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RECONCILIATION FOR PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN

Evaluation Report

January 2019

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Management Systems International, A Tetra Tech Company.

RECONCILIATION FOR PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN

EVALUATION REPORT

JANUARY 2019

Contracted under AID-I-668-13-00001, Task Order # 72066818F00001, Task Order 3

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ACRONYMS

ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
CNHPR	Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPF	Community Peace Facilitator
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTRH	Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and Healing
FFGD	Facilitated Focus Group Discussion
ICC	Interchurch Committee
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IR	Intermediate Result
KII	Key Informant Interview
MSI	Management Systems International
R-ARCSS	Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
RfPSS	Reconciliation for Peace in South Sudan
SO	Strategic Objective
SPLA	South Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA-IO	South Sudan People's Liberation Army – In Opposition
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement – Army
SPLM-FD	South Sudan People's Liberation Movement – Former Detainees
SPLM-IG	South Sudan People's Liberation Movement – In Government
SSCC	South Sudan Council of Churches
SSDF	South Sudan Defence Forces
SSNLM/A	South Sudan National Liberation Movement/ Army
SUCCESS	Systems to Uphold the Credibility and Constitutionality of Elections in South Sudan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VISTAS	Viable Support to Transition and Stability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation report presents the findings from nearly six weeks of field research and two weeks of desk-based work from a team of three experts on South Sudan. Guided by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the team considered six key questions about the implementation of the Reconciliation for Peace in South Sudan (RfPSS) project, implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in support of the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC). The report presents a contextualization of the SSCC's approach to reconciliation in South Sudan and follows with an overview of the project and the methodology for this evaluation. The body of the report provides the general findings, followed by findings per question and then lessons and recommendations. The annexes include several unique pieces of work that informed the evaluation findings: a context analysis, an organizational assessment and three case studies. Also included as an annex is a list of the 95 people consulted for this report and the tools used to guide data collection.

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation was designed as an independent evaluation of RfPSS to inform USAID about project successes and challenges and to provide insights into potential design and operational priorities looking ahead. As such, the primary audience for this report is USAID, in particular the Democracy and Governance Team, with relevance also for the implementing partner and their South Sudanese counterparts. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of RfPSS and identify any sustainable outcomes, including:

- An evaluation of SSCC processes, activities and effectiveness as they relate to RfPSS;
- An evaluation of CRS's performance assisting the SSCC in these efforts;
- An evaluation of the relevance, assumptions and theory of change as presented in RfPSS; and
- An analysis of project outcomes, including identifying lessons learned and recommendations moving forward.

RfPSS aimed to support the SSCC and its ecumenical partners in addressing communal conflicts and maintaining peace through reconciliation activities, while also strengthening grassroots constituencies and faith-based structures connected to the SSCC to undertake peacebuilding and reconciliation activities. The geographic focus of the project covered the former Lakes, Jonglei and Western Equatoria states, as well as Juba County. The goal of the project was to build a more peaceful, prosperous and reconciled South Sudan, based on inclusive citizen engagement at all levels, attention to past wrongs and the implementation of a just and comprehensive peace accord. Project activities focused on supporting the four pillars of the Action Plan for Peace (APP): (1) advocacy—enabling the SSCC to undertake advocacy, particularly through participation in the national peace process and visits to external influencers such as the U.S. and South Africa; (2) reconciliation—enabling the SSCC to undertake reconciliation and mediation activities, such as addressing intra-Murle, intra-Anyuak and intra-Acholi leadership disputes; (3) neutral forums—enabling community-based dialogues on peace and security challenges and solutions; and (4) organizational strengthening—supporting the development of the formal institutional structures and processes of the SSCC.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology relied on inputs from nearly 100 key informant interviews (KIIs) and facilitated focus group discussion (FFGD) participants consulted in the four states of Juba, Gbudue, Western Lakes and Jonglei. To address the evaluation questions, the evaluation team relied on three primary components of the research design: the context analysis, organizational assessment and case studies. Using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods and primary and secondary sources, the evaluation report provides detailed and context-specific insights into RfPSS implementation. Drawing on their extensive experience in South Sudan, the evaluators were able to develop an in-depth critique of the project implementation, as well as of the assumptions that shaped the project outcomes. The evaluation report also uses direct quotations, as far as possible, to provide a nuanced exploration of the perspectives of the various stakeholders.

KEY FINDINGS

While the project recorded some achievements, particularly around increasing organizational coherence and formalizing systems within the SSCC, several key challenges negatively affect the overall impact. In particular, the evaluation highlights **weaknesses with local ownership and the quality of the partnership** between CRS and the SSCC; **problems with attribution and overlap** in terms of RfPSS and other donor-funded initiatives in the area of operation; **flaws in the design logic and project assumptions**; and **an absence of coherent approaches to government engagement**.

The subsections that follow summarize the key findings by evaluation question.

PARTICIPATION

While RfPSS aimed to reach 1.25 million people, as of September 2018, its activities' reach was 133,919 people (56,248 females and 77,671 males). Radio programs reached the vast majority of these: 111,560 people, or 83 percent of project beneficiaries. The main mechanism for participation was meant to be the community conversations. The community conversations process launched in March 2018 and had conducted 15 conversations by September of that year in the Western Equatoria, Lakes and Jonglei regions, with 2,660 participants (992 female and 1,668 males). The project initially aimed to conduct 181 community conversations but reduced this number due to delays in finalizing the methodology. Initial expectations were that the community conversations would include 500 participants over a four-day period. Project staff later reduced this to between 150 and 300 participants in a two-day meeting. Community participants in all field locations noted that the **meetings were too short** and that more days were needed for real discussion and participation. On the ground, **community conversations were seen as a CRS activity** and not an SSCC, Inter-Church Committee (ICC) or APP activity.

The evaluators considered the impact of three specific biases on broad-based participation:

- Participation by religious affiliation: Not all churches participate in the SSCC and ICCs, and some are able to draw on their significant constituencies to assume more dominant roles, sometimes to the exclusion of members from other churches.
- Participation of women: Although the award document states that at least 40 percent of those reached via consultations will be women, these targets shifted to 30 percent female representation in the community conversations methodology; even at that rate, the quality of participation was

weak. The project failed to make significant efforts to include and enable the participation of women.

- Participation by government: The government's participation was an important part of the community conversations, raising questions about the apolitical nature of the neutral forums.

RELEVANCE

The APP is broad enough to incorporate programmatic choices within a continuously evolving context and provides a relevant articulation of the SSCC priorities looking ahead. The APP provided an organizational framework for the SSCC and much progress has been made on formalizing the institutions and systems of the SSCC. However, the SSCC displayed an overall lack of ownership of activities conducted by RfPSS, and multiple church stakeholders referred to CRS as the implementer of RfPSS. The APP belongs to the SSCC, but project activities belong to the implementing partner.

Church leaders are relevant as peacemakers and are called on to mediate in national and local conflicts. However, the evaluation found that **the success of church-led reconciliation processes is influenced by the nature of the conflict in which they are intervening and the personalities of the church leaders.**

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

As mentioned, one of the successes of RfPSS was in **improving the internal organization of the SSCC and the ICCs.** However, the SSCC still struggles with internal coordination and communication, as detailed in Annex III (Organizational Assessment). RfPSS was **broad enough to enable flexible responses**, but slow internal processes hampered the ability to undertake quick responses to community requests for intervention.

Many stakeholders saw **the trauma healing sessions as the most successful part of the community conversations** and, in general, community members consulted for this report noted appreciation for the community conversation process. However, lack of follow-up significantly undermined the overall impact of these activities. Limited monitoring, evaluation and learning took place and little awareness of the impact of single activities on longer-term peace and reconciliation processes existed.

A fundamental project challenge was the issue of timing and tying process-related outcomes to project-defined outputs. The SSCC, like any South Sudanese social institution, is a slow-moving bureaucracy with divergent internal interests. This affected, for example, the ability to quickly define and implement the community conversation methodology. For CRS, the failure to link the research outputs, such as to the project activities, missed an opportunity to link a single activity (production of a research report) to engagement processes.

The SSCC faces significant challenges in terms of centralized and hierarchal decision-making structures, limited technical peacebuilding and mediation skills and the limited capacity of the ICCs, in some areas.

ASSUMPTIONS

The original assumptions in RfPSS suffered from conceptual and contextual flaws that affected the project outcomes in several important ways. First, **civil society represents the same biases as the rest of the body politic** and **the impact of their voices on the national peace process has been limited.**

Second, **RfPSS failed to engage in transitional justice** as a thematic agenda, as indicated in the theory of change. Third, nuance is present in the linkages between national and local conflicts with significant regional variation. **RfPSS intervention areas should be based on a conflict analysis that includes actor and power analysis as well as a basic overview of who else is programming in the area and what their projects are supporting to develop coherent and strategic intervention plans**. Fourth, no concerted efforts took place to tie local-level interventions with national advocacy or to link church constituencies with messages about the national peace process. **The community conversations were not designed to address transitional justice or national political questions; these are community-driven development processes with clear governance outcomes**.

EMPHASIS

The scope of the project was broad and could include a variety of interventions. However, initiatives seldom moved from being single-activity-driven interventions into a more coherent part of a process. Many stakeholders emphasized that peace is a process that requires multiple and consistent engagements. **The structures of the APP are not significantly translated into state-based plans for engagement.**

Questions remain about efficacy, sequencing and timing, rather than emphasis. There seems to be an absence of strategic and operational linkages between the pillars of the APP. For example, no clear efforts linked the SSCC's advocacy activities with inputs from the community conversations to ensure that the church is the "voice of the voiceless."

EFFECTIVENESS

While the SSCC is taking shape as a formal institution, **need for organizational strengthening, particularly at the ICCs, still exists.** Evaluators noted that ICC members consulted for this report had received training, but clarity is lacking regarding the training they received, from whom and for what purpose. A need for staff development planning exists to ensure staff retention for the SSCC, which highlighted a desire to assume more direct control of resources. Meanwhile, CRS maintained that although the SSCC has progressed well in terms of developing internal policies and procedures, these remain weak and characteristic of a nascent institution. Internal decision-making processes at the SSCC are highly centralized and time-consuming, meaning that tight deadlines are unrealistic.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

The evaluation team found that in addition to the six main evaluation questions addressed above, six additional crosscutting points require attention:

1. ***Ownership questions.*** Significant questions were raised throughout the evaluation about local ownership in terms of lack of control of resources, planning and activity implementation.

2. ***Partnership deficits.*** The evaluation team observed several tensions that indicated weaknesses in partnership management (between the SSCC and CRS; between the SSCC and ICCs; and between ICCs and CRS).

3. ***Flaws in the design logic.*** The project was unrealistically ambitious and required further context and conflict sensitivity.

4. ***Mixed understandings of what the "church" is.*** The SSCC is not a homogenous, interest neutral and bias-free actor. The success of the collective depends on the personalities and activities of specific church leaders.

5. ***Significant and ambiguous role of the government.*** The project failed to clearly articulate a strategy for government engagement to mitigate the potential for capture by local elite, while also providing significant roles for government actors to play.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the evaluation team found significant variations between the case study sites that emphasize the need for area-specific intervention planning to tailor capacity-building support to ICCs and to enable a more comprehensive approach to reconciliation. The SSCC is an important political actor in South Sudan, and its relevance as a peace partner at the national and local levels is evidenced by the continued calls for their intervention. However, **future support to the SSCC and the APP should hinge on a more explicit agreement between the donor, implementing partner and SSCC about their joint priorities, commitments and actions.** The SSCC should be enabled through flexible and context-specific support that operates within a framework of mutually agreed long-term goals. Opportunities for intersectionality should be actively pursued to enable church leaders and members to participate in other reconciliation processes that are currently underway, as well as to support the SSCC to become inclusive, especially in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Other key lessons highlighted in this report include the need to:

- **Enable local ownership and partnership.** Spend more focused attention and resources on information management, joint planning and learning; enabling local ownership requires more flexible timeframes.

- **Increase strategic coherence.** Reducing overlap between projects and maximizing support to resolve inter-communal conflicts requires a more coordinated and coherent effort from donors and implementing partners.

- **Focus on achieving depth.** Tie activities to impact outcomes, and adequately measure them.

- **Develop and sustain a learning culture.** Improve information management, learning and reflection.

- **Embrace context specificity and conflict sensitivity.** Resolving local conflicts requires long-term strategies and focused, but flexible, resourcing; conflict-specific intervention plans are required.

The evaluators hope that this report sparks an honest critique of where and how to engage in reconciliation activities in South Sudan at this opportune time. Addressing reconciliation is a highly political undertaking that requires concerted efforts from all South Sudanese and their international partners, and we hope this report enables further discussion on how USAID can maximize the impact of their efforts in this regard.

INTRODUCTION

From December 5, 2018, to January 28, 2019, Management Systems International (MSI) undertook an evaluation of the Reconciliation for Peace in South Sudan (RfPSS) project implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in support of the South Sudan Council of Churches' (SSCC's) Action Plan for Peace (APP). This report provides an overview of the project and evaluation methodology followed by a presentation of the key findings and recommendations from the evaluation team.

The purpose of this performance evaluation is to determine the RfPSS effectiveness and identify any sustainable outcomes, including:

- An evaluation of SSCC processes, activities and effectiveness as they relate to RfPSS
- An evaluation of CRS' performance assisting the SSCC in these efforts
- An evaluation of the relevance, assumptions and theory of change as presented in RfPSS
- An analysis of project outcomes, including identifying lessons learned and recommendations moving forward

The evaluation team comprised three technical experts, Ms. Lauren Hutton, Dr. Leben Moro and Mr. Christopher Oringa, who undertook six weeks of fieldwork in South Sudan. Interviews and focus group discussions took place in Juba, Jonglei State (Bor and Anyidi), Western Equatoria State (Nzara and Yambio) and Western Lakes (Rumbek and Pachong). See Annexes V and VI for a detailed list of interviewees and the data collection tools.

The evaluation's design aims to deliver an independent evaluation of RfPSS to inform USAID about project successes and challenges and to provide insights into potential design and operational priorities looking ahead. As such, the primary audience for this report is USAID, in particular the Democracy and Governance Team, with relevance also for the implementing partner and their South Sudanese counterparts.

INTRODUCTION TO RFPSS

RfPSS aimed to support the SSCC and its ecumenical partners to address communal conflicts and maintain peace through reconciliation activities, while also strengthening grassroots constituencies and faith-based structures connected to the SSCC to undertake peacebuilding and reconciliation activities. The geographic focus of the project covered the former Lakes, Jonglei and Western Equatoria states, as well as Juba County. The goal of the project was to build a more peaceful, prosperous and reconciled South Sudan, based on inclusive citizen engagement at all levels, attention to past wrongs and the implementation of a just and comprehensive peace accord. USAID's support to the RfPSS project aligns with the USAID South Sudan Operational Framework under Transitional Objective 2.2, "to strengthen inter- and intra-communal relations and reconciliation."

The RfPSS sought to reach 1.25 million men, women and youth, including those engaged, trained, listened to and supported via direct consultations or mass media channels for:

- Active civil society participation in grassroots peace and reconciliation activities.

- Advocacy for local and international best practices in a South Sudanese-led transitional justice process.
- Integrating the needs and views of citizens in formal peace negotiations

RfPSS supported the SSCC to implement its strategic agenda, the APP. Developed by the SSCC in April 2015, the APP is an articulation of the SSCC's aims and priorities for engagement in the complex South Sudanese context. The APP's structure centers on four pillars: 1) advocacy, 2) reconciliation, 3) neutral forums and 4) institutional strengthening, with gender as a crosscutting priority issue. RfPSS supported activities aligned with each pillar, as well as on women's participation. The RfPSS was not designed to directly link project activities to the APP pillars. However, the project was conceptualized in terms of goals, strategic objectives (SOs) and intermediate results (IRs) that are easily associated with the APP pillars, as indicated below:

SO1: Participation of South Sudanese communities in inclusive grassroots peace and reconciliation processes strengthened.

IR1.1 SSCC has improved operational systems.
(APP Organizational Strengthening Pillar)

IR1.2 Staff have adequate capacity to lead reconciliation and healing processes.
(APP Reconciliation Pillar)

IR1.3 South Sudanese communities have improved social and community relationships.
(APP Neutral Forums and Reconciliation Pillar)

SO2: SSCC and other institutions incorporated best practices in conflict management and advocate for inclusivity.

IR2.1 SSCC and other institutions identified best practices in conflict management and reconciliation processes.
(APP Advocacy Pillar)

SO3: Views and needs of South Sudanese people are integrated into peace negotiation processes.

IR3.1 Increased ability of SSCC and its partners to influence peace negotiation process.
(APP Advocacy and Neutral Forums Pillar)

In terms of advocacy activities, RfPSS supported SSCC leaders to participate in the national peace negotiations in Addis Ababa that led to the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan. Selected religious leaders also undertook advocacy visits to the United States and South Africa. At the May 17 to 22, 2018, High-Level Revitalization Forum in Addis Ababa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) asked church leaders to lead consultations with factions of the South Sudan People's Liberation Movement—In Government (SPLM-IG), In Opposition (SPLM-IO) and Former Detainees (SPLM-FD)—on the subcommittees of governance and security to build consensus before the formal negotiation process continued.

RfPSS-supported reconciliation activities enabled religious leaders to participate in specific inter- and intracommunal reconciliation efforts such as the intra-Murle, intra-Acholi and intra-Anyuak processes. Specific church leaders were often asked to intervene with such internal leadership contests and provide

mediation between conflicting groups. Activities supporting neutral forums largely focused on community conversations. The project aimed to conduct 181 conversations at the payam, county, state and national levels to engage populations in participatory local peace planning processes. Finally, RfPSS supported the institutional development of the SSCC by providing training and organizational development support, including focuses on financial management, proposal writing and internal policy development. The SSCC exists at the national level as an umbrella body of seven churches: Catholic Church, Episcopal Church of Sudan, Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, Africa Inland Church, Sudan Pentecostal Church, South Sudan Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Church and Sudan Interior Church. For coordination purposes, the country is divided into three greater regions—Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile—with regional coordinating interchurch committees (ICCs, based in Wau, Juba and Malakal, respectively). ICCs are also present at state and district levels with significant variations in their levels of organization, activity and capacity. The project included an assessment of ICCs in December 2017. When asked for a copy of the ICC assessment, CRS staff insisted that the SSCC should provide it to the evaluation team; the SSCC maintains that CRS has property of this document.

SCOPE OF EVALUATION

To assess the project, USAID tasked the evaluation team with answering the following key questions:

1. **Participation:** What strategies has RfPSS used to increase citizen and community participation in peace and reconciliation processes in South Sudan?
    a. How effective have those strategies been, including for various stakeholder groups, such as women, youth, traditional leaders, faith-based groups and other civil society organizations (CSOs)?
    b. Do citizens continue to engage in community and national peace and reconciliation initiatives through the APP?
2. **Relevance:** How relevant is the APP to peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts in South Sudan at both the national and local levels?
3. **Strengths and weaknesses:** What major strengths, weaknesses, successes and challenges are apparent in RfPSS implementation, including in interacting with SSCC leadership and staff at the national and local levels, and in documenting such successes and challenges?
4. **Assumptions:** Are the original assumptions put forward in the RfPSS design and theory of change still valid, given the changes to the conflict and political context in South Sudan since RfPSS started?
5. **Emphasis:** Does the RfPSS maintain the right proportional emphasis across the four APP pillars, given the programmatic context?
6. **Effectiveness:** What type of institutional support to the SSCC is recommended to increase its effectiveness in implementing future peacebuilding and reconciliation activities?
7. **Lessons and recommendations:** What lessons can be learned, and recommendations determined, based on analysis of questions 1 through 6?
    a. What options/opportunities exist for RfPSS during the remaining time of the agreement?

To answer these questions and develop an evidence-based response, the evaluation team developed a holistic yet concise methodology, as the next section details.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND TOOLS

The methodology's design aims to ensure that the evaluation team gathers sufficient data to answer the six research questions and identify lessons and recommendations. The design's three main components are:

CONTEXT ANALYSIS: The evaluation team developed an understanding of how RfPSS project teams analyzed the South Sudan context and, specifically, how they defined, understood and approached issues of national and local conflict. The evaluators developed a context analysis to guide their understanding of local and national conflicts and to inform their assessment of how RfPSS engaged and interacted with conflict dynamics. Annex I contains the context analysis as developed by the evaluation team, along with an assessment of how RfPSS engaged with national and local conflict dynamics.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT: The evaluators studied the structure of the SSCC and its relationship with CRS to understand the relative roles and contribution of each to RfPSS. Annex III outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various structures of the SSCC, as well as data gathered from stakeholders on the functioning of the organization.

CASE STUDY: The evaluation team used three case studies to assess how RfPSS supported APP implementation in differing contexts in South Sudan. Annex IV provides a macro-level analysis of the case study data, including an assessment of the variations and commonalities between the contexts. The case studies arose from field research trips to the states of Gbudwe (Yambio and Nzara), Jonglei (Bor Town) and Western Lakes (Rumbek and Pachong).

The above methods were used to gather data to address the evaluation questions, as well as provide specific inputs to the USAID team. While specific outputs from each element are in annexes, as indicated, the overall data-gathering effort links to the evaluation questions as indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1: GETTING TO ANSWERS

	Q1 – Participation	Q2 – Relevance	Q3 – Strengths and Weaknesses	Q4 - Assumptions	Q5 – Emphasis	Q6 – Effectiveness	Q7 – Lessons
Context analysis		X	X	X	X		X
Organizational assessment			X			X	X
Case studies (KIIs and FFGDs)	X	X	X	X		X	X

The evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach containing qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as primary and secondary sources. The data collection methods relied on a literature review, key informant interviews (KIIs) and facilitated focus group discussions (FFGDs). Data collection used a variety of tools, including questionnaires for KIIs, facilitator notes for FFGDs and an organizational assessment, contained in Annex VI.

The main strength of the methodology was the ability to cover an array of themes and topics within limited time and staffing resources. Furthermore, the evaluation team limited subjectivity by interviewing a cross-section of stakeholders. The mixed-methods approach ensured that data validation was a continuous

process. The three components of the research design ensured that it addressed all evaluation questions in a comprehensive manner, with complementary and overlapping data inputs from each tool. The main limitations of the methodology were the potential lack of depth and the limited opportunity to interrogate causal phenomenon. Additionally, the organizational assessment was purposefully designed to be a focused tool; as such, it does not provide an opportunity for a full investigation of internal organizational management processes and procedures.

The methodology worked well as an approach to data collection and the evaluation team had significant engagements with key stakeholders. The team conducted 95 interviews across six locations: Juba, Yambio and Nzara, Rumbek and Pachong, and Bor. The organizational assessment tool, in particular, worked well to generate discussion and CRS, SSCC and ICC staff engaged openly and actively in these discussions. It became clear during the course of the evaluation that SSCC and ICC staff, as well as community peace facilitators (CPFs), had negative perceptions of the RfPSS that sometimes dominated the discussions, raising repeated clear messages about lack of coordination and joint planning, lack of ownership and lack of partnership. This may have affected the overall tone of the evaluation, which raises critical points about imbalances in relationships between implementing partners and their national allies. This evaluation balances any such bias with recognition that the SSCC and ICCs have their own interests and are actively pursuing access to and management of their own funds. Subjectivity biases affect any qualitative process and the evaluation team hopes that any subjectivity has been sufficiently evidence-based to provide the reader with context and perspective. As such, the evaluation report draws directly on and references conversations with stakeholders to inform USAID of the origins of various perspectives and to show a picture that is as complete as possible.

The evaluation team members drew on their extensive experience in and knowledge of South Sudan to enable the grounding of empirical evidence within its social and political context. The team leader, Ms. Lauren Hutton, has worked on and in South Sudan since 2008 and has supported security sector reform, humanitarian and development programming in the decade since. In this evaluation, she was primarily responsible for the methodology design, overseeing and coordinating the data collection, providing briefings and writing the final report. Dr. Leben Moro, director of the Institute for Peace and Development Studies at the University of Juba, provided context expertise, organized and conducted interviews and focus group discussions and enabled data-gathering through his network of contacts. Mr. Christopher Oringa, also from the University of Juba, provided context analysis and assisted with organizing and conducting field research. Dr. Moro and Mr. Oringa also gave input to the overall narrative of the research findings, assisted with the analysis and recommendations and provided substantive inputs from the field research to inform the evaluation report.

ISSUES

No significant issues negatively affected the evaluation, and the team addressed all challenges that arose during the process. For instance, due to timing challenges, the field research was initially scheduled for only three weeks from the start of December 2018. When the evaluation team convened in Juba, it became clear during the methodology development and writing of the inception report that the period of time available was insufficient. In agreement with MSI and USAID, the evaluation team extended the time frame, without affecting the overall level of effort, and then conducted three site visits with extra field time allocated in January 2019.

The extension of the field research enabled the evaluation team to present a more detailed and nuanced analysis. When conducting the field research, insecurity prevented the team from visiting Duk Padiet, as initially planned. The road between Bor Town and Duk Padiet was extremely insecure at the time of the visit, and three ambushes occurred in the area in the week before the field trip was scheduled to take place. Instead of going to Duk Padiet, the evaluation team was able to interview former county commission (who had been in office when the RfPSS activities were conducted) and ICC members (who participated in the activities), the deputy governor and the peace commissioner, who also had knowledge of the process.

Identifying participants for the evaluation was complicated by the fact that CRS had already suspended activities at the state level at the time of data collection. Former CRS staff willingly participated and were generally helpful in supporting the data collection. However, it became clear that there was little centralized or coordinated information management and the evaluation team relied heavily on the former CRS staff for contacts and introductions, as there were no lists of people who had been trained or participants lists from the community conversations kept by ICCs.

KEY FINDINGS

PARTICIPATION

What strategies has RfPSS used to increase citizen and community participation in peace and reconciliation processes in South Sudan? How effective have those strategies been, including for various stakeholder groups, such as women, youth, traditional leaders, faith-based groups and other CSOs? Do citizens continue to engage in community and national peace and reconciliation initiatives through the APP?

RfPSS used three main strategies to increase citizen and community engagement in peace and reconciliation:

- Community conversations;
- Shows on local radio stations; and
- Ad hoc activities, such as support to a "youth café" and interfaith conferences.

According to CRS's annual reporting, as of September 2018, RfPSS activities reached 133,919 people (56,248 female and 77,671 male). Radio programs reached the vast majority of these—111,560 people or 83 percent of project beneficiaries—and citizen participation in peace processes was largely limited to being passive recipients of media. Furthermore, the majority of these radio programs were broadcast on radio stations supported by another USAID project. The **evaluation team could not clearly establish the impact of radio messaging on behavior change; nor could they find evidence of a coherent strategy for linking radio programming to participation in peace and reconciliation processes**. However, in some cases radio programs mobilized citizens to participate in community conversations and to provide feedback from those conversations.

The main mechanism for participation was the community conversations. This process launched in March 2018, with 15 conversations conducted by September 2018 in Western Equatoria, Lakes and Jonglei regions with 2,660 participants (992 female and 1,668 male). The project initially aimed to conduct 181 community conversations, but the evaluation team reduced this number due to delays in finalizing the methodology. Initial expectations were that the community conversations would include 500 participants over a four-day period. The evaluation team later reduced this to between 150 and 300 participants over

a two-day meeting. Community participants in all field locations noted that **the meetings were too short** and **that more days were needed for real discussion and participation.** With the limited time, **women did not have many opportunities to talk, due to social hierarchies** and **the reality that the time for dealing with trauma healing and forgiveness was extremely limited or totally excluded.** In Pachong, female participants of the community conversations highlighted the importance of the trauma sessions ("If you say what is paining you, you become free"), but noted that time was insufficient for them to talk and that few women had the opportunity to talk. In Rumbek, CPFs noted that trauma awareness sessions lasted only three hours for some 200 people; in Jonglei, ICC members noted that trauma awareness sessions did not take place.

According to CRS in Juba, the SSCC took a long time to approve the methodology, as the document needed to be circulated to all SSCC participating churches and each had to approve it. However, other CRS staff indicated that the delay stemmed from the SSCC wanting to develop its own methodology. However, after too much time had lapsed, CRS decided to hire a consultant to do it.

On the ground, **community conversations were seen as a CRS activity and not an SSCC, ICC or APP activity**. Communities are used to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) using community dialogue modalities, and these activities were similar to initiatives being conducted by other international actors, often in the same areas. As the funds for the community conversations are no longer available, no avenues exist for citizen participation in APP-related peace and reconciliation activities in the areas previously covered by CRS. The lack of identification and ownership of the community conversations as being led by the SSCC or ICC and tied to the APP means that overall, there was limited linking of the community participation activities with APP implementation.

In terms of ensuring the equal participation of various stakeholder groups, the evaluators found several impediments to participation, as the subsections that follow explain.

PARTICIPATION BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

The community conversation model relied on training 215 CPFs and 54 trauma healing facilitators to assist the state- and district-level ICCs to conduct the conversations. In practice, **the distinction between the peace and trauma facilitators was not always clear and, in group discussions, people were not always able to articulate what training they had been given and what their role was.** The evaluation team came to understand that some people had received only trauma awareness training, but that CPFs had received training in trauma healing as well as in the facilitation methodology. This meant that some trauma healing facilitators were not used. One such case was a member of the ICC in Jonglei who was not deployed to provide trauma healing and then stopped participating in project activities more broadly. For ease, this report uses CPFs to refer to all facilitators, regardless of what training they received.

CPFs were recruited through the churches that participate in the SSCC. While the member churches of the SSCC are the dominant religious bodies, more than 200 churches in South Sudan are not part of the SSCC. Further, in some areas, **not all churches participate in the ICCs and some churches are able to draw on their significant constituencies to assume a more dominant role.** This creates several participation barriers based on religious affiliation. For example, in Rumbek, the majority of churches are Catholic and Episcopal, and only candidates from these churches were selected as CPFs, even though the other participating churches had also recruited members to be sent for training. As explained in the FFGD with CPFs in Rumbek, "Some people from different denominations couldn't get

flights for training." The training took place in Juba. Additionally, mobilization messages about the time of convening community conversations usually came through churches; thus, they targeted specific segments of the community: churchgoers. This influenced the ability of the community conversations to reach a wide audience. Particularly in Rumbek and Bor, stakeholders noted that criminals and youth (such as in cattle camps) responsible for insecurity are isolated from their broader community and need to be specifically reached with more targeted interventions.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Although the award document explicitly states that at least 40 percent of those reached via consultations and 50 percent reached through the larger communications effort will be women, **the project failed in several ways to make significant efforts to include and enable the participation of women**.

First, at the national level, the SSCC gender advisor noted that she was not included in any activity planning or implementation to enable the participation of women. Her opinion was that the implementing partner had "stolen" her activity plan. RfPSS included a research project on entry points and opportunities for women's participation in decision-making for peacebuilding and reconciliation. The gender advisor said no one consulted her on any aspect of the research, and her first and only engagement was when she received an invitation to a presentation of the research findings. Consultants did not even engage her as a key informant interviewee. Delays in finalizing the research report's content led to it not being disseminated, and no activities advocated for greater female representation (in line with Activity 2.2.1.a, dissemination "will include discussion forums targeting policy actors and relevant practitioners and government officials," and Activity 2.2.1.b, RfPSS "will also conduct advocacy initiatives for the representation of women and youth in the management of transitional justice processes"). Even when CRS arranged a meeting of women in Yambio, the gender advisor was only informed by invitation to attend the event and was not consulted or included at any other interval.

Second, the methodology for the community conversations aimed for only 30 percent female representation. It is unclear why the percentage of representation goal was reduced from the award document to the methodology document and why the full representation of women as equals was not pursued from the outset. **The SSCC and ICCs indicated a desire for the full inclusion of women, in recognition that females are generally more represented and active in church constituencies than males are.** However, religious institutions by doctrine, structure and process tend to be biased against women and have a poor global track record as structures for gender-sensitive social transformation.

Third, women were largely underrepresented in community conversations, with significant regional variations. Even when women were included in significant numbers, such as in Pachong, Western Lakes, female representatives often acted as cooks, with little time allocated to them to talk in sessions. According to CRS, at the Pachong community conversation, the 234 participants included 112 females and 122 males. According to the female representatives who participated in the meeting, their numbers were high because for each boma, five female representatives were sent to the meeting: three to participate and two to cook. Additionally, the women explained that although they had their own gender-disaggregated discussion group during the community conversation, over the two-day period, only two women were allowed to address the larger group, while men dominated the overall discourse. Participants noted that their "voice as women was not heard."

Additionally, in recruiting CPFs, the eligibility criteria created a significant barrier to the inclusion of women by including mandatory English literacy skills. The award document noted a goal of 50 percent representation of females as CPFs and highlighted that the implementing partner would use an approach with women that differed from the approach with men. However, one church leader in Bor noted that when sending people for CPF training, he could not identify women from his church to attend due to low literacy levels amongst female congregants. Furthermore, **the evaluation team could find no evidence of specific initiatives that were undertaken to ensure the equal representation and participation of females** as CPFs.

PARTICIPATION BY THE GOVERNMENT

Participatory approaches and community-driven development initiatives are a common programming modality in South Sudan, particularly since 2011. From 2012 to 2016, the World Bank piloted and then implemented community-driven development projects to link inputs with plans at the boma, payam, county and state levels. Under the banner of local government development, this project was designed to enable local-level legitimacy and accountability. Since 2009, Saferworld has conducted participatory community security planning activities dependent on community action plans to increase cohesion between communities and security forces. Similarly, USAID previously supported Global Communities to conduct a community-driven development project in South Sudan, which was discontinued in the civil war context.

The community conversation model has remarkable similarities to projects working on local governance legitimacy and accountability and state security responsiveness. CRS staff explicitly situate **the government as a lead actor, if not *the* lead actor.** As project staff in Juba explained, the governor of an area is the host of the community conversation in the area. One of the adaptations that RfPSS pursued after President Salva Kiir established the National Dialogue was to host "buy-in" meetings with governors before working at the community level on community conversations. This ensured that RfPSS conversations were not occurring simultaneously with National Dialogue events, and augmented government support for the community conversation process. Project staff noted that they did not want the community conversations to be regarded as parallel to the National Dialogue. However, there were no attempts to align or harmonize the community conversations with the National Dialogue; the SSCC decided not to support the National Dialogue, as it was deemed a political process with limited support from opposition elements (especially SPLM-IO). However, this is a false divide, as the community conversations worked only with government officials in-country, actively engaged in political processes and did not reach out to include opposition leadership.

The role of the government as an active participant in community conversations seemed to be an accepted part of the programming, with staff and CPFs highlighting the active and open engagement of government officials, including the National Security Services, in meetings. The involvement of government officials was interpreted as an important part of the process and essential for its overall success. On this point, CRS clearly applied a broader and less restrictive interpretation of the congressional budget limitation on direct government support than did other USAID-funded projects in South Sudan pursuing similar local level interventions during the civil war period. There was little concern for the potential negative consequences of "neutral forums" being hosted by and including the active engagement of government. For example, in Rumbek, the current deputy governor was a CPF paid by CRS for his mobilization and facilitation services while being a government employee. Government officials were brought to conversations to address communities, including advisors from the Office of President being flown from Juba to Duk Padiet. Project staff touted as a success that government officials encouraged citizens to talk openly. However, CPFs in

Rumbek noted that they would encourage people to speak by informing communities that they could talk freely, that their names would not be submitted to any government office and that the conversations were not linked to any government agenda.

The participation of the government was also seen as an important part of the approach to sustainability. At the field sites, CPFs and project staff noted that the community conversations were sustainable and had impact because communities told government what they wanted, and now it was up to the government to implement the action items. CRS staff also noted that the community conversations enabled accountability as government officials signed the resolutions (outcomes) in front of the community. When government officials then implemented activities as identified by the communities, this enhanced their legitimacy and they were seen as being responsive to community needs. For example, following the dialogues in Western Lakes, government officials traveled to Juba to request the deployment of the national army to conduct forced disarmament. In Jonglei, the governor is working on a joint police force following requests for increased security along migration routes. Additionally, as noted by CRS, unpredictable reshuffles of government officials at the national and state levels has affected follow-up of some resolutions from the APP peace processes, thereby reducing the community's trust and confidence in the implementation of the agreed-upon resolutions.

RELEVANCE

How relevant is the APP to peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts in South Sudan at both the national and local levels?

The APP is the roadmap for SSCC engagement in peace and reconciliation. As such, it presents an articulation of their priority areas of engagement and their understanding of the space in which the SSCC can mostly successfully contribute to the realization of peace in South Sudan. **The APP is broad enough to incorporate programmatic choices within a continuously evolving context and provide a relevant articulation of the SSCC priorities looking ahead**. Under the reconciliation pillar, for example, the RfPSS has enabled the SSCC to have flexible responses to conflicts and interventions. It is clear that through RfPSS, the SSCC has been able to positively affect reconciliation in local contexts, such as the Murle leadership reconciliation and the intra-Anuak and intra-Acholi reconciliation efforts in Pochalla and Magwi respectively.

However, the evaluation team found a disconnect between RfPSS and APP in several significant ways. The SSCC complained that international partners, including CRS, took the APP and its work plan and then used its activities to raise money, thereby "hijacking" the APP. **The SSCC exhibited an overall lack of ownership of activities that RfPSS conducted. Multiple stakeholders referred to CRS as the implementer of RfPSS,** and SSCC stakeholders called RfPSS "CRS's APP." Local stakeholders interpreted community conversations in particular as CRS project activities and church, government and community representatives did not see them as church-led processes or as activities conducted under the banner of the ICC, SSCC or APP.

For the SSCC, the articulation of the APP was a means to get organized and ensure its continued relevance. It was also part of a process of transforming the SSCC into a formal institution that is able to raise its own funds and administer its own projects. Within this genesis and the changed political context, SSCC can revisit the APP as part of a strategic planning exercise to decide how to position itself in the next phase. However, divides exist in the SSCC over what roles it should play and how. For example, leadership is

split about whether or how to engage with the National Dialogue process. Such debate is necessary for the SSCC to decide how to position itself on reconciliation efforts moving ahead. International assistance complicates these internal debates, as international partners raise money for SSCC activities without its input and they conduct activities "under the flag of the SSCC" without the SSCC being able to have significant input or control over them.

The evaluation team noted that the relevance of the APP to national and local interventions was often based on elements outside the APP. Particular determinants of the specific roles that church leaders can play are context and personality. In terms of context, there are two important points. Firstly, at both the national and local levels, church leaders are called upon when there is a breakdown in communication between key leaders or groups but then are shut out when power politics and securitized processes take over. At the High-Level Revitalization Forum, for example, religious leaders played a key role in restarting the momentum for negotiation, but when the process moved into the corridors of high politics in Khartoum, the church was isolated from the process, like other civil society actors were. Similarly, in Western Lakes, church leaders were able to engage in dialogue with youth and communities in relation to violence related to cattle migration, but when security intervention was initiated, religious leaders took a back seat and largely stopped engaging.

The evaluators found that the success of the church-led reconciliation initiatives was also influenced by the nature of the conflict context in which they were engaging. In general, RfPSS-supported interventions had more traction as single-activity interventions to re-establish dialogue between disputing parties when these parties shared close spatial and structural relationships.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

What major strengths, weaknesses, successes and challenges are apparent in RfPSS implementation, including in interacting with SSCC leadership and staff at the national and local levels, and documenting such successes and challenges?

For the sake of brevity, this section will focus on strengths and weaknesses, as significant overlap exists between the strengths and successes and the weaknesses and challenges.

STRENGTHS

The articulation of the APP provided an opportunity to create internal coherence across the seven member-churches of the SSCC on how they position themselves to engage in peace and reconciliation interventions in South Sudan. As such, **one of the successes of the RfPSS implementation is that the internal structures of the SSCC and the ICCs are taking root and developing.** The SSCC and ICCs are emerging institutions with the structures still developing through practice, but significant progress has been made in this regard. Indeed, CRS project leaders highlighted the increased prominence of the SSCC as a key success of RfPSS and noted the increased confidence of church leaders. There seems to be good coordination at national level that is able to bring together the various churches under the SSCC umbrella and unify the activity of religious leaders in pursuit of common goals. However, gaps remain between the national, regional and state levels. See Annex III, Organizational Assessment Tool, for further information.

The reach of the church extends into communities across the country, providing multiple opportunities for engagement. Their presence in communities enables engagement with various local structures and

organizations and they are perceived to be more neutral interlocutors, able to bring together leaders, communities and other groups. Religious leaders are seen as more trusted and are able to draw on a history of local-level mediation, particularly intra-ethnic reconciliation and mediating between the state and communities. This is remarkably similar to other social institutions in South Sudan, like traditional leaders, chiefs and prophets. **Comparatively, the SSCC and ICCs are more inclusive social institutions than those governed only by ethnicity, age or gender.** However, as a social institution in South Sudan, religious bodies portray many of the same biases discussed in the weaknesses section that follows. The value of religious leaders is exemplified by the way that communities, political leaders and international partners continue to call upon them for intervention. Further, **the RfPSS was broad enough to enable flexible responses** from religious leaders associated with the SSCC when called upon by various stakeholders. According to CRS staff, members of ICCs have become increasingly responsive to local conflicts and are adopting more preventative approaches than before.

According to CPFs, **one of the strengths of the community conversation process was the trauma healing sessions,** and church leaders in Rumbek and Bor saw this as an area where religious leaders could provide more assistance to their constituents. Community members showed appreciation for the community conversation processes and enjoyed being able to come together to discuss issues of importance to them. CRS staff highlighted that because community members facilitated the conversations, participants were more open to discussion, more empowered to speak and better able to deal with healing. CPFs in Rumbek highlighted that the food provided, including the slaughtering of bulls, was particularly useful and appreciated.

While many church stakeholders who were interviewed for this evaluation made negative comments about the quality of the CRS partnership, CRS staff highlighted their continued relevance as a partner to the SSCC in terms of the continual requests for support they receive from church leaders. At lower levels, church leaders misinterpret partner support, but at the level of the SSCC, they understand how to work with international partners and regularly call on CRS for support, over and above the RfPSS.

CHALLENGES

Clear documentation of case studies and success stories are provided in the annual reports presented by the implementing partner. However, these are often referenced by activity and impact questions are largely unaddressed. Similarly, the reports are not structured to provide clear linkages between local-level engagements and the overall theory of change, and they offer few insights into sustainability. Overall, **the project is challenged to show sustainability, impact and effectiveness.** There seem to be monitoring and learning challenges, and despite the presence of multiple coordination mechanisms—within the SSCC and between the SSCC and the implementing partner—CRS and SSCC stakeholders noted that "activities were just being done without thinking about how." There was little consideration of how one activity informs others and the project struggled to maintain a sense of awareness about process with the implementation of standalone activities. There was **no systematic monitoring, evaluation and learning,** and as the project developed, the implementing partner realized the importance of collecting data and reflecting on processes before moving on to the next activity. Quarterly reflection meetings were introduced, but both CRS and SSCC noted continued weaknesses with learning and adapting

A fundamental project challenge was the issue of timing and tying process-related outcomes to project-defined outputs. Delays in project implementation have resulted in a lack of achieving participation targets, such as that experienced with the prolonged development and approval of the

community conversation methodology. Similarly, research reports have not been disseminated at the state level due to delays in completing the research pieces. Throughout the evaluation, it became clear that while the SSCC has developed significantly, they are challenged to balance the many different internal differences, and it is time-consuming for them to generate the internal cohesion to move together.

At the local level, the ICCs have varied capacities and vague understandings of the RfPSS, as well as about how the SSCC partners with international agencies. In interviews, ICC members requested more direct assistance, as they perceive the SSCC to be the recipient of significant amounts of international support. The APP has increased the overall coherence of the SSCC, but more effort is required at the ICC level in terms of staff capacity, training and operational systems. The SSCC, for example, has project, human resource and finance staff in Juba, as well as technical specialists for gender and peacebuilding. At the regional and state levels, the ICCs have no formal capacities and no paid positions for any administrative or project-style activities that would enable them to operate independently of implementing partners.

The biggest challenges to SSCC's ability to implement the APP are the strongly centralized and hierarchal decision-making methods, the limited understandings of technical peacebuilding among SSCC project staff and the limited capacity of the ICCs in some states. Multiple structures are engaged in the RfPSS implementation, as the SSCC operationalizes its activities through ICCs at state level. The need to reactivate the ICCs meant creating new structures at local levels in some areas, such as in Yambio, where Interfaith-Based Council for Peace are also present. However, state-based church leaders saw coordination—from the state ICCs to regional ICCs to the SSCC—as being highly problematic, leading to delays and ownership challenges. For example, if the ICC in Rumbek wants to respond to a community request for mediation, the concept note gets sent to the regional ICC in Wau, which then sends the request to the SSCC. The SSCC presents the request to the implementing partners, and the relevant partner will commit to supporting the activity. According to ICC members, the next step is the implementing partner organizing and implementing the activity, bypassing the ICC but inviting them to the event. CRS staff noted that the gap at the local level resulted from the SSCC not maintaining communication and coordination with the ICCs. It is clear that improved coordination processes are required to enable clearer alignment at the operational level outside of Juba.

Lastly, community, CPF and ICC stakeholders noted that the **project failed to sufficiently ensure sustainability due to a lack of follow-up** on reconciliation meetings and community conversations. Activities were implemented as one-off events with limited internal or external coordination to inform other activities or interventions. This makes the community conversation, for example, an extractive process that fails to move beyond a dialogue forum. Multiple community participants noted that reconciliation "sometimes needs more" and that inputs, such as more water points in Lakes State, are required to ensure that the reconciliation intervention addresses the causes of conflict.

ASSUMPTIONS

Are the original assumptions put forward in the RfPSS design and theory of change still valid given the changes to the conflict and political context in South Sudan since RfPSS started?

The project utilized a theory of change that stated:

> If men, women and youth throughout the country **participate** in an inclusive peace and reconciliation process with broad grassroots engagement, if there is **systematic promotion of best practices** for transitional justice, and if civil society needs and

voices are considered in peace negotiation and implementation processes, then a **just and sustainable peace and reconciliation process** can take root.

The original assumptions in the RfPSS design suffered from contextual and conceptual flaws that affected the project implementation in several important ways. First, a lot of social science literature addresses civil society in Africa and the lack of distinction between civil society and political actors and trends**; civil society is representative of the same divides, biases and behaviors as the rest of the body politic**. Further, because of the deep overlaps between civil society and political institutions in terms of education and employment opportunities, a deep distinction seldom exists in terms of ideology. For example, many South Sudanese have worked in non-governmental organizations, U.N. agencies and government, and their political viewpoints and positions rarely show significant variations. The experience of civil society actors engaging in the national peace process in Addis Ababa reflected many of the same challenges that the overall governance space has in terms of limited constituencies, ethnic and gender biases and power imbalances.

Second, **the project failed to engage in transitional justice and it is unclear from the information gathered how the project used best practices on transitional justice to inform interventions, particularly in relation to reconciliation efforts.** RfPSS produced a research report on traditional conflict resolution in South Sudan that seems linked to this part of the theory of change. However, the report does not focus on transitional justice or on recording best practices, instead offering interesting insights into conflict resolution practices and the limits of traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution to resolve both national and communal disputes. Additionally, no evidence showed that the RfPSS activities created strategic or informational linkages to the broader transitional justice debate and future aspirations for justice mechanisms, as reflected in the national peace deal.

The traditional conflict resolution mechanisms research report has highly relevant findings that could have been integrated into RfPSS, particularly related to alcohol usage and links to conflict, the need to focus on linkages between cultural practices and the development of violent masculinities, and the need for interethnic projects such as leadership exchange programs.[1] Community stakeholders consulted for this evaluation also highlighted the need to address alcohol abuse. Similarly, in Bor, one female participant spoke of the importance of conducting joint prayer meetings with Nuer women in the Protection of Civilians sites and with Murle women in Pibor as opportunities for interethnic cooperation. While RfPSS supported the meetings in Pibor as part of the intra-Murle reconciliation, it did not specifically support or enable the activities of female church leaders reaching across ethnic lines. This oversight could result from not working closely with the gender representatives in the SSCC structures and from the general underrepresentation of women in CRS project staff and CPFs, as mentioned.

While not focusing on transitional justice, the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms research provides a solid basis to inform future intervention priorities for the SSCC, as well as articulates specific priority action areas, as indicated. In understanding how local conflict resolution could affect the national peace process, the authors find that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms do not have the reach to address national conflicts, and locally based conflict resolution is limited in its ability to address questions of national stability due to the lack of focus on accountability for abuses: "Traditional mechanisms tend to overlook the need to aggressively pursue accountability against those that have committed war crimes."[2]

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[1] The Sudd Institute, 2018. *Mechanisms of Traditional Conflict Management and Resolution in South Sudan;* see page 3 for recommendations.

[2] *Ibid*

The report advocates a middle ground in which **intercommunal conflicts should be handled through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and national conflicts should be addressed through international mediation**. These research findings challenge the theory of change assumptions about linkages between grassroots and national peace processes. The authors conclude that local-level dispute resolution is too limited in scope to apply at the national level.

A programming logic exists in RfPSS that says local-level reconciliation will enable national stability and link to national unity. However**, there is great nuance in national-local linkages in South Sudan with significant regional variations**. As a female church leader in Pachong explained, the national conflict is a political one, and even though "our sons are there," they were not concerned about people fighting for political positions. They were concerned about issues that affect them directly, such as cattle-raiding, land boundary disputes and water shortages. This points to an interesting understanding of the national conflict as being driven by the need for power-sharing at the highest level that communities *cannot* influence, and local conflicts being driven by resource-sharing on the ground that communities *can* influence. Conceptualizing linkages between local and national conflicts requires an intricate understanding of the drivers of national and local conflicts and the identification of areas of overlap and relational pathways. The geographic logic of intervention would also need to reflect a more strategic approach to local-level interventions to influence national political calculations. For example, to address national conflicts with local interventions, projects would need to focus on areas of interethnic cooperation and conflict, as well as on intra-ethnic conflicts with important national implications (such in former Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap and Unity states). **RfPSS intervention areas should be based on a conflict analysis that includes actor and power analysis as well as a basic overview of who else is programming in the area and what their projects are supporting to develop coherent and strategic intervention plans**.

Further, one key assumption of the RfPSS is that by having community engagements, the people's voices can be projected into the national peace process; as such, the peace produced would be just and sustainable. This is based on a conceptualization that the limitations of the national peace process stem from a lack of participation and the exclusion of citizens' issues. However, the value of this logic is constrained in several ways by the timing of the RfPSS versus the progress of the national peace process. First, the RfPSS project was initiated after the signing of Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ACRSS); thus, even the initial project justification was flawed because no national peace process existed to feed into. When ACRSS stalled following the July 2016 violence in Juba, the SSCC was involved in the High-Level Revitalization Forum as IGAD requested church leaders to facilitate some parts of the process and church leaders were able to exercise an indirect influence over the peace talks. However, as project staff noted, the government owns the national peace process and bears responsibility for the content of the agreement reached. While church leaders as individuals engaged in the negotiations, **no concerted or systematic effort attempted to link the voices of the church's constituency with peace process outcomes**. Rather, church leaders functioned as trusted individuals and provided support to the IGAD mediators rather than representatives of clearly articulated constituent positions.

This points to the second flaw in the logic of linking local voices to national peace processes: the content of the local processes was not designed to deal with the questions of national legitimacy. As project staff explained, the community conversations are designed to "empower" communities through them identifying the problems they face as well as the solutions required to address them. The focus is on a community empowerment process. Project staff explained that at the *payam* level, the community

conversations identify actions that the community can take, but as these conversations move to county levels, the role of the government becomes more explicit. In county-level conversations, the outcomes are expected to be tied to government-led initiatives; at the sub-county level, communities are meant to self-fund their initiatives. Project staff explained the difference between community conversations and community-driven development as being propelled by context: Community conversations are community-driven development in more difficult, less stable contexts. From an outsider's perspective, **the main difference seems to be that development projects channel resources to local levels to enable empowerment and church-led processes push the onus for resources toward resource-strained communities and local government actors.**

The theory of change does not recognize the impact of external factors, such as the constrained political and security environment. The project design does not recognize that additional activities will be required—for example, community dialogues identify follow-up activities, but if these actions are not undertaken, then reconciliation and peacebuilding cannot be achieved. Stakeholders consulted for this evaluation highlighted the importance of approaching peace as a process and not as single activity interventions lacking follow-up and consistent engagement. Further, **consideration of how the actions in one area may have conflict implications for others is lacking**; in other words, an absence of conflict sensitivity. This also affects the work of the SSCC on reconciliation dialogues, as reflected in the following example.

In October 2017, a three-day peace meeting in Rumbek aimed to enable intercommunal conflict mitigation among the Dinka Gok, Jur Bele and Dinka Agar. The strategies and actions that participants identified to ensure peaceful co-existence included: strengthening traditional authorities and the Gelweng; strengthening law enforcement; and providing basic services to internally displaced persons and populations affected by violence. Some of the challenges created by advocating for such positions are: (1) while the Dinka communities rely on the Gelweng for self-defense, they operate as a threat to neighboring communities and can be instrumentalized at the national level; (2) how to balance strengthening traditional authority with strengthening law enforcement when a conflicting and competitive relationship exists between traditional and formal justice processes; and (3) providing services is a long-term endeavor requiring inputs from other actors. The project had significant impacts on local government legitimacy and accountability, as government officials would sign resolutions in public and then could undertake follow-up initiatives in response to community requests.

However, other examples show a model that is more successful, with more sustainable and less controversial outcomes. For example, after engaging with cattle camp youth in Duk Padiet and Poktap, the youth leaders agreed to:

- Form a joint peace committee of Dinka and Nuer youth leaders to monitor and report on cattle theft cases;
- Apply jail sentences of six years for anyone stealing cattle;
- Establish a formal cattle auction market to regulate cattle exchange and prevent stolen cattle from being sold on the black market; and
- Form a local community police force supported by the government.

The governor has responded to requests for increased policing and has been consulting with the police at the national level for a joint police force in Jonglei, thus bolstering his legitimacy and accountability to his constituents.

The evaluation team concluded that the flaws in the assumptions of the RfPSS were problematic in the previous context and require adjustment in any future intervention of this nature.

EMPHASIS

Does the RfPSS maintain the right proportional emphasis across the four APP pillars, given the programmatic context?

The APP is broad enough to encompass a range of interventions that church leaders can undertake. As a strategic plan and statement of intent, the APP has helped shape the SSCC, defining its roles and providing coherence to its interventions. While this is working well at the national level, **the structures of the APP are not significantly translated into state-based plans for engagement.** Evaluators noted that knowledge about the APP is unequal at the local level and local interventions seem to be driven either by specific personalities, the interests of individual church leaders or the implementing partner. Long-term approaches to resolving specific conflicts are required so that increased strategic awareness offsets the tendency toward isolated processes and single-activity inputs. Locally based, context-specific solutions are required to resolve communal conflicts in South Sudan. The manifestations of the national conflict drivers at the local level differ significantly between areas, and local conflicts display characteristics independent of the national conflict.

Overall, it seems that RfPSS was well balanced in terms of the activities that can link to each pillar. However, **questions are about efficacy, sequencing and timing rather than emphasis.** For example, organizational weaknesses led to delays in implementing project activities, especially under the neutral forums pillar (i.e., community conversations). Lack of progress on the community conversations could have created a gap in the ability of the SSCC to ensure that it is the "voice of the voiceless" and that it brings the views of citizens into the national peace process. This also created an ownership problem, with CRS being seen as the implementer of these activities.

Similarly, while significant activities sought to promote the advocacy role of the SSCC, activities related to the advocacy pillar seem to have favored external advocacy and international travel to meet other religious leaders over internal advocacy on policy issues. Strategic and operational linkages between the pillars seem to be absent, with significant communication and coordination problems within the SSCC structures, as well as between the SSCC structures and the implementing partner.

Looking forward as the context has shifted, a revised approach to supporting the APP would need to be based on an open discussion between the implementing partner, SSCC and ICCs to define common goals under each pillar. It is unclear that the context drives the need to roll out the community conversations across the country, given the existence of other similar initiatives that church leaders could be more empowered to participate in. Further, the advocacy goals should be reconsidered in light of the current context, wherein church leaders at the national and state levels should have increased clarity about what their key advocacy messages are and have a strategy for achieving the types of change they are advocating. Similarly, **improving the ability of church leaders to intervene as mediators in local-level reconciliation efforts requires a more systematic approach to training and learning and an**

ability to link one-off activities with a more process-driven approach that incorporates lessons learned.

According to CRS staff, the SSCC has developed annual strategic plans by pillar and presented them to the implementing partners with budgets for 2019. These plans provide a clear roadmap for the priorities and activities of the SSCC, but staff noted that regional plans are necessary to offset the bias toward top-down planning processes.

EFFECTIVENESS

What type of institutional support to the SSCC is recommended to increase its effectiveness in implementing future peacebuilding and reconciliation activities?

Institutional support to the SSCC needs to be considered as increased support to the SSCC and the ICCs. While the SSCC has been the focus of organizational strengthening interventions, CRS, SSCC and ICC stakeholders noted the need for additional support to the ICCs. Further, evaluators noted that while ICC members have received various training and capacity-building opportunities, **there is a distinct lack of coherence in what training they have received**, and in some cases, members were uncertain about the content and purpose of the training. For example, in Bor, ICC members were unclear about the training they received as individuals and which project activities the training addressed—such as conflict resolution, community facilitation or trauma healing. A more in-depth approach to training and mentoring should be developed with a longer-term vision of creating true capacities. For example, the trauma healing intervention could continue, providing more adequate training to specific counselors as mental health and social work professionals.

In the first year, the project supported the capacity-strengthening pillar to improve the SSCC's position as a credible and legitimate institution to lead peace and reconciliation activities through the revival of the ICCs in Jonglei, Lakes and Western Equatoria. The ICCs are in various stages of development and more specific training and support programs should be designed to target capacity building to the ICCs, per their unique strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, there is a need to improve internal communication and enable more clarity in linkages and processes from state to regional ICCs and from the ICCs to the SSCC. Information management and recordkeeping seem to be problematic and ICCs should increase their capacities to develop records of intervention and reconciliation efforts and a learning culture to harvest, deepen and share their skills. More opportunities should be created for ICC leaders to develop intervention and mediation skills through learning from each other, capturing and reflecting on interventions and having technical skills mentoring.

Where possible, SSCC and ICC staff should be identified for mentoring and longer-term development. According to CRS reports, the SSCC struggled to recruit and retain staff to ensure the smooth running of the project. As reported in the FY17 annual report, high levels of staff turnover and delays in hiring staff for the APP resulted in CRS and other core-group partners investing significant time in training SSCC staff. Further, the implementing partner supported internal structures and processes throughout the project period, including the secondment of a finance specialist to operationalize the human resource manual, procurement guidelines and finance manual. The SSCC stakeholders highlighted their desire to assume more control of resources and to be enabled with direct funding to take more responsibility and be truly empowered. While CRS staff noted that the SSCC has progressed well in terms of developing internal policies and processes, they added that these remain weak and characteristic of a nascent institution.

The SSCC has also tended toward centralized and hierarchal methods of decision-making that affected the implementation of RfPSS and slowed implementation of some activities. **Processes are time-consuming and tight deadlines are unrealistic due to the structure and nature of the SSCC.** This mostly affected the rollout of the community conversations, as mentioned, and should be considered in any future project designs; working in partnership with complex local partners requires a long-term approach with achievable milestones and significant commitment of time and mentorship.

In December 2018, CRS undertook a Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment to obtain a more detailed understanding of the capacity strengths and needs of the SSCC in terms of APP implementation. As this was not finalized at the time of this evaluation, any relevant recommendations are not included here, but should inform the design of future organizational strengthening efforts.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The evaluation team would also like to highlight the following general findings that emerged from the research as a product of the overall analysis. The evaluators found that these six primary issues affected the overall implementation and effectiveness of RfPSS.

1. OWNERSHIP QUESTIONS

Various stakeholders raised significant questions about RfPSS activities being led by the SSCC or by the implementing partner. While **the narrative from church leaders includes an expression of their disappointment about lacking control over project resources, they also conveyed a lack of input in planning and activity implementation.** Church leaders at Juba and the state level spoke about CRS "hijacking the APP"; being treated "like tourists," told to travel to various locations when CRS had decided to host activities there; and that CRS is "using the flag of the SSCC" to legitimize its own agenda. At a focus group discussion in Pachong, female church leaders said that "CRS came with the APP."

It was also clear that **internal tensions exist about resources and control between the ICCs and the SSCC**. At the state level, church leaders were under the impression that the SSCC had control over significant project funds. One stakeholder said this impression developed as a result of the method of the RfPSS project announcement in Juba. There was a false impression that USAID was providing USD $6 million to the SSCC for APP activities. The Sudan Tribune, for example, reported that the resources were allocated to support the SSCC.[3]

Church leaders highlighted the issue of budgetary control and they clearly and repeatedly requested direct project funds and donor support. **The church leaders expressed animosity about having to go through INGOs to access donors and said they want more direct engagement**. While capacity deficits may be an issue, the SSCC has had abundant international support, including under RfPSS, for basic institutional strengthening and on all aspects of financial and human resource management. Clearer communication with the SSCC is necessary to convey what they can realistically expect from donors regarding steps toward direct support; CRS and USAID should work with the SSCC to jointly define an end state to the institutional strengthening efforts and articulate a vision of local ownership that gives meaning to a principled commitment to sustainable aid practice.

[3] http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?iframe&page=imprimable&id_article=58201

2. PARTNERSHIP DEFICITS

Several respondents presented anecdotes to the evaluation team that highlighted deficits in the quality of partnership between CRS and the SSCC structures. At the national level, SSCC staff noted that CRS raised money on their behalf, but that they had to "beg" for money from them to conduct their own activities. At the state level, CPFs in Rumbek, among others, highlighted a lack of collective planning, saying that "CRS was planning alone in Juba, SSCC is planning alone in Juba and ICC also alone (*sic*) at state level without involving the churches or facilitators." SSCC staff in Juba, CPFs in Rumbek and ICC members in Bor raised issues around planning and lack of inclusion in activity planning. For example, CPFs in Rumbek explained that they would be informed by email 24 hours before a community conversation was to occur; if they did not have internet access, they would not receive the message and would have no time to perform the mobilization and preparation. CRS staff conducted the mobilization without the CPFs and ICCs in some cases.

Similarly, ICC members in Jonglei explained that they were in Juba doing their ICC strategy and planning when CRS informed them that they were traveling to Duk Padiet the following day to conduct reconciliation activities and community conversations. The ICC chairperson traveled to Duk Padiet with many other government dignitaries, including the SSCC chairperson and presidential advisor on security affairs, in planes chartered specifically for these events. As the ICC had not been involved in the planning of the Duk Padiet activity, he stayed for only one day and then returned to Bor as he felt his role was not really required. He described the Duk Padiet process as a government-led meeting consumed with the protocol requirements of having people speak in order of hierarchy, with no open engagement or discussion.

The relationship between the ICC and CRS in Jonglei further deteriorated in 2018 as the community conversations continued to be implemented with what was perceived as limited input from the ICC. According to the ICC, they formally suspended their relationship with CRS in September 2018 and sent a letter requesting that the country director intervene and re-establish the lines of communication. According to CRS, the country director met with the ICC in Bor in October 2018 to address their concerns. However, ICC members told the evaluators that their request had received no response, and they continue to insist on the need for reconciliation with CRS before conducting any further activities. ICC members in Bor expressed frustration at the lack of joint planning, in particular citing the Duk Padiet example, but noting that the trigger for issuing the letter of suspension was the cancelation of a community conversation in Makuach due to security concerns. The secretary of the ICC is the primary church leader from the area and the cancelation of the event just days before it was scheduled to occur has caused him great tension. He proudly asserted that he authored the suspension letter. While the legitimacy and justifications of the CRS decision to cancel an activity are not being debated, this anecdote serves as an astute reminder of the importance of personality and relationship management. Furthermore, the ICC in Jonglei was particularly active during the Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation (CNHPR) years and had undertaken several grassroots peace initiatives on its own in other projects. From a conflict sensitivity point of view, this is a reminder of the importance of knowing who you are working with and actively managing those relationships at higher levels of the organization when required.

The issues of ownership and partnership deficits are also highlighted in poor internal information-sharing. At the national level, the SSCC head of programs allegedly did not have access to basic project documentation and had limited information about what commitments CRS had made to the donor as activities and priorities for the SSCC. At the state level, ICCs and CRS staff did not have the

community conversation outcome documents and had no basic records, such as who had been trained at CPFs and participant lists for activities. At the time of writing, the SSCC website does not host any reports, documents or events related to RfPSS. For the evaluation, contacting participants of the RfPSS processes relied largely on interpersonal contacts in the absence of a centralized information storage and sharing system. In Jonglei, the ICC could not mobilize CPFs for interviews due to not having any of their contact information. In Yambio, a focus group discussion for female participants was canceled when evaluators realized that the women gathered had been involved in a community dialogue with the church leaders, but not one sponsored by RfPSS.

3. OVERLAP AND ATTRIBUTION CHALLENGES

The Yambio example not only indicates problems with information management, but also raises questions about overlap and attribution. In all states visited, the evaluation team found significant overlap with other projects and implementing partners. In all areas, stakeholders mentioned similar activities being conducted by Viable Support to Transition and Stability (VISTAS), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Civil Affairs and Saferworld. These actors had longer track records on being engaged on peace and reconciliation in the areas addressed by RfPSS, as well as benefiting from a longer-term presence in the field; all have ongoing activities, while RfPSS has ended. Documentation indicates that USAID intended to coordinate with other donors supporting reconciliation, but **limited evidence shows that any strategic donor coordination manifested in increased operational alignment of activities on the ground.** In Duk Padiet, for example, RfPSS supported some community-based meetings at the same time that Civil Affairs was implementing migration-related dialogues. Civil Affairs is still conducting intercommunal peace dialogues in Duk Padiet.

For USAID, significant overlap occurred between RfPSS, VISTAS, Systems to Uphold the Credibility and Constitutionality of Elections in South Sudan (SUCCESS) and iStream. The overlap of activities creates attribution problems for RfPSS, as it is not clear how their activities contributed to overall outcomes in any specific area. For example, in Yambio, VISTAS supported the Interfaith Based Council (IFBC), while RfPSS supported the ICC. The difference between these mechanisms is that the IFBC includes Islamic clerics, but members of the ICC are also members of the IFBC. It is unclear if the reconciliation activities in Yambio would have been more or less successful with or without RfPSS.

Overlaps with SUCCESS occur with the civic engagement centers. The RfPSS launched at the National Peace Center in Juba, which offers meeting spaces, computer access and information-sharing facilities and was to be supported by this project. SUCCESS similarly operates a civic engagement center in Juba providing meeting space, internet and a platform for civil society engagement on governance issues. In Rumbek, an ICC member was involved in the management of the SUCCESS-supported civic engagement center, but no activities were designed to link the civil society outreach efforts of SUCCESS with those of RfPSS. Regarding iStream, RfPSS relied on radio stations supported by the Internews network, and the majority of RfPSS beneficiaries are also iStream beneficiaries.

4. FLAWS IN THE DESIGN LOGIC

The project failed to achieve its desired effects in several important ways, due to mismatches between activities and aspirations. For example, project documents indicate that "USAID will also ensure that

psycho-social trauma is comprehensively addressed in the methodology for community dialogues."[4] But **in practice, the trauma healing was a limited part** of the community conversation methodology and was not systematically implemented. In Jonglei, for example, an ICC member trained in trauma healing noted that he had not been called on in any of the activities to conduct the trauma healing sessions and other church leaders noted that trauma sessions were not conducted as part of activities they participated in. Further, any approach to trauma healing needs to be more robust in recognition of the complexities of dealing with mental health issues and the need for intensive and in-depth training, as well as for repeated and private consultations. As one female stakeholder quipped, "I was traumatized after being trained in trauma healing and finding out that I had trauma." Being confronted with her own trauma negatively affected her ability to help others discuss their trauma.

Additionally, the project as initially conceived was **unrealistically ambitious**. The notion that 181 community conversations—a nationwide dialogue process—could be conceptualized, drafted and implemented within 30 months with a complex and heterogeneous national partner, bears further investigation. From the onset, RfPSS needed to complete six community conversations per month, more than one per week. However, CRS staffing and management requirements had just one person based in Juba who had to attend all dialogue events. Stakeholders in Rumbek and Bor noted that activities were frequently delayed due to the schedule of the CRS staff member in Juba. While USAID recognized the importance of "a slow and deliberate SSCC process,"[5] the implementing partner was pressured to conduct more activities when project implementation was not proceeding quickly enough. As CRS staff in Bor explained, the SSCC wanted to take the lead, but when it was moving too slowly, "CRS decided to take the lead".

Further, **the ambitious project agenda created expectations with the CPFs and communities**. In Pachong, women noted that "we were promised a lot" and they highlighted, as many other stakeholders did, the need for follow-up activities. Similarly, in Yambio and Rumbek, stakeholders noted that communities expected financial gains from participating.

Lastly, CRS maintains that the RfPSS was not designed to support the APP and that there is no explicit alignment of RfPSS to the APP. This means that CRS designed and secured funding for support to the SSCC that was not intended to advance the strategic priorities of the church. The evaluators recommend that USAID and CRS should consider support to the SSCC only in line with the strategic priorities as articulated by the SSCC. Given the maturity of the organization, donors and implementing partners can improve their relations with the SSCC by supporting them in pursuit of their articulated agenda and by reducing the confusion as well as ownership and partnership deficits that come with well-funded projects untied to the explicit direction being pursued by the SSCC.

5. MIXED UNDERSTANDINGS OF WHAT 'THE CHURCH' IS

There is widespread appreciation for the role of the church in peace and reconciliation in South Sudan and from donor to government, civil society and community levels, there is general agreement that the church has an important role to play. However, **the church is not a homogenous, interest-neutral and bias-free actor**. Doctrinal/ ideological, ethnic, gender, age and class (education, for example) divides

[4] May 2016 Performance and Financial Review – Activity Sheet

[5] May 2016 Performance and Financial Review – Activity Sheet

manifest in religious structures as with any other social institutions in South Sudan. For instance, the SSCC represents seven of the more than 200 churches operating in South Sudan. When speaking of the SSCC as the "church," it refers to a specific set of powerful churches with large constituencies, to the exclusion of minority religious movements.

Further, **the success of the church as a collective depends heavily on the personalities and activities of specific church leaders**. When these leaders are involved in some processes, they are seen as neutral interlocutors. However, when the same leaders are involved in other processes, they can be labeled as politically and ethnically biased. In this way, church leaders can be instrumentalized by national political leaders. Church leaders have also been instrumentalized by the aid apparatus that, particularly since the 2013 war, increasingly relied on South Sudanese civil society to engage in governance and reconciliation and to be frontline aid service providers. The banner of the church provides legitimacy for aid actors and they operate as important interlocutors between internationally supported projects and communities—a link to the constituents. Within this context, church leaders are becoming increasingly political astute actors, operating at local, national and international levels within and across these varied power structures. This is not a negative assessment, but rather an acknowledgment that the church is not a centralized, apolitical and bias-neutral actor; as such, the opportunities and risks of their engagement should be weighed with more context-specific nuance. Further, such an understanding highlights that the strengths of the church as a relatively more inclusive entity should be sharpened, but that support should be based on realistic outcomes, reaching depth instead of breadth, and avoiding overly ambitious programming.

6. SIGNIFICANT AND AMBIGUOUS ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

Related to the point about neutrality, **RfPSS struggled to translate the commitment to neutral forums to the creation of politically unbiased spaces**. This was largely due to the lack of strategy about how to manage engagement with government actors. Part of the challenge was that the value of the SSCC and ICCs is the ability of religious leaders to engage with politicians and actively seek influence over their choices. The need for flexibility to enable church leaders to be responsive to calls for mediation support denotes a lack of specificity about the opportunities and risks of engagement, poor assessment and learning from these ad hoc, often personality-driven interventions.

Furthermore, **the lack of strategy about the role of the government in RfPSS is also related to a lack of clarity about how the project was going to engage with government and mitigate the potential for capture by local elites**. The project was not designed as a governance intervention and as such failed to consider the consequences of undertaking activities directly concerned with resources, decision-making, justice and accountability, as well as security. While the government was not perceived to have a role in the initial project formulation, various stakeholders noted the importance of government relations and local government officials emerged as key stakeholders in the project. Government officials were engaged at various levels, but no clear partnerships developed. For example, in Rumbek and Bor, the Peace Commission officials knew of CRS activities, but highlighted that these were not conducted in partnership with them and that they only worked with Saferworld, VISTAS and UNMISS Civil Affairs. Engagement with government officials seemed to focus on gaining the "buy-in" and participation of governors and local administrators as individuals on a case-by-case basis.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTINUED RELEVANCE OF THE SSCC AND APP: The SSCC has emerged as an important political role-player in South Sudan, and its relevance as a peace partner at the national and local levels is based on the continued calls for the participation of church leaders in peace processes. However, future support to the SSCC and the APP should be based on a more explicit agreement between the donor, implementing partner and SSCC about joint commitments, priorities and actions. The SSCC should be enabled through flexible and context-specific support that operates within a framework of mutually agreed-upon, long-term goals.

Increased opportunities to link the activities of the APP to other reconciliation mechanisms should be considered, as church leaders and communities participate in all of these forums. Opportunities for intersectionality should be consistently pursued; for example, ensuring that all activities advance gender equality and interethnic cooperation and ensuring that functional information pathways link activities to processes and link actors at all levels.

ENABLE LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP: For the SSCC and ICCs to have increased ownership and direction of project activities, implementing partners need to have flexibility with project deadlines and deliverables, and project assumptions should recognize that increased time and resources are required to manage and work in partnership with national actors. The ideal end-state for the SSCC and ICCs is the direct management of aid funds, so clear discussions should take place with them about the processes and milestones required to achieve that.

Various mechanisms exist to manage the partnership between international actors and the SSCC, the but functioning of these mechanisms is not translating into shared ownership of activities on the ground. More focused attention is needed to address internal communication blockages, information-sharing between Juba and state levels and the joint planning and coordination of activities. SSCC and ICC members need to be included in activity design, planning and implementation processes with more explicit leadership roles and activities assigned to them. Space also needs to be available for monitoring and learning, conceptualized as regular activities to enable professional growth and skills development.

CRS and the SSCC need to work on defining their partnership goals, shared expectations and resourcing plans, then ensuring together that these are communicated and cascaded to the state level, where a need exists for more coherent planning and setting strategic priorities and activities with the engaged participation of the ICC, SSCC and implementing partners. Technical expertise would be useful to help ICCs articulate intervention agendas that provide processes and longer-term engagement, as opposed to relying on single-activity interventions driven by top-down planning. Both activities to be pursued and capacity-building requirements should be tailored to the specific contextual strengths and weaknesses of each ICC and should link with the overall strategic goals of the APP.

INCREASE STRATEGIC COHERENCE: From the side of USAID, there is a need to increase the coherence of their community-based programming portfolio and to consider how to support reconciliation efforts within the current context. As mentioned, significant overlap issues occurred between the activities of RfPSS, VISTAS, Saferworld and Civil Affairs. The geographic focus areas for RfPSS receive significant programming attention from other actors, and future interventions should be informed by programming assumptions that include space for conflicts that are less prominent in terms of international attention (e.g., the intra-Dinka tensions in former Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap

states, intra-Nuer conflicts in former Unity and Dinka-Shilluk conflicts in former Upper Nile state) but have significant linkages to national political actors and dynamics. Further, more nuance is needed when considering the roles church leaders can play, and where. Context-specific and conflict-sensitive approaches should be highlighted in project designs.

USAID should explore options to work more strategically with other international donors to align international support for reconciliation efforts in South Sudan. This includes reaching out to nontraditional donors such as Egypt, South Africa and Tunisia, as well as working with U.N. agencies to consider how the overall space for reconciliation and dialogue through the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH), the National Dialogue and APP can create complementarity, maximize the use of scarce resources and avoid burdening communities with false empowerment processes.

The need for strategic coherence can also be applied to the uneven way RfPSS approached government engagement. There is a need to consider risk mitigation measures due to the accountability and legitimacy outcomes of the community conversation process and to provide specific guidelines on how to address the risks of political capture. Given the significant governance impact of the intervention of the churches, engagement with the government should be subjected to more deliberate consideration. The evaluators found that project documents did not address parameters for government interaction.

FOCUS ON DEPTH INSTEAD OF BREADTH: Many people received training as community and trauma facilitators through RfPSS, as well as in previous initiatives such as the CNHPR and 'Morning Star' and in the new CTRH. A lack of consistent support has meant that after people are recruited and receive one-off training, few are used in activities; then, the capacity remains with individuals untied to any activities or future opportunities. This 'capacity' that is left in communities was referred to by some project staff as part of the sustainability of the project. There is a need to consider how to develop and sustain the capacity of people to function, particularly as trauma counselors, social workers and mediators. An example would be to develop a core group of female church elders as counselors and then enable them to mentor and oversee an area-specific women's network at the community level and be able to function as community-based mental health practitioners. Similarly, for mediation work, there is a need to more systematically collect and share experiences and enable mentorship between church leaders from varying areas—internal learning exchanges.

From its announcement, RfPSS heightened expectations among the SSCC, ICCs and communities. The church entities had expectations of direct funding, the lack of which created bitterness and a power imbalance between the churches and the implementing partner. Lack of transparency over resourcing created tensions between the SSCC and ICCs, too. For communities, the reconciliation and dialogue processes created expectations of follow-up action. Future projects need to focus on more realistic goals and objectives, increased clarity and transparency, with more time devoted to internal communications and consultations and a more explicit articulation of ownership and partnership principles and practices.

Similarly, participation targets need to encourage meaningful participation and not just representation. For example, rather than only measuring the number of women in attendance, monitors should measure the time women spend talking within a forum. Additionally, barriers to women's engagement require more focus and targeted programming to support and enable women, such as by providing literacy classes at churches specifically for women. Avenues should be explored for deepening gender programming—not just to address women's representation, but to adopt a more holistic approach to the gendered

dimensions of insecurity, including violent expressions of masculinity and societal expectations and definitions of masculinity.

DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN A LEARNING CULTURE: Improved information management is required for previous project activities to be linked to future interventions and to maximize the usage gains from RfPSS. At the state level, each ICC should have basic project files and activity reports and be encouraged to reflect on lessons as part of their future strategic planning. The development of area-specific intervention plans should be encouraged on the basis of reflecting on successes and failures from RfPSS. Communication plans should be developed for the products of RfPSS, and products such as the research reports, community-based action plans and reconciliation outcomes should be disseminated to the SSCC and ICCs, as well as to implementing partners and donors. At a minimum, the SSCC website should include press releases and activity and research reports, as related to RfPSS.

Given the weaknesses explored in this evaluation, it is further recommended that the SSCC, CRS and USAID have space for reflection and joint discussion of the project. RfPSS provides a good learning experience for all actors involved and it is an opportune time for USAID, CRS and the SSCC to consider how they can best support reconciliation activities in South Sudan.

EMBRACE CONTEXT SPECIFICITY AND CONFLICT SENSITIVITY: There is a long history of international support for local-level peace and reconciliation, and a variety of actors work with church leaders and other locally based interlocutors to encourage community-based solutions. International actors need to put more time into learning about an intervention area and designing more specific interventions to holistically address drivers of conflict based on past and existing program interventions and an understanding of the political economy of the area. This also means that programming assumptions about linkages between national and local-level conflicts need to be explored in more detail, with specific manifestations of those relationships particularly articulated with clearer intervention strategies.

Conflict sensitivity is highlighted as an essential addition for project partners to be more explicit about whom they are working with and why. Knowing about the intervention location, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the stakeholders involved and defining clear process outcomes should be prerequisites for engagement in mediation processes. Church leaders should be encouraged to develop their technical skills as mediators, including in how to prepare for such processes, how to build and sustain momentum and how to learn and adapt.

ANNEX 1 – CONTEXT ANALYSIS

South Sudan is a country born of and mired in conflict. The colonial experience of limited and indirect rule gave way to two extremely violent civil wars that ended with the succession of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011. The civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) were characterized by widespread civilian casualties, forced displacement and asset-stripping, including of cattle and land for oil production, and extreme dearth, including famine. These wars were also characterized by fragmentation and competition as various ethnically-defined groups engaged in local resource struggles and created political allegiances at national level. Within the south, these divides manifest most visibly in the 1991 split within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the outpouring of ethnically-targeted violence that followed. But the depth of these divides pre-dates Riek Machar and Lam Akol's split. Salva Kiir has been quoted as saying the first bullets the South Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) ever fired were against southerners because when founded in Ethiopia in 1983, the emerging SPLA leadership took over a liberation platform dominated by the Anyanya II leaders who hailed largely from the Nuer and Equatorian regions. The rise of the Dinka hegemony is closely tied to the founding of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). Ethnic favoritism was a key cause of the 1991 split and the split was largely representative of the ethnic loyalties previously commanded by the Anyanya II leadership.

Further complicating the conflict landscape was that the SPLM agenda was not that of independence as was the liberation platform of Anyanya but rather for a 'new Sudan' in which southerners assumed positions of authority within the government in Khartoum and more autonomy was delegated to local authorities. This ideological divide in purpose, coupled with the discovery of oil resources largely on Nuer land, provided space for Khartoum to actively spoil the potential for southern unity by reaching limited peace agreements with specific groups, and offering support to some southern rebels to fight against the SPLA. For their part, the SPLA struggled to be recognized as the legitimate liberation movement that Garang wanted it to be due to the highly centralized political control, ethnic biases and abusive relationships to populations under their control. However, the SPLM/A received international recognition as the legitimate liberation movement in South Sudan and with support, particularly from the US and Norway, the SPLM became the official representatives of the south in the peace processes to end the brutal civil war. Facing this reality, some southern leaders who had been fighting in opposition to the SPLA (most particularly Riek Machar and Lam Akol), rejoined the movement. The other armed groups, broadly linked under the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) banner, representing large portions of Nuer, Shilluk and Equatorian peoples, were left out of the formal peace process in Naivasha. After the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the SPLM/A and Khartoum, Salva Kiir led a reunification process and with the signing of the Juba Declaration in 2006, the SPLA and SSDF formally united into the national defense force – under the banner of the SPLA.

A further characteristic of the second civil war was the arming of communities to fight as proxies for the north, SPLA, SSDF or merely as a 'home guard'. The militarization of the home space unleashed cycles of cattle raiding and revenge that occurred in concert with and separate from a strategic war effort. However, with the unification of the SPLA and SSDF, both sides drew on their localized militia to swell their ranks. Those who did not join faced forced disarmament processes as the newly unified armed forces tried to extend their authority over the southern territory. Furthermore, the CPA period (2005-2011) saw the generation of significant oil revenues that fueled the extensive inter-tribal patronage systems in South Sudan dominated by military elites. This led to resurgence of militarization in ethnic communities and was coupled with the government's "big tent" strategy to incorporate armed groups and former

politicians and activists that had been in opposition to the ruling SPLM. Military elites would mobilize and arm ethnic militias as a way to prove their strength and drive their inclusion into the formal state structures. Many commanders received higher ranks as a form of accommodation and the military budget swelled as the number of officers became disproportionately skewed by the country's independence in 2011.

Outside of the CPA, the other major political processes of the time were the 2010 election and the 2011 referendum. The death of John Garang in 2005 opened the space for the Juba Declaration but also created opportunity for southerners to re-engage in the demand for an independent state. Within the SPLM, there were tense divides between those who were maintained the vision of a New Sudan and those that sought an independent state. It was not until just before the 2011 referendum on independence that the SPLM publicly called for independence leading to more than 90% of the population opting for succession. This late focus on succession was also partly caused by the structure of the CPA that was framed in terms of 'making unity attractive'. The narrative of the SPLM as liberator of an independent South Sudan only has historical rooting in the post-2005 period.

The 2010 election was the only attempt at a broadly democratic process in South Sudan. Logistically, it was a massive undertaking that relied on vast amounts of international support to enable voting around the country. Democratically, there were many deficits as state governors, in particular, were perceived to be selected more due to loyalty and accommodation needs than through popular support. This led to many election-related disputes and several local insurgencies. State governors were also particularly powerful positions able to accrue income through taxation and customs fees and maintain security through locally-recruited forces. For the oil producing states, the CPA provided an additional income of 2% of oil revenues that fell into the governor's lap. For Taban Deng - then governor of Unity State - this enabled the building of a powerful local fiefdom. Indeed, several governors from the 2010 election continue to be key actors in the current context. Taban Deng has ascended to Vice President; Paul Malong ascended to Chief of Staff of the SPLA and Kuol Manyang became Minister of Defence. Joseph Bakasoro was the only independent candidate to win against an SPLM opponent in the 2010 election and he remains an important political contender in Western Equatoria. Alfred Ladu Gore, Dau Aturjong, Angelina Teny and Gabriel Changson all lost races in the 2010 election and largely remain in opposition today.

The 2010 election saw the solidification of the SPLM as the primary political actor in South Sudan with the rewarding of SPLM loyalists and also marks the start of the isolation of non-SPLM core political actors. It was estimated that the SPLM had lost 8 out of the 10 governor's races and had secured their hold on power only through manipulation. A series of mutinies and rebellions followed the election and there were widespread claims of fraud and unfairness. However, the momentum toward independence over-shadowed these early warning signs of the tensions that could be unleashed due to the lack of democratic political processes. Filled with fanfare and optimism, independence came in July 2011. Alongside independence, the border area became increasingly destabilized as implementation of the CPA obligations in the Three Areas (Abyei, Kordofan and Blue Nile) stalled and state-led violence created an influx of more than 300 000 refugees into South Sudan. Throughout 2011 and into 2012, violence along the border areas threatened regional stability and created great concern for the newly independent state.

Tensions with Sudan culminated in South Sudan shutting down oil production in January 2012. Some six months into independence, Juba decided to shut down its primary source of income; income that was essential to keep Kiir's big tent functioning. By this time, the new military aristocracy had become used to the steady flow of dollar revenue functioning with limited public accountability in the nascent state

structures. For 18 months, oil - and dollars - did not flow. And when it came online again, it was in a vastly different global context as oil prices had plummeted from over $100 to under $40 per barrel. Furthermore, the shut-down had damaged the oil infrastructure requiring partners to make new capital investments at the expense of future revenues. Juba had taken on loans based on future revenues to cover the intermediate costs of running the government and they were left with an agreement on pipeline transit fees with Sudan that was not tied to oil prices. In other words, Juba had taken on debt based on unrealistic future oil prices and were left paying more to use the pipeline than they could get from the oil sales. It did not take long for the economic tensions to manifest as cracks in the SPLM alliance and discontent from the population toward a corrupt elite that had failed to deliver on the promises of independence.

Within this context, the SPLM began preparing for the 2015 election by dispatching senior party members to hold constituent dialogues around the country. The party was condemned at grassroots levels for having lost its vision and direction and for having failed to deliver even the most basic of services. The feedback from citizens rippled through the already tense political environment and senior political leaders quickly started blaming each other and taking steps to shore up their own popularity in the face of an increasingly displeased public. President Kiir sent letters to 75 serving and former officials who he accused of stealing some $4 billion and undermining the government's ability to provide for citizens. He also took steps to have the 2% oil revenue fees removed from oil producing states and centralized customs and taxation. Around this time, it was also reported that Kiir had told President Mbeki that he would not contend the 2015 election.

In 2013, longstanding differences within the ruling SPLM boiled over as former Vice President Dr. Riek Machar and SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum publicly stated that the Kiir's leadership of the SPLM had failed, a position that effectively divided the ruling party and caused vocal disagreements over leadership succession planning for the SPLM chairmanship. This opened up pre-independence divides within the SPLM as the party moved toward its 2013 convention. At the 2008 SPLM National Convention, a seniority list was drawn up that provided for leadership structure of the unified SPLM with Kiir as number 1 and Machar as number 2, a position greatly disputed internally and accepted only in the pre-independence context where unity was essential to prevent the machinations of Khartoum. Indeed, there are reports that efforts by Kiir and his supporters to oust Machar and Amum in 2008 were contained and these tensions came to the fore again ahead of the 2013 Convention, particularly as Machar and Amum went public with their intention to contest for party leadership.

Alongside post-independence political tensions among ruling elites in Juba, longstanding inter-tribal competition across the country over access to water, grazing, and agriculture lands continued to fester. At various points in recent history, existing cooperation within and among ethnic groups broke down into localized conflicts. Most of these local conflicts had no national implications as long as the political balance in Juba remained intact. However, significant cases began to emerge that overlaid national political elements on top of local conflicts. In late 2012, Jonglei state was racked by extreme inter-communal violence, followed by SPLA abuses during forced disarmament campaigns. In Western Equatoria, tensions between Dinka cattle keepers and farmers began to emerge. As politicians in Juba became aggrieved, they exported grievances from the capital to the village, agitating and instrumentalizing the highly armed and often illiterate ethnic community defense structures. Alongside this, state-building efforts to create a monopoly on the use of force pitted the SPLA against local militias such as the White Army and Galweng. Voluntary and forced disarmament campaigns created spirals of violence as political allegiances and historical roles proved vital determinants for who got to keep or lose their weapons. These processes

were often accompanied by violence as the SPLA were sent into communities who had been their enemies during the civil war.

Furthermore, the rising of a military aristocracy fed on oil revenues manifested at local level in the accumulation of large tracts of land and valuable herds of cattle. With few economic and job opportunities, the cattle economy forms a central part of the patronage network and with larger herds came more cattle guards, more weapons and the further militarization of the cattle economy based on the interests of national elites. Pockets of insecurity, cycles of revenge and the growth of community self-defense structures came to characterize the rural landscape. Jonglei, Lakes and southern Unity states were the focus of escalating inter-communal disputes, evidenced by increasing levels of mobilization and violence in 2012 and 2013.

Events moved quickly from the May 2013 Political Bureau meeting at which Pagan and Riek openly questioned Kiir's leadership through the firings of Riek and others in July, the dissolution of the party structures in November and the outbreak of violence in December. In December 2013, after the downward spiral of disagreements split the ruling SPLM/A, the political crisis exploded into a military confrontation in Juba. The fight quickly spread along tribal lines to the White Army of the Nuer, the Gelweng of Dinka, the Arrow Boys of the Azande, and the various defense groups among Murle, Mundari, Shilluk, and others. Since 2013, chaos within the structures of state in Juba and the harsh response from organized security forces has further distanced the central government from communities in some parts of the country and consolidated a deepened sense of aggrieved ethnic nationalisms across the country.

It is in this context that South Sudan's conflicts appear tribal, but with a deeper and more intractable cause that is political, historical and very much tied to a failure of inclusive political processes. Ultimately the solution must at least include a political settlement at national level that is matched with reconciliation within and between communities torn apart by the decades of war and the burdens of daily subsistence. The national level conflict, often referred to by South Sudanese as being "political", is centrally concerned with power-sharing between the various interest groups that mirror ethnic and historical patterns of alliance. At local levels, national elites instrumentalize and manipulate communities who are tied into patterns of obligation and patrimony. Daily life, defined in so many ways by kinship and cattle, is primarily concerned with securing access to resources for individual and community strength.

LINKING NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONFLICTS IN SOUTH SUDAN

Understanding linkages between national and local level conflict in South Sudan means situating national elite tensions within relational spaces tied to geography through kinship and history. It is these three factors - geography, history and identity - that define the parameters of local and national conflict creating unique as well as dependent conflicts. Local conflicts that link directly to the national conflict are primarily concerned with the extension of state control, marginalization and the denial of rights and competition between organized structures of violence. Underpinning conflicts between actors are resources - competition for resources at national and local levels has an overall determining influence on the conduct and course of violence. As such, key local conflicts that link directly to the national conflict are contests for political and economic space, often felt at the grassroots as a lack of resources and rights.

At the moment, there are two primary points of intersection between national and local conflicts – minority group inclusion such as the Fertit and Shilluk conflicts and resource grabbing conflicts. The Nuer and Equatorian conflicts have largely been resolved with the integration of political and military elites back

into the SPLM/A system. However, there remain forces outside of the process that could threaten stability and there are significant differences across the Nuer on how they are being accommodated. With limited representation and power at national level, the Fertit and Shilluk are holding out for local accommodation that does not seem likely due to the resource needs of the Dinka that surround them on the ground. Using typical 'surrender or starve' war strategies, the central government is encouraging them to stop resisting the newly emerging order and accept a position of marginalization.

There is an overall programming logic among international interveners in South Sudan that while there is limited space to engage on national conflict resolution, there are more accessible spaces at local level and that working on local level peace will lead to a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding. While theoretically this may be true, there are significant ontological challenges that prevent this from being an appropriate and generalizable approach to programming for peace. With significant variations of the meaning and interaction with the national conflict (and most particularly defined through the relationship with the national government), different geographic areas interact with the national conflict in fundamentally different ways. That said, there are also nation-wide commonalities such as dearth, poor governance, poor resource management, and the reliance on ethnic loyalties for access to recourses.

RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM THIS ANALYSIS

The 2013 crisis bought to the fore the depth of governance deficiencies that prevents the emergence of non-violent politics. There are several deeply political processes that are required to bring stability to South Sudan. Firstly, there needs to be processes to determine the nature and structure of governance, most basically represented in the number of administrative units, the delineation of roles and responsibilities and the balancing of power between the branches of government. These discussions are largely happening within the National Dialogue and this process represents a platform for intellectual debate and discourse on fundamental issues of power politics. It will always be an imperfect process, but space is currently being provided for consideration of essential issues such as regional power-sharing. There needs to be a platform for resolving the structural governance questions that South Sudanese people have not previously had an opportunity to engage with. The more people that are encouraged to join such discussions, the more representative they can become, and the more momentum can be generated for a truly South Sudanese solution to emerge. Increased participation, with technical support and advise, can off-set the capture of the National Dialogue to narrowly-defined political ideologies. If Nuer communities, for example, are not able to participate in and articulate positions to the National Dialogue members, they are less likely to have their views represented in any future advice offered by the esteemed panel.

Secondly, political party processes are required to support and enable the normalization of politics into non-violent competition. There is a particular challenge in South Sudan relating to the outsized role of the SPLM as the liberation movement while not being representative of all the constituent parts of the fight for independence. The split personified by Riek Machar and Salva Kiir is a fracture across the core of who the SPLM is and what their identity will be moving ahead. A similar fracture exists also between the Former Detainees and the Kiir faction. Given that the SPLM will likely be the dominant political party in South Sudan, at least for the near future, any leadership succession should be resolved within the party processes. The explosive events of 2013 were tied to SPLM processes and the need to have broad, constituent assemblies remains a challenge. SPLM leaders are hosting state-level consultations and a National Liberation Council meeting and General Assembly are still required. One of the key stumbling blocks in 2013 was that Kiir had changed the delegate appointment processes and state governors, instead of party

officials, were tasked to select the state representatives who, in turn, would be tasked to vote on leadership succession. A succession plan for the SPLM that prevents a return to violence should be sought.

Thirdly, the national conflict tore through the fabric of South Sudanese societies and has spawned fragmented, ethnically-divided, militarized community enclaves. Efforts need to be undertaken to support a return to calm, characterized by freedom of movement, freedom of speech and freedom to pursue livelihoods. This means adopting a holistic approach to communal stability that includes understanding linkages to and the impacts of the national political space on the local space, identifies and promotes inter-group cooperation, unequivocally advances equal rights, and utilizes aid inputs to overcome resource scarcity and competition. Resolving local conflicts should not be pursued for the benefits of national stability; resolving inter-communal conflicts is essential to provide citizens with an opportunity for a different life, to reduce their dependency of short-term gains and provide the space for new governance behaviors to take root.

There is a need for multiple processes to address the governance crises that led to the brutal civil war and a need to see how any single intervention only forms a small part of the context. With dwindling international resources and limited political will from capitals, working together to maximize the impact of the support provided to non-violent political processes may prove crucial to the success of the next phase of international intervention in South Sudan.

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION MECHANISMS IN CONTEXT

Peace and reconciliation are highly political processes, fraught with the complexities of personality, power and conflicting interests. In South Sudan, this sector has been characterized by a lack of coherence and a high level of competition as different mechanisms and actors compete for national and donor attention. In April 2013, President Salva Kiir Mayardit established the Committee on National Healing Peace and Reconciliation (CNHPR), chaired by Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul. International support for the CNHPR was provided by Pact, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNMISS. Even though established before the outbreak of civil war, the CNHPR was beset by perceptions of political bias from the start and the Archbishop was perceived as being too close to the President. The CNHPR model relied on training 550 community peace ambassadors to conduct trauma awareness and community dialogue processes around the country. The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), based in South Africa, were contracted to develop and implement a four-week training package titled *A Step Together: Shared Journeys of Listening and Dialogue,* and conducted the first pilot training for 75 faith-based practitioners in October 2014.[6]

Many donors and implementing partners were cautious about the CNHPR and its potential as a neutral forum. This was mostly a product of the timing of the initial announcement: the CNHPR was established by Kiir after then-Vice President Riek Machar had unilaterally declared the establishment of a truth and healing commission with support from a Swiss-based organization that his wife, Angelina Teny, was involved with. Even before the start of the civil war, there was significant bias within the international community against a Kiir-supported church-led process under a Dinka Archbishop. Efforts by the CNHPR to create a more inclusive platform with parliament and civil society, did little to ease the perceptions that the CNHPR was too close to the Presidency. However, the CNHPR attracted enough support to operate,

[6] http://www.ijr.org.za/home/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/IJR-2014-annual-report.pdf

including through partnership with the SSCC,[7] and continued to undertake activities such as a youth dialogue in Juba on grassroots peace and reconciliation and a conference including all the major donors, UN agencies, civil society groups, SPLM and SPLM-IO on a strategy for grassroots peace and reconciliation until early 2016.[8] In a February 2016 national poll, the CNHPR was referenced as the most well-known mechanism for peace and reconciliation among South Sudanese citizens[9].

With the signing of the ARCSS in August 2015, a new mechanism, the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing (CTRH) was established. Led by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs with financial support from Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Government of Netherlands, UNMISS and UNDP, the CTRH has been developing an intervention strategy in line with its ARCSS-defined mandate to conduct community consultations on social and political issues to enable healing and reconciliation.[10] As per the agreement (and also reflected in the later revitalized agreement), the CNHPR was obligated to hand over their files and materials to the CTRH. Facing the dissolution of the CNHPR and deep internal divides about how the church should navigate the political arena in which they were operating, the SSCC arranged a strategic planning retreat in July 2015 and produced "a framework of engagement for the church for resolving the conflict, building peace, and reconciling the people of South Sudan."[11] This framework was developed into the 'Action Plan for Peace' (APP) – the strategic articulation of SSCC intentions and priorities for engagement. The APP quickly developed into a project proposal and began circulating within the donor community in Juba. The SSCC tried to attract direct donor support. On March 3, 2016, Ambassador Phee announced US$6million in support to CRS for the SSCC to implement the APP.

In December 2016, President Kiir announced the creation of a National Dialogue as "a forum and a process through which the people of South Sudan shall gather to redefine the basis of their unity as it relates to nationhood, redefine citizenship and belonging, restructure the state and renegotiate social contract and revitalize their aspirations for development and membership in the world of nations"[12]. While appointed by the President, the National Dialogue was framed as an independent body with the aim of engaging South Sudanese in defining key governance challenges and discussing highly political issues regarding the structure of the state and the nature of citizenship.

The National Dialogue has its genesis in the SPLM reunification process in Arusha that ran alongside the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa and relies upon many veteran political activists to lead the initiative.[13]

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[7] Many significant church leaders were involved in the CNHPR, including Bishop Paride Taban. Other members of its executive committee include Reverend Peter Gai, Bishop Enoch Tombe, Bishop Rudolf Majak and Bishop Isaiah Majok Daau. These religious leaders remain a core part of the SSCC and ICC leadership.

[8] See CNHPR Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pg/CNHPR/posts/?ref=page_internal

[9] https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/only-1-3-of-s-sudanese-aware-of-national-peace-reconciliation-committee

[10] http://www.ss.undp.org/content/south_sudan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2017/08/25/technical-committee-for-the-commission-for-truth-reconciliation-and-healing-completes-training-in-conducting-inclusive-consultations.html

[11] https://www.sscchurches.com/action-plan-for-peace

[12] https://www.ssnationaldialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/Concept-Note-of-SSND-by-President-South-Sudan-National-Dialogue-Final.pdf

[13] National Dialogue Leadership: Hon. Angelo Beda; Hon. Abel Alier; Hon. Gabriel Yoal Dok; Hon. Bona Malual; Amb. Francis Deng; Hon. Mary Bicensio Wani; Hon. Elizabeth Achan Ogwaro; Hon. Lilian Riziq. There is a 97-member steering committee

The National Dialogue is interesting in its composition, which has representatives of the three greater areas at the highest level, draws on the intellectual leadership of the SPLM, contains some of the most esteemed South Sudanese and is driven by a combination of parliamentarians, church and civil society representatives. However, as an initiative of the President, the perception remains that the National Dialogue is a government-led process for consultation. The National Dialogue has attracted significant bilateral support from Egypt, Germany, Japan, South Africa and Tunisia as well as from UNDP, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNMISS. Throughout 2017 and 2018, the National Dialogue conducted state-level consultations on key governance issues and have issued various briefing papers and notes to inform the national-level consultations.[14]

Meanwhile, CRS and other international partners continued to support the SSCC and the APP as an avenue for independent and neutral engagement on peace and reconciliation. The main donors supporting the APP were USAID, the EU Commission, Norway, Finland and various faith-based groups such as Christian Aid. From early 2018 onwards, there were 3 mechanisms, with different donors and national partners, all conducting community-level dialogues on governance and reconciliation. This dynamic reflects the complex international and national context with competing interests and biases: the SPLM reunification process, led to the formation of the National Dialogue; the internationally-supported mediation led to the creation of the CTRH; and the APP emerged as a church-led approach to reconciliation and peace. Depending on their particular policy choices, donors and implementing partners have supported the various initiatives. However, in practice many of the distinctions between the mechanisms are vague. For example, senior church leaders engage in all of the mechanisms, the government plays key roles in all approaches, and on the ground, the activities look very similar (i.e. IJR provided the methodology and training for CNHPR, CTRH and RfPSS).

led by the King of the Zande and Rev. Matthew Deng as well as a Secretariat headed by Dr. Lual Deng with Alfred Taban, Abraham Awolich, Professor Angok Achuil Angok Achuil, Bishop Samuel Peni Enosa, Deng Gai Gatluak and Vincent Wanga.

[14] For more information, see: https://www.ssnationaldialogue.org/how-national-dialogue-works/document-library/

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ANNEX III - ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

This annex presents the findings of the organizational assessment. The tool included hereafter, was used in three facilitated focus group discussions (FFGD), one each with CRS, SSCC and ICC representatives.

SSCC STRUCTURES

The SSCC, as an institution, is made up of several formal structures overseen by a board, managed by an Executive Committee, operated by a Secretariat and implemented by ICCs at regional, state and district levels. The formalization of structures and processes is an ongoing exercise and the SSCC is still defining roles and responsibilities in practice. For example, SSCC participants noted that while there are now human resource management policies and tools, job positions and responsibilities within the Secretariat were not always clearly defined, in practice.

In terms of FFGD responses, the ICC had the lowest overall ratings for their perceptions of the clarity, efficacy and operations of the SSCC. They gave low (2 out of 5) ratings to the clarity of the organizational structures, efficiency of internal communication and coordination and capacity for flexible responses. In contrast, SSCC participants gave the same questions a 5 out of 5, 3 and 4 respectively. CRS staff rated these at 4, 3 and 5 out of 5, accordingly. This indicates, for example, that at the level of the ICCs, they do not feel able to implement flexible responses but the SSCC and CRS see the church as a flexible and responsive entity. One of the main flexibility challenges for the ICC in Rumbek, for example, was the need to engage at regional level (Wau) and then Juba level for internal processing of requests for activities and interventions. The SSCC highlighted that there are tensions at the level of regional ICC as these representatives "act like governors" and acknowledged significant weaknesses at the level of ICCs. Furthermore, both the ICCs and SSCC recognized the poor internal communications and the SSCC noted that ICCs are largely "cut-off from the Secretariat". SSCC staff observed that the ICC strength is based on who is involved as members at state level with significant regional variations.

All types of stakeholders indicated that the SSCC has the capacity to manage partnerships (4 and 5 out of 5 ratings). The main organizational weaknesses of SSCC as identified by CRS stakeholders were the human resource management systems and the systematic use of monitoring and evaluation. The SSCC also identified monitoring and evaluation as their weakest area.

CRS SUPPORT

SSCC respondents gave negative scorings to questions about CRS support (mostly 2 out of 5). The only neutral rating (3 out of 5) was allocated to the quality of the support provided; SSCC is mostly satisfied with the quality of support, particularly as related to organizational strengthening, provided by CRS. However, the SSCC raised concerns about the quality of the partnership, ease of working together and flexibility of the programming. SSCC participants highlighted that it was time-consuming to work with the international partners and "comes with pressures". They noted that the implementing partners mediate between them and the donors with a lack of transparency, which means that the SSCC has limited control and management accountability over what implementing partners agree to and report back to donors. SSCC participants noted that they have to undertake "activity-based begging" that is very inefficient and prevents them from being flexible and responding to community needs.

Further, they criticized the way activities that they plan are taken over by the implementing partner. For example, the SSCC had planned for a series of radio programs to be broadcast on specific radio stations,

but then CRS signed a contract with Eye Radio to broadcast church programs "in competition with the SSCC". One participated explained that "we plan together, and then they hijack". The SSCC feels stuck between the demands of communities and the demands of partners and feel that they fall prey to the "conflicting interests of partners". This was explained in terms of an example from Boma State where SSCC staff felt like the church was being used "as a flag" over someone else's agenda.

Further issues raised by the SSCC about CRS support included: a lack of flexibility as CRS only funds activities in areas where they are already based; lack of financial transparency; lack of follow-up on Community Conversations; lack of linkages between activities; and lack of joint planning.

On the part of CRS, stakeholders had more positive perceptions about the quality of the CRS partnership, giving ratings of 4 out of 5 to the quality of the partnership and ease of working together. They noted that the project changed significantly from planning to implementation and that they were able to respond flexibly. CRS highlighted that the continual requests for support from the SSCC is indicative of their continued relevance to the SSCC. They also observed that at the level of ICC there are more difficulties as they "don't like or understand" how the partnership between CRS and the SSCC is structured and they have "misrepresentations of partner support".

At the level of the ICC, discourse about the lack of joint planning was prominent and the respondents noted that CRS is empowered by the SSCC in Juba to implement ICC programs; they felt like they were "jumped-over" when it came to the implementation of activities. The ICC also noted that CRS sometimes communicates directly with the churches and not through the ICC, which creates biases due to the dominance of the Catholic Church in that area. However, in scoring the CRS support, the ICC gave high ratings (4 out of 5) to the ease of working together and the flexibility of the programming to the context. They provided neutral (3 out of 5) ratings to the quality of the partnership and quality of the support provided.

PROGRAMMATIC EFFECTIVENESS

As the ICC had limited knowledge about the project activities and program goals, questions about programmatic effectiveness were not addressed to them. CRS staff highlighted the quality of inclusion in the project activities, particularly as evidenced by having separate group discussions for women, youth and elders. Interestingly, the SSCC gave generally neutral to good (3 and 4 out of 5) ratings to the overall programmatic effectiveness. They highlighted that the APP is achieving impact (5 out of 5) but they have failed (2 out of 5) to integrate the views of South Sudanese people into national peace processes. They explained that the church leaders struggled to represent the views of the people in the peace processes and that "if the government had interest in people's views, they could have come to consult (with church leadership and communities) and gather them."

SSCC staff also had interesting reflections on the programmatic assumptions. They noted the importance of dealing with local tensions as a means "to reduce the pressure at national level" and that the de-escalation of tensions on the ground would make people less inclined toward mobilizing for national conflicts. However, SSCC participants highlighted that for the church to be successful at intervening in local conflicts, these interventions cannot be driven by the implementing partners. They emphasized that the Community Conversations, for example, should be conceived as interventions between people fighting to create a neutral forum for dialogue whose outcomes should inform SSCC activities to influence peace and reconciliation. In such a conceptualization, the government "comes as a participant" and not as a lead party in the meeting.

ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT TOOL

This tool has been developed for use in Facilitated Focus Group Discussions (FFGD) to gather data from the SSCC and CRS staff on the RfPSS project. The facilitator will use this tool to solicit data from the FFGD participants through a statement scoring system that will then be graded and analyzed for inclusion in the evaluation report. The tool has been organized around three sections focusing on the structure of the SSCC and its relationship with CRS and on the organizational effectiveness of the SSCC.

SSCC STRUCTURES

1)	Clarity of organizational structures	1 2 3 4 5
2)	Coherence of roles and responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5
3)	Efficiency of internal communications	1 2 3 4 5
4)	Effectiveness of coordination	1 2 3 4 5
5)	Capacity to manage partnerships	1 2 3 4 5
6)	Quality of organizational support	1 2 3 4 5
7)	Capacity for flexible responses	1 2 3 4 5
8)	Systematic use of monitoring and evaluation	1 2 3 4 5

CRS SUPPORT

9)	Quality of the partnership	1 2 3 4 5
10)	Ease of working together	1 2 3 4 5
11)	Capacity of SSCC to integrate support	1 2 3 4 5
12)	Systematic use of monitoring and evaluation	1 2 3 4 5
13)	Flexibility of programming to context	1 2 3 4 5
14)	Quality of support provided	1 2 3 4 5

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

15)	Quality of outreach and participation	1 2 3 4 5
16)	Transparent and participatory management	1 2 3 4 5
17)	Clarity of staff roles in project delivery	1 2 3 4 5
18)	Regular use of information collection system	1 2 3 4 5
19)	Regular project reviews and adjustments	1 2 3 4 5
20)	Clear administrative procedures	1 2 3 4 5
21)	Ability to respond to community requests	1 2 3 4 5

ANNEX IV – CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

GREATER LAKES REGION

The greater Lakes region has often experienced violent conflicts that have led to significant insecurity. The predominant ethnic group is the Dinka, and much of the violence involve clans of this group, such as the Rup and Pakam. Youth are the main perpetrators of the violence, which peaks in the dry season when large herds of cattle and people congregate in locations where water and pasture are plentiful. Therefore, a significant root of the violence is lack of development and government neglect. Conferences or conversations alone cannot address this challenge. What is required is injection of resources, such as water points, and then complemented with other interventions such as disarmament of youth and peace initiatives. Other causes of the violence are cattle rustling, territorial or administrative divisions, proliferation of small arms, and selfish actions of local and national leaders.

Violence during 2016 and 2017 caused displacement and impacted negatively on economic activities as movement along roads become dangerous. To deal with the insecurity, local leaders in the region appealed to the President to declare a three-month state of emergency, which happened on 11 December 2017. Disarmament of the local population by SPLA and other organized forces ensued. The result has been a substantial reduction in violence.

CHURCH RESPONSE

Compared to the other areas we visited, the churches in Lakes have not been very active in resolving the rampant conflicts in the region. The ICC has tried to play a positive role under the RfPSS, but its effectiveness has been constrained by organizational deficiencies. The ICC has undergone a significant re-structuring at the end of 2018 and ICC members interviewed noted that before that there had been leadership challenges. The evaluators noted that the former chairperson of the ICC (now the Secretary) seemed to be the only member active in RfPSS activities and that he seemed to play a controlling role. There seemed to be tensions with younger and newer members of the ICC and the older former chairperson.

Nonetheless, the ICC carried out a number of conversations in various locations. However, their working relations with government authorities appear not to be smooth. Some government officials openly complained that the Churches were not coordinating their activities with government authorities. Other organizations engaged in peacebuilding in the region are AMA, UNMISS Civil Affairs, VISTAS and UNDP. However, their contribution to stability has not been substantial as the call on the President to intervene testifies. It seems the decisive action of the President was the main reason behind the drop in the level of violence.

WHAT WE SAW

There has been a significant reduction in the level of violent conflict in the region because of the declaration of the state of emergency and disarmament of the local population. The disarmament appears to be having a positive outcome even though some people have reportedly fled to other areas to avoid losing their guns. The gradual return to normalcy has had a positive impact on movement and trade. We saw vehicles loaded with goods arriving in Rumbek or passing through the town to other locations. The market in Rumbek has goods even though prices are high.

GREATER JONGLEI REGION

Conflicts in the greater Jonglei region have deep roots. The main ethnic groups in the region are Dinka, Nuer, Anyuak and Murle. Most of the violence involve the Nuer, Dinka and Murle pastoralists. They have historically participated in cyclical cattle raiding and child abductions as well as engaged in cycles of revenge. Cattle are central, not only to all the three communities' livelihoods, but also to their social and cultural systems.

Some of the violent outbursts have links to events happening at the national level or actions of national leaders. For example, following the outbreak of violence in December 2013 in the national capital, Jonglei subsequently became an epicenter of massacres, reminiscent to those which occurred in the aftermath of the split of the SPLA in 1991. Clearly, communities in Jonglei State have experienced conflict over several generations, and it will take many years to mend the rifts between them. All of the communities involved are both victims and perpetrators of violence. However, the tendency is for members of one ethnic group to blame another group or others while presenting their kin as the victims or as acting in self-defense. We heard repeatedly in Bor that the "bad guys" are the Murle. This is likely not the whole truth, though. The common tendency to blame one ethnic group for the violence is unproductive and only fuels conflict. Peace in Jonglei State needs long-term commitment and a diversified approach that includes high-level political dialogue, grassroots consultations, the provision of rule of law and access to justice and the development of alternative livelihood and employment opportunities for the youth.

CHURCH RESPONSE

The churches in Jonglei State have played a significant role in peacebuilding despite many challenges. For example, church leaders led a peace mission to Pibor, which culminated in the meetings of governors of the region. Under the RfPSS, the ICC also did some peacebuilding works, but their relations with the CRS and SSCC headquarters have been challenging. Overall, there have been significant interventions in Jonglei under RfPSS that have substantially improved internal ethnic dynamics such as within the Anyuak, Murle and Bor Dinka. However, the Community Consultation process has soured their relations with CRS and they require more support to articulate and implement their own intervention agenda. The churches in Jonglei provide a valuable avenue for exploring interethnic conflict and for engaging with youth and violence in more comprehensive ways.

Evaluators noted that while the ICC in Jonglei has some interethnic representation, at Bor level, it remains dominated by Dinka leaders and more effort could be focused in enabling inclusivity and representation at these levels as a model for other social institutions.

WHAT WE SAW

We noticed that the ICC in Jonglei is active and seems to have good working relations among themselves, as compared to Lakes region, though they do not receive much supported from the SSCC in Juba. They have excellent information on the current situation of the state with regards to conflict causes and drivers of the conflicts. However, they have been slow to address these conflicts due to lack of mobility and inaccessible roads during rainy season. Yet, the local people trust them and always call on them when in need.

WESTERN EQUATORIA REGION

Western Equatoria is one of the most fertile parts of South Sudan, but its development potential has largely remained untapped due to conflict. In particular, since early 2015, the region experienced massive insecurity as areas around Yambio were occupied by armed groups, especially the South Sudan National Liberation Movement/ Army (SSNLM/A) and SPLA-IO. Some remnants of the infamous Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as well as Ambororo pastoralists also posed security challenges. Many roads connecting Yambio town and other locations were blocked as a result of their activities. Many civilians died at the hands of armed elements, property was destroyed and violence against women was rampant.

However, the security situation has greatly improved, thanks to the intervention of church leaders and the conclusion of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The SSNLM/A signed a peace agreement with the government, mediated by Church leaders, and fighters from the group have been integrated into government structures. The SPLA-IO is also in the process of reconciling with the government of the region, following the conclusion of the R-ARCSS. Church leaders persuaded them to come to Yambio town for a peace celebration and guaranteed their safe return to their base in Rirangu.

CHURCH RESPONSE

Church leaders have played a major role in bringing peace and stability to the region, in some instances at significant personal risks. In particular, the Bishop responsible for the Catholic Church has led local peace efforts. He led teams to the bush to talk to the "boys fighting" and connected them with government officials, leading to meetings and subsequently peace agreement. The Bishop also led efforts to form an umbrella religious group called the Interfaith Council for Peace Initiatives. This group, which includes members of the ICC, have provided a conducive atmosphere for the holding of conversations under the RfPSS. Like in the other areas visited, the ICC has not been happy with the support it has been receiving from the SSCC in Juba. Some of its members would like more room to solicit funds and implement their own activities.

WHAT WE SAW

The churches in the region are active promoters of peace and healing. In particular, we observed that the churches work together very well and have the capacity to deal with conflicts at local levels. This was clear to us as we met with the Inter-Faith Council in their office and learned a lot about their activities and role in the conversations. Moreover, they have good collaboration with government officials, even though a few of them based in Juba seem not to be pleased by what the church is doing.

Due to the activities of the church leaders, especially Bishops of the Catholic Church and the ECS, violence has noticeable decline across the region. As a result, movement within the region has improved. We saw people riding bicycles and motor cycles in and out of Yambio, even during late hours. We went to Nzara and along the road saw local population cultivating and conducting small business. The situation is normalizing.

ANNEX V – INTERVIEW LIST

ANNEX VI – DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW TOOL (SSCC AND CRS)

This tool has been developed for use in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with project managers and staff, particularly for senior leadership at national and state level. These questions provide a guide for an open discussion and the evaluation team should ask follow-up questions as required by the conversational context.

1. What strategies have been used to increase citizen and community participation in peace and reconciliation processes in South Sudan? What lessons have been learned or limitations observed in the strategies that have been used?
2. How have you ensured the participation of all segments of society? Have any adjustments been made to ensure the active and equal participation of men and women, youth and elders?
3. What are some of the RfPSS success stories?
4. What are some of the challenges that RfPSS faces in enabling peace and reconciliation?
5. Are local level consultations linked to the national peace process? If yes, how? If no, why?
6. Does the national peace process reflect the views of South Sudanese citizens? If yes, how? If no, why?
7. How you would you rate the sustainability of the reconciliation interventions?
8. How do local level reconciliation efforts link to national reconciliation and unity?
9. How you would you rate the sustainability of the Community Consultation processes?
10. What can be done to increase the sustainability of these initiatives?
11. What support has been channeled to SSCC to enhance their organizational effectiveness? How was this designed? How effective has it been? What gaps remain?
12. Do you think the RfPSS should be adjusted in the current context? Why and how?
13. Do you think the APP should be revisited given the changed context? Why and how?
14. Do you think the RfPSS has supported the APP pillars equally? Has there been more emphasis on any specific pillars and what are the consequences/ impact of that?
15. What are the main lessons that have been learned through implementation of the RfPSS so far?
16. What opportunities does the current context present for the Church operating in peace and reconciliation?
17. What are the main recommendations looking ahead?

FFGD WITH COMMUNITY PEACE FACILITATORS

Date:	
Location:	
# of participants (gender disaggregated)	
Names:	

Introduce yourself and explain that we are here to evaluate the Reconciliation for Peace project as implemented by the SSCC with support from CRS. We value any inputs received and want to learn from the experiences that they have had as Community Peace Facilitators so that we can build on the strengths of the project and address any potential gaps and needs moving ahead. While the information provided will be used in a report to the donor, no names will be mentioned, and your participation will remain confidential.

1. How were you selected as a Community Peace Facilitator?
2. What training did you receive?
3. How would you rate the usefulness of the training?
4. What activities do you do as a Community Peace Facilitator?
5. How do you ensure that the voices of all members of the community are included in the Community Conversations?
6. What do you think was the most successful/important part of the Community Conversation?
7. Did you experience any challenges when planning for the Community Conversations?
8. Did you experience any challenges when implementing the Community Conversations?
9. What successes have the Community Conversations achieved? How sustainable have these successes?
10. Do you have any recommendations about how the project was implemented and what you would like to see going forward?

FFGD WITH COMMUNITY ELDERS

Date:	
Location:	
# of participants (gender disaggregated)	
Names:	

Introduce yourself and explain that we are here to evaluate the Reconciliation for Peace project as implemented by the SSCC with support from CRS. We value any inputs received and want to learn from the experiences of reconciliation activities in the area, so that we can build on the strengths of the project and address any potential gaps and needs moving ahead. While the information provided will be used in a report to the donor, no names will be mentioned, and your participation will remain confidential.

1. What are the main peace and reconciliation challenges that you face in the area?
2. Can you describe the role of the Church in the area?
3. Do you work with the Church? If so, in what ways?
4. Were you engaged with the community dialogue processes? If yes, can you describe your experience and perceptions?
5. Do you think that the Church has an active role to play in managing conflict in the area? If yes, how? If no, why?
6. How successful do you think the Church has been in preventing violence in the area?
7. What do you think is needed to ensure peaceful co-existence in the area?
8. What challenges do you face as elders in fulfilling your roles in the community?
9. What have been the most successful ways to prevent violence between communities?
10. What are the relationships, if any, between local and national conflicts? How are conflicts in your area affected by the national conflict? How does reconciliation in your area affect national unity?

FFGD WITH FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

Date:	
Location:	
# of participants (gender disaggregated)	
Names:	

Introduce yourself and explain that we are here to evaluate the Reconciliation for Peace project as implemented by the SSCC with support from CRS. We value any inputs received and want to learn from the experiences that they have had as participants in cattle camp dialogues so that we can build on the strengths of the project and address any potential gaps and needs moving ahead. While the information provided will be used in a report to the donor, no names will be mentioned, and your participation will remain confidential.

1. Have you been involved in any community peace and reconciliation efforts led by the Church?
2. How did you hear about and become involved with the Church-led dialogue?
3. Can you describe the events and your experience there?
4. What do you think was the most successful/important part of the dialogue process?
5. What were the main outcomes/conclusions from the dialogue?
6. Have these been implemented? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. Do you think that there were any limitations in the approach to and conduct of the dialogues?
8. How did you feel about participating in the process? Did you feel that women's voices informed the outcomes? If yes, how? If no, why not?
9. What roles can women play as peacemakers in the community?
10. Do you have any recommendations about how the project was implemented and what you would like to see going forward?

FGD WITH YOUTH LEADERS/PARTICIPANTS

Date:	
Location:	
# of participants (gender disaggregated)	
Names:	

Introduce yourself and explain that we are here to evaluate the Reconciliation for Peace project as implemented by the SSCC with support from CRS. We value any inputs received and want to learn from the experiences that they have had as youth leaders and participants in the Church-led cattle camp dialogues, so that we can build on the strengths of the project and address any potential gaps and needs moving ahead. While the information provided will be used in a report to the donor, no names will be mentioned, and your participation will remain confidential.

1. Have you been involved in any community peace and reconciliation efforts led by the Church?
2. How did you hear about and become involved with the Church-led dialogue?
3. Can you describe the events and your experience there?
4. What do you think was the most successful/important part of the dialogue process?
5. What were the main outcomes/conclusions from the dialogue?
6. Have these been implemented? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. Do you think that the Church has an active role to play in managing conflict in the area?
8. How successful do you think the Church has been in working with the youth to prevent violence in the area?
9. What do you think is needed to ensure peaceful co-existence in the area?
10. What have been the most successful ways to prevent violence in your community?
11. Do you have any recommendations about how the project was implemented and what you would like to see going forward?