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**SOUTH SUDAN RECONCILIATION, STABILIZATION, AND RESILIENCE TRUST FUND**

**Final NARRATIVE progress report**

**REPORTING PERIOD: *Insert period here***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Programme Title & Project Number |  | State, county(s), payams, UNCF Priority Area(s) [[1]](#footnote-1) / RSRTF Outcomes |
| * Programme Title: Restoring Peaceful Coexistence for Better Livelihoods in Koch
* MPTF Office Project Reference Number:[[2]](#footnote-2)
 | *(if applicable)**Country/Region* |
| *Priority area/ strategic results*  |
| Participating Organization(s) |  | Implementing Partners |
| World Relief | WR, CARE, DRC, and Mercy Corps |
| Programme/Project Cost (US$) |  | Programme Duration |
| Total approved budget as per project document: 5,164,763 USD MPTF /JP Contribution[[3]](#footnote-3): N/A* *by Agency (if applicable)*
 |  |  | Overall Duration *(months): 27* |  |
| Agency Contribution N/A * *by Agency (if applicable)*
 |  |  | Start Date[[4]](#footnote-4) *01st August 2019* |  |
| Government Contribution*(if applicable)* |  |  | Original End Date*[[5]](#footnote-5)* *: 31st July 2021* |  |
| Other Contributions (donors) N/A*(if applicable)* |  |  | Current End date[[6]](#footnote-6)*: 31st October 2021* |  |
| TOTAL:  | **5,164,763 USD** |  |  |  |
| Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval. |  | Report Submitted By |
| Assessment/Review - if applicable *please attach* Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*Mid-Term Evaluation Report *– if applicable please attach* Yes No Date: *30.04.2020* | * Name: Abiyot Kitaw Mulugeta
* Title: Country Director
* Participating Organization (Lead): World Relief
* Email address: KAbiyot@wr.org
 |

**NARRATIVE REPORT FORMAT**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The RSRTF Koch County project aimed to reduce violent conflict and create conditions of peace and stability conducive to resilience endeavours in Koch County as most areas are volatile. Achieving the outcomes of the RSRTF project as enunciated in the Results Framework of the RSRTF are essentially long term in nature. As such during the last two years, progress have been made but still there is need for continuation to scale up, deepen and consolidate gains made from interventions so that they are sustained and continued to benefit the programme participants beyond the life of the project. Several initiatives have been initiated so far that needed further strengthening and nurturing. The RSRTF project first phase, laid a good foundation that were geared towards restoring peaceful coexistence for better livelihoods.

*Reconciliation*

There has been a reduction in physical violence in Koch over the last two years of the project life. This reduction in violence can be attributed to continued confidence in structures and mechanisms established to enhance reconciliation and peaceful co-existence among the residents of Koch County. The project established 5 peace committees, two peace clubs in schools and facilitated various dialogue sessions. These mechanisms have continued to yield positive results with an increase in number of people from the community seeking peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms as opposed to violence as was the case before the project initiation. The police, the chief’s courts and peace committees have continued to play a greater role in reconciliation and peace building. The RSRTF project strengthened the inclusiveness of conflict mitigation and prevention mechanisms through mentorship of the local court chiefs. At least a record of 673 cases were documented and of those cases 92% were resolved. At community levels seven peace committees were established, actively participated in mitigation and prevention of conflict. Through the community dialogues, community peace and reconciliation forums/exchanges sessions conducted, there were reported reduction in the number violence incidences. The project strengthened the existing community social structures and ensured court establishments that are now functional to mitigate harmful cultural norms that fuel violence.

The RSRTF project supported gender-based violence (GBV) survivors especially women and girls at the established women and girls’ friendly spaces (WGFS) where the project supported them with redress mechanism services and empowered them economically. Awareness raising sessions on GBV issues conducted had a positive change impact on the community regarding GBV. The project further leveraged political influence by engaging political and local leaders who were responsible for resolving conflicts hence, it resulted to reduced tensions in the County.

*Stabilization*

With the absence of a formal justice system, the Chief’s court has continued to be the only point of call in dispensing justice in Koch. the confidence with the chief’s court to undertake this role has continued to increase over the two years period of this RSRTF project. Similarly, there has been an increase in other institutions like the police to provide peaceful conflict resolution. The ABP project has played a key role in ensuring increase access to effective informal justice mechanisms. The project established 7 court houses and increased engagement of local chiefs to build their capacity on the human right laws, useful customary laws and the laws of South Sudan. The project was also able to create awareness on issues of Housing Property and Land and trained community as leaders on human rights with a focus on vulnerable groups including women, youth and those returning to their places of origin.

Despite these great efforts, the feeling of safety within the community has declined over the two years period, which is a pointer towards weak governance. The police and other armed groups are still main perpetrators of violence in the County. The chief’s court is an informal justice system and still operates on customary law sometimes disfranchises vulnerable groups especially women. There is lack of formal justice mechanism which limited effectiveness of the justice mechanism with no referrals managed at formal court system.

*Resilience*

In addressing the root causes of violence, the ABP RSRTF project engaged the community in various livelihood options to dissuade them from re-engaging in violent activities that perpetuate conflicts. The project facilitated formation of 6 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) as well as 55 Self Help Groups, (SHGs) with a combined membership of 1,270 persons. These members have been engaged in savings and loan activities, trained and facilitated to engage in income generating activities. Similarly, 730 youth and women were trained on various trades in the vocational training center, while another 600 farmers supported with Agricultural inputs and training. Youth from different sides to conflict were engaged in joint activities that established 12 community assets including roads that increased accessibility to markets and other services, dykes and trenches that were supportive in flood mitigation measures. The project similarly supported education activities to provide second chance education and well as secondary education at the renovated secondary school in Bhang.

Livelihood activities have been adversely affected by floods which were experienced in later part of 2021 to levels unprecedented. There was also a very low uptake on secondary school education as this requires a longer-term engagement to sensitize the community and encourage youth to engage in schools. Coordination and management structure for this project was done at various levels. The Area Reference Group (ARG) comprising of members from the various consortium members, local government and community representatives, that played a key role in disseminating project information to the community as well as providing feedback on project implementation and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives. The consortium steering committee comprising of Country Directors from the various consortium partners had the overall project responsibility in providing guidance, supervision and ensuring overall project success.

The coordination and management mechanism were however limited as project integration was weak with individual consortium partners implementing activities without much reference to what the other partners were also implementing.

# PURPOSE

The aim of this project is to restore peaceful conditions in Koch so that residents and returnees can live improved lives. Koch County in Unity State has been particularly affected by the protracted conflict, with violence, displacement, and destruction from the war, as well as from intra- and inter-community disputes and attacks. Having identified key drivers to the conflict as cattle raids, revenge killings and conflict over resources, the project set in place measures to reconcile communities who felt aggrieved because of previous conflict events as well as issues related to gender power imbalance and violence. The ABP project also addressed access to justice, and provided opportunities for women and youth, to diversity their livelihood options. The project included context-specific activities under the three pillars of the RSRTF, as detailed in the logical framework and activity plan. The activities fit RSRTF’s Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 5, based on the needs identified in the Koch area reference group strategy.

The target group for these activities were residents and returnees of Koch County that included women, men, boys, and girls. Activities focused on key beneficiary groups, such as uneducated or unengaged youth; girls and women; victims of sexual violence and victims of other crimes.

Project activities were implemented by the four INGOs (World Relief, CARE, DRC, and Mercy Corps) of the consortium, with each partner responsible for activities within their organization’s expertise to maximize impact and efficiency. As detailed in the project plan, all organizations and project activities were coordinated through the prime of the consortium and its management structure. Partners liaised with UNMISS for certain key activities, such as patrols except training of police officers and peace events. The involvement of UNMISS Rule of Law was essential for components of access to justice activities.

The assistances were delivered throughout Koch County as per the assessed needs. The consortium partners were sensitive to the dynamics of the conflict around locations in the target area, including areas considered under the control of SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO (opposition) to maintain neutrality, as well as ethnic clan and sub-clan dimensions.

1. **Narrative reporting on results:**

In Koch County, the conflict dynamics is intertwined with the socio-cultural, economic and political environment. There is real incompatibility in interests and needs. The context and history of the conflict has created anger, fear and sadness, as well as the parties’ action. The situation in Mirmir is the classical example. The project established peace committees, women and girl’s friendly space (WGFS) as well as a workshop for selected community members from Mirmir. Mirmir is where the IO is based, they never allowed the County Commissioner, the government representative for Koch county in their territory, they however allowed RSRTF project activities to be implemented and the people from Mirmir to come to Koch town. In this way, this project activities became connectors. In an interview with one of the leaders, he had this to say; *“Even if the Commissioner does not come to us, he is our commissioner. We belong to Koch. He needs to invite us. The problem we have will be discussed in that meeting”*. The County Commissioner on his part had this to say; *“when the community leaders from Mirmir were opposed to my journey to reach there, I did not force myself, because l want peace not war”*. Adding that, *“the Koang (Commissioner) of the 2015, is not the Koang of now. That was the situation then – it was not peaceful!”*

In Gor village of Kuachlual Payam a case arose between a farmer and a cattle keeper. Which the cattle destroyed the formers’ crops. This led to a serious quarrel which almost turned violent. However, community members were convinced to take the matter to local peace committee, since the owner of the maize crop had seized the cattle demanding compensation. The peace committees (PC) engaged the parties to keep calm and presented to them the option for arbitration at the chiefs’ court, which they agreed. At the court, the case was ruled in favor of the farmer. Unlike common practice of enforcing compensation, where both the maize owner and council of chiefs resolved to seriously reprimand the cattle owner not to allow his cattle to farmland.

In April,2020, the program initiated to the “Village Saving & Lending Association” (VSLA). A woman member shared are story: “I started saving in the group and in September, 2020 I took 50,000 SSP as a loan and I bought saucepans, chairs, plates, stoves, flour etc. and l later expanded my tea shop to include food business. In December 2020, I paid back 50,000SSP as a loan transfer and earned a profit of 30,000 SSP. Currently, am getting at least 5,000 SSP daily from by business of tea and food business. As I had maximized my earnings from these businesses, which empowered me to buy enough family food, clothes, pay medical bill and sent my children to neighbouring Country Uganda to access quality education as our country was in crisis. I am now happier woman with power to say yes and no to things regarding myself and my family”.

***Changes in the operating context that had an effect on the programme delivery and implementation process*.**

The appointment of the County Commissioner with him exerting authority except in Mirmir has greatly contributed to programme delivery. Even if, partners could not move to Mirmir due to floods, beneficiaries always managed to travel to Koch either by boat or foot. The Commissioner always sent a delegate to attend the ARG meeting where participants deliberated on activities and received feedback.

Since September 2021, floods had a serious effect on programme activities. Demonstration gardens were submerged, and roads worked on as community assets were destroyed. However, partners took advantage of the displaced community from Payams such as Boaw and Ngony to deliver the training for them in Koch where they were displaced. The floods also hindered movement of cattle raiders as cattle raids were not experienced since the onset of flooding except for the petty thefts which were easily handled by the Commissioner and the Police.

***Key partnerships, explaining how such relationships impacted on the achievement of results.***

The UNMISS Protection force, Ghana Batallion (GhanBat) – Ghanbat established a temporary operating base (TOB) in Koch in February 2020. The presence of GhanBat contributed to the stability especially curbing incidences of disturbances by armed youth. They frequently met with all stakeholders to discuss security threats. They also helped partners to pull their vehicles that got stuck on the road during field visits. Whenever high-level UN delegations came to visit GhanBat, partners are always given chance to interact with the team to give security assessment.

The County authority and leadership that included: The County Executive Director, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissions (RRC), the Education Department and Police department that worked with the consortium provided conducive, collaborative environment. When the Commissioner was sworn at the beginning of 2021, it concretized the leadership, coordination, security, and stability in the county. He fully supported the programme and officiated in several activities including peace rallies and conferences, graduation of trainees for alternative livelihood and at the ARG meetings.

***Cross-cutting issues pertinent to the results being reported on.***

Throughout the implementation processes, assistances were delivered throughout Koch County as per the assessed needs. The consortium partners were sensitive to the dynamics of the conflict around locations in the target area, including areas considered under the control of SPLA/M-IG and SPLA/M-IO (opposition) to maintain neutrality, as well as ethnic clan and sub-clan dimensions. Amongst the target groups reached, individuals were not discriminated based on their gender, age, diversity and the project ensured meaningful access, prioritized safety and dignity, do no harm when engaging project beneficiaries. Protection was mainstreamed during activity implementation that has targeted various group of individuals to participate in freely. Accountability to the affected population was ensured through the complaint feedback mechanism strategies initiated.

***How RSRTF Area Reference Group coordination has been implemented in support of achievement of results*.**

Although the constitution and operationalization of the Area Reference Groups (ARG) was delayed, the ARG reinforced coordination and collaboration with all stakeholders; non-consortium partners, civil society groups, the business union, youth and women groups and association, as well the Inter-Church Committee (ICC). The ARG provided information and feedback to the consortium, thus providing better understanding of the area-based programming. ARG members got involved in mobilizing communities, highlighting and discussing emerging issues including concerns and misunderstandings which were collectively addressed, and thus improved participation and ownership.

***Results contributing to humanitarian-development-peace nexus and linkages and complementarity between the relevant reconciliation, stabilization and resilience components of the project***.

The One-Stop Center is the epitome of the nexus. Women and girls who are the most vulnerable victims of violence and food insecurity found solace at the center as survivors of violence. Besides counseling for psycho-social healing, they were equipped with skills for alternative and improved livelihood by diversifying their incomes. The skills training incorporated literacy and numeracy which enabled them to keep records of their business transactions. Most of the participants at the One-Stop centers became peace ambassadors after attending several awareness sessions and attending training on peace values – respect, cooperation and nonviolent responses.

***Outcomes:***

* ***RSRTF OUTCOME # 1: Individuals, particularly children and women are facing less violence at the community and local level.***

Throughout the project period, the project team ensured mainstreaming of gender and protection in all program activities in Koch considering person with specific needs, AGD and accountability to the affected population. During the end line survey carried out, it was established 83.7% individual respondents confirmed to have reported increased personal safety and security in Koch within the last 24 Months.

Partners also engaged with UNMISS, where they advocated for the successful re-deployment of UNMISS GANBATT to do patrols in Koch. Partners were also able to engage with the UNMISS HoFO in which they shared challenges and issues on management of community assets like schools, youth centers, that needed political engagement with the state level authorities for Unity State based in Bentiu town. The UNMISS Rule of Law section was engaged to explore the challenges around the establishment of the formal justice system at county level in Koch, although it remained a big gap for the project to achieve some of its key objectives as the establishment of formal courts was not successful during the implementation period.

***RSRTF OUTCOME 2: Communities have effective mechanisms in place that meaningfully include women and youth to resolve conflicts peacefully.***

During the reporting period, women and girls were mobilized to participate in peace committee and peace clubs, conducted awareness raising on harmful traditional practices. The program supported reconciliation and peace building activities ensuring women and girls participation in dialogue forum sessions. The project achieved 62% as number of instances where disputes referred to community-based conflict management mechanisms supported in the target area that were successfully resolved within the last 24 Month. This was so since the mechanisms established to resolve conflict were now popular to the community members. The end line survey data also indicated that 98.7% confirmed that peace committees were important and helps in conflict resolution peacebuilding process.

There was a notable increased participation of women and youth in reconciliation mechanisms that are mediated by women and youths. The project registered an achievement of 67% with a significant participation of women and youth in the established mechanisms. Functional mechanism was ensured throughout the last two years for conflict prevention, dialogue and conflict resolution in Koch County except from Boaw Payam due to insecurity. The peace committees formed were comprised of women and youths who were committed in mediating cases among the community.

***RSRTF OUTCOME 3: Justice sector actors are more effectively delivering justice, even in areas with previously limited or no judicial infrastructure***

Chiefs’ courts in Koch continue to handle cases, two SGBV perpetrators were referred to Bentiu by County authority for jurisdiction. Follow-up of those cases was made difficult due to the absence of formal court system in Bentiu. Chiefs from both Mirmir Payam, the SPLA-IO controlled area and SPLA-IG areas were trained on customary laws and laws of South Sudan. It contributed to increased access to justice and reduction of tension between the two groups with the project activities on peace building. The project conducted various awareness raising sessions to deliver messages on causes and consequences of serious cases that included SGBV cases, importance of access to justice and health through referral pathways. Other topics that were added in the awareness were functions of formal courts, legal aids and all others victims’ redress mechanisms as well as medical support that could be accessed by SGBV survivor.

***RSRTF OUTCOME 5: Community resilience is strengthened through increased economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods.***

Community transformation through viable economic activities to improve livelihoods leading to peaceful coexistence was what the project achieved within the last two years. Through VSLA interventions, Koch communities transitioned into various income generating activities (IGAs) were supported with start-up support packages. The project facilitated various trainings that resulted positively amongst the beneficiaries, as it enabled some of the participants that were already operating small businesses to increase their business sales and profits and that led to improved livelihoods. The project established social centers that provided opportunities for the youth in Koch County however, still they are limited, thus why there is need to have phase II of this project. Also, interventions for social services were muchly affected by the pandemic as a result the youth were not fully engaged to participate in the project.

Community assets established/rehabilitated included secondary school, recreational center, youth center, youth vocational center, court halls, market shades with selling racks, major community access roads. Although still most of the locations were not easy to access physically, few markets locations were improved to provide space for the increased market for small scale traders to operate.

* ***Outputs:***

**RSRTF OUTCOME 1: Individuals, particularly children and women are facing less violence at the community and local level.**

***Output 1.1 Mainstreaming of protection into all project activities***

The RSRTF project ensured compliance with all COVID-19 protective measures during the implementation of project activities. Partners also ensured inclusive participation of program participants. For instance, one partner included a cross section of the community in PCs, peace dialogues, awareness-raising sessions across all the targeted areas through participation of women, youth, and people with special needs.

**RSRTF OUTCOME 2: Communities have effective mechanisms in place that meaningfully include women and youth to resolve conflicts peacefully.**

***Output 2.1: Improved reconciliation and conflict resolution mechanisms leading to reduced community violence and enhanced***

In total 11 peace dialogue and conferences sessions were convened in locations of Koch County, Bentiu and Rubkona attended by 2,599 individuals (926 male; 1,637 female) within the project period with members of the various community structures included thus; trade unions, local chiefs, woman committees, youth representatives and pertinent local authorities. The peace dialogues were designed to create an inclusive and accessible platform for representatives of the various community structures to discuss and sensitize each other on the importance of peace, the root causes of conflict, and propose solutions to the conflicts in their communities that would contribute the stabilization and reconciliation in Unity State. Cattle raiding, revenge killing, unemployment, HLP, high rates of illiteracy, cases of SGBV (forced marriage and cases of rape), and illegal use of weapons were raised as major causes as well as consequences of conflict in Koch and Rubkona County. Participants made detailed recommendations on how the drivers of conflict can be addressed. The resolutions can be found at the annex section of this report.

***Output 2.2: Enhanced participation of women & girls in conflict prevention and management***

The program supported peace committee who were established at the beginning of the project. Within the membership of the peace committees, the project ensured 56.6% of the members were female and of those, 33% of the leaders were composed of women who participate in conflict resolutions and mediation. Since formation of peace committee structures, the leadership has been vocal in resolving a series of incidents including family and other minor disputes which helped the community in each location to for the community members to leave in peaceful co-existence and mitigate outbreak of large-scale violence that may disrupt their local stability. Even within schools, peace clubs were formed were 50% of the members were girls who were trained on conflict prevention and management.

PCs successfully mediated 93% cases related to forced occupation, inheritance, forced eviction, and non-HLP petty offenses that involved men, women, youth, elders, and people with special needs both under the capacity of the PCs and through others were referred to local chiefs’ courts. The RSRTF project trained local on good governance and conflict resolutions particularly from Mirmir, Koch, Jaak, and Gany Payams. The participants were expected to change their mode of service delivery to the grassroot and have the skill of resolving conflict amongst their communities. Youth in Koch were equipped with skills on conflict management and effective communication in their social network. The trainings also helped to facilitate better relationships between the communities in former SPLA-IO and government-controlled areas. Similarly, communities in the four payams were trained on conflict sensitivity, human rights, laws of South Sudan and customary laws.

The RSRTF project also facilitated dialogues sessions to address negative notions of masculinity. In addition, there were two follow up dialogue meetings on issues relating to lower representation of women in leadership and employment. These dialogue meetings were held in Koch Town, Rier/Jaak Payam and Mirmir Payam. The first dialogue session was planned to target both men and women whereas the other two sessions were exclusively attended by women and women leaders from various women groups such as VSLA, PCs, vocational schools, SCE and residential blocks women leaders. The purpose of those sessions was to identify areas where women are underrepresented and therefore advocate for their rights. Secondly it was also meant to create awareness of the cultural ideas, practices and beliefs that compromise the dignity, equality, freedom and access to opportunities for women on the basis of sex and gender.

**RSRTF OUTCOME 3: Justice sector actors are more effectively delivering justice, even in areas with previously limited or no judicial infrastructure**

***Output 3.1: Access to legal aid and referral services promoting fair investigations and trials in formal courts***

The RSRTF project raised awareness on human rights and legal frameworks across six payams except in Boaw. Awareness-raising session were particularly on HLP, rights of women and the rights of people affected by displacement. Topics discussed was meant to increase their understanding and exercise their rights.

The RSRTF project monitored and documented SGVB cases at all levels in Koch County including at Police Station. The survivors were also provided with legal counselling and legal education stationed at women and girl’s friendly spaces.

***Output 3.2: Strengthened formal court mechanisms providing fair opportunities to seek justice***

In effort to strengthen formal court mechanism, the project hired a legal and advocate consultant to conduct training to various stakeholders on the laws of South Sudan on legal aids, legal procedures, women rights, child rights, and humanitarian law governing fair trails, linkage between customary laws and formal laws, legal provision protecting women against SGBV and victim redress mechanisms.

Rule of law analysis and submitted the report. The report will be presented to partners and key stakeholders virtually in May 2021.

Chiefs’ forums were facilitated Monthly throughout the project period and attended by youth, women, chiefs and local elders. During the forum, topics discussed were about women right violations, rule of law, human rights and challenges affecting the justice system and identification of harmful traditional practices in the community such as revenge killing and compensation that violates human rights. Hired court observers documented and reported a total of 673 court cases settled at customary courts in Koch, Mirmir and Gany. Partners advocate for UNMISS Rule of Law Department to support the establishment of a functional bench court in Koch to reduce the number of statutory court cases being handled by the traditional chiefs.

***Output 3.3: Respond to gender-based violence in Koch***

The RSRTF project through the protection and GBV working group, conducted a safety audit exercise in six payams. The projected conducted training that targeted women and youth representatives, Chiefs, VSLA members, nutrition staff, GBV volunteers and religious leaders. The objectives of the training were: to impart service providers with knowledge and skills that will enable them to effectively and practically perform their duties in relation to GBV prevention in their communities; to enable service providers and stakeholders to fully understand the forms GBV, key concepts, root causes and overall consequences of GBV on individual/survivor, family, community and society as a whole. The participants were trained on PFA skills and techniques involved when providing PFA to a survivor was well demonstrated to participants.

The project provided psychosocial support to survivors. Throughout the project, GBV survivors were provided with counselling services, dignity kits, enrolled for PSS activities at women centers and referred to other sectors e.g., health or police for more support.

The project still identified more need to close the gap with awareness raising on SGBV issues. The participants were all chiefs and sub-chiefs from the C” courts B” courts, Executive chiefs and the paramount chiefs in Koch County headquarters and the neighbouring payams who are directly involved in adjudicating cases related to SGBV in conformity with Nuer traditional customs and tradition. The session covered topics on the functions and roles of customary courts, jurisdiction of customary courts, nature and composition of customary courts, customary courts structure, limitations of customary courts and decision making, competence of customary law court system, roles of customary chiefs in conflict mitigation under the Local Government Act 2009.

**RSRTF OUTCOME 5: Community resilience is strengthened through increased economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods**.

***Output 5.1: Support skills development for youth***

Bhang secondary school premises was rehabilitated however, the school started operating in June 2021 due to government regulations on the ongoing response to COVID-19. The school has been fully equipped with desks and stationeries and some of the class rooms are used by second chance education learners.

The project mobilized in and out of school youth to join second chance education (SCE) which has been affected by the COVID-19 control measures which has also registered low turn-up of learners. However, the project alternately engaged the youth for life skills development opportunities where youth were mobilized and trained on life skills and during the trainings, the youth are exposed to project interventions and encourage their participation.

The project also organized sporting competition (football) that attracted many youths with the aim to unity them across all the payams which contributed to free movement within the county which has not been the case before the last two years.

***Output 5.2: Restore and diversify household level livelihoods***

With the help of the community, the RSRTF project rehabilitated most of the community access roads, provided market infrastructure such as market shades, selling racks, water channels, during flooding in 2020, helped the community in digging dykes and water drainages among others. However, resources were not enough to continue providing these services specially to maintain the rehabilitation of the major roads which somehow affected project implementation since government did not offer support.

In the communities, the project installed two grinding mills in Kuachual and Mirmir Payams to support communities grind their flour as value chain which is one of the key demands by the local communities in Koch County. A sustainable measure was put in place by appointing five-member management committee (2 women and 3 men) who were identified through the help of traders’ chambers in Koch and Mirmir Payam.

***Output 5.3: Strengthened market systems through local trade and enabling infrastructure***

To aid the market cycle, traders were provided bicycles, fishing kits to fish traders in Kuachlual and Boaw to support them with the transportation of fish from the fishing site to the markets. Others were given to traders in Jaak and Mirmir Payam to support fish traders. The project also supported local farmers who were engaged in vegetable farming using the available swamp or rivers and further supported with construction of water channels as irrigation systems and now the farmers are earning from their produce by selling them in the local markets.

The RSRTF project supported individual particularly women in groups in Jaak, Gany, Kuachlual, Mirmir, and Ngony Payams on income generating activities (IGA) and business skills. The topics included; how to identify a suitable business venture with a focus on what is locally available and what is in high demand within Koch community. The project further provided them with orientation on group start up grants, and how best to manage a business and income generated from group businesses. The potential business opportunities the groups were involved includes embroidery, bead craft, tea making knitting, handcrafts, bakery and many others.

Youths from Koch were also engaged in vocational schools that managed to enrolled 535 learners and graduated them after successfully finishing their vocational course from the three centers established in Kuachlual, Jaak, and Mirmir. Short courses offered were; tailoring, baking, bicycle repairs, brick laying, knitting and carpentry. Now some of the learners were able to support themselves by getting jobs with NGOs, others practicing casual work within the local markets, and other learners have already established businesses. Operation of the secondary schools that was equipped but with low number of students registered for active classes, this was mainly because the primary schools around Koch are not graduating many students to be accommodated, although a certain number were expected from the students returning from PoCs, and other locations which has been a challenge.

The project strengthened, monitored and mentored community members on VSLA/SHGs strategies, groups were formed to manage their savings and the project supports them on modalities of their operations and this has impressed many members to join, about 60 groups were established from six payams and beside this groups established by the project, other members in the communities have also copied the strategy and the project also offered support them. Mainly, VSLA/SHGs members benefit to acquire business and personal loans from the savings and invested in micro-businesses like buying and selling fresh fish, opening tea places as well as making local brews where they can earn income from. So far, each group has declared their profits earned from the loan member acquires.

* ***Beneficiaries:***

A total of 9,947 out of the 3,070 beneficiaries were reached with different interventions under this project as shown in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Number of direct beneficiaries*** | ***Number and % women*** | ***Number and % youth*** | ***Number of indirect beneficiaries***  |
| ***Planned***  | ***3,070*** | ***1,657 (54%)*** | ***736 (24%)*** | ***3,070*** |
| ***Achieved***  | *9,947* | *5,699 (57.3%)* | *2,158 (21.7%)* | *9,947* |

1. ***Indicator Based Performance Assessment:*** Results Framework document is included as Annex
2. **Success Story:** Two success stories are included as annex
3. ***Lessons Learned:*** Lessons learnt is included as annex

**COORDINATION**

1. **Area-Reference Group (ARG):**

The formation and operationalization of the Area Reference Group (ARG) delayed and only began in December 2020. The lockdown measures in response to the COVID 19 pandemic caused further disruptions affecting the monthly ARG meetings. Nonetheless, six meetings were held during the two years. It was attended by its broad stakeholder members comprising of consortium partners, non-consortium partners, the business union representatives, women and youth leaders, faith-based groups represented by the inter-church committee (ICC) and the County Authority represented by Payam Administrators, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). The County Commissioner always sent a delegate to the meetings. The ARG meetings provided feedback to the consortium, received progress on implementation, coordination and complementarity.

1. **Coordination with Authorities & UNMISS:**

During the reporting period, there was no direct participation by UNMISS departments in the activities of “Restoring Peaceful co-existence for better livelihoods in Koch”. However, the presence of protection force under Ghana Battalion, served to deter crime and disturbance especially by some of the armed youth. On occasional visits to Koch UNMISS teams were hosted by consortium partners and together participated in meetings with County Authorities. It contributed to providing access and enhanced cooperation between partners and the County Commissioner in particular. The consortium Steering Committee (CSC) had at least three meetings with the leadership of UNMISS Bentiu field office to discuss the gaps experienced in two areas; access to justice about formal justice, and political engagement to contribute to the socio-political change needed for stability and reconciliation processes. As a result, in consultation with RSRTF secretariat, UNMISS’s departments of reintegration, transition & protection, civil affairs and rule of law have been included in the consortium for the proposed phase II, to purposefully work with consortium partners to deliver wholistic outcome.

**DELAYS & CHALLENGES:**

i) Livelihoods – the destruction of food crops and homestead by the flood frustrated efforts to improve livelihoods. Women who were engaged in bakery businesses cannot easily get ingredients needed for baking, the few products available ones are quite expensive as their prices have more than doubled.

Poor roads network coupled with the floods made project inputs difficult to be delivered. There were some items which were dispatched from Juba early July and took long to be delivered to Koch due many security check points and landing points blocked by water hyacinth.

Some project locations such as Lablabni, Jajah, Jaak, Maar and Gap were not accessible because of flood in addition to restrictions to some locations such as Boaw, Jaak and Guol because of insecurity. Communities from these areas where reached in the place of settlement

Gun welding youth continue to contribute to the feeling of insecurity among the population, though some sections see it as a sign of community protection especially from external cattle raids. The consortium engaged the Police and Commissioner on the matter, to which they indicated being vigilant and monitoring the youth. So far, those indiscipline ones have been apprehended.

The displaced communities moved into Koch town with their animals, so the heavy presence of livestock has also led to destruction of farms. Livestock roam freely further destroying other people’s livelihoods, and in some instances became triggers of conflict. Partners facilitated community dialogues among the displaced and host communities so that emerging issues that may trigger violence are addressed.

Household savings are still low and slow. This is because most households live from hand to mouth. Consortium partners resolved to keep reinforcing on the importance and significance of saving as the foundation for growth and development. This is a general community challenge.

**LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES**

Lessons learnt document is attached as an annex

**RISKS, EXIT STRATEGY & SUSTAINABILITY:**

1. **Risks**

Risks analysis document is attached as an annex.

**ii. Exit Strategy & Sustainability**

The shade in Koch market, the youth center, fish rack in Port 29 are already in the hands of the beneficiaries. During the ARG meeting for the project close out stakeholders’ pledge to carry on with activities. This includes the chief and peace committees.

1. ***Follow-up measures or activities to sustain, reinforce and build on the achieved reconciliation, stabilization and resilience gains if the Programme was extended to next phase?***

A phase II has been requested for strengthening, consolidating and scaling up the gains and accomplishment during the last two year. This will involve mentoring and coaching for sustainability, peace committees in three remaining Payams and linking the working of the chiefs’ informal courts to the judiciary with the support of UNMISS’s rule of law department and UN Police. The youth in the cattle camps will be reach with tailor-made activities that will involve them in alternative livelihoods including financial inclusion strategies.

Individuals who have transitioned VSLA and SHGs into business with be assessed, trained and support with grants. Selected youth will be assigned as apprentices to the fish traders supported at the Ports. These livelihood and vocational training centers will have peace awareness raising sessions by the peace committees in those location.

**MONITORING & EVALUATION**

1. **End line Assessment**

There was reported increased personal safety and security in September 2021, compared to November 2019. This was demonstrated by respondents who reported an increased planting of crops far from home at 80% in September 2021, compared to 76% in November 2019. The ‘Everyday Peace Indicator ‘methodology used for the baseline survey was used to measure personal safety and security perceptions. The number of instances when disputes were referred to peace committees, chiefs’ courts, paralegals increased due to the trust in those community-based structures for resolving disputes. It also included issues arising from housing, land and property (HLP) concerns. There was improved households’ Food Consumption Scores (FCS which is attributed to the period being harvest time and the community had a fair harvest of grains including maize and sorghum. Households diversified their livelihood because of market-based livelihood interventions.

1. **Final evaluation**

The project was evaluated by an external national consulting firm Skills-Max Consulting Inc in September 2021 and the following were the key findings:

* In this first phase activities were implemented in “silos” by consortium partners which did not manifest complementarity and the triple nexus. This was however, recognized during the review workshop for the lesson learnt thus far.
* Whereas the activities were relevant to the needs and context of Koch County, and the consortium is efficiently and effectively managing it, there was significant delay caused in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic protocol and the restrictions of movement due to floods. Unresolved political tensions also affected the timely implementation.
* There was also delay in the formation and operationalization of the Area Reference Group (ARG), an important component in the area programming.
* The sustainability of the activities in the events that the partners leave is also not well articulated, and the community seems not to be properly prepared for the transition.

The evaluator recommended focusing activities on fault-lines and divides that separated communities and prevented collaborative action for stability and better livelihoods. It also pointed out activities that would contribute to transforming attitudes and practices that socialize individuals and groups, especially young people in promoting peace and nonviolence. Youth Engagement should be deepened as a critical factor in those isolated in the cattle camps.

The evaluators recommended faith-based groups as connectors for social cohesion that bring together people from different identities together. They can serve as medium for nurturing and promoting a new collective identity. On peace committees and paralegals, it was recommended that their work should be complementary and sometimes, concurrently executed. Their training should be consolidated, integrated and expanded. The emphasis should be as “community volunteers” and not because the programme is paying them.

Programming to include Payams in neighbouring Counties comprising Guit (Kadet and Kuach payam), Mayendit (Tharjiathbor and Rubkuach payam), Mayom (Bouth and Wangkei payam), and Rubkona (Pakur and Nhialdit payam) which were understood to be hot spots areas was also recommended. This it was observed would enable the area programming to have a positive multiplier effect on the peace and stability in Koch County.

1. **Everyday Peace Indicators**

In 2019, focus groups in Koch were used to locally develop routine indicators of people’s perceptions of safety and security. They were included in the November 2019 base line survey and the September 2021 end line survey, this allowed for change to be observed.

One indicator was feeling safe to return home after dark. In September 2021, end line survey data showed 69.4% of people answered that they had returned home after dark and 87.7% of those said that they felt safe doing so. Of those who had not returned home after dark, 90.1% said that they did not return home after dark as they did not feel safe to do so. Compared to the baseline in November 2021, this showed a slight decline from 77% to 69.4% of people previously saying they had returned home after dark.

Another indicator was travelling outside of their own village in the day, the end line results in September 2021 showed, 93.1% as compared 71% of people that they felt safe travelling outside of their own village during the day. This is because people felt safer to move on the way without being attacked.

The end line survey also demonstrated an increased planting of crops far from home, In September 2021, end line survey data showed 92.2% of people said they had planted crops far from home compared to just 80% in November 2019. In addition, during the end line survey 76% of the people reported feeling less safe doing so. In November 2019, 17% of the respondents confirmed they felt unsafe cultivating far from home. During the end line, 22% of respondents confirmed they felt unsafe cultivating far from home. This suggest that there are other factors forcing people to cultivate further from home despite feeling unsafe. This might include increasing housing, population and farming densities, as well as other causes of food insecurity that are forcing people to take risks with their safety to cultivate enough food.

Respondents were also asked if they grazed cattle on desirable grazing land far from the home. In November 2019, 79% of respondents confirmed they did and 89% of those who did said that they felt safe doing so. By September 2021 during the end line, only 74.4% of people said that they did so, and only 51% said that they felt safe doing so. Therefore, of the 49% who felt unsafe grazing cattle far from home (including both those who still grazed far from home anyway and those who did not), a significant decrease of 11% from baseline survey data.

Almost similar percentages of respondents confirmed during baseline 92% and end line 91% to have collected firewood. However, 90% those who confirmed they felt safe doing so during baseline had declined 72% during end line survey in September 2021. Again, this shows that a significant number of people are currently carrying out this essential livelihood activity without feeling safe to do so.

Another indicator was feared for their immediate families’ safety, during baseline survey, 75% of the respondents confirmed to have feared for the safety of their immediate family member of respondents, an compared to 83.7% confirmed that they either often or sometimes had feared for their immediate families’ safety during end line survey. This provides a clear indication of the continued widespread concern in Koch over personal safety. The cause of the fear among respondents was most often from fear of a cattle raid, from targeted revenge or from rape or sexual violence. However, 45.9% of respondents confirmed during end line survey that they often or sometimes feared for their personal safety because of the threat of governing authorities enforcing their power. 44.3% also said that they often or sometimes feared for their personal safety because of the potential for an attack from the government or SPLA-IO.

The most significant decline in indicators of perceptions of safety was a reduction in people’s movement between government and IO areas. During baseline survey, 75% of respondents confirmed that they had moved between government-held and armed opposition held territory and 91% of those said that they felt safe doing so compared to only 44.3% of respondents confirmed during end line survey in September 2021 that they had moved between government-held and armed opposition held territory and 82.7% of those who said they didn’t move to opposition held area said that they felt safe doing so.

Therefore, over all, there was a decline in people perceiving that they were safe and secure. This might be best explained by this last indicator of people’s movement between SPLA-IO and government areas. Of all the indicators, this was the most negative change. At the time of the survey, there was growing SPLA-IO – government tensions, and threats against people moving between these areas. This growing tension might have caused the broader decline in perceptions of safety and security and connected behavior.

1. **M&E coordination**

At the beginning November 2019, the project conducted a baseline assessment that has informed few specific indicators on the result framework that were indicated as new activities and others had missing information. The baseline survey data was vital for comparison with the end line survey that was conducted later in September 2021. Also, during the implementation reporting period, the project facilitated a baseline assessment on HLP and the team participated and contributed to the development of questionnaires, data collection and later data analysis and report presentation which was disseminated. The M&E team supported in the development of the standard operating procedures focusing on development of post-distribution monitoring tools for the agro-inputs. Market price collection forms designed on ONA downloaded in tablets meant for accurate data collection from markets by trained staff which helped to update the partners on trends of market prices with Koch County.

M&E Coordinator also supported RSRTF project staff on usage of indicator tracking tools, data collection tools and developing a working plan based on the indicator output targets, provided more information on the project indicators. Project tools were developed to appropriately capture and monitor the progress of the indicators. Mostly, during the implementation period, M&E Coordinator liaised with M&E project focal point persons from all the partners to track progress on project outcomes and outputs monthly and quarterly. The team also monitored project activities throughout the implementation by reviewing indicator performances and document lesson learned and impact stories for the project.

Project coordination meetings was facilitated on Monthly bases, it was a reliable platform for discussion about project activity progress, challenges and way forward for all the partners and besides that, there is social platform for updating partner members which was an effective means to relay information. Learning workshop was also conducted twice, thus at the beginning and towards the end of the project, where all project staff where invited for the participatory meeting, where the project team learned about goals of the project and how its implemented by all the consortium partners.

Monitoring ensured engagements with communities on accountability of affected persons (AAP) to assess satisfaction of the program on the participants. Towards the end of the project (July 2021) the M&E Coordinator liaised with representatives from partners, to conduct a community feedback meetings where all partners were represented and selected community members (representatives from payam leaders, direct beneficiaries, and other community members) were met to ascertain their knowledge about the project, what impact/change have they experienced by expressing their general view about RSRTF project implementation, thus, feedback (positive or negative) or complain related to the implementation of the project. Later feedback to the complains were provided by the team and questions were also provided feedback as it was facilitated by the consortium M&E Coordinator. The meeting was conducted across all the payams except Mirmir by that time it was hard to reach due to flood and insecurity reasons. Outcome of the meeting was very positive and all the partners participated. Also, at partner levels, complaints and feedback were by the rollout complain feedback respond mechanism (a system put across partners to gather complain/feedback) and responses were provided through field visits and community meetings. Main key feedback/complaints captured at the same time given attention includes; inadequate psychosocial support materials, extension of SCE in all the payams, demand for cash during meetings instead of refreshment, among others, and the feedback included appreciation for the establishment county court which they said was a great achievement especially in justice sector, dignity kits and bicycles distributed to the community and establishment of the women and girl’s friendly spaces, One Stop Centre and among others.

**PROGRAMMATIC REVISIONS (if applicable)**

**Major adjustments in strategies, targets or key outcomes and outputs that took place.**

During the RSRTF project implementation, some of the project indicator targets were not achieved as planned and some adjustments were done based on the budget available. For example, the VSLA group was planned to form only five groups, but the budget allowed for the project to form six which was one in each payams that are easily accessible which was also away of avoiding conflict amongst the communities in Koch.

Program initially designed with VSLA approach was changed to a new approach called self-help group (SHGs). This was so because SHGs approach allows for capital grants to be provided to groups and discourages division of money saved at the end of the cycle of savings that allows for continuity and sustainable access to savings and credit among group members. VSLA approach was not good enough to target many members to provide sustainable access to credit and savings to the groups as the project targeted 55 groups with group members ranging between 25 to 30 individuals.

The RSRTF project activity implementation was also affected with the measure put in place to control the spread of COVID-19 since March 2020 when it was declared pandemic. The outbreak of COVID-19 caused a significant delay in activity implementation such as school operation, public gathering, vocational school operation and other activities which further curtailed activity implementation. This was exacerbated by unseasonable flooding in South Sudan which rendered most project location inaccessible. Therefore, this has forced the project to seek for no cost extension for addition of three months to implement pending activities especially vocational trainings, secondary school, second chance education, capacity building of local chiefs, local political leaders, and local stakeholders. Of the four consortia, only three World Relief, CARE, and Mercy Corps participated in the no-cost extension. DRC has virtually completed all planned activities (at 97% implementation). The project had consistently adopted the sustainable means of managing the risk pose by the COVID-19 and later implemented all the pending activities as planned during the no-cost extension.

**RESOURCES (Optional)**

* + Provide any information on financial management, procurement and human resources.
	+ Indicate if the Programme mobilized any additional resources or interventions from other partners.

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

During the RSRTF project implementation period, partners have benefited from having to deliver different components of the project activities together, saving on time needed to bring the same beneficiaries to different events. The ARG and working group approaches have provided partners with an opportunity to share information and planned trainings and events to see how these can be combined. The project has also benefited from the use of already set facilities like the youth resource centers and vocational centers as venues for meetings, workshops, trainings and events. The existing committees and structures set up by the partners, like Peace committees, VSLA groups have also been key for mobilising communities and provision of information and awareness to communities.

**COMMENTS AND FEEDBACKS (optional)**

* Provide any additional feedback or recommendations on operational, programmatic, or strategic issues to the RSRTF, Administrative Agent (AA) or Managing Agent (MA). For instance, what could the RSRTF / AA / MA have done differently to support your?
1. UNCF 2019-2021 Priority Areas; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](http://mdtf.undp.org) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](http://mdtf.undp.org) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](http://mdtf.undp.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)