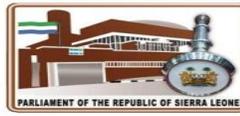




Scaling and Validating of the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide in Sierra Leone

OFFICIAL REPORT



SCALING AND VALIDATION WORKSHOP

THE FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIAN
MENTORSHIP GUIDE IN SIERRA LEONE

15 & 16 SEPTEMBER 2025
CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING CENTER



Date: 15th & 16th September, 2025

Venue: CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING CENTER

SUBMITTED BY OFFICIAL EVENT RAPPORTEUR:

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List of Acronyms

DePReP – Department of Programs, Research and Partnership

SLeFPaC – Sierra Leone Female Parliamentary Caucus

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

MPs – Members of Parliament

CSOs – Civil Society Organizations

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

Executive Summary

The Department of Programs, Research and Partnership (DePReP), in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Female Parliamentary Caucus (SLeFPaC), and with generous support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), convened a two-day national event on **Scaling and Validating the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide**. The meeting was held at the Civil Service Training Center from **15th to 16th September 2025**.

The central purpose of the event was to **validate and operationalize the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide**, which was initially developed in 2024 to promote knowledge transfer, leadership skills, and gender-responsive political participation among female MPs and aspiring women leaders.

Day One focused on official opening ceremonies, keynote addresses, technical presentations, and participatory group sessions. Notably, the Lead Consultant presented the Mentorship Guide, emphasizing its framework and strategic relevance. Regional caucuses engaged in group work to validate its practical applicability, and participants further deliberated on ethical standards, operational guidelines, and mentorship challenges.

Day Two centered on practical mentorship approaches. It featured **skills development sessions, goal-setting exercises, and pairing activities** between mentors and mentees. The program closed with a documentation session and a joint declaration of commitments by DePReP, and SLeFPaC, setting the stage for sustained implementation.

The event brought together **female MPs, parliamentary staff, civil society representatives, and technical experts**. Discussions were rich, covering inclusivity, sustainability, and resource mobilization strategies.

Key outcomes included:

1. A **validated Mentorship Guide** that reflects input from MPs, civil society, and partners.
2. Consensus on **ethical and operational guidelines** for mentorship.
3. Strengthened partnerships between **Parliament, UNDP, and SLeFPaC**.
4. Agreement on **mentor-mentee pairings** and peer learning structures.
5. Clear commitments for a **sustainable roll-out strategy** aligned with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and AU Agenda 2063.

Strategically, the event reinforced Parliament’s role as a driver of gender equality and democratic inclusivity. It also positioned the Mentorship Guide as a critical tool for enhancing women’s leadership, broadening political participation, and consolidating parliamentary capacity for future generations of women leaders.

1.0 Background and Context



The **Sierra Leone Female Parliamentary Caucus (SLeFPaC)** was established to advance gender equality and ensure that women legislators serve not only as policymakers but also as mentors to emerging women leaders. The caucus has consistently championed initiatives to **bridge the gender leadership gap**, empower female MPs, and strengthen women’s participation in

decision-making processes.

In **2024**, SLeFPaC, in collaboration with DePReP and supported by UNDP, convened the **Inception Meeting on Mentorship for Female MPs**. That meeting laid the foundation for the development of the **Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide**, which provided a structured framework for fostering mentorship, knowledge sharing, and leadership development among female MPs and their mentees.

The **2025 Scaling and Validation Event** built upon those achievements. Its rationale stemmed from the urgent need to refine the Guide, validate it with the full participation of stakeholders, and ensure its alignment with **national development priorities** and **global frameworks** such as:

- **Sierra Leone’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act (2022)**
- **Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls)**
- **African Union Agenda 2063**

The event further recognized the **systemic challenges faced by women in politics**, including underrepresentation, limited access to resources, and societal barriers. A structured mentorship system was therefore deemed essential for nurturing resilience, leadership competence, and confidence among women leaders.

DePREP’s role was pivotal in this regard, providing the **technical, research, and programmatic backbone** to ensure that the Guide was evidence-based, strategically relevant, and adaptable to Sierra Leone’s parliamentary and socio-political context.

By scaling and validating the Guide, the event marked a significant step toward **institutionalizing mentorship within Parliament**, ensuring that the process transcends individual tenures and becomes a sustainable, legacy-driven approach. It also offered a platform for strengthening synergies between **female MPs, CSOs, and development partners**, thereby anchoring gender equality efforts within a robust and collaborative framework.

2.0 Objectives of the Event

General Objective

To scale and validate the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide as a strategic tool for empowering female MPs and mentees across Sierra Leone.

Specific Objectives

- To review and refine the mentorship guide with inputs from MPs and stakeholders.
- To build consensus on ethical and operational guidelines.
- To strengthen mentee-mentor pairings and peer learning structures.
- To identify gaps, challenges, and sustainable approaches.

- To affirm institutional and partner commitments for implementation.

3.0 Methodology of Engagement

Format of the event

The workshop combined multiple complementary formats to maximise validation, consensus-building and practical learning:

- **Plenary sessions** formal opening, keynote, presentations (Lead Consultant, Gender & Research Unit, UNDP), and plenary reflections to establish shared grounding.
- **Breakout / Regional Caucus sessions** participants divided by region (North, East, South, Western Area, Northwest) to validate the Guide's contextual relevance and provide region-specific inputs.
- **Validation workshops** structured group exercises (e.g., clause-by-clause review; dot-voting on priority actions; SWOT analysis) to arrive at consensus edits to the Guide.
- **Peer-learning / practical exercises** skills development demonstrations, goal-setting clinics, pairing and cohort building (mentor–mentee matching simulation).
- **Panel & interactive dialogues** multi-stakeholder panels (MPs, CSOs, UNDP) to surface cross-cutting issues and resource considerations.
- **Documentation & resource sharing sessions** distribution of draft Guide, templates, and information on monitoring/accountability.

Role of consultants and facilitators

- **Lead Consultant** presented the draft Mentorship Guide, led the technical validation workshops, captured proposed amendments and produced annotated draft sections.
- **Consultants (subject experts)** facilitated breakout groups, led thematic sessions (mentorship models; monitoring & evaluation; ethics) and drafted technical notes based on group outputs.
- **DePREP Moderation Team** (Deputy Director / Moderator / Secretariat) overall session moderation, timekeeping, coordination with resource persons, and liaison with UNDP and SLeFPaC.

- **Gender & Research Unit** led the session on ethical guidelines and operational standards; ensured that edits aligned with national gender policy and evidence.
- **Regional Representatives & Caucus Leads** convened caucus discussions, ensured regional perspectives were captured and presented group work outcomes.
- **Rapporteurs** one per major session and one per breakout group; captured proceedings, key proposals, participant lists, commitments, and prepared daily summaries.
- **Technical Support / Secretariat** logistics, digital capture (scanning, photography), distribution of materials, and maintenance of the attendance register.

Use of participatory and gender-sensitive approaches

- **Safe-space protocol & code of conduct** a participatory code was read at opening to guarantee respectful dialogue, confidentiality where requested, and zero tolerance for harassment.
- **Inclusive facilitation** use of small-group facilitation techniques (World Café style rotations, fishbowl discussions, role-plays) to ensure quieter participants could contribute.
- **Gender-responsive tools** discussion guides included gender-sensitive indicators, and validation checklists asked participants to test each Guide section for differential impacts on women and vulnerable groups.
- **Accessibility & inclusivity measures** seating arrangements to support mobility needs, materials provided in print and digital formats (large print on request), signposting of facilities, and refreshments sensitive to dietary requirements.
- **Power dynamics mitigation** mentors and senior MPs were encouraged to listen first during caucus sessions; facilitators used targeted questions to ensure representation from junior MPs and mentees.
- **Child-care / family considerations** organisers provided flexible arrival times and a quiet room to accommodate participants with caregiving duties (communicated in advance).
- **Language & communication** sessions conducted in English with summaries in Krio upon request; facilitators used plain-language briefs and visual aids to aid comprehension.

Data & documentation methodology

- **Registration & attendance** all participants completed a registration form (Name, Institution, Region, Role, Contact, Days Attended) and signed an attendance sheet on arrival.
- **Session capture** each session had an assigned rapporteur who produced: (a) a short session summary; (b) key decisions/agreements; (c) an issues log (for items requiring follow-up).
- **Recording & consent** audio recordings and photographs were taken only after informed consent; all participants were notified and given the option to opt out of media capture.
- **Group outputs** flipcharts, post-it notes and plenary flipboard inputs were photographed, scanned and attached to session annexes.
- **Validation tracking** proposed edits to the Guide were captured in a single “validation tracker” (documented by section, proposed change, rationale, proposer and final decision accepted/rejected/for revision).
- **Evaluation & feedback** participants completed a standard workshop evaluation form (qualitative and quantitative items) and a short mentorship readiness self-assessment.
- **Synthesis & reporting** rapporteurs’ notes, recordings and the validation tracker were consolidated into the event proceedings, which served as the basis for the final annotated Guide and the donor report.
- **Archiving** — all electronic files (attendance register, validated Guide, session summaries, photos, evaluation forms) were stored on DePREP’s secure repository under a clearly labelled folder structure and catalogued in the event annex.

4.0. Participation Profile

Total number of participants were staff, 8 Mentees and 42 Female Members of Parliament

5.0. Proceedings of the Event

Below is a comprehensive, session-by-session account of the two-day **Scaling and Validating the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide** workshop (Civil Service Training Center, Freetown 15–16 September 2025). This narrative records what transpired, the main issues raised, validation outcomes, and decisions agreed for onward

action. Where appropriate, the report references the validation tracker, annexed session notes, and rapporteur outputs (see Annexes).

Participants: A total of **60** participants (provisional, per registration) representing female and male MPs from all regions, DePREP staff, SLeFPaC executives, consultants, civil society actors, media, and parliamentary technical staff.

5.1 Opening Session

Call to order & prayers

The workshop was formally opened by the DePREP Moderator at 09:00 on Monday 15 September. A brief invocation set a reflective tone and participants observed a minute of silence for colleagues and national concerns.

5.2 Welcome Address — Paul S. Turay (Deputy Director, DePREP)

Mr. Paul S. Turay, Deputy Director of the Department of Research and Gender (DePREP), formally welcomed participants and expressed appreciation for their commitment to strengthening mentorship within the parliamentary framework. In his address, he framed the central purpose of the workshop — the scaling and validation of the Mentorship Guide — as an essential step toward institutionalizing a culture of guided learning and leadership development in the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Turay highlighted DePREP's commitment to providing consistent institutional support and to ensuring that evidence-based tools are made available to both senior and junior members of Parliament. He emphasized that mentorship must not be viewed as an informal or ad hoc activity, but rather as a structured process integrated into the broader parliamentary system, enabling continuity, knowledge transfer, and institutional memory. The address further underscored the importance of achieving practical outcomes from the workshop, namely: (i) the validation of the Mentorship Guide, (ii) the articulation of clear operational guidance for its use, and (iii) the development of an implementation plan with defined roles and responsibilities.

5.3 Opening Statement — Hon. Bernadette Wuyatta Songa (President, SLeFPaC)

Delivering the opening statement, Hon. Bernadette Wuyatta Songa, President of the Sierra Leone Female Parliamentary Caucus (SLeFPaC), reaffirmed the Caucus' mandate to advance the full and effective participation of women in politics and governance. She reminded participants that the Mentorship Guide is not merely a technical document, but a strategic tool to strengthen leadership continuity and ensure that female parliamentarians are empowered to thrive in political life.

Hon. Songa stressed that mentorship is indispensable for preparing the next generation of leaders — enabling junior MPs and prospective women leaders to navigate the complex realities of parliamentary practice, constituency representation, and legislative responsibility. She called for collective ownership of the Guide, encouraging participants to forge consensus around its recommendations and to tailor them to Sierra Leone’s unique political, cultural, and institutional contexts. Her remarks concluded with an appeal for practical, context-sensitive recommendations that can be readily applied to accelerate women’s leadership journeys and sustain gender gains within Parliament.

5.4 Statement- Acting Clerk of Parliament

The Acting Clerk of Parliament conveyed strong institutional commitment to the mentorship initiative, noting that Parliament’s administration fully recognises mentorship as a strategic instrument for strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring leadership continuity. He assured participants that the Parliamentary Service stands ready to facilitate the integration of the Mentorship Guide into existing parliamentary orientation programmes for both new and serving Members of Parliament.

The Acting Clerk emphasised that the administration would provide consistent support for the operational aspects of the mentorship process, including logistical arrangements such as venues, documentation and record-keeping, and coordination with technical partners. He further underscored that embedding mentorship into the Parliament’s administrative routines will not only ensure sustainability but also reinforce Parliament’s broader goals of professional development, institutional memory, and gender-responsive governance.

5.5 Keynote Address — Guest Speaker

In delivering the keynote address, the Guest Speaker framed mentorship as both a strategic necessity and a moral responsibility within parliamentary institutions. The address underscored three critical imperatives that must guide the implementation of the Mentorship Guide.

First, the Guest Speaker emphasised the **institutionalisation of mentorship** as essential for sustainability. Mentorship, he noted, should not depend on the goodwill of individual officeholders or fluctuate with political tenures. Rather, it must be formally embedded within parliamentary structures, supported by clear policies, administrative frameworks, and dedicated resources. Such institutionalisation would ensure continuity, create a culture of shared learning, and safeguard institutional memory.

Second, the Guest Speaker highlighted the importance of **robust monitoring and evaluation systems** to demonstrate the impact of mentorship initiatives. He stressed

that measurable indicators — including retention of female parliamentarians, their legislative contributions, active committee participation, and leadership appointments — are necessary to assess progress and justify continued investment. Evidence of outcomes, he argued, would not only enhance accountability but also strengthen the case for further donor and institutional support.

Third, the keynote stressed that **ethics and safeguarding must be central to any mentorship arrangement**. He cautioned that mentorship, while deeply beneficial, is also a relationship of trust and influence. Safeguarding principles, gender sensitivity, and ethical standards must therefore be integral to programme design, ensuring that mentorship remains safe, inclusive, and empowering for all participants.

The Guest Speaker concluded by challenging participants to embrace mentorship as a transformative practice that can consolidate democratic governance, build resilient leadership pipelines, and create a Parliament that is both inclusive and forward-looking.

Opening Session Outcomes

- Broad endorsement from leadership (DePReP, SLeFPaC, Parliament) to proceed with validation and scaling.
- Agreement to use a participatory validation process (regional caucuses + plenary) and to capture outputs in a validation tracker.

6.0 Thematic Presentations

6.1 Presenters

Presentation 1: The Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide- Framework & Strategic Relevance (Lead Consultant)

The Lead Consultant presented the draft Guide, covering: purpose & scope; mentorship models (one-to-one, group/peer mentoring, e-mentoring, reverse mentoring); mentor/mentee selection criteria; duration and expected activities; monitoring & evaluation framework; resource and budgeting template; sample tools and templates (mentorship agreement, individual development plan, session log, feedback forms).

Key technical highlights and proposed additions captured during the presentation:

- Incorporation of **e-mentoring modalities** to increase reach (virtual mentoring for remote regions).

- Clear **mentor selection, vetting and pairing criteria** (competency-based, experience, regional balance).
- A set of **SMART indicators** for M&E (number of pairings operationalized; mentee confidence/competence scores; committee membership increases; policy interventions championed by mentees).
- A **safeguarding and confidentiality clause** and a complaints/Grievance Mechanism, aligned with parliamentary codes and national legislation.
- Resource estimates for pilot roll-out (training, stipends, digital platform licensing).

Presentation 2: Ethical Guidelines and Operational Standards for Mentorship (Gender & Research Unit)

The Gender & Research Unit led a session on ethics and operational norms: conflict of interest, anti-harassment, confidentiality, transparent reporting, child and vulnerable person safeguarding (where mentees' work may interact with children or community groups), and sanctions for misconduct. The unit proposed a mandatory mentor-mentee code of conduct and a reporting pathway to DePREP and the Clerk's Office.

Q&A and technical clarifications

Participants sought clarifications on institutional oversight (who signs off mentorship agreements), the legal status of mentor incentives, and how to ensure participation from junior MPs who may be constrained by constituency duties. The session concluded with agreement to include a short "Implementation Guide" annex with practical SOPs.

Group Validation Sessions (Regional Caucuses & Thematic Breakouts)

Organisation & methodology

Following plenary presentations, participants broke into regional caucuses (North, East, South, Western Area, Northwest) and thematic groups (M&E, Ethics, Implementation & Resource Mobilisation). Each group used a structured validation worksheet and the validation tracker to review Guide sections clause-by-clause. Facilitators used dot-voting, SWOT analysis, and role-play scenarios to stress-test the Guide.

6.2 Main issues discussed across groups

1. Mentorship Models & Modalities

- Strong support for a blended model (face-to-face + e-mentoring) to address logistic constraints.

- Proposal to include **group mentoring cohorts** (3–5 mentees) to build peer support and lower resource intensity.

2. Selection & Pairing

- Agreement on competency and interest-based selection with a transparent application process.
- Recommendation for an **inaugural national call** for mentors (within Parliament and external experts) and a standardised application form.
- Pairings should consider regional representation, subject-matter expertise, and gender sensitivity.

3. Duration & Intensity

- Consensus for a **pilot mentorship cycle of 6 months** expandable to 12 months based on evaluation.
- Minimum monthly contact expectation (e.g., four formal touchpoints and ongoing ad hoc support).

4. Ethics, Safeguarding & Complaints

- Strong endorsement of including a **Safeguarding and Complaints Protocol** with confidentiality, investigation procedures, and referral pathways to parliamentary human resources or external agencies where necessary.

5. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Groups proposed measurable indicators (output and outcome): number of pairings, session logs completed, mentee skill improvement (pre/post assessment), committee or leadership roles assumed by mentees, and a qualitative case study repository.
- Recommendation for a simple digital dashboard (hosted by DePReP) to capture session reports and M&E metrics.

6. Resource Mobilisation & Costing

- Need to cost the pilot realistically (training of trainers, platform/communication costs, monitoring, small stipend for mentee travel where necessary).

- Suggested engagement of development partners (UNDP, bilateral partners) and private sector sponsorship for sustainability.

7. Incentives & Institutionalisation

- Discussion on incentives (recognition certificates, parliamentary acknowledgements) rather than monetary rewards to avoid conflicts.
- Agreement to incorporate mentorship outcomes as part of parliamentary professional development and orientation for new MPs.

6.3 Group outputs & presentations

Each caucus presented validated edits and prioritized actions. Presentations were captured by rapporteurs and photographed for annexing to the validation tracker.

Plenary Outcomes

After group presentations, the plenary synthesized results and agreed on the following outcomes and decisions:

A. Validation & Adoption

- The **Mentorship Guide was validated** in principle. Participants accepted the major structural elements and agreed a short editorial consolidation of tracked edits was required before final adoption. The consolidated version will be circulated to participants for final endorsement.

B. Institutional Arrangements

- **Establishment of a Mentorship Implementation Taskforce** (M.I.T.) consisting of: DePREP (chair/coordinator), two SLeFPaC executives, a UNDP focal point, two senior MPs (one from the majority and one from opposition), the Gender & Research Unit lead, and a representative from Parliamentary HR. The Taskforce will oversee final consolidation, pilot implementation, and M&E. (Membership list to be circulated by DePREP.)

C. Pilot Roll-out & Timeline

- Agreement to pilot the Guide in **two parliamentary regions** during the initial cycle (one urban, one rural) to test e-mentoring and cohort approaches, with a pilot period of **6 months**. (Regions to be selected by the Taskforce based on representation and logistics.)

- Editorial consolidation and production of the final Guide to be completed and circulated for endorsement within **three (3) weeks** from the workshop's close (target: by **6 October 2025**).
- Pilot implementation to commence after final sign-off and mobilisation of required resources (targeting roll-out to begin by **1 November 2025**).

D. Monitoring & Documentation

- Adoption of the proposed M&E framework, including a standard mentee baseline and endline assessment, session logs, and a short qualitative case study methodology. DePREP will host an online repository for documentation and the digital dashboard for indicators.

E. Ethics & Safeguarding

- The plenary accepted the Safeguarding Protocol and the complaints pathway with minor editorial adjustments; the Policy will be appended to the final Guide and adopted as standard operating procedure for all mentorship activities.

F. Communications & Outreach

- Agreement for a modest communications plan: press brief, social media visibility, and an internal parliamentary circular announcing the initiative and inviting mentors.

7.0 Day Two: Skills Development, Goal Setting, Pairing & Documentation

7.1 Recap of Day One

The Rapporteur provided a concise summary of Day One outputs, the validation tracker status, and the plenary resolutions.

Session 2 — Skills Development & Leadership Learning (Practical Approaches)

Facilitated by Paul S. Turay, this session used practical demonstrations and micro-trainings to equip mentors and mentees with tools for effective engagement. Core modules included:

- **Mentoring session design** (how to structure a 60–90 minute mentorship meeting).
- **Active listening and feedback techniques** for mentors.
- **Time management and constituency balancing strategies** for mentees.

- **Using Individual Development Plans (IDPs)** — template walkthrough and practice.
- **Digital mentoring tools:** brief orientation on using basic platforms for scheduling, video calls, and shared documentation.

Participants practiced mock mentoring sessions in pairs and small groups; rapporteurs captured session logs and feedback.

Goal Setting for Female Mentees

Mentors and mentees worked through SMART goal setting exercises. Mentees drafted 3–5 short-term goals (3–6 months) and one medium-term goal (6–12 months) tied to parliamentary functions (e.g., bill drafting skills, committee engagement, constituency outreach methods). Mentors provided immediate feedback and revised IDPs.

Pairing & Cohort Building Exercise

Consultants facilitated a structured pairing exercise using predefined criteria (expertise, interests, regional considerations). Outcome: initial mentor-mentee pairings for the pilot cohort were provisionally agreed; pairings to be finalised by the Taskforce following background checks and mutual confirmation. Groups also created two peer-learning cohorts to meet monthly.

Documentation of Lessons Learned

Rapporteurs consolidated immediate lessons: importance of flexibility in scheduling; value of group mentoring for topic-specific skill transfer; need for a small technology orientation for less digitally-literate MPs; and the critical role of an M&E lite tool (short forms) to reduce reporting burden.

8.0. Key Themes & Discussions

Theme 1: Leadership and Mentorship as Tools for Political Empowerment

Participants emphasized that mentorship provides a **critical pathway for strengthening women’s leadership in politics**. Through structured guidance, young or newly elected female MPs can gain confidence, legislative knowledge, and resilience to navigate political and institutional challenges. Mentorship was seen not merely as individual support, but as a **collective empowerment strategy** that builds a pipeline of competent women leaders who can influence governance processes.

Discussions highlighted successful cases of mentorship in other African parliaments, demonstrating how mentorship has historically **boosted representation, improved legislative performance, and enhanced visibility of women leaders**. In the Sierra

Leone context, participants agreed that mentorship could bridge generational divides, promote solidarity, and reduce attrition rates among female MPs.

Theme 2: Validation of the Mentorship Guide – Practical Relevance and Adaptability

The **Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide** was extensively reviewed during group validation sessions. MPs from different regions affirmed its **relevance, clarity, and strategic alignment** with national and international frameworks such as **SDG 5** and the **GEWE Act (2022)**.

Regional caucuses stressed the need for **flexibility** to adapt mentorship practices to diverse constituencies, cultural contexts, and political realities. The guide's tools for pairing mentors with mentees, tracking progress, and monitoring outcomes were validated as **practical and scalable**. Participants also recommended that the guide remain a **living document**, subject to periodic updates based on experience and lessons learned.

Theme 3: Ethical Considerations and Operational Frameworks

A strong emphasis was placed on the **ethical foundation of mentorship relationships**. Participants agreed that mentorship must be guided by **trust, confidentiality, transparency, and mutual respect**. The ethical framework within the guide was validated, with additional suggestions on **conflict-of-interest management, safeguarding vulnerable mentees, and maintaining accountability structures**.

Discussions revealed that formalizing **codes of conduct, grievance redress mechanisms, and professional boundaries** would not only ensure credibility but also attract broader buy-in from institutional partners.

Theme 4: Regional Perspectives and Shared Experiences

The group work sessions, structured along **regional caucus lines (North, South, East, and Western Area)**, provided a platform for MPs to share **unique challenges and experiences**. For instance, rural constituencies highlighted the difficulty of balancing political duties with cultural expectations, while urban representatives underscored the need for **digital tools to support mentorship across distances**.

Regional perspectives reinforced the value of **peer learning**. MPs from different areas agreed that **cross-regional collaboration** is essential to create a cohesive mentorship culture that transcends geography and political affiliations.

Theme 5: Sustainability and Institutionalization of Mentorship in Parliament

One of the strongest themes to emerge was the **need for institutional ownership**. Participants cautioned against treating mentorship as a one-off project and instead advocated embedding it within **Parliament's structures, policies, and budget lines**.

The discussions proposed that DePREP and SLeFPaC should establish a **dedicated mentorship coordination desk**, supported by UNDP and other partners, to ensure continuity. Resource mobilization strategies were also debated, emphasizing partnerships with **CSOs, international donors, and local institutions**. The consensus was that sustainability requires **shared responsibility across Parliament, political parties, and external stakeholders**.

9.0. Key Outcomes & Recommendations

Key Outcomes

1. **Validated Mentorship Guide:** The guide was thoroughly reviewed, refined, and endorsed by MPs, consultants, and stakeholders as a **strategic tool** for empowering women in Parliament and beyond.
2. **Consensus on Ethical and Operational Guidelines:** A common framework for **mentorship ethics, roles, and accountability** was adopted, strengthening trust in the process.
3. **Identification of Gaps and Solutions:** Challenges such as **limited resources, cultural resistance, and lack of monitoring mechanisms** were openly discussed, with solutions proposed including digital support systems, regional mentorship networks, and stronger parliamentary ownership.
4. **Strengthened Partnerships:** The event deepened collaboration among **DePREP, SLeFPaC, and Civil Society actors**, paving the way for multi-stakeholder support.
5. **Commitments for Roll-Out:** Clear commitments were made to **implement mentorship pairings, document lessons learned, and mainstream mentorship into parliamentary capacity-building programs**.

Recommendations

For Parliament (through DePREP and SLeFPaC):

- Institutionalize the mentorship program by creating a **mentorship desk** within DePREP.
- Allocate **budgetary support** for mentorship activities, ensuring sustainability beyond donor cycles.
- Integrate mentorship into the **capacity development strategy** of Parliament.

For SLeFPaC:

- Champion the **mentorship agenda** within Parliament and serve as the primary advocate for women’s empowerment initiatives.
- Lead the **monitoring and evaluation** of mentorship outcomes, ensuring periodic updates to the guide.
- Strengthen collaboration with **CSOs, universities, and grassroots organizations** to broaden the pool of mentees.

For Civil Society and Other Stakeholders:

- Provide **technical input and monitoring support** to ensure transparency and inclusivity.
- Partner with Parliament to offer **training modules, advocacy platforms, and mentorship resources**.
- Promote **community-level awareness** to counter cultural resistance and foster acceptance of women in leadership.

10.0. Intended Purpose Indicators

The **Scaling and Validation of the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide** was designed not only as a one-off event but as a strategic intervention with measurable outputs, outcomes, and long-term impacts. The following indicators provide a clear framework for tracking achievements and reporting progress to partners, including UNDP.

A. Output Indicators

1. Mentorship Guide Validated and Adopted

- The Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide was reviewed in plenary and group sessions, refined through regional caucus inputs, and formally validated by participants.

- Adoption was signaled by consensus across MPs, SLeFPaC, DePReP.

2. Number of MPs and Mentees Engaged

- A total of **60 participants** (final verified number to be inserted from attendance list) engaged in the two-day event.
- Breakdown included female MPs, mentees, parliamentary staff, consultants, and development partners.

3. Ethical Guidelines Refined

- Ethical frameworks were debated and consolidated into an agreed code of conduct.
- New provisions were included on confidentiality, conflict-of-interest management, and grievance mechanisms.

B. Outcome Indicators

1. Strengthened Female Leadership Capacity

- MPs and mentees acquired new insights on leadership, mentorship roles, and peer learning approaches.
- Skills development sessions provided practical tools for goal setting, cohort building, and sustaining mentor–mentee relationships.

2. Enhanced Mentor–Mentee Relationships

- Pairing exercises initiated direct relationships between senior MPs and mentees, fostering trust, mutual learning, and accountability.
- Cross-regional mentorship linkages were established to broaden perspectives.

3. Increased Commitment from Participants

- DePReP and SLeFPaC confirmed ownership and pledged to integrate mentorship within Parliament’s institutional framework.

C. Impact Indicators

1. Contribution to Women’s Political Empowerment in Sierra Leone

- The validated guide represents a strategic instrument for nurturing competent female leaders, thus **expanding women’s representation, visibility, and influence** in Parliament and beyond.

2. Alignment with National Gender Strategies and SDG 5

- The mentorship initiative complements Sierra Leone’s **Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Act (2022)**.
- It directly contributes to **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**, as well as AU Agenda 2063 aspirations for inclusive governance.

11.0. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Despite the overall success of the event, a number of challenges were encountered that provide critical lessons for future rollouts of the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide.

A. Technical and Logistical Challenges

- **Fuel Allowances:** Several regional caucus members faced delays in arriving at the venue due to inadequate or late disbursement of fuel allowances, which slightly disrupted the early morning registration process.

DSA Allowances: Members were called upon impromptu during recess to participate in the mentorship program while they were already in Freetown for official parliamentary duties. This arrangement provided the leeway to engage them without incurring Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) costs for the event.

- **Hall Rental and Venue Preparation:** Although the Civil Service Training Center was secured, last-minute logistical adjustments (seating arrangements, audio-visual equipment setup) caused minor delays at the opening session.
- **Time Management:** Given the richness of discussions, certain sessions—particularly the **plenary validation discussions**—extended beyond their allocated times, slightly compressing the schedule for group reporting and reflections.

B. Content-Related Gaps in Mentorship Design

- Participants highlighted the **need for more detailed guidance on mentorship monitoring and evaluation**, including measurable indicators of mentee progress.
- **Digital mentorship approaches** (online mentoring platforms, virtual check-ins) were identified as missing but necessary to support MPs with geographically dispersed constituencies.
- Some mentees expressed the need for more **context-specific case studies** that reflect the realities of rural political engagement and constituency management.

C. Lessons for Future Rollouts

1. **Regional Inclusivity:** Stronger consideration should be given to regional mentoring hubs so that mentees can access guidance without over-reliance on Freetown-based MPs.
2. **Stronger Monitoring Frameworks:** Embedding a clear M&E system, including tracking tools and progress reports, is critical for sustaining credibility and demonstrating impact.
3. **Flexible Programming:** Agendas should allow buffer time for deeper discussions, ensuring no session is rushed at the expense of content quality.
4. **Advanced Resource Planning:** Early disbursement of allowances and confirmation of venue logistics will minimize technical disruptions.

12.0. Financial Overview (Linked to Budget Indicators)

The financial management of the event adhered to accountability standards, with expenditures linked directly to the planned activities and budget categories. UNDP’s support ensured that both the technical and logistical needs of the two-day workshop were adequately met.

13.0 Formal Close & Departure

DePReP offered formal courtesies to partners and participants. A group photo was taken (with consenting participants) and materials (validated worksheets, session notes, templates) were made available digitally to attendees.

13.1 Key Decisions, Agreed Actions & Responsible Parties (Summary Table)

Decision / Action	Responsible	Timeline / Target
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Consolidate validation edits & produce final Guide (annotated)	DePReP (Lead Consultant support)	Within 3 weeks (target 6 Oct 2025)
Establish Mentorship Implementation Taskforce (M.I.T.) and circulate membership	DePReP	Within 7 days (target 22 Sept 2025)
Mobilise mentors (national call) & confirm pairings	SLeFPaC & Taskforce	Following final Guide sign-off (target end Oct 2025)
Host digital repository & M&E dashboard (M&E lite)	DePReP (IT support)	Prior to pilot start (target 31 Oct 2025)
Pilot roll-out in two regions (6 months)	Taskforce & regional leads	Pilot start target: 1 Nov 2025
Monitor & midline review of pilot	DePReP & M&E consultant	Mid-pilot (3 months after start)
Final evaluation & scale-up recommendation	Taskforce	After pilot end (target Apr 2026 if pilot starts Nov 2025)

13.2 Issues Raised & Mitigation Measures

- Issue:** Limited digital literacy among some MPs might reduce e-mentoring uptake.
Mitigation: Small orientation sessions and simple step-by-step digital user guides; pairing less digitally literate mentees with mentors comfortable with phone-based mentoring.
- Issue:** Concern about conflicts of interest and confidentiality in mentor-mentee relationships.
Mitigation: Stronger vetting procedures, a mandatory code of conduct, and clear grievance and reporting pathways appended to the Guide.
- Issue:** Funding constraints for pilot roll-out beyond in-kind parliamentary support.
Mitigation: Development of a short funding proposal and engagement with UNDP and other partners for seed funding.

14. Conclusion

The **Scaling and Validation of the Female Parliamentarian Mentorship Guide** marked a pivotal step in strengthening Sierra Leone’s democratic institutions through gender-responsive leadership. The event reaffirmed that **mentorship is not only a tool for capacity building but also a transformative pathway for advancing women’s political empowerment.** By creating structured spaces for learning,

knowledge transfer, and solidarity, the mentorship initiative has positioned itself as a cornerstone for consolidating gains made under the **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act 2022**, while also aligning with **SDG 5** and **AU Agenda 2063**.

The two-day workshop highlighted that female MPs, as role models and mentors, play a critical role in **inspiring and equipping emerging women leaders** with the skills, confidence, and networks necessary to succeed in political and governance spaces. Beyond Parliament, this mentorship culture is expected to cascade into communities, empowering young women and creating a generational ripple effect for inclusive governance.

The role of **DePREP**, together with its partners **SLeFPaC** was underscored throughout the proceedings. DePREP's technical leadership, combined with UNDP's financial support, ensured that the process was inclusive, participatory, and results-oriented. The event not only validated the Mentorship Guide but also cemented a framework for **sustained collaboration between Parliament, development partners, and civil society**.

However, the event succeeded in transforming the Mentorship Guide from a conceptual framework into a validated, practical tool for political empowerment. By sustaining this initiative, Sierra Leone's Parliament, with the support of UNDP and other partners, is taking bold steps toward building a **resilient, inclusive, and gender-balanced democratic future**.