Quarterly Report – UK Integrated Security Fund Pacific Programme

Project Title	Strengthening Local Solutions for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in the PNG Highlands
Countries Covered	Papua New Guinea
Implementer and downstream partners	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - World Vision - Southstar Sports Development Association - Catholic Diocese of Mendi - United Church PNG
Quarterly report (Q1-Q4)	Q3

Quarterly report structure
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	Acronym	**Explanation**
Please list relevant acronyms here.	MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
	SARV	Sorcery Accusation-Related Violence
	GBV	Gender-Based Violence
	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
	UKISF	United Kingdom Integrity Security Fund
	CSO	Civil Society Organisation
	CBO	Community-Based Organisation
	PNG	Papua New Guinea

Section 1: Project Summary from the approved Proposal Form (Maximum of one page)

The overall objective of this project is to address fragility, conflict, and violence in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea by strengthening local institutions and infrastructures for peace and responding to peacebuilding and violence prevention needs.

The UKISF funded 52 community peacebuilding grants executed during this project's first, second, and third phases (FY 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024) to enhance social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. In FY 2024-2025, UNDP will provide 20 community peacebuilding and development grants to the CBOs identified and capacitated during the earlies phases of the project. The grants would lead to an increase in social, cultural, and development activities and the strengthening of human security and social cohesion in the Highlands. The grants will focus on a range of priorities, including but not limited to generating employment opportunities through productive services, small business activities, and livelihood and environmental protection projects to benefit low-income families, facilitating the access of vulnerable populations to basic social services, promoting opportunities for youth through recreational activities, such as sports, street theatres, music, etc., and developing social and economic opportunities for the displaced population.

Moreover, in FY 2024-2025, the project intends to begin initiatives to address narratives that drive recurring violence in Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces. Specific interventions will include 1) initiation of peace education at schools, 2) development and propagation of a narrative on conflict resolution and transformation, 3) development and propagation of narratives on healthy and gender-sensitive masculinity, and 4) development and promotion of alternative narratives on social media developed by younger and creative influencers through video and music.

In response to growing needs in the Highlands and firmly in line with the comprehensive Sorcery and Witchcraft Accusation Related Violence National Action Plan’s focus on the provision of counselling and protection of SARV survivors, the project has partnered with the Catholic Diocese of Mendi to provide access to emergency shelter and survivor-centred support to SARV survivors in Southern Highlands since 2021. This includes a safe space for accessing psycho-social care, physical and emotional recovery, vocational training, assisted relocation/repatriation/ reintegration, and legal protection to restore dignity and promote survivors' recovery and empowerment. In FY 2024-2025, the project will partner with faith-based groups, CSOs, and CBOs to expand educational and awareness-raising programmes to the remaining districts and villages of Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces. In Hela, dialogues on SARV and GBV will continue through Peace & Development Dialogue networks in partnership with the United Church PNG, while in Southern Highlands Province, CSOs and CBOs will facilitate community-level awareness sessions.

In partnership with the Catholic Diocese of Mendi and United Church PNG, UNDP has been mediating 12 conflicts in Hela and Southern Highlands provinces. Eight conflicts have been successfully mediated, while the other four have not been fully resolved and require continued support from the UNDP-supported Mediation Teams to undergo the entire mediation and guided conflict resolution to allow parties access to formal and informal justice and closure. Through UK funds, UNDP will continue collaborating with its five mediation teams to remain engaged in the mediation process for the four unresolved conflicts. Additionally, the project will extend its involvement to mediate other unresolved disputes and address any emerging conflicts, utilising its existing five mediation teams.

Section 2: Progress update

1. Please describe a maximum of 3 - 4 highlights from the last quarter (please attach pictures to email submission where applicable). Focus more on impact and **why** these interventions are important to the project.

Mariste Peace Agreement Signing Ceremony

On December 9, the project witnessed the signing of a peace agreement between two clans in the Mariste community in Hela Province. The peace agreement resulted from persistent mediation by the United Church and UNDP and financial support by UKISF. The two clans had engaged in armed combat since 2014, which resulted in over 3,000 people being displaced from their communities.

“Mariste is one of the most remote communities in Hela Province. We barely have access to any services or support here, so for UNDP and the United Church to come all the way here and to help us bring peace to our community means so much to us,” stated Gimson Hanal, a teacher from Mariste Elementary School during the peace signing ceremony.

During the ceremony, the community leaders and former combatants from both clans engaged in a reconciliation ritual. They wrote down all their negative feelings toward their former enemies on notes and burned them in a fire in front of the community.

“This is our way of saying that the conflict is now in the past, and nobody will no longer seek revenge for the losses they experienced during it,” explains Moses Komengi from the United Church, who played a leading role in the mediation efforts.

To help the communities begin recovering from the conflicts, the project has also constructed a new market and two community centres and engaged youth in road maintenance work. These facilities were ceremoniously declared open after the peace signing ceremony. In addition, the event witnessed the groundbreaking of a new health post, which UNDP and the United Church will build in the community in the coming months.

“Ten years ago, this conflict destroyed everything in Mariste. To see you coming together today and hugging each other for peace is truly inspiring. These new facilities we are opening today are not just buildings but the foundations for lasting peace in your community,” said UNDP Resident Representative Nicholas Booth during the ceremony.

<u>Conflict Background</u>

Mariste Community comprises two tribes, the Keprok and Lim, in the Lower Wage LLG of Magarima District. Mariste borders the Hela, Southern Highlands, and Kandep of Enga in the Highlands Region. They have a unique culture and speak three languages: Huli in Tari, Angal Heneg of Mendi, and Kandep in Enga. Because of its linguistic advantage and tribal relations with Kandep and Mendi, it has become a hub for many displaced families from the recent conflicts in the Southern Highlands and Kandep.

The Mariste conflict began in 2014, resulting in significant loss of life, displacement, and disruption to the community. The conflict claimed the lives of eight individuals due to gun violence, while hundreds of people were forced to flee their homes. Economic activities were severely disrupted, leaving many families without a stable source of income. The destruction of the local Aid Post impacted health services, particularly for women and

children, who could not access essential immunisation. Additionally, schools in the area were closed, and teachers evacuated out of fear for their safety. This led to hundreds of children missing out on critical education.

The United Church in Papua New Guinea was invited to mediate this conflict between the LIMBI Tribe and the KEPOROP Tribe. The United Church Mediators actively engaged with both tribes. They succeeded in a ceasefire agreement as a first step in preventing violence and paving the way for genuine peace and reconciliation.

To encourage meaningful engagement and build trust between the two tribes, the project collaborated to implement community peacebuilding projects to foster cooperation and mutual understanding. These initiatives were designed to unite the tribes around shared goals, lay the foundation for dialogue, and create a conducive environment for negotiating a sustainable peace agreement. As part of this effort, five community grants were allocated to support social cohesion projects in Mariste. These projects are

1. Mariste Peace Center (Limbi Tribe)
2. Mariste Peace Centre (Keprop Tribe)
3. Peace Market
4. Road Maintenance work
5. Mariste Aid post

Insider Mediation:

UNDP has been expanding its scope beyond its existing five mediation teams by identifying influential people and engaging them as Insider Mediators to enhance the effectiveness of its mediation support, specifically for complex and complicated conflicts. During the reporting period, the project identified five conflicts and selected 39 male and female insider mediators from within the conflicting groups.

1. **Lama-Tindiwa Conflict:** *Location (Ialibu Pangia); Cause (alcohol abuse); Duration (2.5 years); Casualties (1 man killed)*
2. **Percy-Semin Conflict:** *Location (Nipa Kutubu); Cause (hijack of election boxes during the 2022 elections); Duration (2 years); Casualties (tens of houses and businesses burned)*
3. **Nene-Marep Conflict:** *Location (Mendi Munihu); Cause (a fight between two youths); Duration (23 years); Casualties (22 people killed)*
4. **Mato-Kusa Conflict:** Location *(Poroma LLG, Nipa Kutubu); Cause (Poisoning a boy to death); Duration (7 years); Casualties (41 people killed)*
5. **Kusi Conflict:** *Location (Karinz LLG, Mendi-Munihu); Cause (Pig stealing) Duration (9 years); Casualties (4 people killed)*

Five insider mediation teams were established across the above five conflict-affected sites, comprising 39 insider mediators—18 women, 21 men, and 30% youth representation. Each team consists of 7-8 mediators, ensuring gender balance and youth inclusion, the first of its kind in the Highlands. The project aims to challenge traditional power structures and promote a more inclusive approach to conflict resolution by encouraging women's and youth's leadership in peacebuilding. Additionally, it advances gender-responsive and age-inclusive peacebuilding by creating spaces for women and youth to contribute meaningfully while encouraging men to recognise and support their roles.

The insider mediators participated in an intensive week-long training to equip them with the skills and strategies needed for effective insider mediation. The training strengthened their

capacity in conflict and context analysis, mediation, conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm, gender sensitivity in mediation, and consensus-building while enabling them to develop targeted action plans for resolving the conflicts. As a result, mediators are now better prepared to implement structured mediation processes. Over the next quarter, they will actively engage in their communities and report on their progress, outcomes, and the next steps for their insider mediation. The project anticipates that their efforts will resolve conflicts, prevent potential violence, improve inter-clan relations, and increase community cohesion.

Granting of Community Peace and Development Projects through CBOs

The project has empowered CBOs to lead community-driven peacebuilding initiatives and implement development projects in Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces. It has also provided technical assistance, training, and ongoing mentorship to strengthen the CBOs' capacity to respond effectively to their communities' evolving needs. With their enhanced capacities, the CBOs designed activities and submitted proposals to UNDP for funding consideration. Following a thorough vetting process and capacity assessment, UNDP approved funding for the following community projects proposed by eight CBOs in Hela Province.

No	CBO	Grant Title
1	Hela Orphans Hope Centre	Rice Farming Training to Promote Self-Reliance
2	Hela Women in Peacebuilding	Advocacy Against Harmful Customary Practices that Trigger Violence in Tebi LLG
3	Hela Peace Foundation Inc	Enhancing Access to Justice to Promote Peace by Training Community Leaders as Village Court Officials in Tagali LLG
4	Hela Women Voice	Embracing Resilience: Trauma Counselling for Frontline Service Providers of Various Forms of Violence
5	Tagali Women for Change	Sewing Training
6	Rural Community Empowerment Foundation Incorporated	Youth Empowerment Programme through Basketball Competition
7	Young Ambassadors for Change	PEACE IN ACTION: Involving the Youth in Poultry Farming Training
8	Koroba SARV Awareness	Awareness Against Sorcery Accusation Related and Gender-Based Violence

These funded projects address critical community needs; they promote self-reliance, justice, and social cohesion. The eight CBOs have begun implementing initiatives such as rice farming training to enhance food security and economic independence, advocacy against harmful customary practices that trigger violence, and training community leaders as village court officials to improve access to justice. Other projects focus on trauma counselling for frontline service providers, sewing training to support women's livelihoods, and youth empowerment through basketball competitions and poultry farming training. Additionally, targeted awareness campaigns against sorcery accusation-related and gender-based violence aim to challenge harmful beliefs and encourage safer communities. These efforts have not only strengthened local ownership of peacebuilding but also reinforced trust between communities and key stakeholders, paving the way for long-term stability and development in Hela Province.

2. Please describe in 2-3 sentences the status of this project (i.e. exceeding expectation, slightly behind schedule or off-track) and why using indicators or targets from your workplan

The project is on track, with significant progress in Q3 across all three outputs. Please refer to the progress against each project indicator below.

Indicators	Target	Progress
1.1 Number of peace and development projects implemented	20	**4** peace and development projects granted. Total: Q1 (0) + Q2 (11) + Q3 (4) = **15**
1.2 Number of peace and development initiatives by CBOs	10	**8** peace and development initiatives by CBOs in Hela province. Total: Q1 (0) + Q2 (4) + Q3 (8) = **12**
2.1 Number of safe houses for SARV and GBV established/refurbished	01	Plans are in place to support refurbishing a safe house in Q1 of 2025.
2.2 Number of capacity-building, livelihood and awareness-raising activities in support of SARV and GBV prevention	15	**04** capacity-building, livelihood and awareness-raising activities supporting SARV and GBV prevention are completed Total: Q1 (0) + Q2 (4) + Q3 (4) = **8**
3.1 Number of tribal conflicts locally mediated by the faith-based mediation teams	04	**01** conflict resolved and a peace agreement signed. **02** conflicts ready for signing peace agreements. **01** conflict is being mediated.
3.2 Number of Insider Mediators trained	25	**39** Insider Mediators trained

3. With reference to the activity-based budget and outputs set out in the proposal, which activities has seen major progress in this quarter? Explain progress or why certain activities were not delivered. (maximum of one page)

The project made significant progress in Q3 across all three outputs. Four community peacebuilding projects have been granted, already demonstrating a positive impact and contributing to peacebuilding and social cohesion within communities. Eight CBOs received grants to promote peace, enhance food security, advocate against SARV and GBV, and promote local solutions to problems by taking ownership. The Mariste conflict was concluded by signing the peace agreement in December 2025. Four SARV awareness-raising sessions were organised, and 39 insider mediators were trained to facilitate the mediation of 5 newly identified conflicts in SHP. The refurbishment of a safe house for SARV and GBV could not be initiated due to technical issues and delays, and the project aims to focus on it in the last quarter of the project.

4. If there are significant changes to delivery, then what will be the financial implications on future spend before the end of March 2025?

The project intended to commission a documentation process of mediating conflicts to serve as a resource for mediators, facilitators, and organisations. This is crucial in enhancing learning and process improvement. UNDP has decided to modify the plan and prepare a documentary on conflict resolution in the Highlands instead of written documentation. This will not have any implications on the budget funding.

5. Based on activities that have been completed/not completed this quarter, does the Activity Based Budget need to be updated? If Yes, please attach an updated ABB	**Yes / No** *No significant changes are anticipated in the Activity-Based Budget.*
6. What Activities are planned for next quarter? (If different to original proposal plan)	
Activity	Planned Budget (currency and value)
05 community peacebuilding projects to be granted	$ 47,500
01 SARV house to be refurbished	$ 30,000
07 SARV Awareness sessions to be held	$ 20,000
Mediation Interventions	$ 25,000
Documentary on Conflict Resolution	$ 30,000

Section 3: Risk management

7. Please list any risks encountered and explain what has been done to manage these risks in this quarter. Additionally, please also indicate if any risks have been closed and highlight any changes to individual risks encountered since the last reporting.

Note: This risk matrix should include medium and high impact risks that were mentioned in the proposal document.

Risk	Likelihood (L/M/H)	Impact (L/M/H)	Mitigation
An implementing partner struggled to carry out the activities and achieve deliverables.	H	M	• The project closely monitored the interventions of the implementing partner and provided mentorship to the project coordinator to complete community peace and development projects. • The project held meetings with the implementing partner's leadership in Port Moresby, raising concerns related to the operational barriers and seeking their attention to the needs of their staff on the ground. • **The partner completed the community peace and development projects, and hence the risk is closed.**
CBOs do not implement the community grants per the project expectations.	M	M	• The project has onboarded United Church PNG to regularly monitor the CBO's activities in the field, ensuring they meet project expectations and bring about expected results. United Church will participate in their activities and provide on-site mentoring and advice.

Section 4: Challenges and Learns Learnt

8. Please identify and describe any challenges faced this last quarter. Explain why they happened, what has been learned and what will be done with these learnings? Reflect on progress to date and consider how delivery in the reporting quarter has informed learning. This might involve reporting on relationships with local government, experiences of working in a particularly complex environment or experimenting with new ways of

working. It is important to consider:

- Whether activities had the intended outcomes and reflect on any unintended outcomes
- Operational processes and procedures involving the delivery of outputs.
- Working with downstream partners, project teams or other stakeholders
- How this learning will be used to adapt the project (if appropriate).

The project did not experience any significant challenges during the reporting period.

Section 5: Gender equality and social inclusion (You could refer to any relevant strategic objectives within the UK's new National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security).

9. Have you observed any changes to the context regarding gender and/or gender equality (positive or negative)? This does not have to be directly linked to your work or your results.

Four of the eight CBOs receiving grants from this project are women-led, marking a significant shift in the Highlands, where women increasingly take on leadership roles. The project has observed that women CBOs have demonstrated outstanding commitment and enthusiasm in their fieldwork, often surpassing their male counterparts. Women's contributions are gaining recognition, with men admiring their efforts and acknowledging their impact on the community. This shift gradually challenges traditional perceptions, promoting greater acceptance of women's roles beyond household responsibilities.

10. What actions have you taken to mainstream gender into your analysis, planning and/or delivery?

The highlight of this quarter was the project's redefining mediation in the Highlands by ensuring gender equality and youth inclusion in conflict resolution. Five insider mediation teams were established across five conflict-affected sites, comprising 39 trained mediators—18 women, 21 men, and 30% youth representation. Each team, carefully structured to ensure gender balance and youth inclusion, marks a shift in the Highlands, where mediation has traditionally been male-dominated. The project actively challenges entrenched power structures and promotes a more inclusive peacebuilding approach by positioning women as equal partners in conflict resolution. The Women mediators have been trained and equipped with skills to lead negotiations and gain greater recognition and influence within their communities. The initiative further promotes gender-responsive and age-inclusive mediation by creating safe spaces for women and youth to contribute meaningfully. It encourages men to acknowledge their leadership and become allies in advancing sustainable peace.

11. Have you observed or experienced any resistance or support from your stakeholders? If so, what did you do?
The project did not experience any resistance from stakeholders.
12. Please describe and list if and how the project has worked with other marginalised social groups in the last quarter.
The project's support to the Mariste community exemplifies its commitment to reaching the most remote and marginalized populations in the Highlands. The mediation assistance provided to resolve their conflict, along with five community grants, marks the first intervention of its kind for the people of Mariste. With no road access, Mariste can only be reached by a two-hour walk from the nearest road. According to community members, no government authorities have ever visited their village due to its isolation. This project represents a historic milestone for them—not only as the first external initiative of its kind but also as the first-ever visit by non-PNG nationals. In December 2024, the UNDP Resident Representative, Peacebuilding Specialist, and Communication Specialist traveled to Mariste to participate in the Peace Agreement Signing Ceremony.

Conflict Sensitivity
13. What conflict/contextual analysis have you undertaken this quarter to inform your understanding of the dynamics, including the way that gender and social categorisations (age, class, race, disability) intersect with these conflict dynamics?
UNDP commissioned an independent conflict analysis in the Highlands focusing on Hela, Southern Highlands, Western Highlands, and Enga provinces. The study was specifically conducted to inform the UN's Highlands Joint Programme Phase II, which will begin in Q1 of 2025. The conflict analysis draft report is enclosed.
14. How has the project minimised harm and used opportunities to build peace this quarter?
UNDP follows the Do No Harm approach in its project design, implementation, and monitoring to ensure that interventions do not harm. When deciding on the target beneficiaries, it provides clear targeting criteria for the specific support it offers and does not reinforce exclusion. Moreover, the community-level context and conflict analysis help the project identify the peace connectors and strategise peacebuilding interventions to strengthen them for preventing violence and creating social cohesion and harmony among communities. The selection of 8 CBOS was made in consultation with provincial administration, district authorities, and Local-level government. This collaborative approach ensures equity, avoids imbalances in peace and development support across communities, and avoids leaving any community groups feeling excluded. The project team and the provincial, district and local level administrations communicated the selection criteria to others not receiving grants. Hence, they are aware of the process to ensure transparency and minimise potential resentment over the selection process. The granting of these 8 projects

to CBOs has been well received by communities and is already building momentum for peacebuilding and social cohesion.

15. How did you track **conflict risks** that could undermine the objectives of your project this quarter?

UNDP uses conflict-sensitive approaches in its project design, implementation, and monitoring to ensure that interventions do not harm. When deciding on the target beneficiaries, it provides clear targeting criteria for the specific support it offers and does not reinforce exclusion. UNDP and its implementing partners analyse the context and assess the communities where support is provided, aiming to avoid resentment from other communities and groups. Additionally, UNDP carries out the community selection process in consultation with UN agencies and the provincial governments to prevent duplication and ensure equal participation of communities who meet the project's criteria and are in the same geographic location to benefit the peacebuilding and development interventions.

16. How have you monitored **conflict <u>sensitivity</u>** risks this quarter? What risks emerged? How did you mitigate/manage/address these?

Conflict risks are continuously monitored through UNDP's risk log matrix, enabling the project to identify potential hazards that interventions may pose. Mitigation measures are proposed to prevent or address these risks as they arise.

17. How do you horizon scan for new conflict sensitivity risks? How do you use information provided to you by local partners, community members and other stakeholders to manage these risks

The project is implemented by UNDP's local partners who have a permanent presence in the communities they serve and understand the local context and conflicts well. They are aware of the existing conflicts and the relationships between different clans and tribes, as well as the historical grievances, and therefore, ensure their interventions do not cause risks. UNDP regularly meets its partners, analyses the information they provide, and accordingly makes decisions in consultation with the local partners, provincial and district administrations, and communities.

SECTION 6: Sustainability

18. Are there any examples of how the activity outputs from this quarter may be sustainable? Are there any examples of unintended consequences of project interventions?

During the reporting period, UNDP provided grants to 8 CBOs to implement peacebuilding interventions; this is an example of the project's approach to mobilising local capacities for peace with a long-term impact of empowering communities to devise solutions and take charge.

The basis of grant provision to the CBOS as well as of all other project interventions is to provide training, planning guidance and support to CBOs so they can become active in peacebuilding and development initiatives in their communities. The project's sustainability

is therefore linked to greater participation by CBOs and the community people in peacebuilding and development initiatives within their communities. The project ensures to connect and introduce these CBOs to other organisations in the Highlands, such as the District and Provincial Administrations, local and national government, and the INGOs and Donor Agencies to channel their support through them and serve as helping hands to these institutions.

SECTION 7: Communications and Visibility

19. Please provide a summary of and links to all visibility coverage over the last quarter (links to PRs, socials and any media coverage)

- The link to a UNDP social media post on the Mariste Peace Agreement Signing Ceremony supported by the UKISF funds.

  https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18bvbVtcoB/

Section 8: Forward Look

20. Please indicate any matters which you would like to escalate to the UKISF Pacific Programme team or discuss in our quarterly meeting.

Not any

21. Please indicate what the next quarter plans are, including an indication of an events calendar for upcoming events which require BHC attention. Additionally, please indicate any matters which you would like to escalate to the ISF Pacific Programme team.

- 05 community peacebuilding projects to be granted
- 01 SARV safe house to be refurbished
- 07 SARV Awareness sessions to be held
- Continuation of the work of the insider mediators
- Video documentary on SARV and GBV
- Video documentary on conflict resolution in the Highlands

Signature	
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Position	Peacebuilding Specialist
Date	05 February 2025