

**IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FACILITY (IRF1)
FINAL EVALUATION - KYRGYZSTAN**

UN Peacebuilding Fund - Immediate Response Facility (IRF)

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TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
Acronyms	3
Executive Summary	4
I. Introduction	
a. Background to the Kyrgyzstan conflict	8
b. The Peacebuilding process in Kyrgyzstan	8
c. The Peacebuilding Fund's Immediate Response Facility (IRF) in Kyrgyzstan	10
II. Assessment of conflict drivers / causes to be addressed	11
III. Evaluation Research Design and Methodology	13
IV. General Relevance of IRF Programme and of IRF Projects (IRF1) and by Sector:	
(i): General Relevance	15
(ii): Relevance by Sector:	
• <i>Youth empowerment</i>	17
• <i>Women networks</i>	21
• <i>Water Users Associations</i>	22
V. Effectiveness	24
VI. Efficiency	26
VII. Sustainability of Results and Catalytic Effects	27
VIII. Ownership	28
IX. Transparency and Accountability	29
X. Project Selection, Design Management, and Implementation	29
XI. Observations on Second Tranche of IRF Projects (IRF2)	30
XII. Findings and Conclusions	31
XIII. Organizational chart, LCMs in the South	35
XIV. UNCT Comments Regarding the Independent Evaluation	37

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTI	Foundation for Tolerance International
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IRF	Immediate Response Fund
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
MDTF	Multi Donor Trust Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAC	Oblast Advisory Committee
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PDP	Peace and Development Programme
PRF	Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Facility
PRP	Poverty Reduction Programme
RC	Resident Coordinator
SDRD	State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPCCA	United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WFP	World Food Programme
WPC	Women's Peace Committees
WPN	Women's Peacebuilders Network
WUA	Water Users Association

Executive Summary

Introduction

In June 2010, violence erupted in southern Kyrgyzstan stemming from social exclusion, divisive ethnic rhetoric, an absence of strong government, and the inability or unwillingness to combat the illegal and clandestine struggles for power in the southern region of the country. Officially, the violent clashes left over 400 dead (although unofficially it is many more) and forced tens of thousands of ethnic Uzbeks to flee to the border of Uzbekistan.

The violence subsided almost as quickly as it started, but what remained in its wake was a deeper fracturing of society based upon ethnic and regional lines, an embedded criminal network operating unchecked within the country, and a fundamental distrust of state and police security structures as well as the national and local government.

Kyrgyzstan and PBF support

In October 2010, the Assistant Secretary General of the UN for Peacebuilding Support announced the approval of a Peacebuilding Fund envelope from the Immediate Response Fund for Kyrgyzstan following an initial request by the UN country team and the interim Kyrgyz government. An initial USD 3 million was allocated to quickly respond to and support critical needs for reconciliation in three components:

- Youth Empowerment
- Women's Networks
- Water Users Associations

The Secretary General declared Kyrgyzstan eligible to receive PBF support in June 2011 leading to the approval of a further USD 7 million that same year to initiate the implementation of peacebuilding activities prior to Presidential elections being held later that same year. Funding was allocated to the following 6 areas:

- Administration of justice
- Strengthening media capacity
- Cultivating peace using water-based resources to facilitate reconciliation
- Empowering women to contribute to peacebuilding
- Empowerment of youth to promote reconciliation
- Infrastructures for peace

Findings and Conclusions

Based on OECD/DAC guidelines, the purpose of the evaluation was to determine the overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, ownership and accountability of the Peacebuilding Fund's IRF1 and determine what contributions were made to the peacebuilding process in Kyrgyzstan immediately post ethnic clashes in June 2010. The evaluation team also conducted a brief review of the ongoing IRF2 projects.

The evaluators find that the IRF1 funds effectively jump-started projects immediately post-conflict that were important for creating stability and a sense of normalcy. This assisted communities' reengagement in independent, self-sustaining economic activities. The evaluators also find that participation of key sectors of the community, specifically youth and women, in peacebuilding activities was also increased with the use of IRF1 funds and momentum has been created to address some of the key structural causes of the conflict, namely these groups' exclusion from political and economic spheres in Kyrgyzstan.

Specifically, the evaluation found:

- The ability of the IRF1 to engage quickly post-crisis reduced some of the critical drivers of the conflict namely youth, which could have ignited a further spate of violence if not addressed quickly. Some IRF1 programming initially lacked a conflict sensitive analysis/approach and perpetuated ethnic tensions in some mono-ethnic communities¹.
- Through the IRF1 and the continued IRF2 programming, important capacity is being built especially with youth and women's organizations but also within government ministries. This capacity building within the government is critical to rebuild the confidence of society in the government's ability to respond to issues that divide and foment conflict in Kyrgyzstan. Legal and parliamentary reforms being supported by UNDP and OHCHR IRF2 programming are especially critical.
- The IRF1 programming considers women as a homogenous category and emphasizes the positive role women play in their communities as well as in peacebuilding. Little analysis or recognition exists to also understand the role women also play as aggressors, perpetrators as well as simply observers during conflict. The multiple roles played at various times and for various results need to be investigated, understood and addressed more fully within capacity development and peacebuilding programming
- The programming of the IRF2 illustrates a better understanding of the causes of the conflict and willingness to allocate resources and encourage the government to engage in deeper structural reforms. This is due, in part, to a consensual conflict analysis undertaken at the level of the UNCT, as well as more time and resources available to work through and plan a more strategic and unified UNCT approach to the challenges of peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan. There has been more consultation at both the national and local levels to guide the planning and development of projects for the additional USD 7 million and the government has expressed greater satisfaction with the process as a whole. The coordination and

¹ UNCT refers to a start-up planning workshop for the youth project to discuss conflict sensitive issues, and determine the criteria for the location of youth centers. Mono-ethnic communities were taken into consideration to overcome perceptions that the international community only focuses on conflict affected communities and neglects the need to reach out to vulnerable youth in mono-ethnic communities as well.

communication with the presidential administration has improved significantly with the implementation of the IRF2. The national government was engaged in designing and approving IRF2 programmes and the Joint Steering Committee is now functioning.

- The PBSO should revisit the criteria used to evaluate IRF programming to reflect the immediacy and unique nature of this funding mechanism. OECD/DAC criteria, while generally applicable, are better suited to evaluate longer-term peacebuilding interventions and not “emergency peacebuilding” or “stabilization” activities that are often implemented in challenging circumstances and with limited resources and often without the benefit of a conflict analysis. The evaluation team also believe UNCT offices that receive IRF funds would benefit from more structured guidelines for the use of the funds as well as initial programmatic support.
- IRF1 engagement in Kyrgyzstan proves that it is possible to get started early on peaceful change post-conflict provided there is a solid conflict analysis to ensure conflict sensitivity in programming and the right implementing partners in place with effective procurement mechanisms.

Recommendations

- IRF1 funds could have been put to more effective use if they complemented a consensual conflict analysis and articulated a peacebuilding/conflict prevention strategy guiding UNCT programming. The evaluation team recommends not only a conflict analysis be undertaken before the programming of IRF funds but also a concerted effort be made to ensure that programme development and implementation is conflict sensitive and incorporates a ‘do no harm’ approach.²
- Due to overlap between the projects undertaken during the humanitarian response and the IRF1, the evaluation team recommends a review of the assistance that was provided through the Flash Appeal to the humanitarian crisis in relation to the activities undertaken with PBSO funding. It was not always clear to the evaluation team which activities were funded by humanitarian budgets and which came from the IRF1 fund, as agency specific financial reports were not required to be provided to the MDTF. Therefore, it remains a challenge to not only evaluate programmes within the IRF framework, but also to attribute either success or failure to the work undertaken within a peacebuilding lens and with peacebuilding funds.
- The UNCT, the Government, and the people of Kyrgyzstan would benefit from a joint UNCT communication strategy that would explain the strategic purpose of the IRF 1 and 2

² UNCT comment: Conflict analysis was carried out by individual agencies and taken into account for the development of project proposals. Because of the urgency of starting an immediate response, a separate conflict analysis was not carried out any more. However, UN agencies participated in a series of conflict sensitivity workshops. Such efforts were further strengthened by UNCT P&D Advisor.

programming and prevent misunderstandings in regards to what the funds are to be used for as well as to increase ownership and participation in supporting social cohesion initiatives.

- The Early Warning Systems for conflict prevention, as proposed by numerous agencies and other partners, need to be better understood and coordinated to ensure that they link up to a coherent system at the national level. Various initiatives could be joined up to comprise a network of conflict solvers/mediators who would link local to national mechanisms, depending on the conflict and how best to resolve it. Linked to this is the assessment and monitoring data that is being collected by various networks that are supported by different parts of the UN system. It is suggested that the UN should systematize the information collection and analysis from the many networks that are operating in parallel to improve synergies in analysis and potential impact.
- Support provided to vocational training for youth could be more effective if the market analysis was updated with a specific focus on ensuring women receive training for jobs where the pay is more equitable to salaries received by men; otherwise, salary disparities will remain and will be reinforced through the training provided.
- Peacebuilding stands a better chance of taking root if it has broad support within a community. Where possible, the good work begun with the Youth Centers should be expanded and the Youth Centers become community centers to include women's networks, the business community and other special interest groups. Broad based support would expand the financial resources needed to ensure independence and sustainability as well as reduce jealousies and tensions within communities by allowing more equal access to training and other resources.
- The UNCT needs to be especially conscientious in the development and implementation of projects as well as in the staffing of offices in an ethnically conflicted country like Kyrgyzstan, where much emphasis is placed on who has access to resources and positions of influence. Staffing of both humanitarian and development projects that favour one ethnicity in a pre, during, and post-conflict situation may create perceptions that support is biased towards one group. The UNCT, working in a sensitive and conflictive area, needs to ensure that an ethnic balance of staff exists within the offices, especially in the South.

I. Introduction

a). Background to the Kyrgyzstan Conflict

In April 2010, Kurmanbek Bakiev, a President who sought to consolidate power within his familial spheres of influence and whom many saw as corrupt and ineffective, was deposed through a violent rebellion that killed 85 people. Post-conflict, a transitional government was put in place that struggled to present itself as coherent and cohesive during a time of great instability.

In June 2010, violence erupted in southern Kyrgyzstan stemming from social exclusion, divisive ethnic rhetoric, an absence of strong government, and the inability or unwillingness to combat the illegal and clandestine struggles for power in the region of Osh. Officially, the violent clashes left over 400 dead (although it is probably many more) and forced tens of thousands of ethnic Uzbeks to flee to the border of Uzbekistan.

The violence subsided almost as quickly as it started, but what remained in its wake was a deeper fracturing of society based upon ethnic and regional lines, an embedded criminal network operating unchecked within the south, and a fundamental distrust of state and police security structures as well as the national government as a whole.

b). The Peacebuilding Process in Kyrgyzstan

One of the first UN organizations that reacted to the increasing conflict tensions in the country that began in the early '90s was UNDP having initiated actions for prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts under the Program of Democratic Governance in 1999. This initiative grew in 2003 into a separate Preventive Development Program. By that time, at the regional Central Asian level there were programs in the Fergana valley to settle conflicts and build peace and the Preventive Development Program (that in 2006 transformed into the Peace and Development Program) from the very beginning started to focus on the work in southern regions of the country – Osh, Batken, and Jalal' Abad. From the beginning of its activity, the program focused its attention on creation of “early warning system” in the regions prone to conflicts; preparation of analytical and situational reports on conflict situations; implementation of projects on joint actions with the communities, training of activists from the communities and NGOs; and conflict management and mediation.

Also from the early 2000s, a number of organizations started to work in the area of diversity management, preventive actions and conflict management, including the most actively involved UNHCR and OSCE (missions in Bishkek and in Osh as well as the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities).

After the June 2010 events practically all international organizations and development agencies continued, following the humanitarian mission, the work under individual or partnership programs. To avoid duplicating and to optimize activities in peacebuilding and reconciliation, international organizations decided to increase coordination, the foundations for which were formed during and immediately after the June 2010 conflict during the humanitarian assistance

phase. Thus, a working group with participants from international organizations, state and civil society, the organizational structure of which is presented below.³ In addition to this coordination structure, there are others that in various proportions include the key stakeholders.

The state and civil society institutions to various degrees understand that they have programmes and strategies for peacebuilding. So, at the national level, despite the de-jure limited mandate, the presidential power structures (the department for inter-ethnic and religious policies and interaction with civil society) believe themselves to be the owners of such programmes.⁴

Among the civil society institutions, it is important to note an increasing number of participants in peacebuilding programming after June 2010, thanks to creation of new groups and organizations as well as revision of the mission and specialization of earlier existing organizations. At the national level, the following organizations are included in the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation: Assembly of Kyrgyzstan's Peoples, NGOs such as FTI, Institute for Public Policy, Polis-Asia, DCCA, WESA, Egalite, Centre of Information Law, Centre of Public Technologies, Mutakallim (Islamic Women's Movement), Analytical Centre "Religion, Politics, Law", GIIP, Research Centre for Democratic Processes, Y-peer, Association of Crisis Centres, Women's Support Centre, Peace and Development Network and others. Each of the national NGOs has its own specific niche in the sphere of peacebuilding and reconciliation. For instance, FTI's mandate includes the analysis of peace and conflicts as well as development of recommendations, including improvement of communications with and among beneficiaries, while the Centre of Information Law develops information strategies and Door Media facilitates development of conflict-sensitive public opinion through the media, etc.

In addition, to enforce interaction and coordination at the local level with UNDP support, regional and district advisory committees were created under state administrations, which included not only the leading experts of state services, but also representatives of most active NGOs. At the regional (oblast and district) levels, the most active organizations included the following: Iret, InsanDiamond, DIA, OrdoluMyrzake, Kovcheg, WomenPeacebuildersNetwork, WomenLeadersofJalal'Abad, YoungCitizensDevelopment, OshMediaResourceCenter, StabilityandDevelopmentNetwork, ValleyofPeace Networks, etc.

A number of international organizations and development agencies are working mainly at the grass roots level with communities and community organizations. These include Intrak, Camp Ala-Too, and others.⁵

³ From: RECAP and Southern Peacebuilding Implementers Report, prepared by: Kim Toogood, Conflict Prevention Expert UNDP Peace and Development Programme. See Annex 1.

⁴The weakness and limitation of the mandate is demonstrated by the history of development and approval of the national strategy/ program of inter-ethnic policy. For instance, the version created by the presidential administration was not approved and there was an opposition between the parliamentary and presidential versions.

⁵ Please see Annex 2 for the structure of coordination amongst international and local organizations. This is taken from "Mapping Formal and Informal Community-Based Actors in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblast", prepared by Kim Toogood, Conflict Prevention Expert UNDP Peace and Development Programme.

Even though there are coordination mechanisms today, the issues of interaction within the sectors of activity are still missing, even between members of the same networks. Key NGO partners suffer from lack of specific knowledge and skills, including gender aspects. Also, there has always been a certain spirit of competition among the international organizations and their implementing partners in carrying out programmes and projects and the distribution of information about their results and outcomes.

c). The Peacebuilding Fund's Immediate Response Facility (IRF) Engagement in Kyrgyzstan

The Immediate Response Facility (IRF) is designed to be a flexible and responsive tool that is used to jumpstart peacebuilding and recovery needs in countries following an emergency or 'shock' (e.g. political or ethnic violence), or in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. The IRF requires an existing planning/strategic framework with peacebuilding goals. It is driven by a response to immediate needs and is prepared in cooperation with national authorities and informed by UN system-wide consultation. It is meant to fund projects of a 12-month duration, and is usually part of a larger UN initiative. It is intended to cover critical gaps, be strategic in its relevance, have identifiable catalytic impacts, be sustainable, to identify key indicators, to contain a risk analysis, and to be technically feasible.

The initial IRF1 USD 3 million response to the June 2010 ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan did not entirely meet the above framework of engagement. The majority of the projects were based on needs assessments originating from the humanitarian response and not based on an analysis of the conflict that was relevant for the crisis that took place⁶. The UNDP Conflict and Development Analysis (PDA) that was started in 2007 (but did not take into account ethnicity as a contributing factor to instability apparently due to ongoing civil unrest and a resulting reluctance of participants to discuss divisive ethnic issues) was not finalized until 2011; therefore there was no common understanding of the drivers of the conflict or its triggers, or what a common approach to addressing the systemic issues of conflict in the south would be. Many of the projects designed took longer than 12 months to complete and did not contain a risk analysis that could have raised awareness to ensure that they were completely conflict sensitive in their approach and implementation.

The IRF1 was approved very quickly, while the UNCT was still in the midst of responding to the humanitarian crisis. IRF1 funds were used for "emergency peacebuilding/stabilization" that sought to bring together conflictive elements of society to prevent a further escalation of violence. Given that the UNCT was in the midst of responding to the humanitarian crisis, compounded by the on-set of winter, decisions were taken by the UNCT to allocate IRF1 resources to programmes that were part of the UNCT ongoing programming strategy and/or part of the flash appeals. There was some partial coordination of projects based on agency expertise focused on the short-term goal of stabilization and meeting important stabilization needs by

⁶ UNCT comment: The conceptual framework and proposals were developed based on existing knowledge and analysis including external conflict analysis.

engaging potentially volatile sectors, covering critical recovery gaps while preventing an immediate relapse into conflict.

The process for the approval of the IRF2 funding (USD 7 million) was less problematic, given the reduction in the humanitarian response, and resulted in more time for programme planning. The UNCT also had more time to better understand the violence stemming from the June 2010 events and to target their activities to address the structural causes of the violence as well as ensure that a conflict sensitive approach was better incorporated into programming.

II. Assessment of conflict drivers / causes to be addressed

Conflicts in Kyrgyzstan are many faceted and inter-related. There are layers upon layers of conflictive issues that interconnect and reinforce the deep roots of the instability that lie at the core of recent conflicts in the country. These complex structural causes cannot be addressed on an individual basis, due to the inherent impacts upon linked causes and the possibility of increasing tensions in corresponding areas.

Emerging from the relative stasis of the Soviet system, Kyrgyzstan experienced a rapid political and social change that has shaken the stability and underpinnings of society, creating insecurity and a fear of the future. Many would agree that at the heart of the issues fomenting instability and insecurity is the inability of the state to fulfill its role in regards to governance. Corruption is endemic at all levels of society and the state has been unable to provide equal access to justice, rule of law, transparent and fair elections, and oversight for all processes for its citizens. This decreases the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of its people and as a result, there is little expectation that the state will meet its obligations and little corresponding effort by its citizens to participate positively or proactively. The State, seeking to legitimize itself and consolidate bases of power and support, uses traditional institutions (Aksakal courts, women's and youth networks from Soviet times) in untraditional ways to manipulate ideas of nationality and ethnicity reconstructing a national ideology and history to support a conflictive vision of who is and who isn't truly Kyrgyz.

Parallel structures have emerged to meet economic and social demands, and many of these structures are criminal in nature. The south of Kyrgyzstan has experienced violent conflict as a result of the impact of local and cross-border organized crime. Crime is pervasive with the trafficking of arms, drugs, and humans supporting a clandestine organizational base that uses its significant economic powers for political and social influence to continue fomenting instability.

Historical North/South divisions of the country are also manipulated for political effect. Large-scale inequalities in the distribution of resources and economic wealth, combined with a lack of access to opportunities and unemployment exacerbates tensions, especially in resource-critical regions like the Ferghana Valley where tensions have historically run high over access to land and water resources. Poor agricultural development and significant environmental degradation only compounds the insecurity. Disparities in regional development that have not been

adequately addressed have both limited social and economic development, as well as increased tension.

Competing cultural values and models of behavior, most notably over land and resource use, have created divisions within society. Strategic ethnic identification and the development of a strong nationalist rhetoric that effectively excludes minorities has played a large part in dividing the population and manipulating emotional sentiments for political gain, especially in areas where the distribution of economic resources and the division between the “haves” and the “have-nots” is most critical.

The poor, with no access to improving their lot either politically or economically, are potential recruitment targets for political entrepreneurs who can effectively hire out violence to meet their end goals. Unemployed youth, marginalized further by an ineffective education system, are especially vulnerable, as the state is not able to meet growing expectations. Shrinking educational resources and opportunities potentially increase outward migration of those seeking to engage productively, and while also potentially increasing criminal engagement for those with limited options.

There has been a rapid marginalization of women in the post-Soviet period, amplified by unemployment and the rise of patriarchy within society. This in itself increases internal conflict, as this marginalization is not accepted by the generation of those who are 35 and older. The representatives of these groups of women continue to be active and advocate for political, economic, and social influence within state and society which often produces conflict with leaders in certain community and religious spheres who would prefer to see women relegated to more “traditional” roles.

Another critical factor that is often mentioned, but is rarely understood or explained satisfactorily is the impact of religion and its ability to positively/negatively motivate and perpetuate misconceptions that shake the unsteady post-conflict foundation that is trying to be rebuilt. Not understanding the external influences on religious organizations in country means that the door is left open for the possible entry of extremist or fundamentalist philosophies to infiltrate a relatively nascent organized religious system. The number of radical Islamic followers is increasing due to increased economic and political marginalization of some sectors of society, and people are turning to religion to provide the direction and security that the state is unable or unwilling to provide.

Kyrgyzstan finds itself in the unenviable position of being close in proximity to one of the world’s most protracted conflicts in Afghanistan. Fragile borders and strong geopolitical interests of more powerful nations also serve to stoke internal nationalist rhetoric as the country seeks to maintain its independence and identity while dealing with areas of the country that often show stronger linkages to neighboring countries than their own.

More and more emphasis is placed on the importance of the Kyrgyz language as a cultural identifier of patriotism and belonging in Kyrgyzstan. Ignoring the fact that minorities have been

present for centuries and that Uzbek and Kyrgyz are mutually intelligible, lines are drawn between those who belong and those who are considered interlopers threatening the integrity of the nation in the face of instability, especially in the South. All these factors are interconnected, and the manifestation of these structural causes of conflict is seen in a lack of physical security and increased domestic violence, increasingly mono-ethnic communities, pervasive attitudes of fear and resignation (this is especially true amongst the youth), increasing human rights violations, and frequent illegal land/property seizures in the South. While many theories exist in regards to the reason behind the June 2010 conflict, inter-ethnic violence was a manifestation of larger structural issues being manipulated beneath the surface, and not a cause of the June conflict in itself. There is consensus surrounding the fact that youth, often excluded from traditional as well as current economic, social and political structures were negatively engaged in the June conflicts and that they incrementally increased communal violence. The media enflamed ethnic tensions through irresponsible and inflammatory reporting on ethnic issues. The underlying IRF1 theory of change was that an immediate return to conflict could be prevented if key sectors of society (women, youth, agricultural communities) were positively engaged in reducing inter-ethnic tension through social cohesion and economic/vocational activities.

III. Evaluation Research Design and Methodology

(i). Research carried out.

The IRF1 full evaluation and the review of the IRF2 were redesigned based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and specifically focused on evaluating the IRF1 response based on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and catalytic effects, ownership and transparency and accountability. In effect it was a significant challenge for the team to effectively evaluate the programming of the IRF1 based on the above criteria due to the rapid response and short-term nature of the funds provided through the IRF mechanism. Some essential elements needed for conducting an effective evaluation were missing, again due to the rapid disbursement of the fund. Baselines, including a conflict analysis, measurable objectives, explicit theories of change and monitoring tools were for the most part absent from the IRF1 as the rapid intervention hindered the establishment of these key criteria. IRF evaluation guidelines that are better adapted to the unique nature of this funding mechanism should be created to support a more pertinent evaluation; one that would be able to capture the often unique results that come from the IRF ability to respond as “catalytic emergency peacebuilding/stabilization”.

An international and national consultant began their mission on May 10th, 2012, by reviewing and familiarizing themselves with the following documents:

- Background documents on recent events/conflicts in Kyrgyzstan
- Guidelines of the UN Peacebuilding Fund/ IRF mechanism and Performance Management Plan;
- UNEG and OECD DAC evaluation guidelines
- Evaluation and assessment documents from the projects
- Detailed Guidelines for the Appraisal of Peacebuilding Projects

- A collection of Project Summary Sheets and Status Reports
- MDTF website programme and project reports for the IRF1 and IRF2
- UNCT internal documents including conflict analyses, country programme strategies, UNDAF, Flash Appeals etc.

The team reviewed a series of other UN agency and implementing partner documents during the evaluation.

(ii) Organization

An induction briefing was also held in New York on May 8th, 2012, with the PBSO and the international consultant to discuss the goals of the evaluation as well as the needs of the PBSO in regards to reporting requirements. The team leader arrived in Bishkek on May 15th and agreed upon a basic approach as well as interview protocol for the evaluation with her national counterpart. The team is composed of an international consultant, Marla Zapach, and national consultant specializing on gender/media issues, Gulnara Ibraeva.

(iii) Evaluation, Methodology and Scheduling

As far as the methodological approach is concerned, the team of consultants has been asked to carry out an evaluation of the first Immediate Response Facility (IRF1) that the UN Peacebuilding Fund has financed in Kyrgyzstan as well as to review ongoing programming from a second tranche of Immediate Response Facility (IRF2) support. The main purposes of the IRF1 evaluation will be to determine what the outcomes of the individual projects as well as the overall programme may have been in assisting the country's peacebuilding effort; to review the effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the various projects and the use of the funds provided; and to identify lessons and make recommendations to the UN PBSO for future peacebuilding activities in Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere.

For the evaluation of the IRF1, the consultants used a mixture of:

- An outcome oriented approach to determine the internal coherence and efficiency in the design of each project, identifying the key deliverables achieved;
- A responsive approach to determine the results of the various projects and more importantly of the programme as whole, as perceived by the various stakeholders.

For reviewing the IRF2 projects, a review of project design processes, implementation, activities undertaken to date, as well as stakeholder perceptions was taken into account. An effort was also made to draw linkages, where possible, between the two IRF programmes in order to better understand and report on the possible value-added of funding consecutive activities through the IRF mechanism. It was not possible to assess the IRF2 in any depth, as most projects are still operational and the evaluation team had limited time available. It is the opinion of the evaluation team that the IRF2 would benefit from a timely evaluation once the projects are completed due to the inter linkages between the two IRF funding tranches.

For this purpose, in addition to reviewing in detail the documentation available, the team carried out over 90 interviews with stakeholders in 5 categories:

1. Senior Government Officials on a national and local level
2. Members of the United Nations Country Team
3. Government and United Nations Project Implementers
4. External Observers/Donors
5. Programme/Project Beneficiaries/Implementers

The team developed a detailed interview protocol, and with the input of the UNCT, chose the stakeholders and groups of stakeholders to be interviewed.

The structure of interviews and resulting internally produced reports included the following dimensions:

1. Projects/program design
 - Conceptual framework (incl. legislation, practices of state policy on security & human rights, findings of baseline research – needs assessments)
 - Enabling environment (national reconciliation strategy & state interethnic relations strategy, institutional mechanisms, funds)
 - Design specific (development of project - agencies, procedures, involvement, sources of information taken into consideration)
2. Project implementation
 - Management and coordination between projects/agencies & implementing partners
 - Participation (incl. the process of identification of counterparts)
 - State ownership (indicators, representations)
 - Institutional capacity
3. Outcomes and outputs
 - Unintended effects
 - Perceptions of change by target populations
 - Lessons learned (by subjects)

All covered areas integrated a gender approach and focused on the gender balance within stakeholders groups.

An interview schedule was prepared together with the RC office. During the second week of the mission, interviews were carried out in the field in and around Osh and Jalal'Abad. The initial and final weeks of the evaluation mission took place in Bishkek. A debrief of the initial findings of the evaluation for the Kyrgyzstan country office was held on 4th June 2012 with FAO, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA UNHCR, UNIDO, UN Women, UNRCCA and WFP in attendance.

IV.Relevance of IRF Programme:

(i) General Relevance:

The IRF1 focused on jump-starting peacebuilding and reconciliation processes by engaging youth, women, and rural communities (specifically water users) in capacity-building activities in order to prevent a further escalation of the conflict in the South and to prepare the ground for long-term reconciliation and inter-ethnic co-existence. The UNCT's decision to work with youth, women and water user's associations (WUA) didn't require extensive analysis given that needs had already been identified pre-conflict as in the case of youth or came out of a humanitarian needs assessment as in the case of women or the WUA. It also didn't require extensive negotiation with a fragile interim government in order to get approval as the government had tacitly approved engagement in these three areas either before or immediately post June 2010 crisis⁷. Both the government and the UNCT, as a priority sector for engagement following the April 2010 revolution, identified youth. Conflicts over water usage in the Ferghana valley are not recent and are well documented and the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster proposed engagement with the WUA in food for work activities. The now Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration supported engaging women post-conflict, in part, due to the strong internal capacity of UNFPA and UN Women to conduct a needs assessment 10 days after the conflict and articulate the IRF1 project that was supported.

The IRF is a quick response mechanism that focuses on “emergency peacebuilding” and stabilization immediately post-conflict. Activities should be based on a common, shared conflict assessment to guide the process of project development and to fund allocation across the UNCT. Given the immediacy of the IRF1 intervention and a lack of a strategic framework with peacebuilding goals, funds were programmed based on needs assessments coming out of the humanitarian response and were guided by agency mandate and capacity. The IRF1 projects met relevant needs immediately post-crisis that engaged high-risk sectors of the population in the South and started laying the foundation for reconciliation.

It is certainly challenging in the immediate aftermath of a conflict to integrate peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategically into programming, especially as meeting urgent humanitarian needs necessarily take priority. In October 2010 the UNCT was still meeting and prioritizing humanitarian needs well into the engagement of the IRF1. IRF1 peacebuilding funds were initially allocated to supplement existing activities. Not all UN implementing organizations understood the work undertaken within the IRF1 framework to be peacebuilding in intent and were not able to articulate how their activities contributed to the outcomes that framed the IRF program. For example, interviews with both UNHCR staff and its project-implementing partners reiterated that projects undertaken through the IRF1 and IRF2 were really “protection work” and couldn't always articulate how protection activities served to augment peacebuilding.

⁷ UNCT comment: Needs were not identified pre-conflict but based on the conceptual framework prepared by the RCO. Projects were rigidly scrutinized to avoid continuation of projects under the flash appeal.

A concerted effort was put into data collection by the UNCT to ensure a diverse group of beneficiaries received assistance. While neither FAO nor UNCHR implementing partners collected specific data on ethnicity in the communities where they engaged, an effort was made to consult with the local populations to ensure that the most affected communities benefitted from the activities of the IRF1. The UNCT and their implementing partners, affected by strong criticism that Uzbek communities benefitted more from the international communities' assistance, have learned the importance of balancing of the provision of needs-based assistance with additional support to mono-ethnic communities not necessarily the most impacted by the June 2010 violence.

An evaluation of the IRF2, once projects are completed at the end of October 2012, should show an evolution in relevant programming to address structural causes of the conflict and increased understanding of the importance of conflict analysis and peacebuilding frameworks. This is mainly due to additional human resources that were dedicated to supporting the RC/UNCT in the development of a conflict analysis and conflict prevention framework. It is important to note that the IRF1 was seen in the eyes of the agencies as an opportunity to engage and build capacity for further funding within the IRF2 and possible PRF support.

“There was a positive impact of UN programming. Right after the conflict the government wasn't able to respond to the psychological and humanitarian needs. Without this assistance the region would not have improved during the last two years. Now it is time to build the capacity of the government so that the international community doesn't continue to replace it and the government can do its job” (Women's NGO leader, Osh).

Gender dimensions: The programme goals and objectives address the key problems of post-conflict peacebuilding processes, which have great significance for the promotion of gender equality. The programme activity for the development of leadership and empowerment for youth and women in peacebuilding and the creation of income-earning opportunities are in line with strategic gender needs. A number of measures for the programme components such as reinstatement of identification documents, provision of psychological and social assistance, stabilization of food security, and enforcement of overall personal security are in line with practical gender needs.

(ii) IRF1 Relevance by Component-Youth UNICEF (US\$ 867,342) UNDP (US\$ 865,844) UNHCR (US\$ 272,850)

After the June 2010 events, youth were seen as both perpetrators and victims of the conflict, and concerted efforts were made to rapidly engage this sector of society in order to prevent a relapse into violence. It was assumed that if spaces for youth to engage with other ethnicities were created and access to educational opportunities to improve their livelihoods were offered, then tolerance could be built and youth would actively promote peace within their communities and turn away from violence. Within the funding from the IRF1, social activities, educational training, and economic opportunities for youth were established in order to build relationships, breakdown stereotypes, and decrease the likelihood of youth participating in inter-ethnic violence immediately

post-conflict. UNICEF, UNDP and UNHCR while all working under the auspices of the Youth component, divided the funds according to expertise and mandate and jointly decided which conflicted areas to cover to increase engagement impact.

Outcome One: *Youth contribute to confidence and peacebuilding processes.*

A total of 17 out of an initial target of 50 youth centers have been created by UNICEF with IRF1 funds, effectively stimulating interest in peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives, youth motivation, and providing educational opportunities that had not previously existed. In the communities where youth centers exist and where there is effective facilitation and participation, the community noted that youth confidence has increased and that they are seen as a positive force within the community. Importantly, Youth Centers provided a space to bring various groups of youth of different ethnicities and backgrounds and link these communities to local government for advocacy and decision-making processes. Effort has been made to ensure that both minorities and women held positions of leadership in the centers, but this still remains a challenge due to continued marginalization and cultural constraints. The work of the Youth Centers remains relevant for those youth who are engaged and motivated and who receive support from their families to participate. In order for this project to be completely relevant, concerted effort needs to be made to engage youth who remain on the fringe of the community and who are vulnerable to manipulation. An effective strategy needs to be articulated to target problematic youth, as these are the ones who potentially could contribute to instability in the future.

Post-crisis efforts of agencies to provide equipment, opportunities, and training for youth were timely and relevant. Training on tolerance, reconciliation, and conflict transformation using various methodologies were well received; many youth have been able to articulate how they have put this training into practice in real life situations. Diversity management training provided to the Ministry of Youth by UNICEF is now being developed and applied by the Ministry within the Youth Centers and the municipal Youth Councils.

In some Youth Centers, the participants who have been able to engage in UN programmes have become a groundswell of positive change within their communities, and parents and teachers alike have noted this. However, there is a challenge to sustaining the level of these efforts, as expectations have been raised in terms of infrastructure, trainings, and social opportunities. Without an effective transition plan for resource mobilization, there is a significant risk that if there is no sustainability plan when funding ends, youth may become disillusioned and no longer attend or participate in social cohesion activities.

Interviews with youth highlighted that the perpetrators and victims of the June violence are often sitting in the same room. As one youth put it: “Unless there is justice, we can never be friends.” Efforts need to be made to address issues of transitional justice at local and national levels in order for reconciliation to begin. It is acknowledged that there is limited psychosocial support that is available in the South and that the needs are greater than what can be provided. This is an area of concern, as the impact of the conflict seems to be buried under the expectation that the community and especially its youth will be able to simply forget and move on by focusing on the future instead of the past.

The concerted engagement by the UNCT on engaging youth has yielded measurable positive results. So much so that other sectors of the community are now requesting similar opportunities and demand is outpacing resource. Although it may be too early at present, Youth Centers could expand to integrate programs for women, men, elderly, and the business community that could potentially extend the resource base needed to keep these centers operational. Youth, having had positive experiences mobilizing peers could be part of the capacity building of the community by increasing engagement across the community. Peacebuilding stands a better chance of taking root if it has a broad approach, support base, and understanding within the community.

Some projects that were placed under the Youth component focused more on the population in general and not specifically on youth due to both the experience and mandate of the implementing agency. This specifically relates to the support provided to the SDRD by UNDP and State Registration Services by UNHCR. Support provided to implementing community-based projects, communications support to the SDRD, and the State Registration Services all benefited affected communities at large, but were less targeted to explicit needs of youth. However, providing assistance and support to critical state services was important for two reasons: to build capacity for the state to meet its responsibilities in regards to specific protection objectives as well as to engage the state more robustly and to rebuild confidence through information campaigns to discuss reconstruction plans and increased coordination at the local government level, which was critical not only after the June conflict but during the government transition as well. This was an important input into the government structures that assisted people to understand how decisions were being made and to communicate important information effectively by reducing potential conflict.

Before, during and even after the June 2010 conflict both the local and national media played a role in inflaming ethnic conflict. UNICEF and UNHCR worked together to develop capacity-building and communication opportunities for youth and 33 youths were trained on basic journalism skills. UNICEF created opportunities through local radio networks for youth and adolescents to voice their concerns and educate their peers on tolerance and reconciliation issues. As a result of this training, 90 news articles produced by youth were published or aired. Youth participated actively in local radio and print media and there seems to be a concerted effort to report on issues of tolerance, trust building and reconciliation. UNDP supported the production and broadcasting of independent media outputs focusing on communicating reconstruction plans post-conflict. UNDP also supported the SDRD in developing its communication strategy promoting reconciliation of society and building confidence in the transparency of the organization.

Small grants provided through the IRF1 to UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF supported youth camps, sports competitions, workshops and other small initiatives focused on building peace and a return to normalcy for both the youth and their communities. Although only a small portion of the financial resources provided through the IRF, these responsive funds provided flexibility for the agencies to respond to immediate peacebuilding needs.

Outcome Two: *Youth embrace opportunities that empower their livelihoods.*

This outcome focused on providing youth with education and employment opportunities in order to build confidence so they will not engage in conflict.

Providing youth with training and education opportunities as well as funds for small business set-up are seen as particularly relevant activities funded by UNICEF and the UNDP PRP through the IRF1. Beneficiaries of training that the evaluators met and spoke with explained how access to means to improve future employment opportunities has positively impacted how they view future prospects for stability in the region. They claim to have more hope for the future and believe that should more youth have access to vocational and educational opportunities, there would be less need/desire to pursue illegal and socially destructive activities. 21 youth have been funded to establish small businesses and over 800 have received vocational training and are positively engaged in rebuilding their lives and the lives of their families. Strategic partnerships between businesses, public leaders and the youth are breaking down stereotypes that relegate youth to holding a negative role in society. The Mayor of Osh has declared 2012 to be the year of Youth and Education and has allocated 1.5 million som (US\$ 32,000) for 10 successful youth applicants to start up small businesses based on the criteria that they must increase ethnic unity amongst youth. This is a good example of how the decision to engage with the youth sector post-conflict has increased visibility and encouraged stronger engagement and support from local government as youth are now seen as critical to engage.

Youth demands for training to increase employability were met through computer and language training through youth centers as well as through specific vocational training and small business start-up grants that were provided to graduates of training programmes who successfully submitted grant applications. A Youth Labour Market Analysis Demand and Supply Survey was conducted at the beginning of the project and this served to guide the vocational training offered to 690 youth from severely conflicted areas of the south. The training offered to women could be more relevant and equitable in comparison with the training received by men. The majority of women were trained as seamstresses through the project, which is typically a low-paying sector in the South with high unemployment. Efforts should be made to promote other areas of training such as administrative and secretarial work, where there is a more equitable distribution of salary and more opportunities for employment.

Gender dimensions: The significance of the programme results in the IRF1 Youth component is best illustrated through the principles guiding the community involvement in activities of the Youth Centers that represented a truly multicultural and inclusive approach. The support provided to the Youth Centers assisted in the integration of a gender-mainstreaming approach into their activities, enabling them to involve more girls and young women; these activities included women of all ages from various ethnic groups, urban and rural areas, religious confessions, as well as people with disabilities.

The Youth Centers, thanks to a favourable political environment (i.e.: agreement among key stakeholders– the state, civil society, international organizations– on the issues of organized involvement of youth in constructive activities of peacebuilding and reconciliation), were

instrumental in solving a number of serious issues of gender violence. For example, the leaders in Osh and Jalal'Abad Youth Centers organized discussions on domestic violence and bride kidnapping. Also, the city Youth Committee under the Osh municipality registered a case when a young woman came with a complaint about regular beatings and raping by her husband and failure to act/ignoring of her complaints by the local law enforcement bodies that are supposed to provide legal protection from domestic violence. The mediation and action by the Youth Committee leader radically resolved the problem and the man was arrested and held responsible by local law enforcement officers. As a result, the woman was able to file for a divorce and her physical security guaranteed. However, it is also important to note that this result was achieved through bypassing law enforcement authorities and was even in violation of regulatory procedures. The actions taken by the Youth Committee went well beyond its authority and mandate. Therefore, the evaluation team believes it is important to point out the possible risks for the potential development of the Youth Committees: further institutional and ideological development is not quite clear, while the Youth Centers and Committees' potential for influencing the decision-making process is already significant.

Outcome three: *Women and women's networks are more effectively engaged and better positioned to influence peace, security, and reconstruction strategies.* **UN Women (US\$ 513,107)**

This IRF1 programme was formulated based on the results from a forum held in September 2010 that was organized and conducted by women's activists and organizations. At this meeting attended by more than 100 women from the Southern regions, the "Women's Peacebuilding Network" was launched which became a key structure ensuring women's inclusion into the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Despite the fact that UN Women conducted needs assessment in the post-conflict situation (the benchmark study having been completed in September 2010), the programme considered women as a monolithic category, singling out only ethnic groups and such vulnerable groups as widows with children. Despite the high significance and correspondence to the strategic gender needs of the programme activities under this component, many aspects of practical activity of WPN served to reinforce women's traditional roles within society. Thus, the WPN, mostly comprised of mature and elderly women, concentrated its attention on the organization and implementation of symbolic actions and events that reinforced images of women as mothers, as childcare providers, and as housekeepers. A number of assumptions formulated in the programme document are also based on traditional stereotypical understanding of women's role in society. Among these, there is an assumption that women are strong peace agents, without differentiating among various possible positions and roles of women in conflict and violence practices.

Before the June 2010 events, among women's NGOs there was no specialized organization working for peacebuilding and reconciliation at both local community and national level, capable of playing the role of conflict researchers and analysts, peacebuilders and gender advocates for vulnerable groups of women. The IRF1 programme has facilitated establishment of a network (at first informal, but by the end of the programme it was registered legally), and its institutional development has become a key programme direction. As a result of institutional support in the

form of creating and equipping two legal support centres in Osh and Jalal'Abad, 20 women's peace committees in local communities now undertake training programs in conflict management, research and analysis methodology, mediation, etc. The WPN has started to produce monthly monitoring reports feeding into early warning system results, training events for women, small grants programme implementation in local communities, as well as special events at the regional and national levels.

During the process of training and analysis of conflict situations and defining high-tension zones, the WPN actively cooperated with one of the civic organizations as a key FTI partner in peacebuilding. The information was collected during the monitoring stage by the WPC in local communities on the basis of a checklist developed specifically for these purposes. However, analysis and synthesis of the information collected was mostly conducted by FTI specialists due to low analytical capacity in the WPN, and in some cases the analytical reports were delayed, which undermined opportunities for early prevention of conflicts. Along with the analysis, each report contained a package of institutionally targeted recommendations. The key targets for WPN were local and regional authorities, ombudsmen offices, administration of the President, as well as UN agencies. Unfortunately the level of analysis and quality of the monitoring reports produced by the WPN were lacking in information and timely production and it wasn't feasible to establish an early warning system due to these noted capacity issues.

Under the projects that benefitted from small grants, women peacebuilders addressed the problems identified in the needs assessment completed by September 2010. In particular, radio stations were Jalal'Abad State University, at a number of rural schools with mixed ethnic groups of students in order to fight one of the key components escalating conflicts – rumors. Also, youth and student peacebuilding camps were organized, as well as special events «White Scarf», «Peace Bread», and others.

Creating opportunities for the activists of women's peacebuilding networks is an important achievement that will have a long-term strategic impact in the women being able to develop analytical skills for peace and development, training knowledge and skills in conflict management, mediation, etc.

Outcome Four: *Water resources along the Uvam-Dostuk canal are peacefully accessible and meeting the demand of inter-ethnic communities.* **FAO (US\$ 278,200)**

This project provided opportunities for people to work together on practical issues and to socialize across ethnic lines in order to breakdown mistrust and negative stereotypes and to develop habits of cooperation.

Conflict over the equitable use of water resources is not new in Kyrgyzstan and underlies some of the recurrent instability that communities face in regards to ensuring sustainable agricultural production. In times of instability and crisis, besides immediate concerns for physical safety, communities are most concerned about meeting basic needs. Under IRF1 this project provided immediate food assistance through WFP's Food for Assets programme to almost 1,200 people in

return for their assistance to clean the canals, which in turn benefitted more than 120,000 in the area.

Some community members who didn't qualify under the selection criteria to benefit from the food distribution contributed their labour voluntarily and while it took time to convince the community of the importance of this project, these community members expressed how much they valued this intervention and how they wished it would continue. It is difficult to say what longer-term results the "softer" side of socializing activities will have on building community cohesion. However, they were important to undertake immediately after the conflict to build inter and intra communal confidence, as well as to support relationships that were being re-established through the physical work of cleaning the canals. Further monitoring and follow-up is important to determine whether or not there has been longer-term sustainable impact on the community and whether or not the activities that spurred the joint cleaning of the canals can be sustained without payment, either monetarily or through social activities. If indeed the communities will take it upon themselves to organize, clean and maintain the canals, especially across ethnically divided communities, then this project can be considered successful and extremely relevant for sustaining peaceful communities.

In the near future, the WUA will need to be supported in further conflict mitigation training as well as monitored to encourage appropriate ethnic and gender representation/balance within its leadership and association in general. It is important that peacebuilding activities carried out by women's peace committees, WPN, and Youth Centers are also implemented in the sphere of natural resource management in the local communities. Such types of integration could become mutually beneficial, as water management is one of the priorities in rural agrarian communities, and as the inclusion of women and youth leaders, both young men and women, allows for their empowerment and application of newly acquired knowledge and skills of peaceful conflict and problem resolution.

Gender dimensions:

Inclusion of gender dimension into the activity for management of natural (water) resources by ensuring the participation of women on the WUA will enable future increases in decision-making effectiveness at the level of rural communities by taking into account the interests and needs of both genders. This will also expand the local community's understanding of principles of decentralized management and governance, wherein every citizen, including representatives of vulnerable groups, will be able to understand and accept responsibility for decision-making at the local level in peaceful coexistence.

V. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the extent to which the intervention's objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance. The IRF1 programming was, for the most part, effective

despite challenges of programming during a humanitarian phase. At the time, human resources were stretched thin due to the need to respond to immediate life-saving activities. The IRF1 funds were disbursed quickly and there was little coordination between the UN agencies to jointly develop projects and no universal analysis of the conflict. This resulted in the development of small-scale projects based upon specific agency experience and expertise scattered across sectors that didn't link up to larger objectives. Despite these constraints, the programming successfully addressed some of the triggers of the conflict, such as youth and community tension that could have prompted a relapse into violence while the situation was still volatile.

The question remains as to what should be expected from UN agencies in regards to achieving effective peacebuilding with IRF funds due to its unique and rapid approval and disbursement mechanism. Ideally IRF funding should be approved only when the conditions for the effective implementation of projects are in place. One of these conditions is an existing strategic framework with peacebuilding goals. This, however, doesn't always exist immediately post-crisis and often the IRF is used to respond to unexpected emergencies. More often than not, UNCT's have not undertaken a conflict analysis as a regular part of programming that could highlight increased possibility for violent conflict and therefore have risk mitigation strategies in place to which IRF funding could be applied.

The following key outcomes speak directly to the effectiveness of the IRF1 programming:

- 17 Youth Centers have become operational and have helped to attract other donor engagement to fund similar initiatives. Youth and their communities have responded favourably to the centres and the training opportunities provided through them. The Centers are seen as a positive influence and potentially have the ability to change negative attitudes and stereotypes of youth and their ability to participate in constructive change within the community. IRF1 support provided to realizing this outcome appears to have been effective and was well received, and more focus on small business development is requested by the youth interviewed. While shortcomings remain within the vocational education system, specifically in regards to the training offered to women, 80% of the youth from the high conflict areas that were targeted by this project were able to find employment afterwards as per reporting that was undertaken three months after the training finished. Youth interviewed placed high value on the computer and language skill training they received at the Centers and over 3100 youth have taken advantage of this opportunity.
- The State Registration Services have improved their policy and ability to respond to constituent documentation needs due to the advocacy and support provided through the project in a particularly time sensitive manner during the instability immediately post-conflict. Most importantly, confidence in the State to meet the needs of the population is being re-built incrementally through support from this project.
- Mobile legal clinics and information centres met critical needs and produced tangible results for women who required timely access to legal services. Thanks

to the activities of WPCs and information resource centres, more than 400 women affected by the conflict received legal assistance in restoration of documents – identification documents, property title documents, etc. Two legal support centers have now been established in Osh and Jalal'Abad. A total of 630 persons attended general legal consultations 408 persons, 343 of whom are women (50% Kyrgyz, 46% Uzbek, 4% Russian), received individual consultations in information centres and through mobile clinics.

- During one year of activity, the number of WPNmembers has grown to an estimated 800 people,⁸ even though the organization has not yet started the process of official membership registration. The leaders of women's peace committees, working on-site in close cooperation with the local state structures, were capable of earning trust and recognition, and making their contributions into peacebuilding visible. For example, the monitoring work undertaken by the WPN in order to support the work of the Oblast Advisory Committees are starting to yield results in raising awareness and conflict prevention. Among local mature women, involvement in peacebuilding networks is considered to be prestigious; there are many active rural women who would like to join the movement and live up to the image of a woman who has social power and is active and influential.
- By engaging quickly in assisting the re-establishment of this critical part of agricultural production- canal cleaning-, FAO assisted families in becoming independent through sustaining themselves, which in turn brought immediate stability in areas where there was conflict over unequal access to resources and an unwillingness or fear to renew engagement between conflictive ethnic groups post-conflict. FAO was well placed to seize the opportunity to meet a need within the communities, while at the same time build confidence between inter-ethnic populations and train WUA to play a supportive role in mitigating future conflicts. There was further reaching impact from this project as the government, surprised by the positive results, has prioritized rehabilitation of the canals as a means not only to improve agricultural production, but also to strengthen WUA in the collection of financial resources and the early mitigation of conflict over the use of water.
- Temporary employment through 'food for work' initiatives that were linked to improving agricultural development through increasing water access yielded immediate benefits to 120,000 area residents and provided immediate stability by meeting basic needs post-conflict. It is important to note that WFP provided in-kind funding to this project that was not covered under the IRF1 in order to ensure its success.

IRF1 contributions to the PBSO Performance Management Plan results can be attributed as follows:

⁸The exact number of network members is not known; the documents related to WPN activity, as well as interviews cite various estimates – 800, 830, about 900.

1. Outcomes One (Youth Centers), Three (Women's Peacebuilders Networks) and Four (Support to Water Users Associations) can be considered to have encouraged catalytic leverage in terms of a) Encouraging other donors to support the creation of Youth Centers; b) Jump-starting an important peace relevant process through the creation of the Women's Peacebuilders Networks; and c) Additional funding commitments being considered by the government to support the work of the WUA.
2. Another important result from the IRF1 is the engagement of youth and women of conflict affected communities acting as catalysts to prompt peace processes and early economic recovery through supporting organization and vocational training.
3. Immediately post-conflict certain essential functions of government were restored, namely documentation services, effectively enhancing the credibility and legitimacy of local state representatives.
4. Finally, the PBF provided timely turnaround for the approval of the IRF1 and resulting programming.

Important activities were begun through the IRF1 and the cumulative impact of the entire US\$10m fund will be able to be measured by the end of the IRF2.

VI. Efficiency

Efficiency measures both qualitative and quantitative outputs that have been achieved as a result of inputs.

While the evaluation team was able to access narrative reports from the MDTF website, despite requests, they were not provided with financial reporting from the UN agencies in order to assess the 'value for money' of the programming. The majority of stakeholders were satisfied with the speed of transfer of funds and appreciated the rapidity of response from the PBSO and MDTF. The rapid disbursement of funds allowed some UNCT programmes to begin to address immediate confidence-building needs within conflicted communities months before other donors were able to engage. Therefore, it solidified the presence of the UN on the ground as a responsive and efficient partner that assisted the communities in returning to normalcy.

The target of setting up to 50 Youth Centers was overly ambitious, given the humanitarian/transitional situation at the time, as well as the inability for key authorities (both local and national) to assume responsibilities and form partnerships. However, financial and substantive reporting seems to have been carried out in a timely manner by the recipient UN agencies, as determined by the MDTF Office Gateway, and the UNCT had an average annual delivery rate of 88.6% for the IRF1; this indicates that despite delays and reallocations of some funds, the programme was able to spend its funds during the operational challenges following conflict.

“There was a positive effect of UN programming post-conflict. The government was not ready or able to respond to the psychological tragedy. The international community provided legal

assistance and coordinated all the activities. Without these activities, nothing would have improved within these last two years” (NGO Representative in Osh).

VII. Sustainability of Results and Catalytic Effects

Ensuring the sustainability of “emergency peacebuilding” is challenging to measure, partly because indicators focus on immediate changes and improved stability in the short term, rather than long term resolutions and reduction of conflict.

The sustainability of results is challenging, as the evaluators heard repeatedly that the UNCT works with individuals and not organizations. Therefore, when key people within organizations leave, there is a negative impact on the ability of the institution to continue and high staff turnover can compound the lack of baseline/monitoring data. Institutional strengthening and not simply engagement on an individual basis is needed to ensure longevity and sustainability of activities.

While all activities need to create mechanisms for sustainability, there are certain areas that urgently require solid transition mechanisms due to the sensitive nature of the engagement. Youth Centers have created expectations as well as demands from the youth and the communities in which they operate. Support from the government has not been guaranteed and the Centers must determine whether or not they become independent NGOs or link to local government. Either way, the relatively high salaries paid by the UNICEF project cannot be continued and the upkeep of the Centers will also need to be sustained through regular and consistent funding. Before the end of the IRF2, a sustainability plan needs to be finalized with each of the Youth Centers.

“Catalytic” relates to a) launching a process; b) unblocking a process or c) undertaking high-risk activities in order to create new capacities/additional mechanisms/commitments for the transformation of conflict; while some projects were successful in their ability to interest other donors and stimulate other funding, there were limited catalytic results that can be attributed to the IRF1. This is partially due to an absence of conflict analyses guiding the initial IRF program design, meaning that activities could not be “strategically catalytic” and work towards achieving the understood definition.

The Women’s Peacebuilding Network was an important catalytic effect resulting from the IRF1 programming. From its conception the WPN was intended to jump-start an important process and provide critical organizational support and training for women based on a consensual post-conflict needs assessment. It took the initial first steps in creating a network that united various organizations and women’s groups, expanded the peacebuilding constituencies to include groups that had not previously engaged together and created a new structure that links work being done at the local level to national policies and strategies.

The national government’s desire to continue supporting communal cleaning of the canals to improve agricultural production and strengthen WUA in the collection of financial resources and

the early mitigation of conflict over the use of water is also potentially an important catalytic effect.

The IRF1 made good use of complementary engagements of other donors and interviews with key UN partners in the international community who appreciated the opportunity to engage and meet gaps within existing IRF1 funding and programming. USAID/OTI was a key partner within the UNICEF Youth Centre program, the FAO canal cleaning project, as well as the UNHCR document restoration process.

VIII. Ownership

Ownership in this evaluation refers to the capacity of national partners to determine priorities, to establish objectives and outputs, and to monitor strategies and programs.

Given the situation immediately following the conflict, the transitional government was still trying to consolidate its authority and was unable to respond and participate fully in the development of the IRF1 programming given the rapidity of the IRF response mechanism and the humanitarian crisis that was ongoing at the time. Authorities mentioned that while they were consulted in regards to what their priorities were for peacebuilding - these being rehabilitation of infrastructure and youth - they felt left out of the decision-making process, as the UN decided internally how to allocate the funds coming from the PBSO. Interviews with the UNCT recognize the frustration the Government has with not understanding how the IRF1 funds are meeting the priorities of the government. Mention was made to the fact that the *“authorities are not well informed and don’t understand peacebuilding. They need to be convinced on the value of peacebuilding”* (UNCT senior staff member). However, a lack of a peacebuilding strategy within the UN country office and insufficient communication and engagement between the UNCT and the national government in the planning of the IRF1 did not assist in bridging the understanding divide.

The Joint Steering Committee, which is a mandatory requirement of the IRF, should have been comprised of senior officials in the UNCT, government, key donors, and civil society. However, this committee was never activated, and no meetings held. Having a functioning JSC would have gone a long way to ensuring national ownership of the process and increasing understanding of IRF programming and communication.

National oversight was a challenge, given the timing of the crisis during the consolidation of the transitional government and the humanitarian crisis.

IX. Transparency and Accountability

While it is not the function of this evaluation to audit projects, it did enquire about the appropriate use of funds, and the team was assured by the corresponding UN agencies that execution and oversight of IRF 1 funds had been conducted in a transparent manner and that there was appropriate record keeping.

However, interviews with international donors, local partners, and beneficiaries highlighted that there needs to be more clarity in regards to project selection process as well as the allocation of funds to NGOs and communities at the implementation level in the South. UNDP was highlighted as an agency of concern, specifically given the mono-ethnic composition of the office and speculation regarding the transparency of its programming⁹. While the evaluation team was in country, an audit of the UNDP PDP was conducted; its results will be published separately to this report.

More transparency should guide the approval mechanism for the allocation of small grants. It has been noted previously in the evaluation that these many small grants have had relatively no impact on the larger objectives of the IRF1. The evaluation team believes that the approval mechanisms that presently exist to approve these funds are not sufficient to prevent their inappropriate use. Possibly the grant approval committee could have a neutral donor partner participate during the review of proposals and the selection of the grant recipient to ensure transparency in the process¹⁰.

X. Management and Implementation Arrangements

It is important to understand the context behind the program design of the IRF1. The April 2010 revolution brought into power a fragile transitional government that was still consolidating its authority when the violent events of June took place. The UNCT was able to access humanitarian funds as well as support from the IRF for normalization/early recovery. In order to engage the funds quickly, the program was based on the needs assessments coming out of the humanitarian cluster system. In effect, it was “emergency peacebuilding/stabilization,” and it sought to address immediate needs from the conflict to stabilize conflictive communities and constituencies.

Unfortunately, an initial lack of conflict sensitivity when planning and implementing the IRF1 created some resentment that still remains in some mono-ethnic communities who feel they have been excluded from the international community’s engagement. This can largely be explained due to the fact that initial activities through the small grant funding mechanism were based on a needs-based assessment and targeting communities most affected by the violence. In visits to some of the projects undertaken with small grant funding, community members still highlight their anger that assistance to them arrived much later than it did to the Uzbek community identified as the most affected during and post conflict. Many other donors the evaluation team spoke with also recognize the continuing challenge of ensuring equal ethnic representation, participation and inclusion and the challenges of being seen as providing preferential access to one ethnic groups over the others and is by no means only a UN problem. It is important to note that UNCT programs attempted to redress inequalities between communities when they arose.

⁹ UNCT noted the establishment of specific mechanism (e.g. hotline) to avoid these concerns.

¹⁰ According to UNCT, a recent internal audit, undertaken briefly after the end of the evaluation, did not confirm similar concerns (lack of transparency in fund use).

“Within the UNCT there was no joint analysis, no joint development of projects, no joint implementation, no cross fertilization and no larger outcomes”(UN senior staff on IRF1 planning and implementation).

Unfortunately few IRF1 coordination meetings took place making it difficult for the UNCT to develop a common understanding of the context in which they were operating as well as create a common vision of what they were attempting to achieve. Without a conflict analysis, the June conflict was understood as an “event” by the UNCT at the time of the IRF1 planning instead of a cumulative issue that started in the ‘90s. While the IRF is generally envisaged to undertake immediate stabilization activities, it is also meant to prepare the ground for more substantial programming and to build capacity within the UNCT as well as with national counterparts to tackle larger and more difficult structural issues of conflict. Key interlocutors within the government stated, *“The UN would have done the same programming conflict or no conflict.”* Given that one of the mandates of the IRF is to engage in high-risk projects that are meant to catalyze results for sustainable peace, the program design of the IRF1 seemed to rely on a safe “business as usual” model. While “emergency peacebuilding/stabilization” was accomplished with the IRF1 funds, it may have missed out on critical opportunities that would have been present had a conflict analysis taken place and a more innovative approach to programming been employed.

All in all, most activities could be realized with the resources available. The IRF1 did not start from scratch and was either a scaling-up of existing projects or the implementation of projects planned in advance at the request of the government post-April revolution. Depending on the context in which the IRF is approved, there are two possible routes for programme development: build upon existing programming refined through a conflict lens to increase existing results; or undertake new and innovative programming to open up new opportunities. Which route taken in programming IRF funds necessarily needs to be based on a conflict assessment.

One of the challenges faced by not only the evaluation team but also the implementing partners were how to report on results. Indicators are mostly quantitative and there is little understanding on how to measure peacebuilding, especially within an abbreviated time frame like the 12-months of the IRF. One implementing partner expressed frustration at not being able to adequately reflect attitudinal changes that were taking place on a more substantive level within their reporting. The Baseline Survey of Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) undertaken by UNICEF is one means to overcome this challenge and could be used more broadly across future peacebuilding programming.

XI. Observations on Second Tranche of IRF Projects (IRF2)

The processes surrounding the analysis, development, and implementation of projects for the IRF2 are much improved from the IRF1.

While there are mixed feelings as to whether or not the selection process for the IRF2 was more transparent than the IRF1 and whether or not PBSO intervention assisted or hindered the process of funding allocation, the result is that there appears to have been more consultation at both the

national and local level guiding the planning and development of projects for the additional USD 7 million. The government expressed greater satisfaction with the IRF2 process as a whole and the coordination and communication with the presidential administration has improved significantly. The national government was engaged in designing and approving IRF2 programmes and the Joint Steering Committee is now functioning. In the past two years, state structures have gained oversight capacity because of improved communication mechanisms within the IRF2 as well as more input into the implementation process.

The UNCT now has a jointly developed understanding of conflict prevention and peacebuilding and has completed a consensual conflict analysis as well as priority program directions and key advocacy messages in peacebuilding and conflict prevention for the Kyrgyz Republic. The IRF2 has been able to structure programming around a completed and consensual conflict and development analysis, as well as agency assessments and evaluations coming from IRF1 programming. As a result, the programming undertaken in the IRF2 is more strategic in its focus and seeks to deepen its engagement in addressing structural causes of Kyrgyz conflicts, specifically through support to parliamentary reform and capacity building, as well as engaging the critical area of support to the legal community on international human rights standards.

Comments from the UNCT reiterate that much improvement has been made in regards to coordination and collaboration, specifically within the areas of information sharing and linking up projects at the ground level. While the results of this engagement are still to be evaluated pending the completion of the projects scheduled for October 2012, this focused engagement of the UNCT on important structural conflict issues such as equitable judicial processes, land, housing and property, etc. indicate that the UN is building its credibility as a partner engaging in areas critical to the development of a peaceful and democratic society.

XII. Findings and Conclusions

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, ownership and accountability of the Peacebuilding Fund's IRF1 according to OECD/DAC evaluation guidelines to determine what contributions were made to the peacebuilding process in Kyrgyzstan immediately post ethnic clashes in June 2010. It also conducted a midterm review of the ongoing IRF2 projects.

The evaluators find that the IRF funds effectively jump-started projects immediately post-conflict that were important for the stabilization of communities and creating a sense of normality which assisted communities to reengage in self sustaining economic activities. The evaluators also find that participation of key sectors of the community, specifically youth and women, in peacebuilding activities was also increased and a certain amount of momentum has now been created to follow through with addressing some of the key drivers of the conflict, namely exclusion from political and economic spheres in Kyrgyzstan.

1.

The IRF1 programme was not designed based on an updated, comprehensive

conflict analysis. The conflict analysis, which was begun in 2007 and was still in process of being finalized during the time of the 2010 conflict, did not identify the critical issue of ethnic strife.

2. Immediately after the June 2010 conflict and the resulting humanitarian crisis, the UNCT faced pressure from both the government and the affected communities to respond as quickly as possible. The funds from the IRF1 arrived in country in October 2010 while UN agencies were fully engaged in the humanitarian response. The 12-month implementation frame of the IRF also increased pressure on the UNCT to quickly programme the IRF1 funds. Several of the IRF1 projects were designed prior to the drafting of the IRF1 response plan and the peacebuilding focus of the programming, in some instances, seemed to be an “add-on” activity to typical agency programming.
3. In essence, the IRF1 engagement could be considered “emergency peacebuilding” or “stabilization” programming and the IRF1 did meet the immediate and critical needs of the population to restore a sense of normalcy and to encourage the rebuilding of social cohesion between and amongst conflictive groups. The programming successfully addressed some of the triggers of the conflict, such as youth and community tension that could have prompted a relapse into violence while the situation was still volatile.
4. The IRF1 programme did not consistently employ a conflict sensitive approach to project development and implementation. This resulted in sustained tensions between some ethnic and rural/urban communities that suspected each other of having benefitted more from the international humanitarian and peacebuilding response.
5. Capacity within key sectors, specifically women and youth, has been increased and an important momentum has been created, encouraging youth and also their communities to be positive actors for change.
6. The IRF1 programme document considers women as a homogenous category in relation to peacebuilding strategies and emphasizes the exclusive sacrificial role of women, despite the fact that a number of research studies reported that women performed various roles in the conflict, including the role of aggressors and perpetrators, as well as mediators and simply observers. The diverse roles that women play in and around conflict need to be further explored and understood in order to better target programmatic interventions. Furthermore, the IRF1 programme document didn't use the findings from the “Post-conflict evaluation of reconstruction and reconciliation needs in southern Kyrgyzstan: Findings and recommendations (August 2010)” that was compiled and published by UN Women, as well as the conclusions made by sub-cluster experts based on humanitarian assistance to develop programming.

7. The programming of the funds for the IRF2 illustrates a better understanding of the causes of the conflict and the need to engage the government in deeper structural reforms due to the fact that deeper analysis of the conflict has been undertaken across the UNCT and there is a realization that programming needs to be conflict sensitive in its implementation. The UNCT benefitted from a consensual peace and development analysis, as well as more time to work through and plan a more strategic and unified approach to the challenges of peacebuilding faced in Kyrgyzstan. Specifically, this included the work being undertaken in the revision of laws to ensure conflict sensitivity, the provision of housing, land, and property documents, as well as support/training on human rights standards for the legal community has begun to address the sensitive and highly conflictive issues; exactly where the risk-taking mandate of the IRF is meant to operate.
8. Given the short term, flexible funding nature of the IRF, it is not designed to address the structural causes of the conflict but rather focuses on providing immediate resources to prevent relapse into violence, effectively buying time for the coming on-line of other funds and programs which would address the long term structural issues of the conflict. Given the incredible flexibility and rapidity of the IRF mechanism, the evaluation team believe there should be more willingness to use the fund to support innovative and risk-taking programming that is outside the traditional programming framework of most agencies.
9. Through the IRF, there have been some examples of peacebuilding impacts beyond the outputs of the activities. Peacebuilding activities and training that increased the capacity of women, youth, and others in communities and relevant institutions to address conflict in a proactive and responsive manner has created an inclusive (women, youth, different ethnicities) cohort of people with basic knowledge on conflict prevention, with some good examples of how such knowledge is being utilised to spread good practices. These fledgling organizations should be included as community partners for conflict mitigation in other conflictive areas, such as natural resources.
10. There are also some good examples of how coordination at the implementation level has helped to take steps towards better impact. For example, the monitoring work undertaken by the Women's Peacebuilders Network in order to support the work of the Oblast Advisory Committees are starting to yield results in raising awareness and conflict prevention. Through this connection, the WPN has begun to advocate for more effective conflict prevention policy to government, thus extending their activities from the community to the level of the national government.
11. The IRF mechanism served to bring the UNCT together for programming and limited joint implementation of projects. Smaller agencies were able to access

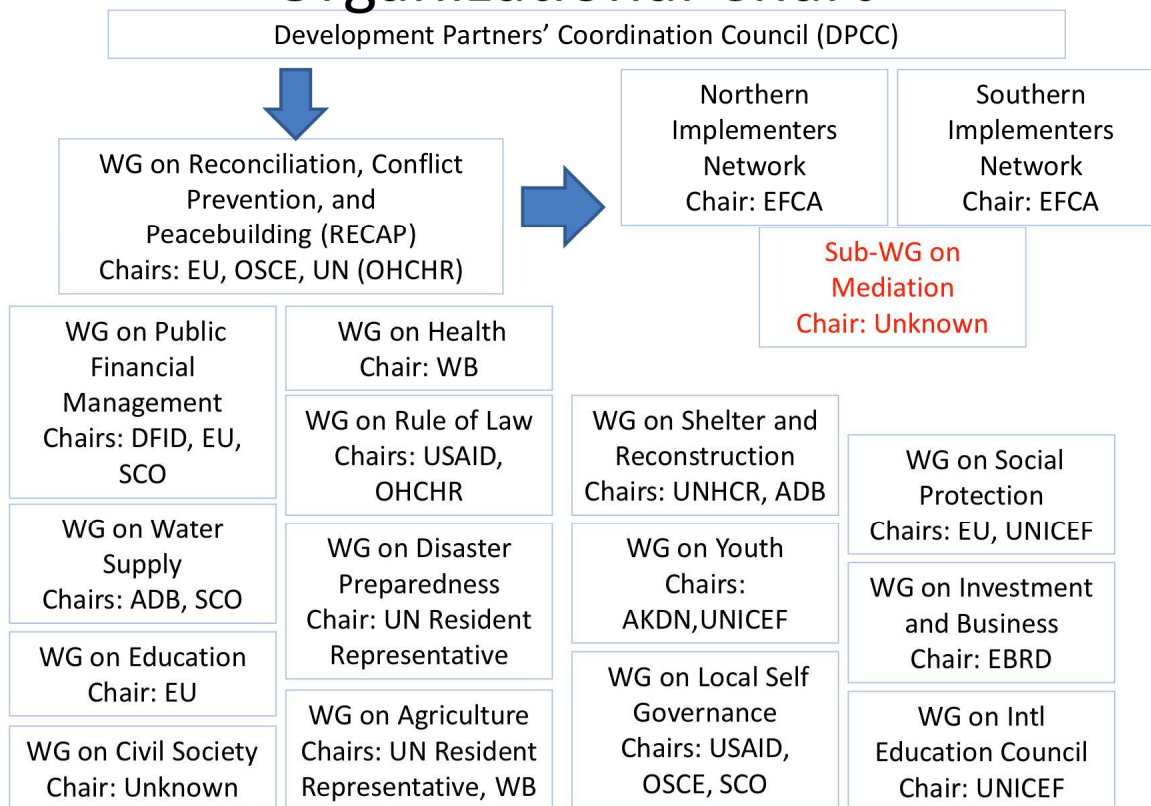
funding through larger agencies that received IRF funds, and agencies worked together who had not done so before the crisis. There is now an expressed interest to work further together on other initiatives, such as Durable Solutions. There is now recognition that joint programming can be improved and that in order to increase results, especially with the multiplicity of challenges coming from conflict, agencies need to work together through a true “One UN” approach.

12. The RC/UNCT benefitted from the designated human resources allocated to guide processes, assist with reporting, and to work with the agencies to understand and develop peacebuilding and prevention initiatives. Ideally this support should have been provided at the start of the IRF engagement and not only for an abbreviated period at the end of the IRF 1.
13. The PBSO should revisit the criteria used to evaluate IRF programming to reflect the immediacy and unique nature of this funding mechanism. OECD/DAC criteria, while generally applicable, are better suited to evaluate longer-term peacebuilding interventions and not “emergency peacebuilding” or “stabilization” activities that are often implemented in challenging circumstances and with limited resources. The evaluation team also believe UNCT offices that receive IRF funds would benefit from more structured guidelines for the use of the funds as well as initial programmatic support.
14. Finally, IRF engagement in Kyrgyzstan has shown that it is possible to get started early on peaceful change with one caveat; it is necessary to have a solid analysis of the needs, based on a conflict sensitive understanding of the situation and to have the appropriate implementing partners with the efficient procurement procedures in place. Quick engagements that are based on a ‘Do no harm’ understanding and a solid conflict assessment to guide engagement are more likely to be successful in building confidence and a sense of normalcy in encouraging people to re-start their lives immediately post-crisis. The ability of the UNCT to engage quickly served to increase the positive image of the UNCT in the field as a responsive partner during crisis.

XIII. Acknowledgements

The evaluation team wishes to thank all those who contributed their time and provided the team with valuable insight and information. The team especially acknowledges the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the staff of the Resident Coordinator’s office, and the staff at PBSO in New York for their support and for the resources and guidance provided.

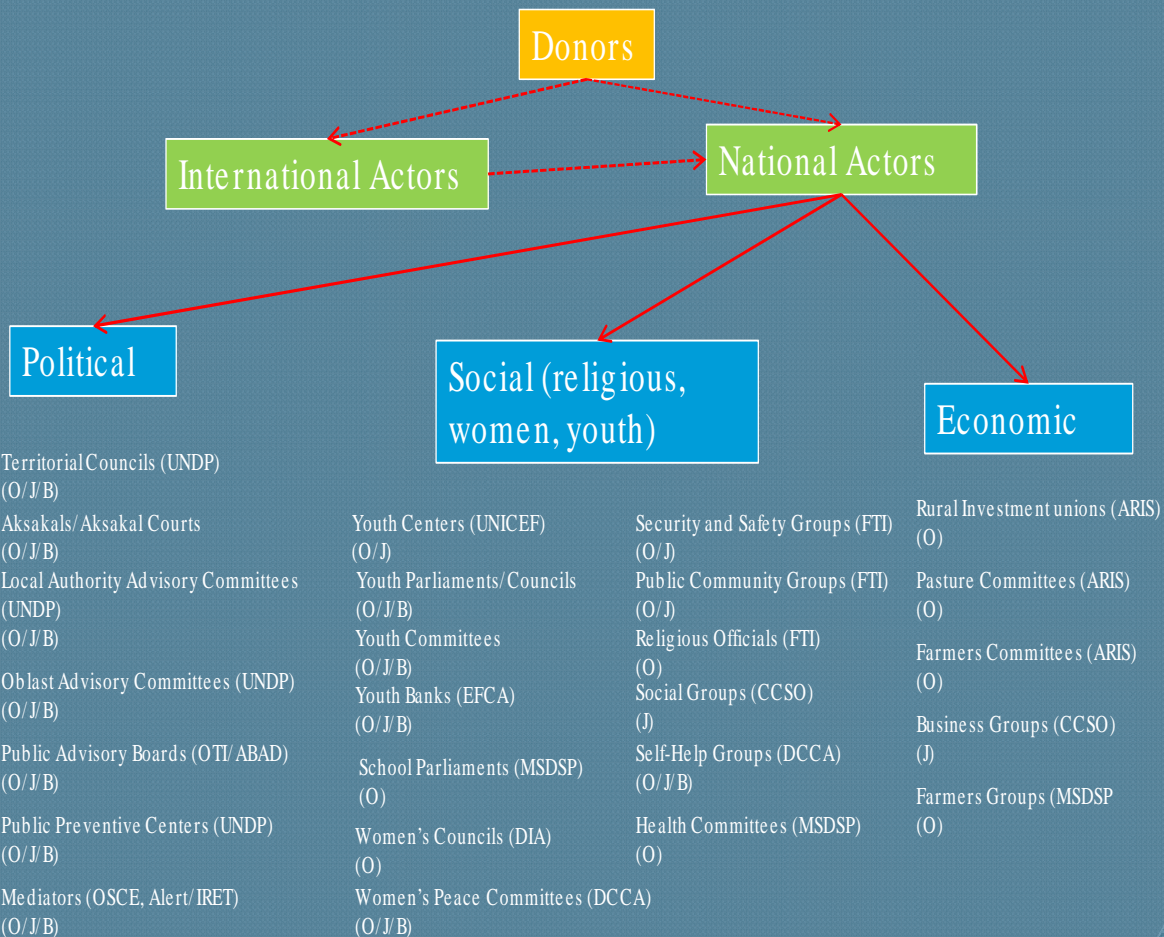
Organizational Chart



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¹¹ Clarification UNCT: Sub group of mediation was chaired by UNDP and UNRCCA, and now handed over to a local NGO

LCMs in Southern Kyrgyzstan



THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE REPORT WERE RECEIVED ON 07SEPTEMBER 2012 AND ARE INCLUDED HERE FOR TRANSPARENCY.

Comments on the Independent Evaluation as provided by the Kyrgyzstan UNCT

1. There should be more references to evidence. It is much better towards the end of the report, but the first half needs to have more references to literature, mission findings, etc. It is difficult to get from the report how the perceptions between the stakeholders might have differed or not; which would be an interesting analysis.

2. We do not agree with a number of statements that suggest that agencies did not analyze the conflict context before designing the peacebuilding interventions. It also suggests that agencies have just put in projects that they already had prepared as part of the humanitarian response. This is incorrect. While no separate conflict analysis was carried out for IRF I, an IRF technical working group looked at the conflict context and designed a conceptual framework that provided strategic guidance for the kind of proposals that were developed. While one may argue about different definitions of peacebuilding, the UNCT made genuine efforts to design peacebuilding interventions, using their contextual knowledge and following the guidance of the technical working group and RCO.

3. We do not know why a one-page conflict analysis was put together for the evaluation. It should be reviewed carefully as very bold statements were made without references and it seems to go beyond the scope of the evaluation.

4. There is a rather hesitant references made to IRF II. If it was not meant to be part of the evaluation, then better to take it out and have one pager of the summary of the evaluation team's findings on IRFII.

