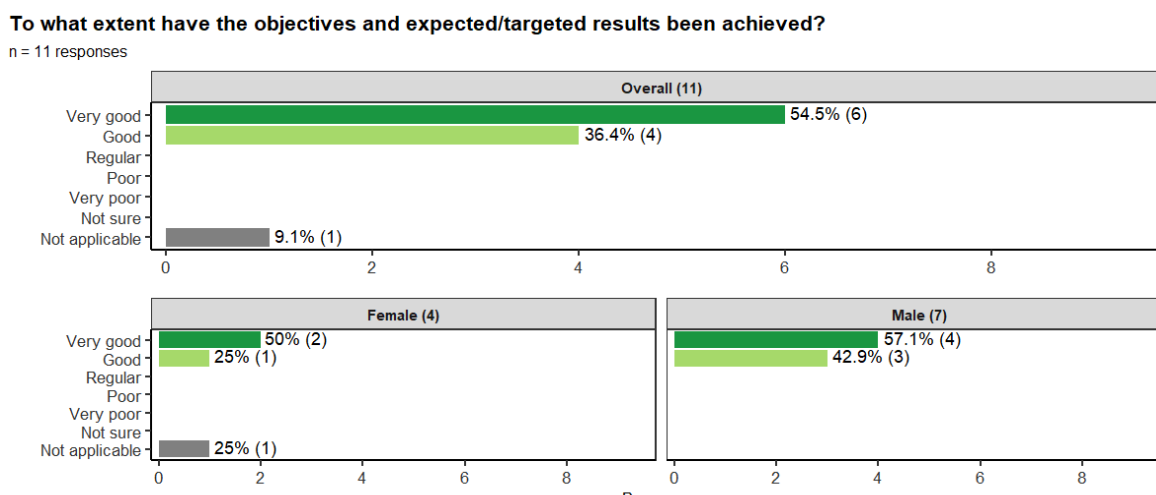

Figure 7. Opinions from the online survey on the achievement of the objective and expected results.

EQ8: How well was the implementation adapted to the major external and internal factors influencing the achievement of the objectives and results?

The participants of the online survey evaluated very positively the adaptability of the projects to cope with factors influencing their achievements, as shown in the figure below. Overall, about 90% of the participants replied positively: 36% 'very good', 45% 'good', and 9% 'regular'. When the data were disaggregated by sex, the same pattern was observed as for the overall sample,.
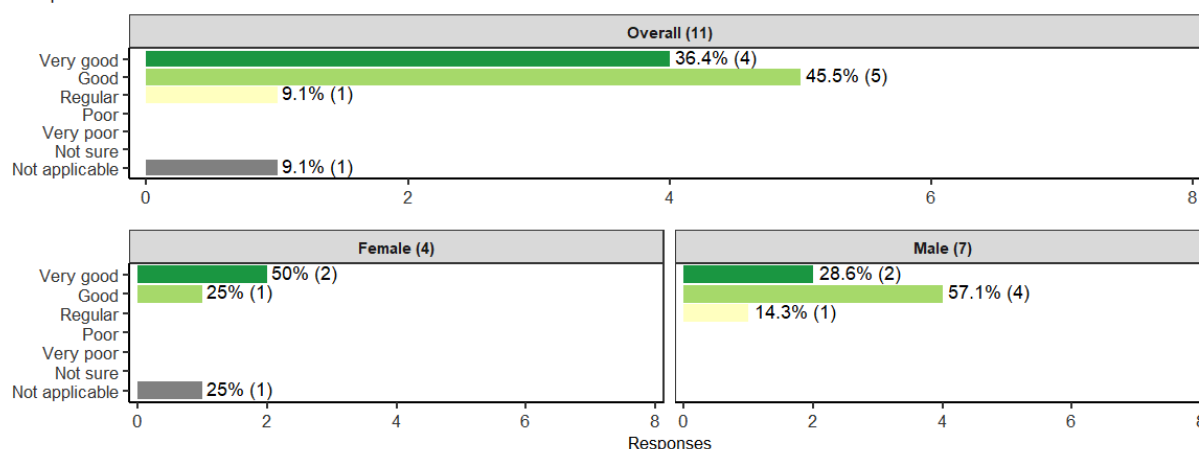

Figure 8. Assessment of the online survey respondents of the adaption of the project's implementation to the major factors.

It seems that the major factor influencing the accomplishments of the project activities was related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, YAD and FT implemented actions to reduce the damages triggered by the pandemic in a way that the major achievements could be noticed among the target groups.

The Covid-19 outbreak severely impacted the political structure and economy of Sierra Leone. These changes were reflected in the higher costs of essential materials such as cement to build toilets; their affordability was an essential demand from the COD project. Covid-19 also affected the activities of the KCM project, which faced a slowed implementation and substantial changes in the cost of goods and services. The political elections in 2012 slightly affected the arrangements for the construction of the MCPS due to substantial safety issues. Environmental aspects, such as flooding during the rainy season, created obstacles to the implementation of this project as well as to the construction of the NCSS.

Political changes in the rules to build open toilets, implemented in 2012, required additional costs, since septic tanks could no longer be built as planned; instead, cesspools were required, which need to be emptied regularly. The same year, a cholera epidemic broke out in Sierra Leone, which required new guidelines from the government to cope with the risks of infection[20].

Despite all contextual challenges, rearrangements of plans and additional financial inputs helped YAD and FT to cope with the difficulties. Most of the factors influencing the projects came from environmental and somewhat unpredictable sources, such as Covid-19 and cholera outbreaks as

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[20] 2012 – Sierra Leone: Cholera disease outbreak news. https://www.who.int/

well as flooding of roads. The results from both the documentary evidence and the primary data indicate an effective performance in adapting to context changes and challenges.

EQ9: To what extent did the projects ensure the continuous participation of their key stakeholders in the planning and implementation?

All proposals mention regular collaborative work between the implementing organisations and the relevant line ministries, namely the Ministries of Education, Youth, and Sports; Health; Land, Housing, and Environment; and Development. There is evidence of close cooperation with local government authorities such as the city and district councils of Kenema, for example. Local government authorities played an active role in the planning and implementation of the projects. It was under their permission, for example, that YAD and Fambul Tik were allowed to use the land in Kenema within the MYRC Phases I and II. As from the project proposal, the Government of the City of Kenema in collaboration with the Ministry of Land, Physical Planning, and Environment, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, the Kenema City Council, and the Honorary Mayor of the City provided the land for the MYRC building at a lease price of the equivalent of € 100 per year for a period of 70 years. Another example of the participation of key stakeholders is YAD's partnership with Action Start, an organisation based in the Kenema district that works with youth development. According to respondents of one FGD, mainly composed of members of Action Start, their partnership is based on exchanging support for each other's activities, such as YAD's provision of rooms for Action Start meetings. Action Start supported the construction of the building for Phase I.

There is reasonable evidence that beneficiaries have been involved as active agents in the achievement of the outputs, contributing with their labour force to the construction of schools, for instance, as well as of toilets, of the building for the MYRC Phases I and II, and the storages for the on-going project NIHP. The tasks delegated to the beneficiaries to take part in the project's activities created a feeling of ownership, unity and responsibility among them, as evidenced in their answers. This has contributed to the long-term sustainability of the benefits. Strategies were created in cooperation with YAD and local authorities in order to make the beneficiaries responsible for the maintenance of the project structures. This includes the selection of the CHMs in every village covered by the COD project, which encourages the beneficiaries to continuously monitor their facilities.

In the MCPS and NCSS projects, the monthly contribution that residents of Matakan and Gandorhun villages make towards the payment of volunteer teachers is a way of keeping the project going until the government provides more qualified and paid teachers to cover the demand of students, which is growing every year. This also indicates the ownership of beneficiaries and their active participation.

In the NIHP, YAD has been working in close cooperation with the local authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the direct beneficiaries of the project in order to identify swamps in all six target communities of the Inland Valley Swamps (IVS). From the agricultural training provided to the beneficiaries of this project, we can assume that they will be able to continue to expand the project implementation as ambassadors of its activities in other villages, following the capacity-building model that YAD has implemented in its projects.

In the KCM project, 26 members were elected to represent Konjo Youth Development Association (KYDA) to coordinate the project implementation with YAD. They have played a central role

throughout the project implementation and in the management of the project facilities as described in YAD's internal activity report from 2019-2020 and by one key informant:

> *"[...] After the end of the project, we created the KYDA group that manages the market. They raise money to maintain the facilities as well as to invest in the community [...]." (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)*

According to the results of the online survey, there is a positive view of the contribution of beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of projects. 82% of respondents rate as 'very good' or 'good' the ongoing participation of beneficiaries in project planning and implementation. As previously mentioned, the participatory method that YAD has implemented in all its projects and the inclusion of the beneficiaries as decisive agents in the achievement of results has generated a feeling of ownership among them and, consequently, the aim of using its benefits in the long term.

Figure 9. Opinions from the online survey on the participation of the beneficiaries.

9.4 Efficiency

Key findings

i: The activities can be considered cost-efficient. Several external factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the inflation crisis made financial management difficult. However, activities involving fundraising and volunteering effectively supported the self-sustainability of projects and activities.

ii: The management quality and efficiency of the projects (including work planning, procurement, financial resource management, budget allocation, and timely outputs) was good. High transparency and good communication as reported by stakeholders have contributed to this.

iii: The project-management system (including technical expertise as well as monitoring, planning, and reporting systems) was moderately functional, sufficient, and goal-oriented. Key

stakeholders reported positively on the project-management system. Especially the feedback system implemented by YAD and the close work with Fambul Tik can be highlighted here.

KEY QUESTIONS – EFFICIENCY	PERFORMANCE (Evaluative conclusion)					WEIGHT
	A = 5	B = 4	C = 3	D = 2	E = 1	
EQ10: How cost-efficient were the activities?		4.0				30%
EQ11: How adequate were the management quality and efficiency (including work planning, procurement, financial resource management, budget allocation, and timely outputs)?		4.0				40%
EQ12: How functional, sufficient, and goal-oriented is the project-management system (including technical expertise as well as monitoring, planning, and reporting systems)?			3.0			30%
Note: A = very good; B = good; C = fair; D = poor; E = very poor	Result:				3.7	B

Table 7. Score for the criterion 'efficiency' by the evaluation team.

EQ10: How cost-efficient were the activities?

The question regarding the cost-efficiency of the project activities was overall highly positive. Approximately 91% of the participants of the survey evaluated this question positively: 18% 'very good', 63% 'good', and 9% 'regular'.
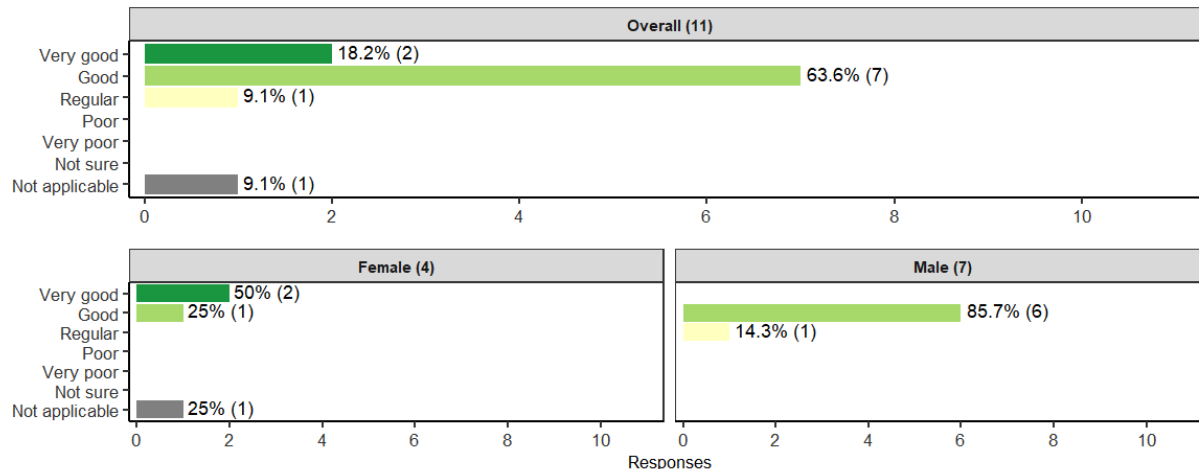
Figure 10. Evaluation from the online survey respondents on the cost efficiency of the projects.

In general, the projects showed a good performance in terms of cost-efficiency, even when considering substantial factors influencing the projects, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the inflationary crisis[21]. Some of the management actions implemented in the projects to cope with those factors required additional financial inputs, as evident from the project implementers' requests for adjustments of the budgets. The main cause was the increased material prices.

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[21] See more at: The Determinants of Inflation in Sierra Leone: A Cointegration Analysis – Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development (2015).

During the most intensive period of Covid-19, the costs of the imported materials to build toilets increased substantially, including, among others, cement, zinc, iron bars, and tiles. Key informants confirm this statement:

> *"The projects were not so cost-effective because we don't have control of the prices, and inflation in Sierra Leone is a big problem for us. We had to prioritise the activities that we could afford at the time of the implementation. When a project is approved to be implemented next year, all the financial plans we designed before need to be changed because of inflation."* (Participant: Staff of Fambul Tik, Based: Germany)

> *"It was not so cost-effective because we could not control the prices and we always had to change the financial plan. If you plan the costs for today, you always have to go do the purchases on the same day to keep the first plan."* (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)

An example of deviation of planned versus actual costs is the sum of €2,513 (6.5%) in the MCPS project, which was invested on furniture and school building. The deviation of the costs is explained in the internal report by the doubling of the furniture prices due to a government ban on timber logging.

Yet, YAD has shown a fairly effective ability to self-sustain financially through multiple activities and engagement of volunteers. It rented out its conference rooms to other organisations for fundraising in the MYRC Phase I, as described in the Activity Report from 2019.

Although the cost-efficiency of the project activities seems fairly robust, there is a limitation to evaluate this question, since the data on costs recorded by YAD are available only from 2016 onwards. The reports (*Verwendungsnachweise*) from FT, however, include information on expenditures versus planned budgets in sufficient detail. The evaluation did not include a cost analysis (how costs compare to similar interventions or standards). This was not feasible considering the focus of the terms of reference, provided inputs/data, available time and resources. The results suggest good management quality and efficiency, but there are areas for improvement including work planning, additional information on procurement processes (e.g., sharing organisational procurement guidelines with evaluators), and financial resource management (e.g., evidence of the use of regularly updated digital systems).

EQ11: How adequate was the management quality and efficiency (including work planning, procurement, financial resource management, budget allocation, and timely outputs)?

Overall, management quality and efficiency was perceived positively by respondents from KIIs and the online survey. 27% from the online survey found it 'very good' and 55 % 'good', while the remaining respondents evaluated the management quality and efficiency as 'regular'. Also, the large majority of interviewed key informants found the management system operation sufficient and result-oriented. When asking specifically about management transparency and accountability, more than 80% of the respondents responded 'very good'. In addition, communication among staff involved in the implementation was indicated to be at least 'good' by 91% of the participants of the online survey. Other factors contributing to good management quality and efficiency named by respondents are regular personal evaluations and working with people from different knowledge backgrounds. Selected responses about this are presented below:

"[the management] was really good, we have people from different backgrounds, so whatever the gap is there, we fill the gap with people with the knowledge to solve the problem." (Staff of YAD, Based: Golahun Vaama and Kenema City)

"The communication skills of the project implementers were very good." (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)

"For me, the team needs more capacity building. Some of us just came from the universities, we don't have experience. We need more training to be ready to do the work and better management [...]" (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)

The construction of the MYRC is an example of good management quality and efficiency. While YAD gave instructions for the construction, manpower was provided voluntarily by the community itself. According to YAD, community responsibility highly supported the management transparency and allowed for reaching good results. Regular monitoring took place, and a working group was formed with leaders from different youth organisations. In order to include the beneficiaries' feedback, regular evaluation meetings were held with beneficiary representatives. The evaluation team did not find evidence of anonymous feedback and complaint mechanisms, which can be a potential area for improvement.

How adequate was the management quality and efficiency (including work planning, procurement, financial resource management, budget allocation and timely outputs)?

n = 11 responses
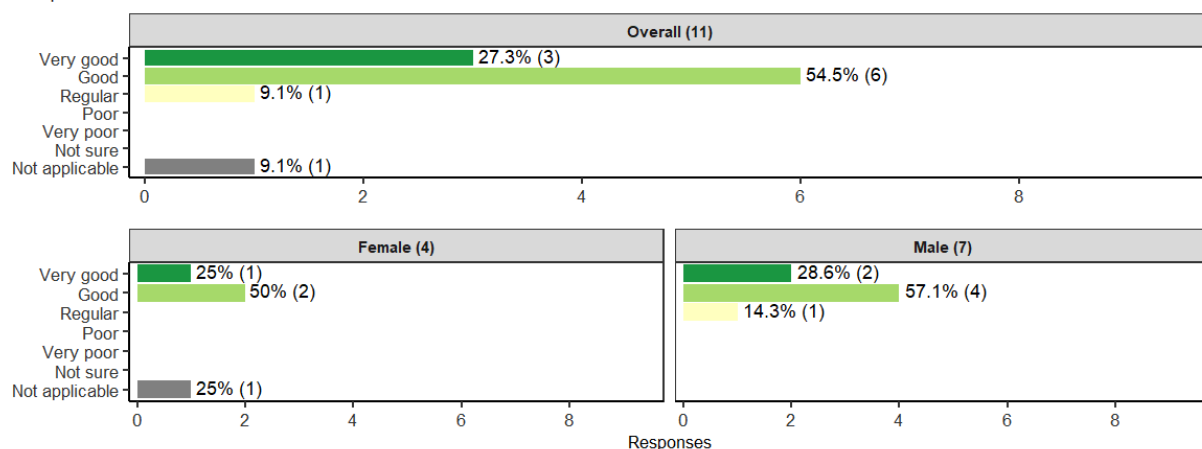
Figure 11. Opinions about management quality and efficiency of the projects from the online survey results.

EQ12: How functional, sufficient, and goal-oriented is the project-management system (including technical expertise as well as monitoring, planning, and reporting systems)?

The respondents suggest that there is a sufficient and goal-oriented functional management system based on Fambul Tik and YAD procedures. Only one of the survey questions received a score lower than 4.0 (3.8): "How would you rate the degree of input supply/time availability to implement activities?" 27% of the respondents rated the input supply and time management as 'regular'.

The majority of the key informants evaluated this question positively and mentioned that YAD carries out regular personal evaluations, makes good use of the available management resources, and communicates well. According to the KIIs, YAD members have regularly visited the beneficiary villages. The YAD activity reports for the years 2017, 2018, and 2019 demonstrate an

effort by the organisation to report on the main results of the projects, although without presenting and comparing indicators against targets, which can be a measure to improve future reports. The feedback meetings implemented by YAD with the beneficiaries is an example of best practice, as all those involved (beneficiaries and stakeholders) report the openness offered for feedback and meetings with YAD members. The close work between Fambul Tik and YAD was an important factor in the positive perspective of the project management system and its planning. Suggestions for improvement mainly refer to the need for more professional training:

> *"For me the team needs more capacity building. Some of us just came from university, we don't have experience, so we need more training to be ready to do the work and better management in specific projects." (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)*

The achievements would be maximised by increasing the training of project implementers in monitoring and evaluation, as demonstrated by the responses to the KII questions: "To what extent has the support developed local capacities?" and "What would be your two main suggestions for improvement?"

> *"First, I would suggest that we should focus on more capacity building for the staff. The second would be that BMZ could extend the implementation of the projects. (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)*

> *"We did a lot of capacity building for all the projects. There is always room for improvement, like in the terms of frequency it could be improved." (Participant: Staff of YAD, Based: Kenema City)*

9.5   Impact

Key findings

i: The projects contributed to the development of Sierra Leone and were aligned with national strategies; they also contributed to a reduction of waterborne diseases, to improved education, and the economy of the villages. Their impacts were very high.

ii: The projects have large indirect positive impacts (i.e., environmental, social, cultural, gender, and economic). Unplanned negative impacts were not identified. Among the indirect positive impacts are an increased recognition and growth of YAD and a sense of unity created within the villages. Gender inclusion was promoted through female engagement in all activities.

iii: The outcomes and benefits can be highly attributed to the projects themselves. Therefore, several key informants stated that the projects should be conducted in other parts of the country, too, to promote sustainable development.

KEY QUESTIONS – IMPACT	PERFORMANCE (Evaluative conclusion)					WEIGHT
	A = 5	B = 4	C = 3	D = 2	E = 1	
EQ13: How well have the projects had direct impacts at their overall-objective level?	5.0					40%
EQ14: To what extent does/will the project have any indirect positive and/or negative impacts (i.e., environmental, social, cultural, gender, and economic)?		4.0				30%
EQ15: To what extent are the outcomes of the projects and the benefits attributable to the project, and if not, to which extent?		4.0				30%
Note: A = very good; B = good; C = fair; D = poor; E = very poor	Result:			4.4		B

Table 8. Score for the criterion 'impact' by the evaluation team.

EQ13: Have the projects had a direct impact at their overall-objective level?

The results of this evaluation indicate that there is a direct contribution of the project objectives to the development of Sierra Leone. When analysing the general objectives of each project assessed, we found a high level of achievement considering the challenging context of the Covid-19 years (see annex with [Result Matrix of Progress against Indicators](#) for detailed information by project).

For example, the objective of COD to "improve the health and hygiene situation of 20 villages in Niawa and Langurama Chiefdoms by providing them with public toilets and hygiene awareness and education" has been successfully achieved as from the documentary evidence and the collected data. The toilet blocks were constructed with environmentally friendly materials. For cleaning, rain water was used during the rainy season and well-water during the dry season. The toilet users do not use chemical cleaning material but only water, following the hygiene training provided by the YAD staff. In social terms, the separation of the toilets by gender, physical condition, and age provides more safety and comfort for the women, children, and people with disabilities. Replying to the KII question "What is your view about the contribution to support sustainable development in Sierra Leone?", beneficiaries from the COD reported:

> "I see that this will contribute to the sanitation development of the country." (Participant: Local government/authorities, Based: Ngiehun Konjo)

> "Health is part of the government programme for this country, so I think that project helps the government in this way." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Golahun Menila)

Through hygiene promotion in the affected communities, the impact of COD contributes directly to the achievement of other projects' objectives, such as the MCPS and NCSS, which now receive more students. These two projects are aligned to the Government's flagship programme for Human Capital Development within the country's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023)[22]. The construction of the primary and secondary schools showed the government that these schools are worth the investments. The beneficiaries underlined their impact:

> "Created positive impacts towards the institution and outgoing students; now has high enrolment advantages and has tremendously improved adult literacy. Hence, the principal and pupils appealed for more classrooms to accommodate more courses in other areas

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[22]Sustainable Development Goals, Knowledge Platform: Sierra Leone. https://bit.ly/2KSh6ww

and also to improve tutors' salaries and learning materials for students." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Kenema City)

"We see only positive impacts of all the projects: For the secondary school, for example, nobody from my chiefdom needs to move to Kenema anymore to study." (Participant: Local government/authorities, Based: Gandorhun)

Because of the presence of schools in their own communities, families feel safer to let their children study. Literate children will find it easier to participate in their family's generation of income, finding better jobs or even participating in the projects implemented in their communities.

The educational training of young people in Kenema City that was part of the MYRC phases directly contributes to the sustainable development of Sierra Leone, as it enables more qualified young people to contribute to the town's economy and decreases the rates of violence through the conflict-resolution training that is part of the project activities. One key informant confirms this:

"The relevance of their support reflects that now we don't have the same mind-set as in the past. We learnt how to solve conflicts in a peaceful way. An example of that is that during the riots in Freetown this year, everybody was afraid in Kenema that the same could happen here, but it didn't happen. We have changed the mentality of youths to not use violence." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Kenema City)

In the KCM, in Malegohun chiefdom, the space provided for traders was built with the intention of making commercial relations more solidified and organised among the population. By establishing a place for the sale of their products, the beneficiaries can use the benefits of this structure in the long term and contribute to the economic development of their community. The building allows the people of the community to come together in a safe space to organise their activities for community development.

The contribution of the NIAHP project directly addresses one of the country's biggest problems: hunger. Training the beneficiaries in improved agrarian techniques has led to decreased rates of hunger in their communities. This is not only due to the knowledge on how to increase production and preserve it but also to the sale of the excess made with some products since the beginning of the project, as one key informant describes:

"Because of the project Initiative against Hunger and Poverty, we now have a garden, which is helping us to make an income, since we sell the results of our work in Plama. We did not know how to construct swamps properly, or how to plant rice better, and now we have this knowledge. Next year, people will get to know about our Niawa-garden, not about Bo-garden anymore. Because of the COD, when strangers come we don't feel shy to receive them anymore." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Sendumei)

The facilities were planned to include solar-panels as the main source of electricity for the schools, market, and the MYRCs. Field observation demonstrated that COD beneficiary villages no longer suffer from pollution caused by faeces spread outside the houses. According to key informants:

"The COD has stopped open defecation, and the dignity of our people is restored. No more eating of faeces, and there is a reduction of faeces-related diseases, like cholera and diarrhoea." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Yebeima)

"The project was really relevant. Because of the fair needs of the people, we are no longer using the bush to defecate. Also, at this time of the year when the rain has its peak, we are experiencing the faeces everywhere and getting sicknesses, like diarrhoea." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Yebeima)

EQ14: To what extent does/will the projects have any indirect positive and/or negative impact (i.e., environmental, social, cultural, gender, and economic)?

According to the results of the online survey, none of the respondents identified any negative unplanned impacts caused by the projects. However, as seen in the chart, a significant share of people responded 'not sure' (27%), and one answered that it is not applicable. This can be explained by the fact that most respondents are part of different stakeholders, such as YAD, Fambul Tik, local authorities, BENGO, and NGOs, and hence not have had experiences with all the projects.
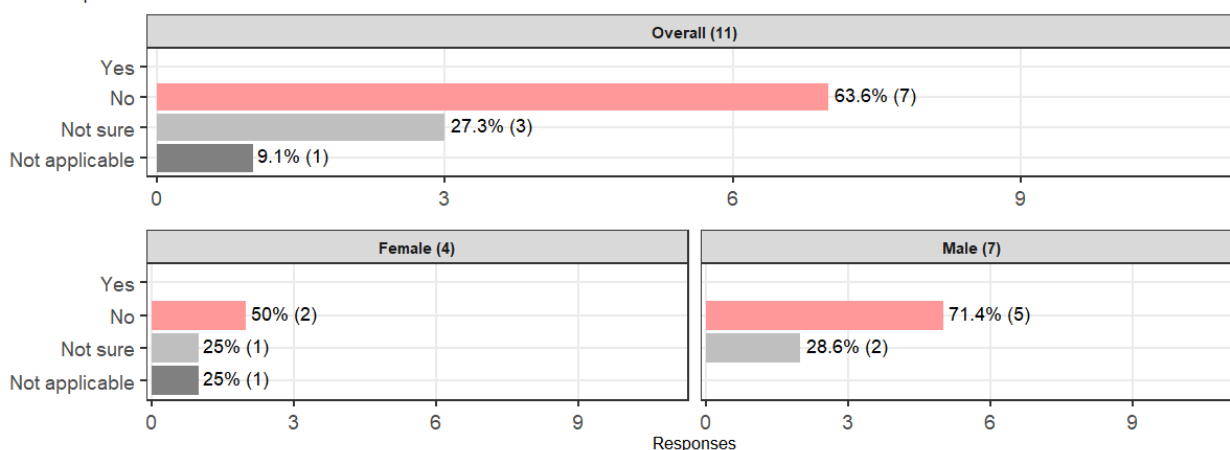
Figure 12. Perception of negative effects as from online survey results.

36 % of the respondents identified unplanned positive impacts, some examples of which were given by a representative of Fambul Tik:

"1) The Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre phases I and II were intended to create access of underprivileged youths to quality skills training and foster sociocultural cohesion and friendly coexistence among the youths, while creating a solid foundation for YAD upon which it can stand to work as a local CSO partner. The unexpected positive impact of this project is the high recognition and moral respect won by YAD as a result of those projects. The central government has selected YAD to serve as the lead for all local NGOs active in the region and it's their designated representative at the District Development Coordination Committee (DDCC) of Kenema where all development plans are made for the district. 2) The Konjo Community Market and Social Mobilisation Centre: This project was meant to foster social cohesion and friendly coexistence for the youth while triggering

income generation for women. The unexpected positive impacts are improvement in sanitation for those who live within the surrounding of the structure as it allowed them quick access to safe drinking water and toilet facility, and uplifting the image of the Ngiehun community above all other communities. All chiefdom development meetings and workshops are now conducted in Ngiehun. Added to that, youth are travelling miles away to watch football games at the centre in Ngiehun. 3) Campaign against Open Defecation (COD) This project was intended to improve environmental and household hygiene and eradicate hygiene related diseases. 4) Niawa Initiative against Hunger and Poverty (NIHP) This project is intended to eradicate hunger and poverty by adding value to the yearly harvest of poor farmers in the targeted region. However, both projects number 3 and 4 above have yielded to unity and peace coexistence among the beneficiaries which was never their primary goal. The beneficiaries have now adapted to unity and a friendly manner of living as YAD and FT continue to re-coho the message of peace, stability, tranquillity, democracy, and lawfulness in both private and collective lives." (Participant: Staff of Fambul Tik, Based: Germany)

Among the main indirect impacts caused by the projects have been the recognition and growth of YAD as an organisation, both through the positive results promoted and commented on by the beneficiaries beyond the target regions and the experience that the organisation has gained by implementing seven projects in precarious regions but with the great mobilisation of their residents. Those projects that have installed toilets and provided clean drinking water, such as KCM, have contributed to the recognition of the villages by neighbouring villages. One of the unplanned impacts most commented upon was the sense of unity created through participating in the project implementation.

All projects have engaged greater female participation in their activities, such as COD with its equal number of female and male Control Health Monitors. In the MYRCs, girls are prioritised for admission to the training courses.

EQ15: To what extent are the outcomes of the projects and the benefits attributable to the project, and if not, to which extent?

According to the majority of interviewed key informants, a wide range of benefits and positive results can be attributed to the projects, which should be conducted in other parts of the country as well to promote sustainable development in Sierra Leone.

The most frequently mentioned outcome was an improved hygiene situation, due to the construction of sanitation facilities and awareness-raising campaigns by COD, resulting in fewer diseases.

The living situation of children and youths was improved as a result of the projects. The construction of the two schools helped to improve and increase access to education, while at the same time allowing children to spend more time with their families and not having to travel far to school. The MYRC building can be used for professional training for youths and improves their reputation in the communities.

> *"Major impacts created are as follows: boast of skills trained – [...] students are now role models in societies, better standard of living based on the skills trained …" (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Kenema City)*

The support provided by the projects helped beneficiaries to improve their economic situation. Constructing the community market and social mobilisation centre improved women's socio-economic situations. While it provides women with a safe income, it was also reported to increase the community's unity.

> *"The market in the Konjo community has improved the local economy and has helped women to support their husbands and children." (Participant: Local government/authorities, Based: Kenema City)*

> *"The impact that this project brought to us was the unity among the community members (cohesion) …" (Participant: Local government/authorities, Based: Ngiehun Konjo)*

9.6   Sustainability

Key findings

i: The level of ownership of the project by target groups is very high. Beneficiaries were involved in project planning, and feedback mechanisms were put in place. Involvement of beneficiaries in terms of labour and funding indicates a high sustainability of the projects.

ii: The long-term orientation of the projects is very high, and target groups and beneficiaries are very likely to be using the benefits of the projects after the end of the support. According to the KIIs, the benefits from the projects will positively impact future generations.

iii: Institutional and management capacity of local partners were very high despite the short duration of most projects. In particular, capacity-building activities for various leaders and counsellors can be highlighted here as they play important roles for the enforcement of laws at community level.

KEY QUESTIONS – SUSTAINABILITY	PERFORMANCE (Evaluative conclusion)					WEIGHT
	A = 5	*B = 4*	*C = 3*	*D = 2*	*E = 1*	
EQ16: What is the level of ownership of the project by target groups?	5.0					40%
EQ17: To what extent will the target groups and beneficiaries continue to use the benefits after the support has ended (long-term orientation)?	5.0					30%
EQ18: How well are the projects contributing to the institutional and management capacity of local partners?	5.0					30%
Note: A = very good; B = good; C = fair; D = poor; E = very poor	**Result:**				**5.0**	**A**

Table 9. Score for the criterion 'sustainability' by the evaluation team.

EQ16: What is the level of ownership of the projects by target groups?

According to 82% of the survey respondents, the level of ownership of the projects by target groups is 'high' or 'very high'. This is in line with the results from the observation and key-informant interviews. Ownership of the projects was supported by different training sessions to ensure proper use and enable maintenance and facility repairs by the communities. There is sufficient evidence that target groups were involved in project planning and implementation from

the beginning and included as owners of the projects. Therefore, the constructed facilities, such as toilets, schools, and the market centre, are owned, and taken care of, by the communities. Regular funding mobilised among the community members themselves (e.g., payment of teachers) confirms a high level of ownership and sustainability, although additional advocacy work can help to ensure public investments.

For the sanitary facilities, there are local sanitary officers who regularly conduct monitoring and training sessions. For future needs, community members have been equipped with the knowledge about how to build the facilities themselves. For managing the market, a committee was formed and community members were trained in how to clean and organise the market. Another committee was formed for monitoring the situation of the schools and regular community fundings to enable repairs and maintenance. The cassava machine from the NIHP project belongs to the community. Learnt farming practices are applied by the families to produce food for the community. Youths now use the skills learnt at the MYRC, and the community maintains the centre.

> *"Beneficiaries have designed strategies that help to maintain the facilities when the projects end (e.g., an agreed amount of money to be paid on a monthly basis, by doing so the ownership of these structures is maintained)." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Yebeima)*

EQ17: To what extent will the target groups and beneficiaries continue to use the benefits after the support has ended (long-term orientation)?

Most respondents saw the long-term use of the projects' benefits optimistically: Around 73% replying to the survey considered the extent of long-term use as 'very high'. Almost all key informants were convinced that the projects are sustainable and will also be used by future generations.

In the KCM project, the market facilities are used by the community for trade and social meetings. The installed solar panels on the building can motivate similar initiatives and contribute to its sustainability in a cost-effective manner. To maintain these facilities, the KYDA group was formed and a community bank account opened under its name. This former voluntary self-help group has 26 elected members. It has the oversight of the facilities, ensuring ownership and sustainability. To be able to continue the project after its end, the leaders were trained in capacity building, accounting, report writing, and WASH.

A committee was formed to monitor the pupils' performances at the primary and secondary schools. The number of enrolled pupils was reported to be increasing, and the qualified teachers are paid by the government.

> *"In primary school, we made some elections to choose people to be part of the committee as monitors to see the performance of the pupils." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Matakan)*

For the sanitation facilities provided by the COD, there were no doubts mentioned about their maintenance and repair. Due to receiving trainings, regular monitoring, and community fundings, the respondents were convinced that the facilities will be maintained for the long term. During the COD implementation, Community Health Monitors (CHM) were elected for each village, responsible for managing the sanitation facilities and taking over the project after its end.

The MYRC Phases I and II are well consolidated and recognised by residents of Kenema City, which suggests the continued use of its benefits after the projects' end. The overarching objective of MYRC Phase I was achieved, with the centre being used daily by YAD members to perform their activities. The same goes for MYRC Phase II, where the classrooms, the equipment used for the courses, and the gym facilities were all in good condition.

The benefits of the NIHP can still be seen by the use of the cassava machine provided in Matakan village. New farming practices learnt during the project have been applied by the beneficiaries, who already notice their benefits by an increased production, as described by some key informants.

EQ18: How well are the projects contributing to the institutional and management capacity of local partners?

For each project implemented, there was an important contribution to strengthening the structures and capacities of the local partners in addition to the project implementation. As shown above, the projects included multiple capacity-building activities in their initial implementation phase. An example is the KCM project's training of 38 community members in various positions of responsibility, including community counsellors, spiritual leaders, leaders of women's groups, youth leaders, and primary school teachers. As the country has not yet developed to the level of establishing government offices in all localities, these influential figures are responsible for the enforcement of customary laws at community level. Training topics included basic human rights, combating domestic and gender-based violence, conflict resolution, youth drug prevention, traditional conflict resolution without police involvement, and a basic understanding of Sustainable Development Goals 5, 10, and 16. This training model is described by a beneficiary living in Kenema City:

> *"It has improved greatly. The way YAD works is: In order to extend their impact to more places, they have first to include local people as the owners of their projects. Some target groups are not in Kenema, so when they capacitate these people they help them to be ambassadors in their community, giving them the responsibility to pass on the knowledge. The capacity building is really intense and focused on the youth, which is sustainable."*
> *(Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Kenema City)*

The KCM project proposal stated that the YAD staff received training in monitoring and evaluation, learning about indicators, specific objectives, the impact of projects, and basic MS office packages.

According to the NIHP project proposal, YAD conducted training for 36 representatives of different branches from six villages. The training was conducted by YAD's field supervisors and an expert from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, training 300 families in how to operate the machines, which increases production. YAD conducted training for 60 farming families on climate adaptation and the application of compost fertiliser.

> *"I joined the training on how to use the toilets and how to clean them. In the Initiative Against Hunger, I learnt how to plant crops. My brother learnt how to use the rice machine." (Participant: Local authority, Based: Matakan)*

> *"I have learnt how to plant agricultural crops, that is, when, where, and how to plant. I also learnt the types of fertiliser to apply on plants and how to apply them." (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Matakan)*

The construction of a facility for storing rice protected from rain and training on better agriculture techniques and management of their goods were part of the training for NIHP beneficiaries, as described by a beneficiary on "What would you say have been the main lessons learnt?":

> *"I learnt how to use these facilities (e.g., rice milling, storage) and how to keep our produce safe. Working together as unity has helped us to reduce labour. (Participant: Beneficiary, Based: Matakan)*

During field observation in Matakan village, however, the milling machine was identified as broken and being currently repaired.

In the COD project, training of trainers (TTT) for YAD staff on WASH and hygiene was provided. According to the project proposal, the TTT for YAD staff was initiated in 2020, with two sessions delivered by speakers from the Kenema District Medical Office (DMO), the Department of Environmental Health, and members of SEND, a local non-governmental organisation that is also active in the eastern region, mainly in the field of WASH and agriculture. During the peak of Covid-19, there were training sessions to sensitise the community on disease protocols and precautions. They were conducted by the YAD Project Manager and Field Supervisors in different villages. The workshops were conducted in parallel to ensure that the work in the construction area was not interrupted by the awareness workshops. YAD selected some beneficiaries to be trained to act as CHMs, who received the same workshops on WASH and hygiene, to keep the COD structures clean, guide users to preserve them, and follow hygiene rules.

> *"Local capacity building is ongoing as we have local sanitary officers who monitor and educate the community on the proper use of these facilities." (Participant: Local government/authorities, Based: Yabaima)*

For the MCPS and NCSS projects, no evidence of capacity building of local staff was reported in the provided documents. However, with the establishment of schools in the targeted villages, qualified teachers received distance training provided by the government.

For the MYRC Phases I and II, according to their project proposals and responses of YAD key informants, there is still a need for more capacity-building training for YAD staff and representatives of other youth groups. This includes training in IT, monitoring and evaluation, organisational management, more accountability, networking with other organisations, team building, and fundraising. Leaders need to know how to raise funds, save money, write simple reports, build teams, and run their various clubs independently, without direct YAD involvement.

> *"We have been doing training, but we need more investment in capacity building. We are educated to do some work in some fields. When we were doing the COD, we had to train the trainers about health and WASH, but we need more." (Participant: Staff from YAD, Based: Kenema City)*

> *"We did a lot of capacity building for all the projects. There is always room for improvement, like in the frequency." (Participant: Staff from YAD, Based: Kenema City)*

10 Conclusions

This section presents the main conclusions of this evaluation, reflecting its purpose and objectives. It is followed by forward-looking recommendations as well as the identification of lessons learnt and good practices considering challenges, gaps, and barriers.

The seven projects were highly relevant to the national context and the needs of the target groups. They have contributed to the sustainable development of Sierra Leone in line with government goals. In their intervention logics (including planned objectives and outcomes), the projects prioritised vulnerable groups, that is, women, children, youths, elderly people, and persons with disabilities. This is exemplified by the engagement model that YAD and Fambul Tik implemented for the equal participation of women and men in activities, the inclusion of youth organisations in support of YAD's actions in Kenema City, and the adaptation of project structures and tools for the use of older people and persons with disabilities. The activities carried out in MYRC phases I and II, for example, were relevant in providing the youth from Kenema City and surrounding villages a safe place for their meetings, where they also received workshops on conflict resolution issues and career counselling. Key informants confirm that youths are satisfied with the services provided, which is reinforced by the survey results, according to which 91% of the respondents rated the project relevance 'very high' (73%) and 'high' (18%). When asked about their opinions on the work done by Fambul Tik and YAD, 89% of the keywords used by the respondents in key-informant interviews were positive (in a sentiment analysis; see more about this in section 8.1). Regarding the relevance of the support considering the beneficiaries' needs and priorities, 75% of the keywords used were positive.

The relevance of the work is high considering the needs of the beneficiaries of the other projects, such as poverty eradication (KCM), hunger eradication (NIHP), hygiene improvement (COD), and improving education for children (MCPS and NCSS). These projects all address the requests made by the beneficiaries themselves during planning, as YAD and Fambul Tik applied a participatory approach for the design of all implemented projects. Despite that, there seems to be room for improvement in terms of data collection and management. The evaluation team did not receive any baseline study or survey reports among the documentary evidence.

The results of the KIIs and the documentary evidence suggest that the objectives and outcomes were well achieved considering the challenges of Covid-19. The results indicate, however, that the support received during Covid-19 in terms of food-for-work is requested to be continued for the implementation of the still ongoing NIHP. The only limitations mentioned by the respondents are the halting of project activities in the years 2019 and 2020 in view of the restrictions related to Covid-19 as well as those during the Ebola crisis from 2015. However, according to online survey findings regarding the question: "To what extent does the design respond to the needs related to the Covid-19 pandemic?", only 45% responded positively (9% 'very good' and 36% 'good'), which was expected considering that the projects had to adapt to the Covid-19 context.

The projects' impact in the areas of education, health, and economy was high. Building primary and secondary schools in the villages of Matakan and Gandorhun contributed to the education of children and their safety, reducing the need to travel far to study. Additional analysis could be done in assessing impacts in terms of a reduction of child labour, considering the improved access to education. Regarding hygiene, the primary and documentary evidence suggest that COD has contributed to reducing the cases of waterborne diseases, thereby increasing the quality of life for vulnerable groups and their ability to invest their energy and time in activities that contribute to

their own development and that of their families and communities. The KCM project has promoted income generation for female traders in the Konjo community, as women are now able to sell the produce harvested on the fields in a more organised and regular manner. Finally, the impact on hunger eradication was demonstrated by beneficiaries of the NIHP project, whose application of the farming techniques learnt in the project resulted in higher outcomes of their harvests. Assessing the impacts at household level would require an additional household survey to explore the benefits in terms of income, employment, education, and nutrition, for example. Further analysis on standard indicators of well-being at household level, such as the Life Satisfaction Index, Food Consumption Score, Coping Strategy Index, and Household Dietary Diversity Score, could help assess impacts in a more detailed way. Despite that, there is no indication of any major indirect and unexpected negative impacts, and the positive results reported in the online survey and KIIs suggest that the projects addressed the main needs highlighted by the beneficiaries.

The collected evidence suggests a positive evaluation of all aspects related to the overall management, quality of results, transparency, and communication. Data about the timely provision of inputs, however, suggest the need for improvement. Similar to the documentary evidence and key-informant interview results, about 27% of the survey respondents rated this as 'regular'. This may be due to under-budgeting and the required time for project changes, considering requests for changes in the budget caused mainly by the inflationary crisis in Sierra Leone, which seems to have contributed to the delay of some activities.

The projects show a very good alignment with international goals, particularly the SDGs 1, 2, 4, and 6. The results indicate that the areas addressed in the education, health/hygiene, and economic sectors were highly coherent with existing national policies and strategies. The contribution to the sustainable development of Sierra Leone was confirmed by the key informants.

There is evidence of partnerships between project implementers with Kenema City government authorities, government ministries, and youth organisations. Similarly, the results suggest an active involvement and participation of beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of each project. Although none of the projects cite a specific gender action plan, there is evidence that gender has been integrated into the engagement model (e.g., strategy of equalising the number of male and female active agents in the projects, taking the example of the CHMs). Developing a gender mainstreaming plan that is culturally sensitive and adapted to the context could help improve the contribution to gender equality, with a focus on promoting more women in leadership positions, for example. Eradicating female genital mutilation could be explored in future projects, since it is still common in the rural areas of Sierra Leone, which remains one of the 28 African countries that still partake in the practice.

The findings suggest the need to improve the way project indicators are monitored and presented in YAD internal reports. Household surveys could help projects to become more evidence-oriented, while contributing to inform policies and other actions by the government and development partners. Training on robust monitoring tools and systems could be included more frequently in the training of YAD members. Commercial cloud-based management-information systems that help improve project management, such as Teamwork Projects, Trello, Asana, or Basecamp, could help improve both the implementation and monitoring of tasks on a routine basis.

The sustainability aspect was the most highly rated by the key informants. Again, the participatory approach that YAD and Fambul Tik implemented contributed to creating a sense of ownership and responsibility among the beneficiary communities. This, together with the partnership with local and national authorities, helps to maintain the delivered structures in the long term. Strategies created by stakeholders, such as the implementation of local laws punishing those who degrade project structures, monthly payment of a fee to the local village bank account in cases of repairs, and delegation of monitoring responsibility to village residents in reporting to YAD members are examples of best practice supporting sustainability.

The following section gives key recommendations for improvement for ongoing and future actions.

11   Recommendations

Recommendation 1: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) It is highly recommended to publish this report as well as present and discuss the results of the evaluation with the beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. The plots were coloured for easy identification of results and also for people with low literacy levels. We highly recommend preparing summaries in local languages, so that beneficiaries and other stakeholders can learn about the key results in more detail and collaboratively design ways forward. This is critically important for accountability and transparency, which are especially essential for civil society organisations.

Recommendation 2: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) We recommend improving/scaling up the outreach of the same projects to other vulnerable villages in Kenema district, as their needs are reported to be the same by the respondents of this assessment. There is evidence that residents of the non-beneficiary villages feel marginalised by not receiving the same benefits as others, which may result in possible disagreements between the beneficiary and non-beneficiary villages. This is important in terms of 'do-no-harm'. The migration of residents from other villages to the beneficiary ones, especially for the use of the toilet facilities, may pose risks to the maintenance of these structures. Expanding these projects to other communities was one of the most frequently-mentioned suggestions in the KIIs and focus-group discussions.

Recommendation 3: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) In order to ensure that the benefits of the vocational courses of the MYRC Phase II are sustainable, it is recommended to invest in projects that facilitate the acquisition of start-up packages for graduate students, including financial education as well as business-development mentoring. Respondents to this study showed interest in opening their own business and following a professional career in the course done at the centre, however, the lack of knowledge and resources to invest in their own materials is a barrier. Some participants suggested increasing the spectrum of vocational training topics for electrical areas, for example. Additional consultations with young people, ideally involving private-sector actors in the design and planning phase, can help maximise the relevance of services to young people.

Recommendation 4: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) We recommend scaling-up the capacity building in financial education as well as business development/entrepreneurship for the beneficiaries of the KCM and NIHP projects. The increase in the sales and goods production from the beneficiaries' farms allows them to make an income (and savings) by selling the excess locally. The opening of the local bank account and the storage provided will gain more value if entrepreneurship and financial-education training is provided. This will help to prevent risks such as overindebtedness.

Recommendation 5: (Responsible: FT, YAD, BMZ, and BENGO / Priority: High) Key informants suggest the need to introduce a more structured and digitalised monitoring system for on-going (real-time) information on projects. This could take place either at YAD/FT level or even at country or global level through standard forms with minimum M&E information. We recommend establishing a set of forms using safe and freely available digital tools (e.g., KoBoToolbox, ONA, or ODK Cloud) to aggregate, manage, and allow for a repository of beneficiary and implementation data. This may be composed of the following forms: 1) beneficiary registration form; 2) item-delivery form; 3) support delivery form; 4) beneficiary feedback and complaint form; and 5) monitoring and evaluation form. A separate form on the indicators of each project can help to keep track of any output indicators that are not covered by the five-form structure above.

Currently, YAD staff are doing it themselves without a structured digital system, which leads to higher than necessary costs for the organisation and increases the likelihood of risks in terms of data protection and management. Future projects should include external support to set up and build capacities of both FT and YAD on the use of such tools and design an operational system to allow for better monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendation 6: (Responsible: BMZ and BENGO / Priority: High) During the rainy seasons, the lack of food was reported as a main challenge. The farmers normally harvest at the peak of the dry season in November/December, but they usually consume all the harvest in the first four months of the year (January to April). After that, they face severe food scarcity during the farming season, which begins from May onward. While BMZ seems not to fund food distribution or 'food for work' initiatives, the food provided by YAD during the Ebola and Covid-19 outbreaks was not sufficient to feed all the project beneficiaries. Answers from implementing organisations suggest the need to either revise the policy of not funding 'food for work' activities or discussing alternatives for combating severe food scarcity (e.g., increased funding for food production, identification and referral of cases of acute malnutrition particularly among children under 5 years of age).

Recommendation 7: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) According to respondents from the project NCSS in Gandorhun town, a headquarter for the teachers is urgently needed for the sustainability of the school as well as the payment of their teachers, including the ones in the MCPS project. Therefore, we recommend that in future projects there should be greater involvement of local governments in financial-sustainability strategies such as hiring qualified teachers for the schools as well as the construction of more classrooms in order to expand existing schools, as the number of students increases every year.

Recommendation 8: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: High) We recommend adding water wells to future projects with a similar plan as the COD. As reported by respondents, in the dry season it is harder to obtain water for hygiene purposes. The use of chlorine tablets may offer an important alternative to treat water and should be considered in future projects in coordination with UNICEF and other development partners (see: https://movimentar.eu/research-on-chlorine-tablets/).

Recommendation 9: (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: Medium) We strongly recommend to conduct household surveys and use objectively verifiable scores to prioritise both villages and households. Structured group interviews (group-based key-informant interviews) can be used as part of a standard rapid assessment form. Such studies should take place in the inception phase of projects if there have not been previous studies within the past two years before the project start. Although there is evidence that the projects are based on ground needs, we did not find evidence of studies (e.g., needs assessments/feasibility studies, baseline studies, monitoring and evaluation studies) including standard development indicators (see https://www.indikit.net/), which could help to prioritise those most in need and also to justify geographical coverage based on objectively measured vulnerabilities (e.g., Food Consumption Score, Household Diet Diversity Score, or Coping Strategy Index). Such standard indicators are internationally accepted and will improve the design of logframes as well as future projects. The objective assessment of the covered villages using standard indicators will help to implement the do-no-harm approach by providing neighbouring villages with a clear justification about the selection of villages for benefits. A multi-index score (e.g., WASH, food security, and protection indicators) can be used for this purpose, ranking villages according to their vulnerability.

<u>Recommendation 10:</u> (Responsible: FT and YAD / Priority: Low) In addition to those already used by Fambul Tik and YAD, we recommend modernising the information systems used for the management of implementation and the adoption of project-management information systems in the cloud. Training will enable greater efficiency and systematisation including tasks and responsibilities. We recommend investing both in terms of staff training and in project management tools 'in the cloud' such as [Teamwork Projects](), [Asana](), [Trello](), or [Basecamp](). These commercial systems help to move away from traditional e-mail-centric processes, reducing the flow of messages while improving communication with partners. This may support the processes of modernising the management, communication, and governance of joint programmes through more automated reminders and report generation.

12 Lessons learnt and best practices

Lesson learnt 1: The introduction of the beneficiaries' participatory approach in the implementation of the projects is key to the successful sustainability of the project's outcomes.

> **Best practice 1.1:** The open and regular local meetings between the organisation implementer and all the local authorities and villagers provides a democratic space where everyone has the right to speak and share their needs, which are agreed upon as a group. This allows for finding effective solutions to their own problems, based on their own experience.

> **Best practice 1.2:** The inclusion of the beneficiaries in the achievement of the project's objectives, such as the use of their labour force in the construction of the schools, youth centres, markets, and toilets, for example, was not only an economic way of financing the projects but also created a feeling of unity and ownership in the communities, as mentioned in most of the answers in the assessment.

> **Best practice 1.3:** The establishment of representatives who monitor the project facilities, such as the Konjo Youth Development Association (KYDA) for the Community Market and Social Mobilisation Centre and the community health monitors (CHM) in the villages covered by the COD project promoted collaboration with local authorities to ensure the sustainability of the projects. KYDA leaders and the CHM received theoretical and practical training so that they can continue to manage the project after implementation. This practice can be further expanded in future projects in different fields.

Lesson learnt 2: The introduction of a charging platform for cellphones in KCM sped up and eased the communication between beneficiaries and YAD staff and improved business in the market.

> **Best practice 2.1:** The source of energy through solar panels in all structures implemented by the projects contributes to their sustainability.

Lesson learnt 3: Feedback obtained through the KIIs/FGDs suggests a strong and frequent communication and monitoring network implemented by YAD members with the ambassadors (representatives) of each village. The selection of representatives from each village to work as the main connecting bridge between their residents and YAD members helped to coordinate the tasks and avoid misunderstandings in the implementation of activities. Despite that, the results emphasised the importance of increasing capacity building in ongoing and future projects.

> **Best practice 3.1:** The selection of representatives of the beneficiary group for the implementation of each project is an example of a best practice which catalyses the work of the implementing organisation with the decentralisation of responsibilities.

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14 Annexes

The annexes to this report are available at: https://movimentar.co/ft-yad-evalrep-annexes. They include:

1) Terms of reference
2) Analytical framework / Evaluation matrix
3) Results matrix of progress against indicators for each evaluated project
4) Information about the evaluation team
5) Detailed findings of primary data collection
6) References