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Generating Sustainable Livelihoods and Leadership for Peace in South Sudan: Lessons from the Ground

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Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, is implementing a five-year project (September 2016–August 2021) on "Generating Sustainable Livelihoods and Leadership for Peace in South Sudan" as part of a consortium of three organisations, also including the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) and DanChurchAid (DCA). The long-term goal of the project is to address the political and socio-economic root causes of armed conflict and instability in South Sudan. The project is funded by the Addressing Root Causes (ARC) Fund of the government of the Netherlands.

Following two long civil wars between 1956 and 2005, South Sudan, with a population of about 13 million, became an independent state on 9 July 2011. After independence, the country's socio-economic challenges were enormous, and unresolved political tensions plunged the country into civil conflict in December 2013, in which an estimated 50,000 civilians have lost their lives, and about 2.3 million people have been internally displaced.[1] Despite a peace agreement, mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and signed by the warring parties in August 2015, prospects for peace faded, with fighting erupting in Juba between government and opposition forces in July 2016. Although a ceasefire is in place, tensions have continued, and the renewed conflict in 2013 and 2016 has exacerbated the socio-economic and political challenges that face South Sudan. The country remains the fastest-growing and largest refugee situation in Africa, with an estimated 3.1 million South Sudanese refugees projected to be hosted by six neighbouring countries by the end of 2018.[2] Within South Sudan, more than half the population (7.6 million people) are in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of the continuing civil war.[3]

Four major inter-related causes of conflict and instability have been identified by the consortium, which are being addressed through the ARC project: food insecurity, youth disengagement, tensions and mistrust, and lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms. The project seeks to empower local community leaders, civil society, and peacebuilding actors to contribute directly and sustainably to a culture of peace and respect for human rights in five states in South Sudan: Imatong, Jonglei, Jubek, Kapoeta, and Terekeka. A key underlying premise of the project is that local communities in South Sudan will be better equipped to prevent and manage the consequences of conflicts and economic shocks if interventions address both humanitarian and development issues.

This is the first in a series of five policy briefs that seek to promote wider and better understanding of the challenges faced by local communities in the project target locations, and to disseminate the lessons learned, while encouraging bench-marking of best practices. It is based on consultations with beneficiaries as well as the experiences of, and

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A REFUGEE FROM SOUTH SUDAN TRANSPORTS FOOD FOR DISTRIBUTION IN THE MOYO DISTRICT, NORTHERN UGANDA, IN OCTOBER 2017.

Image source – Reuters
Photo – Reuters/James Akena
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-hunger/hungry-south-sudanese-refugees-risk-death-in-return-home-for-food-idUSKBN1D81TG

1   United Nations (UN) Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan,* 6 March 2014, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2014_158.pdf.

2   Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan: January – December 2018", http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2018%20South%20Sudan%20Regional%20Refugee%20Response%20Plan%20-%20Jan-Dec%202018%20%28January%202018%29.pdf. The neighbouring countries and projected South Sudanese refugee populations are: Uganda with 1,380,000; Sudan with 1,007,000; Kenya with 140,000; Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with 120,000; Ethiopia with 85,000; and Central African Republic (CAR) with 3,000.

3   UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "South Sudan: A Humanitarian Crisis of Catastrophic Proportions", 20 September 2017, https://www.unocha.org/story/south-sudan-humanitarian-crisis-catastrophic-proportions.

lessons learned from, three CCR capacity-building training workshops, as well as activities undertaken by ACORD and DCA, in project locations between September 2016 and March 2018. Bringing together community leaders representing traditional and religious institutions, women and youth structures, local government authorities, as well as civil society actors, the Centre's three workshops were conducted – in collaboration with its local implementation partner, Manna Development Agency (MADA) – in Kapoeta South (Kapoeta state) on 18–21 July 2017; Terekeka (Terekeka state) on 24–29 July 2017; and Ikotos (Imatong state) on 15–19 January 2018. Project implementation includes a robust learning agenda, with a view to sharing valuable lessons from the ground, not only with the consortium's development partners in South Sudan, but also with those working in other fragile contexts and with key relevant decision-makers in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

1. Sources of Conflict in Ikotos, Kapoeta, Terekeka, and Bor

The most common types of conflict in Ikotos, Kapoeta, and Terekeka states are inter- and intra-communal conflicts. Communities in the project locations in these states largely comprise agro-pastoralists whose main livelihoods are subsistence agriculture and cattle-herding. Many young men in these communities are idle, and a lack of education and training opportunities directly translates into the limited employability of the youth. As a result, some young men in Ikotos engage in violent actions such as cattle-raiding as their only means of survival, while in Terekeka, cattle-raiding is also a source of conflict, as is ownership of cattle; competition over water points, pasture, and land; and marriage, with the acquisition of cattle by violent means used to pay "bride price" and thus causing conflict. In Kapoeta, the most common conflicts experienced by communities include armed highway robbery; a lack of defined boundaries, or artificial boundaries, created by politicians at the boma, payam,[4] county, and state levels; and destruction of farms by animals. Domestic violence against women is also prevalent in Kapoeta, as well as in Bor South in Jonglei state. Many of these conflicts can lead to (further) violence, if not managed and resolved in a timely fashion.

> 66 Some young men in Ikotos engage in violent actions such as cattle-raiding as their only means of survival, while in Terekeka, cattle-raiding is also a source of conflict, as is ownership of cattle; competition over water points, pasture, and land; and marriage. 99

A MUNDARI CATTLE KEEPER IN TEREKEKA, SOUTH SUDAN, IN FEBRUARY 2018.

Image source – Bruno Feder
http://www.brunofeder.com/south-sudan-s-other-war

Cattle-Raiding

Although violent cattle raids lead to a loss of lives and damage to livelihoods, as observed by a chief from Terekeka during CCR's July 2017 Terekeka workshop, trying to stop the youth from raiding can in itself create conflict. For communities in Ikotos, raiding is not considered to be something negative, but is seen, rather, as a responsibility to exact revenge and to retrieve stolen cows. Culturally, the belief is that cows are given to a community by God,

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4   A payam is the second lowest administrative division, below a county, in South Sudan. Payams are further sub-divided into a number of bomas.

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and it is thus the responsibility of men to retrieve these cows for their own community. Project beneficiaries consulted in January 2018 in Ikotos emphasised the very real challenge that cattle-raiding presents: although a recent conflict over raiding between a community in Kidepo and another in Ikwoto[5] was resolved through mediation, the cessation of cattle-raiding means that a major source of livelihood for local youth has been cut off. In this regard, a key component of the ARC project is to enhance nascent food production capacities, particularly among agro-pastoralists, to be able to generate income from agriculture, and small-scale and petty trade to diversify livelihood opportunities. As of December 2017, DCA had established 15 village savings and loan association (VSLA) groups with 369 members, comprising 194 women and 175 men in Kapoeta South and Budi (Kapoeta state) and Bor South. Training in life skills has been provided to farmers, peace committees, community leaders, women, youth, trader unions, and beekeepers. These actors have been further supported with seed capital, to enable them to start up businesses and conduct business more effectively for income that can help to ensure food security for their households, other basic needs (such as health and education) being met, and, ultimately, peace in their communities.

> ❝ **As of December 2017, DCA had established 15 village savings and loan association (VSLA) groups with 369 members, comprising 194 women and 175 men in Kapoeta South and Budi (Kapoeta state) and Bor South.** ❞

DCA'S SUPPORT OF VSLAs IN KAPOETA, SOUTH SUDAN, EMPOWERS WOMEN TO START BUSINESSES AND GENERATE INCOME FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Image source – DCA Actalliance
Photo – Edan Johna
https://www.danchurchaid.org/articles/video-in-a-quiet-corner-of-south-sudan-dca-builds-livelihoods

Youth who carry out raids represent hard power, as they possess the strength and the ability to carry out a raid. However, the authority lies with the paramount chief and kraal leader,[6] who give the command to raid, and without whom the youth would not be able to raid. Having said this, though, in Ikotos nobody is forced to raid: the main incentive is the share in the cows to be raided, although peer pressure plays a part. Sometimes a young man is pressured to engage in cattle-raiding to avoid being shamed or called a "coward", or he eventually joins his friends in a raid after experiencing intense isolation for having refused to participate. While not directly involved in cattle-raiding, women give their blessing by inciting the youth to raid through ululation and praise songs. However, a member of a self-help group in Terekeka noted that she sometimes cautions the youth against raiding as it leads to revenge attacks from other communities, while the chairperson of the Terekeka State Women's Association noted that if she is aware that the youth are preparing to raid, she will try to find out what they lack at home that is causing them to raid.[7]

It is when the needs of the youth are unmet and their expectations are not addressed by the authorities that they will do whatever it takes to make sure that these are fulfilled. Youth make up the majority of the population in Kapoeta state. They are involved in safeguarding and securing the cattle kraals, as well as in cattle-raiding and related incidents of insecurity in the community. However, as a religious leader noted, the youth dominate church activities and participate in large numbers. Given that in many areas in South Sudan, local religious leaders and pastors have a critical role to play in encouraging dialogue, building trust, and promoting a culture of peace through their daily work, the active participation of youth in church activities provides an opportunity for the project to bring together both religious leaders and youth to strengthen their skills in conflict management.

Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the hands of civilians is a significant source of insecurity in Kapoeta, Ikotos, and Terekeka. Similarly, a link has been made between the lack of alternative livelihoods for young

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5   Ikotos refers to two counties: Kidepo and Ikwoto.
6   The paramount chief is the overall head of a community, while there are many kraals in a community.
7   Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) workshop, Terekeka, Terekeka state, South Sudan, 26 July 2017.

men and cattle-raiding in Jonglei. Indeed, community representatives, including youth leaders, directly relate the widespread availability of small arms to being able to use them as a means of livelihood.[8] These weapons are used to carry out violent cattle-raids, with young men often raiding for economic reasons, as well as for marriage or the transfer of wealth.[9] The presence of small arms and light weapons in the hands of unauthorised people in local communities in all project locations is a threat not only to community members, but also to effective project implementation.

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A SOUTH SUDANESE MAN HOLDS A GUN IN HIS VILLAGE.

Image source – Business Insider
Photo – Flickr/Steve Evans
http://www.businessinsider.com/this-maps-shows-how-iranian-weaponry-is-making-it-to-one-of-africas-most-violent-hotspots-2015-2?IR=T

In Ikotos, at CCR's January 2018 workshop, the facilitator noted that about three-quarters of the workshop participants had guns in their houses.[10] Women are the custodians of firearms, giving them to men when they go to raid cattle and taking them back upon their return. In this way, women both contribute to, and suffer as a result of, conflict when their men are absent for a long time during the raid, or their husbands, brothers, and sons are killed. In Ikotos, women hold the "soft power": if a woman decides to withhold a gun from her husband, he may beat her, and then go and drink, but he will not go to raid. In response to these challenges, information campaigns and risk-awareness training are being undertaken with communities at risk of, and affected by, small arms violence, with a view to promoting behavioural change and reducing the risks and threats posed by such arms, light weapons, and other remnants of war. Furthermore, to ensure the sustainability of the safety messages in at-risk communities – in particular Bor, Kapoeta, and Chukudum – peer-to-peer risk educators will be trained to conduct the risk education activities. Security providers such as the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS) and community policing structures will also be trained on the safe management of small arms. Such initiatives have proved to have a big impact particularly in communities where great mistrust exists between the security sector and community members.

Because of the multiple actors involved – directly or indirectly – in these practices that promote a culture of violence, the project seeks to bring them together to explore alternative positive examples of non-violent identities that can function as role models or inspiration for youth. The consortium's work aims to build on already-existing local and traditional structures. In the project areas, traditional authorities such as boma and paramount chiefs, women and youth councils, peace committees, and opinion leaders all have a key role to play in the mobilisation of local communities, in gaining trust and consent, and in ensuring community ownership. In many areas, local religious leaders and pastors have a critical role to play in encouraging dialogue, building trust, promoting a culture of peace, and providing psycho-social support to victims of violence through their daily work. Strengthening their skills –

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8   United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) South Sudan/Community Security and Arms Control Project, "Jonglei Community Consultations on Conflict and Food Security", n.d.
9   UNDP South Sudan, Bureau for Community Security and Arms Control, and South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission, "Community Consultation Report", Eastern Equatoria state, 2012.
10   Participants neither confirmed nor denied this assertion.

along with those of traditional and local government authorities – in conflict management (including mediation, reconciliation, and dialogue) is a key focus of the consortium's work. Religious leaders also tend to have established networks with a wide reach, and can transfer these skills through "peace ambassadors".

2. Cultural Norms and Practices

The core principle of universal human rights states that all human beings are equal. There is, however, a clear hierarchy of value among individuals in South Sudan, which is particularly evident in terms of gender, with males, as the primary power brokers within local society, widely considering themselves as inherently superior to females.[11] In Terekeka – a deeply patriarchal society – respect for tradition and customs is paramount, with a chief stressing that, culturally, men are the head of the household, which means that a man is the "director", while the woman is the "deputy". Although the director may consult the deputy, he – as the man – is the final decision-maker. Similarly, in Ikotos, it is not common for women to be involved in decision-making: indeed, they are not even given the opportunity to contribute. Such patriarchal norms inhibit the inclusion of women in formal and informal decision-making structures and processes. Furthermore, cultural norms and practices present a number of challenges for the promotion of more economic opportunities to lift young people out of poverty. For local communities in Terekeka, educating a girl means educating her for another family after she marries, which means that there is thus no need to educate her. Similarly, educating a boy is viewed as a waste because he will then not have the skills to look after cattle – a key source of livelihood.

While patriarchal relations remain dominant in South Sudan, conflict can provide the space in which a redefinition of social relations is possible. In Terekeka, the functions of conflict as identified by project beneficiaries include building new relationships and assisting in the creation of coalitions; creating or modifying rules, norms, laws, and institutions; assisting parties to assess and recognise power balances or imbalances and work towards the redistribution of power within a system; and enhancing cohesion when issues and beliefs are clarified. There is also scope to capitalise on the newfound strengths that some women have acquired in terms of rights awareness, familiarity with markets, business management, and skills acquisition. For example, the chairperson of a women's self-help group in Terekeka, who organises agricultural activities and is part of a VSLA, observed that women are becoming educated, and are standing up for their rights. Similarly, development actors such as the project consortium comprising ACORD, CCR, and DCA, working in collaboration with local authorities, can help shape attitudes towards women's rights and participation in decision-making.[12]
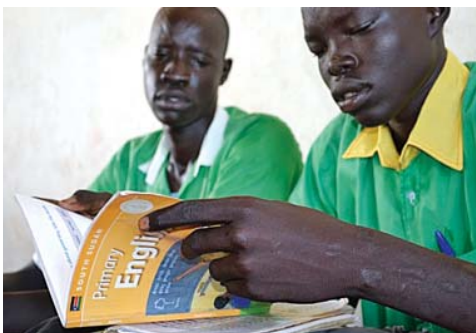
> **Educating a boy is viewed as a waste because he will then not have the skills to look after cattle – a key source of livelihood.**

PRIMARY 8 STUDENTS AT ST. STEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL PREPARING FOR ENGLISH LESSONS IN TEREKEKA, SOUTH SUDAN.

Image source – Gurtong
Photo – Huub Gales
http://www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/11313/
Terekeka-Primary-Students-Now-Using-New-Textbooks.aspx

11   Catherine Hauser, "Conflict and Gender Study – South Sudan: Addressing Root Causes Programme", January 2018, p. ix.
12   Judy El-Bushra and Ibrahim M.G. Sahl, *Cycles of Violence: Gender Relations and Armed Conflict* (Nairobi and London: Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development [ACORD], 2005.

3. Communication and Conflict Management

Communication can be both verbal and non-verbal and is linked to conflict management: conflict can be avoided by the way in which one speaks and the language one uses. Signs of communication among the Mundari in Terekeka include: dismissing someone with a wave of a hand (thereby inviting conflict); the beating of drums for fighting; ululation (a sign for others to gather round the man or woman ululating); drawing a line in the sand (a sign that if the other party is determined to fight they should cross the line); songs to encourage cattle-raiding; and body language (as a non-verbal sign of communication). Signs that youth are preparing for cattle-raiding include gathering and beating a drum, pretending to dance, while they are actually planning a raid, and weapons lying under trees in the village. In Kapoeta South, the Toposa refer to the Buya as "the enemy who is constantly among us". Their daily language is thus a constant reminder of potential conflict and the seeming impossibility of any peaceful co-existence occurring. Those who do not form a part of one community's inner group are viewed as a threat, and perceptions are exacerbated by social practices.[13] This lack of trust between the Toposa and Buya is deeply entrenched and means that the consortium will need to construct a separate water point for each of the two communities rather than building a shared water point as originally planned.

Culturally, women in Terekeka do not participate in solving conflicts, and female youth contribute to triggering violence through singing. For example, female youth can sing "Oh how we wish we were men!" and their male counterparts will take up their guns and ask them where they should go. Female youth inciting their male counterparts to raid cattle for the purpose of marriage is a persistent problem in Terekeka county, according to the commissioner there. Having said this, though, women can also participate in solving conflicts, which is why their participation in the project is crucial. Among the Mundari in Terekeka, singing is also used as a social sanction against raiding and stealing cattle. Songs are composed calling for other communities to not marry from a particular family because their cattle are stolen. Singing therefore is part of a social system that contributes to prohibiting cattle-raiding.

In Ikotos, signs of peace among communities include youth dancing throughout the night (the converse is the sound of gunfire in the night), drinking from one calabash (signifying reconciliation), and lorries carrying goods on the road. Indeed the commissioners of both Kidepo and Ikwoto counties reiterated that "there are no rebels or war in Ikotos".[14] Activities and initiatives designed to promote peace in Ikotos include peace workshops, conferences, and training; community dialogues; sensitisation of communities through churches; inter-communal festivals, which include sports such as wrestling, as well as music, dance, and drama; visits to a different community as part of peacebuilding; the creation of equal job opportunities; inter-marriage across neighbouring communities; and cross-border business practices. For example, a peace dialogue took place in June 2017 between kraal youths from Kapoeta East county and Turkana West county in Kapoeta South who agreed to share water points and pasture at Nadapal (near the border with the Rift Valley province of Kenya), which has been a source of conflict between the two communities. Peace is also promoted through project follow-up by the consortium partners.

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MUNDARI WOMEN DANCING IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN.

Image source – The Speaker
http://thespeaker.co/headlines/women-south-sudan-urged-speak-gbv/

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13   Hauser, "Conflict and Gender Study", p. ix.
14   Comment made during a welcome address by the commissioners of Kidepo and Ikwoto counties at CCR's project launch in Ikotos, Imatong state, South Sudan, on 15 January 2018.

4. Youth and Governance

The marginalisation of South Sudanese youth and, in effect, their almost full exclusion from decision-making processes, have severe consequences for their lack of resilience in the face of conflict and economic shocks. Youth (under the age of 30) constitute 72 per cent of the population in South Sudan,[15] but they are overwhelmingly socially and economically underdeveloped. Consequently, youth – more specifically young men – are vulnerable to being mobilised for violent and criminal purposes. Most of South Sudan's youth are unemployed, unskilled, and residing in rural areas.[16]

> **Youth have an important role to play in governance, and should thus be utilised as change agents at each level of governance. In terms of development, positive messages should be communicated to the youth; otherwise they are a source of conflict.**

CHILDREN PLAY AT LOJORA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN TEREKEKA, SOUTH SUDAN.

Image source – Reaching The Last Mile
https://site.reachingthelastmile.com/media-center/gallery

Youth have an important role to play in governance, and should thus be utilised as change agents at each level of governance. In terms of development, positive messages should be communicated to the youth; otherwise they are a source of conflict. For effective governance, decisions that affect youth should not be taken without their active participation. Indeed, women and youth make up the majority of the population in Terekeka, which means that their participation in governance structures is crucial, and their voices need to be heard. The majority of stakeholders at CCR's July 2017 Terekeka workshop (men and women included) emphasised that if the youth decided that there should be no more violence in communities in Terekeka, there would be none.

Project beneficiaries use both traditional customary and local government administrative structures, systems, and processes for managing and resolving conflicts from the family unit up to the state level. However, conflicts sometimes arise as a result of the dual system, which has an adverse effect on the authority or effectiveness of one system over the other. Local government administration is most effective from the boma level up to the state level. Governance structures at the community level comprise the executive or boma chief, the sub-chief (who can head a number of villages), the headman at the family, clan, or village levels, and the cattle camp chief. There is an absence of formal government from the boma level downwards, where clan and family governance is more pronounced, and is often the most effective means of resolving and managing conflicts at such micro levels.

Institutions such as the traditional courts and the police that administer the rule of law are seen to have become increasingly weak and poor in administering justice, with the result that they are generally disregarded by the youth. Weak local and national institutions, including security sector institutions, have been a key contributor to South Sudan's enduring conflicts. Furthermore, in several instances, both military and police personnel have reportedly been involved in perpetrating violence against civilians since the country's civil war broke out in December 2013 and again erupted in July 2016.[17] The South Sudan National Police Service is staffed mainly by former and current members of

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15 African Development Bank (AfDB) Group, "South Sudan: Interim Country Strategy Paper 2012–2014", Regional Department, East Region B, October 2012.
16 AfDB Group, "South Sudan".

the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), many of whom need greater skills and training to manage community conflicts effectively.[18] Indeed, the lived experience of communities in Ikotos is that a person who is arrested by the police is already seen as a criminal and will thus be beaten and tortured as a matter of course following arrest.

Another challenge that adversely affects the effectiveness and capacity of governance mechanisms is indiscipline and disregard of authority, particularly among the youth. For example, cattle camp courts are being weakened by the growing population, which is making it increasingly difficult to monitor, investigate, and discipline armed youth who are raiding vehicles on highways and killing people. A cattle camp leader in Terekeka expressed the need for conflict resolution training in cattle camps due to the undermining of leadership structures within these camps. Community dialogues will address this critical need.

The project cannot work with all stakeholders at all levels for various reasons, including a lack of resources. Instead, target beneficiaries for training are those from the boma level and above, to which conflicts that cannot be resolved by family and clan structures are typically referred. The project will target beneficiaries at the lower governance structures through training-of-trainers (ToT) workshops, which will build the facilitation and training skills of carefully selected previously trained individuals in conflict management. These individuals will be equipped to further transfer their skills and knowledge within their local contexts to relevant stakeholders such as headmen and sub-chiefs who work with local community members on a daily basis, and who have a considerable amount of influence. The creation of a pool of competent trainers will also help both to sustain and expand the results of the project's work.

5. Peace Committees – "Bringing the Message of Peace"

In order to ensure local ownership, the project is working closely with diverse structures at the community level. These include local water management and peace committees. Peace committees facilitate community dialogues and reconciliation, while the water management committees, borehole pump mechanics, and community-based field facilitators are involved in the management, operation, and maintenance of water sources. Because women have great potential to influence social cohesion positively, the project seeks actively to develop their leadership capacity and facilitate meaningful participation in mediation and decision-making processes related to conflict and peacebuilding.

In all project locations, membership of peace committees is voluntary and comes with no remuneration, and includes elders, women, youth, and religious leaders. Those in peace committees are primarily driven by the desire to bring peace to their communities. Peace committees initiate dialogue among divided communities; manage conflicts over cattle-raiding; integrate returnees to the local community; dispel rumours; and mobilise and sensitise community members for peace. Furthermore, peace committees solve, manage, and mitigate community conflict, and protect communities from danger, including community violence. They also use modern conflict resolution approaches such as mediation.

> **" Those in peace committees are primarily driven by the desire to bring peace to their communities. "**

A COMMUNITY PEACE COMMITTEE MEETING IN KIDEPO VALLEY IN THE EASTERN EQUATORIAN REGION OF SOUTH SUDAN IN DECEMBER 2017.

Image source – South Sudan Portal
Photo – United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/local-residents-form-community-peace-committee-promote-peace

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17   *See, for example,* UN Human Rights Council, "Assessment Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to Improve Human Rights, Accountability, Reconciliation and Capacity in South Sudan", UN Doc. A/HRC/31/CRP.6, 10 March 2016; and "Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan", UN Doc. A/HRC/37/71, 23 February 2018.

18   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), "UNESCO Country Programming Document for South Sudan 2014–2016: Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women", Juba, South Sudan, p. 24; United States (US) Department of State, "South Sudan 2014 Human Rights Report", pp. 8–9.

There were nine members of existing peace committees at CCR's Ikotos workshop in January 2018, while about seven peace committees were cited as operating in Ikotos. Three peace committees were re-established in Chahari, Ikotos, and Bira, while more members were added to these three committees from the workshop. All peace committee members developed action plans that they would seek to implement. These plans included helping a new camp of internally displaced persons (IDPs) with access to water; discussing opportunities with a parish priest to "bring the message of peace" to church members on a weekly basis; acquiring a smartphone or camera to be used in the field to capture incidents; and fundraising initiatives to help the peace committees continue with their work. In Bor South, three peace committees were formed, established, and trained. However, they face challenges such as lack of transport and lack of communication equipment (for example, mobile phones) to assist them in relaying urgent messages on peace-related matters across communities. Challenges faced by peace committees in Ikotos include lack of funds; inadequate skills; high membership turnover; and poor means of transport, poor roads, and poor communication systems, which prohibit them from operating effectively. Other challenges faced by peace committees – which are meant to be neutral bodies – are possible political conflicts of interest, whereby politicians may try to use the committees for political aims. The ARC project seeks to build upon, and strengthen, existing structures; and so it remains important to identify the mandates of the different peace committees operating at different levels in the project locations, such as state peace commissions and county peace committees.

Cirilo Lino Kwanga

Cirilo Lino Kwanga is the chairperson of the Ikwoto County Peace Committee. He has been involved in peace committees since 2005. His responsibilities include presiding over meetings, mobilising community members to attend meetings, initiating projects for conflict resolution, and accompanying people to carry out conflict-mapping and collect data. The Ikwoto County Peace Committee has helped to integrate returnees to the community, such as those who had fled to Juba and Torit in South Sudan, and Khartoum in Sudan. The peace committee has also brought back community members who tried to join rebel groups. Festivals such as a dance event held in Ikwoto county in November 2017 involve marriages between communities, which are a peacebuilding tool. Funds are needed to continue these and other initiatives, such as work to bring back community members who have settled on mountains as a result of conflict and the drought, and introducing farming to raiders as a source of income. Other challenges that the Ikwoto County Peace Committee faces include a lack of funds for rapid response to conflict, an unmet need for sensitisation of the community on peacebuilding, and IDPs fleeing to Ikwoto from other communities as a result of the ongoing conflict in the country.

Iromo Pasquina Lino

Iromo Pasquina Lino has been involved in managing conflicts in peace committees since she was 16. She is now 29, and the mother of five surviving children. In her capacity as a social worker, Ms Lino works with women to help them to understand the role of peace programmes; and speaks to both women and men in communities about human rights, including the rights of women, as well as educating people about gender-based violence (GBV) and the early marriage of girls. She has found that some men respond well to her talks about GBV, and commit to changing their behaviour towards women. Ms Lino has undergone mediation training, and works with the Manna Development Agency, CCR's Ikotos-based partner in South Sudan, as a facilitator training men on the rights of women and the education of girls. "Mama Prisca", as she was referred to at the January 2018 Ikotos workshop, is a member of the Payam Youth Peacemakers, which is part of the Logire community in Chorokol payam of Kidepo county. Because the ARC project seeks to facilitate breastfeeding women to attend meetings with their helpers, Ms Lino was able to bring Prisca, her eight-month-old baby, as well as her eight-year-old niece, Sunday, to the CCR capacity-building training workshop.

Policy Recommendations

The following six policy recommendations have emerged from the ARC Fund project activities, implemented by CCR, ACORD, and DCA, between September 2016 and March 2018 in South Sudan:

1. Greater community outreach by key stakeholders – in particular direct project beneficiaries – should take place for community members who were not trained as part of the project to also benefit from the skills and knowledge gained by those trained. To this end, trained community members need to be encouraged, and provided support where and when possible, to engage more actively with the project. This is a key lesson learned by CCR, ACORD, and DCA, but is also of potential value to those considering or engaged in designing similar projects.

2. Training and awareness-raising by development partners should be solutions-oriented and complemented by follow-up activities in a process of sustained long-term engagement, for greater impact. There is an urgent need for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to discontinue with their perceived tendency to train communities, often through one-off activities, and then disappear.

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3. The current project's capacity-building and training interventions target governance structures at the boma level and above, but a key lesson learned is that institutions below the boma level should be the direct beneficiaries of any future funded interventions, as they are the closest to local community members and thus the most effective in resolving many of the community- and household-level conflicts that occur.

4. Youth have an important role to play in governance, and should thus be utilised as change agents at each level of governance. For effective governance, decisions that affect youth should not be taken without their active participation.

5. Community dialogues should be conducted in cattle camps to address the undermining of leadership structures within these camps in project areas such as Kapoeta and Terekeka.

6. Donors and development partners should provide support to address the numerous challenges that peace committees face. Support could include the provision of bicycles to enable peace committee members to travel to different communities with greater ease, and to ensure timely communication and information-sharing with local government officials and other relevant stakeholders. Uniforms, caps, and badges are also needed to identify peace committee members, which would distinguish them from other local community leaders, and motivate them in their important roles.