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TRUST FUND

Reconciliation Stabilization Resilience

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2024



**United Nations Multi-Partner Trust
Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization
and Resilience in South Sudan**

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS





A young girl reads 'SASA! Together' material—part of a community-led effort to prevent violence against women and girls. Implemented by IOM under the RSRTF ABP in Central Equatoria State, the initiative promotes safer relationships and positive power dynamics in homes and communities.

IMAGE: MUSE MOHAMMED/IOM

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In the sweltering midday heat of Pibor, people rest beneath trees—spaces that double as informal forums for dialogue and connection. These everyday interactions play a quiet but vital role in fostering community cohesion.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CVR	Community Violence Reduction
DSRSG/RC/HC	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General / Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK)
GPAA	Greater Pibor Administrative Area
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
MSS	Measuring Safety and Security
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
POC	Protection of Civilians
RSRTF	Reconciliation, Stabilisation and Resilience Trust Fund
R-ARCSS	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WFP	World Food Programme



FOREWORD

In 2024, South Sudan experienced a deepening crisis marked by stalled political processes, growing insecurity, and economic fragility exacerbated by regional instability and climate-related shocks. Yet amidst this uncertainty, the Reconciliation, Stabilisation and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) remained a vital instrument that contribute to holding fragile communities together through locally driven, peace-positive interventions.

During the year, the RSRTF's area-based programming offered a model of practical, conflict-sensitive engagement that enhanced social cohesion. From Tonj to Central Equatoria and Jonglei, the Fund's integrated approach helped communities recover from violence, rebuild trust, and strengthen their resilience to future shocks.

In 2024, the RSRTF supported more than 60 intercommunal dialogues, helped reintegrate 183 abducted women and children, expanded access to justice through mobile courts that resolved 154 cases, and provided critical livelihood support to 31,226 at-risk youth, women, and returnees. These are not abstract metrics, they represent real people whose lives were protected and dignities restored because of our collective efforts through the Fund.

The Fund's ability to operate in high-risk areas, where national-level peace dividends remain elusive, is a testament to the strength of local leadership, the innovation of implementing partners, and the value of sustained donor support. Its inclusive governance mechanisms, community-centered design, and flexible funding model continue to prove essential in navigating South Sudan's volatile landscape.

However, this work is not without challenges. Funding constraints, political volatility, and gaps in development transitions remain serious obstacles to consolidating gains. The Fund's 2024 evaluation has rightly called for stronger strategic direction, more coherent collaboration with other funding instruments, and a more deliberate approach to exit and sustainability.

As we look to 2025, the RSRTF's role will be more critical than ever. The Fund must continue to bridge the gap between emergency response and long-term development by investing in local capacities, strengthening inclusive governance, and delivering visible peace dividends at the community level. The Fund will also enhanced its collaboration with other Funds, promoting greater synergies and complementarity.


On behalf of the United Nations in South Sudan, I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the government, donors, civil society, and the communities themselves who are leading this work from the ground up. The RSRTF demonstrates what is possible when peacebuilding is owned locally, coordinated strategically, and supported with patience and trust.

In a time of mounting pressure on our collective ability to "stay and deliver," the RSRTF reminds us that the most delicate seeds of peace can defiantly take root even on fragile ground.

The Fund must continue to bridge the gap between emergency response and long-term development by investing in local capacities, strengthening inclusive governance, and delivering visible peace dividends at the community level

Ms Anita Gbeho Kiki

DSRSG/RC/HC
Chair, RSRTF Steering Committee



“People used to walk two to three hours to town just to grind maize and sorghum. Now, they can come here”

- Sarah Bonaire

IMAGE: MUSE MOHAMMED/IOM

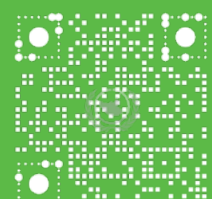
“I STAYED THROUGH THE WORST”: FROM CONFLICT TO COMMUNITY ANCHOR

“I didn’t leave. I stayed through the worst of it,” says Sarah Bonaire, a resilient business owner in Yei, South Sudan. Sarah runs a grinding mill—an essential service in her community. “People used to walk two to three hours to town just to grind maize and sorghum. Now, they can come here.”

Sarah’s journey into entrepreneurship started when a local organization provided business training. She and others identified the need for a local grinding mill, especially in remote areas where such services were scarce. “Most people didn’t have access to a grinding mill. That’s why we chose this business,” she explains.

Her grinding mill now employs one other person and has become vital for the local community. With it, people can grind their staple foods—maize, sorghum, and cassava—without risking the dangerous long journeys they once made. “The security is better now because people don’t have to travel far,” she adds.

Thanks to the business, Sarah can support her two children, aged 10 and 3, and dreams of giving them a better future. “I want them to have their own opportunities,” she says. From surviving conflict to supporting her family, Sarah’s grinding mill has become a cornerstone of her community’s daily life.



CLICK OR SCAN
FOR DETAILS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against the backdrop of political uncertainty, persistent insecurity, and economic hardship, the Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) remained a crucial mechanism for peacebuilding and stability in South Sudan throughout 2024. As the country navigated yet another extension of its transition period under the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), the RSRTF played a pivotal role in mitigating localised conflicts, strengthening governance structures, and fostering economic resilience in some of the nation's most fragile regions.

STABILISATION AMID POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

While national political processes remained stalled—marked by a fourth extension of the transition period and continued elite power struggles—the RSRTF's interventions provided a stabilising force in high-risk areas. Programmes in Jonglei, Unity, Central Equatoria and Warrap states focused on community violence reduction, conflict mediation, and support for local governance, preventing political tensions from escalating into widespread violence.

CONFLICT REDUCTION AND PEACEBUILDING

The RSRTF supported over 60 intercommunal dialogues across conflict-prone areas, brokered several localised peace agreements, and facilitated the successful reintegration of 161 abducted women and children. The removal of military checkpoints in key trade routes improved security and freedom of movement, benefiting local economies and displaced persons returning to their communities.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

In response to deepening economic distress exacerbated by the temporary suspension of oil exports, the RSRTF expanded its livelihood and resilience programmes. More than 4,300 farmers received agricultural inputs and climate-smart training, while vocational training programmes empowered over 500 young people, including ex-combatants, with alternative sources of income. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) provided financial resilience to over 1,450,000 SSP in microloans, reducing dependence on humanitarian aid.

GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE SECTOR STRENGTHENING

The RSRTF played a critical role in reinforcing local governance by establishing Police-Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) and supporting mobile courts to increase access to justice in underserved areas. Over 300 cases were successfully adjudicated, reducing reliance on informal and sometimes violent dispute resolution mechanisms.

CHALLENGES

Despite its achievements, the RSRTF faced several critical challenges that threaten the sustainability of its impact:

- **Insufficient Transition to Development Actors:** The RSRTF was intended to serve as a catalytic mechanism for longer-term recovery, but limited engagement and follow-up investment from development partners have undermined this goal. Without stronger coordination and strategic alignment with development agencies, there is a serious risk that RSRTF's stabilisation gains will not be sustained, leaving conflict-affected communities vulnerable to renewed instability.
- **Funding Shortfalls and Donor Fatigue:** The withdrawal of key donors, including Sweden, and reduced contributions from Canada and Korea, have exposed RSRTF programmes to serious financial strain. The decline in predictable funding jeopardises the Fund's ability to maintain momentum and risks reversing peacebuilding and resilience gains if continued support is not secured.
- **Governance and Strategic Direction Gaps:** The Fund evaluation conducted in 2024 highlighted weaknesses in the Fund's governance—particularly within the Steering Committee — lack of leadership and a lack of clarity around RSRTF's strategic identity. Uncertainty over whether the Fund should remain a short-term catalytic

instrument or take on a broader recovery mandate has created operational ambiguity and hindered decisive planning and coordination with other funding mechanisms.

In 2024, the volatile political context in South Sudan also significantly shaped the operational environment for RSRTF programmes, particularly through insecurity, fragmented governance, and shifting leadership structures. In Central Equatoria State (CES), ongoing conflict involving armed groups such as the National Salvation Front (NAS) disrupted access to target communities in Yei, Morobo, and Lainya, impeding programme delivery and mobility. Political fragmentation also constrained implementation of peace agreements, as key resolutions—such as those from the Kajo-Keji peace conference—required action by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF), which often failed to follow through. Similarly, in Greater Jonglei and the GPAA, administrative turnover and the absence of a cohesive political framework meant that consistent stakeholder engagement was necessary just to maintain programme relevance.

These dynamics forced RSRTF teams to adapt by prepositioning supplies, adjusting activity timelines, and relying heavily on community-led mechanisms like Inter-Communal Governance Structures (ICGSs) to sustain peace dialogues and reconciliation efforts. In Greater Tonj, frequent changes in state and county government leadership created discontinuities in programme implementation. These transitions often required re-orientation of new officials unfamiliar with the area-based programme approach. Nevertheless, RSRTF partners employed mitigation strategies such as engaging permanent civil service staff to maintain continuity and scaling up training for local governance structures, which played a stabilising role amid political flux.

LOOKING FORWARD

As South Sudan approaches elections in December 2026, the RSRTF's role will be even more vital in bridging short-term stabilisation efforts with long-term resilience and governance strengthening. Moving forward, key priorities include:

- **Enhancing Local Ownership:** Strengthening the role of Area Reference Groups (ARGs), local government agencies, national and local civil societies, women and youth groups to ensure sustainability beyond RSRTF interventions.
- **Securing Multi-Year Funding:** Engaging new donors and exploring innovative financing models to sustain programme impact.
- **Strengthening Coordination with Development Partners:** Aligning RSRTF interventions with broader development goals to ensure a smooth transition from stabilisation to economic growth.

The RSRTF's adaptive, area-based approach has demonstrated that targeted, community-led interventions can significantly contribute to peace and stability in South Sudan. By continuing to invest in reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience-building, the RSRTF remains an essential tool for supporting South Sudanese communities in their journey toward sustainable peace and development.

SOUTH SUDAN CONTEXT IN 2024

Against a backdrop of political delays, persistent insecurity, and economic hardship, the RSRTF remained a crucial instrument for stabilisation in South Sudan. While the national peace process struggled to deliver tangible benefits, the Fund operated in some of the country's most fragile regions, addressing the everyday realities of conflict-affected communities.

Looking back on 2024, South Sudan remained a nation in transition, balancing on the fragile edge of political reform, persistent insecurity, and deepening economic distress. While progress was made in some areas of governance and peace implementation, the year was largely defined by continued uncertainty—both in the country's trajectory toward democratic elections and in its ability to maintain stability in the face of internal and external pressures. In this turbulent landscape, the Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) proved to be a critical tool, adapting to shifting dynamics and providing targeted support where it was most needed.

As 2024 unfolded, the roadmap set out by the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) remained incomplete. The transition, which was meant to deliver key reforms and prepare the country for its first-ever elections, instead saw extensions—its fourth—postponing elections to December 2026. While government leaders justified this delay as necessary to finalise security arrangements, voter registration, and civic education, many feared it was yet another sign of stagnation, reflecting elite power struggles rather than genuine progress toward democratic consolidation.

Political manoeuvring intensified throughout the year, as factions within the government and opposition jockeyed for position ahead of the eventual elections. Meanwhile, efforts to incorporate non-signatory groups into the peace process through the Tumaini Initiative saw little success, with negotiations repeatedly stalling over power-sharing disputes and oversight mechanisms. The inability to bring holdout groups into the fold left a critical gap in the country's security landscape, as some of these factions continued to operate outside formal structures, fuelling localised violence and insecurity.

For the RSRTF, this political fragility reinforced the necessity of a stabilisation-focused approach. With the national transition faltering, the Fund's targeted interventions at the local level became even more relevant offering a means to support reconciliation, strengthen community resilience, and mitigate the risk of localised conflicts escalating into broader political crises.

Despite the absence of full-scale civil war, conflict in South Sudan did not abate in 2024—it simply manifested in different, often more fragmented ways. The UNMISS Human Rights Division documented over 3,600 civilians affected by violence, a stark reminder that for many South Sudanese, peace remains an abstract concept rather than a lived reality.

Across the country, multiple conflict drivers converged:

- Inter and Intra-communal violence, particularly in Warrap, Unity, Jonglei, and Greater Pibor, continued to fuel cycles of revenge attacks, cattle raids, and displacement.
- Localised clashes between armed factions and holdout groups flared in Central and Western Equatoria, often linked to unresolved political tensions and competition for influence.
- The conflict in Sudan spilled over into South Sudan's border regions, increasing the number of displaced persons and exacerbating tensions over land and resources in Upper Nile and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Since the conflict in Sudan started, over one million people crossed the border into South Sudan, complicating the humanitarian situation.

One of the most troubling trends was the resurgence of politically linked subnational violence, particularly where factions aligned with R-ARCSS signatories engaged in clashes over territory, power, and access to state resources. These conflicts underscored a broader reality: the peace process remained incomplete, and in many cases, conflict was simply being displaced rather than resolved.

The RSRTF's presence in these contested spaces was vital. With state security forces stretched thin, accountability mechanisms weak, and political disputes often playing out through violence, the Fund's



In South Sudan, cattle are more than livestock—they are wealth, dowry, status, and tradition. But this deep cultural value often comes at a high cost. Cattle-related raids and revenge attacks remain one of the leading triggers of intercommunal violence, especially among youth.

stabilisation efforts helped to fill critical gaps—supporting community-led peacebuilding, reinforcing local governance structures, and providing resources to mitigate the root causes of conflict.

Beyond politics and security, 2024 pushed South Sudan's economy further into crisis. The most significant shock came in February 2024, when Sudan's conflict-related damage to the oil pipeline forced a suspension of exports—South Sudan's primary revenue source. The ensuing economic turmoil—currency depreciation, salary arrears, rising inflation—left the government struggling to provide basic services and pay its civil servants. Though the government announced that a gradual resumption of oil exports will take place in early 2025, the damage had already been done, public discontent was rising, urban protests became more frequent, and economic grievances deepened existing political and security tensions.

This economic downturn had direct consequences for conflict dynamics. As livelihoods became more precarious, competition over resources—particularly land, water, and grazing areas—intensified. The humanitarian situation worsened, with millions of South Sudanese facing food insecurity, a crisis further exacerbated by climate shocks such as flooding and droughts. In this environment, the RSRTF's focus on resilience-building became even more critical. Beyond immediate stabilisation efforts, the Fund's work in supporting livelihood recovery, economic diversification, and local capacity-building helped to create pathways out of vulnerability, reducing the likelihood that economic despair would translate into further conflict.

As South Sudan enters another prolonged transition period, the challenges of 2024 will not simply disappear. The risks of political instability, renewed violence, and economic distress remain high—and if left unaddressed, they could unravel the fragile progress made in recent years.

CUMULATIVE OUTPUTS ACCORDING TO RSRTF INDICATORS

180,190

people reached with sensitisation messages on violence reduction promoting inter-communal peace and reconciliation efforts



30

radio programmes supported to promote intercommunal peace and reconciliation

36,121

individuals affected by violence were provided with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and rehabilitation

1,356

youths in cattle camps trained on conflict management.

388

Abductees recovered and supported with family tracing and reunification

215

safety and security/conflict monitoring activities conducted and reports disseminated to inform advocacy and programmatic direction

862

UNMISS patrols conducted



6,424

community representatives, including women- specific clusters trained on community security approaches and action planning

3,294

justice sector actors trained

2,895

SGBV survivors benefitting from victim redress mechanisms

178

cases investigated and adjudicated by the mobile courts deployed



2,188

individuals provided with legal aid service

815

government officials trained to better manage and provide basic services

29,907

women, men, boys, and girls received capacity strengthening, training and technical support

28,528

individuals engaged in building restoration or maintaining community assets through cash for work

4,540

students enrolled and graduated from functional adult literacy and second chance education (SCE) program

7,179

at-risk youth provided access to career development and employment/ livelihood opportunities

140

community assets built, restored or maintained

4,791

people actively participated in Harmonised Community-Based Participatory Planning exercises to identify structural drivers of recurring crises in their communities



RSRTF AT A GLANCE

The Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) is a United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund established in December 2018 as a joint initiative of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Created in response to the enduring impacts of the violent conflict and civil war that began in 2013—including mass displacement, protracted insecurity, and deep community fragmentation—the RSRTF was designed to support South Sudan’s transition from crisis to recovery by addressing the root causes of violence and instability through locally led solutions that foster peace, resilience, and long-term development.

The RSRTF operates within the “Triple Nexus” framework, strategically bridging humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development interventions. Unlike traditional humanitarian aid programmes that focus on immediate relief, the Fund provides flexible, strategic financing to stabilise communities and enable longer-term recovery. Its area-based programming concentrates resources in specific conflict hotspots, allowing tailored, context-specific responses grounded in local peace agreements and realities.

The RSRTF aligns with the “sustaining peace” approach articulated in the 2016 UN Security Council resolution, which emphasises conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and inclusive engagement across all phases of the conflict cycle. It is also directly aligned with the UN Cooperation Framework (UNCF) for South Sudan (2019–2021), and the Fund works to ensure targeted communities are protected, facilitating humanitarian access, supporting the Revitalised Peace Agreement, and address to human rights violations. This strategic integration positions the RSRTF as a key mechanism for operationalising the political and development priorities of the UN system in South Sudan.

To achieve its objectives, the RSRTF adheres to a whole-of-system approach that strengthens partnerships among UN agencies, local and international NGOs, civil society, and government institutions. It promotes strategic alliances that leverage comparative advantages and local knowledge to maximise impact. The Fund minimises earmarking and operates through pooled, inter-agency funding, enhancing coordination, responsiveness, and trust among stakeholders.

A key feature of the RSRTF is its Area-Based Programmes (ABPs), which implement small-scale, high-impact interventions in targeted locations through rapid, flexible grant mechanisms. These programmes are grounded in locally owned peace agreements and shaped through inclusive planning processes involving diverse community stakeholders—including both victims and perpetrators of violence. This grassroots model enhances local ownership, accountability, and adaptability, allowing the Fund to respond effectively to emerging risks while addressing the structural drivers of conflict.

THE THREE PILLARS

The RSRTF is structured around three interconnected pillars—Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience—that together form a foundation for sustainable peace and recovery.

1. Reconciliation: Building Trust and Social Cohesion

Reconciliation lies at the heart of the RSRTF’s mission, focusing on healing divisions and fostering peaceful coexistence in communities fractured by decades of ethnic, political, and economic conflict. The Fund supports locally led peace dialogues, community mediation, and inclusive conflict resolution processes.

Key reconciliation activities include:

- Community dialogues and peace agreements involving traditional authorities, local leaders, and civil society actors.
- Conflict prevention and mediation efforts that enhance local capacities for peaceful dispute resolution.
- Gender- and youth-inclusive peacebuilding initiatives that ensure meaningful participation of women and young people.

- Involvement of both victims and perpetrators in reconciliation processes and trauma awareness to promote healing and justice.

2. Stabilisation: Strengthening Governance and Security

The stabilisation pillar aims to restore order and provide communities with tangible peace dividends by addressing urgent governance and security challenges. Many areas in South Sudan suffer from weak institutions, limited justice service delivery, and a lack of justice mechanisms—conditions that fuel cycles of violence.

Stabilisation interventions include:

- Strengthening local governance, traditional and formal justice systems .
- Improving physical security through investments in police posts, justice infrastructure, and community safety initiatives.
- Creating space for peaceful political processes and rebuilding trust between citizens and institutions.

3. Resilience: Enabling Communities to Withstand Future Shocks

Resilience-building under the RSRTF focuses on empowering communities with the tools and resources needed to break cycles of dependency and conflict-driven livelihoods. It supports inclusive economic recovery, food security, and social integration to deter violence and promote long-term development.

Resilience activities include:

- Vocational training and life skills development, especially for youth and women.
- Small business and entrepreneurship support.
- Climate-smart agricultural and livestock development to improve food security and income generation.
- Social safety nets, community assets development, and community-based economic initiatives that build interdependence and self-reliance.
- Rehabilitating roads, marketplaces, and administrative centres to improve service delivery and economic access.
- Promoting agency, equality, and social cohesion to shift incentives away from violence.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIC APPROACH

To achieve its objectives, the RSRTF adheres to three guiding principles that shape its approach to programming:

- 1. Increasing Local Focus** – Ensuring that interventions are driven by local analysis, priorities, and decision-making, empowering South Sudanese communities to take the lead in shaping their own future.
- 2. Bridging Silos** – Delivering coordinated, cross-sectoral responses that address the full range of conflict drivers, breaking down divisions between humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development efforts.
- 3. Promoting Partnership** – Strengthening collaboration and coordination among UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, and government institutions to maximise impact and ensure sustainability.

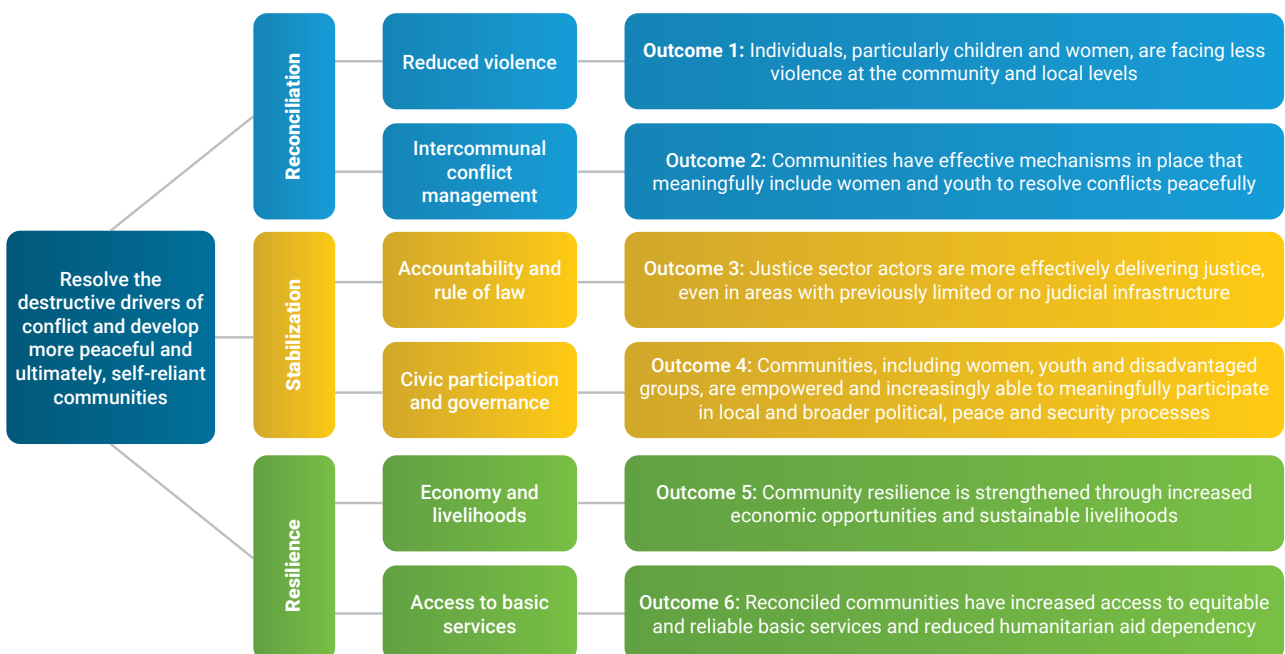
By integrating reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience-building efforts into a cohesive and locally driven framework, the RSRTF plays a vital role in breaking cycles of violence, fostering trust, and enabling long-term recovery in South Sudan. Its area-based, adaptive, and inclusive approach allows the Fund to respond effectively to emerging crises while ensuring that investments lay the foundation for sustainable peace.

As South Sudan continues its transition, the RSRTF remains an essential mechanism for supporting community-led solutions, strengthening governance, and ensuring that peace dividends reach those most affected by conflict. Through continued engagement and strategic partnerships, the Fund is helping to shape a future where communities are safer, more resilient, and better positioned for sustainable development.

RSRTF ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO THE SDGs



RSRTF PILLARS AND OUTCOMES





Sarah's grinding mill in Yei is more than a business—it's a lifeline. By employing local youth, she's helping build skills, income, and stability in a community once torn by conflict.

IMAGE: MUSE MOHAMMED/IOM

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2024, the Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) reaffirmed its relevance and impact amidst political uncertainty, economic volatility, and persistent conflict risks in South Sudan. Guided by its Strategic Investment Plan and built around its area-based approach, the Fund completed a successful programme in Koch and expanded into new intervention areas in Southern Unity, including Leer, Mayendit, and Panyijar, as well as border counties in Lakes and Greater Tonj. These strategic expansions reflect the RSRTF's ability to pivot and respond effectively to emerging needs, targeting regions where peacebuilding and resilience are most urgent.

Furthermore, with a new flexible three-year implementation model valued at USD 10.71 million for the Southern Unity programme, the RSRTF transitioned away from costlier two-phase approaches, increasing effectiveness while maintaining financial prudence.

Despite significant donor funding constraints in 2024, the RSRTF raised USD 22.26 million, thanks largely to continued support from the European Union, the Netherlands and Switzerland. While traditional donors like Norway, Germany, and Sweden paused their contributions due to global aid restructuring and inflationary pressures, the Fund's performance and strategic value enabled it to secure top-up commitments from the EU (USD 6.59 million) and Switzerland (USD 559,871). Cumulative contributions since inception now total over USD 119 million.

CONTRIBUTORS	Contributions in 2024	Additional Amount	CUMULATIVE (2019-2024)	
			Commitments	Deposits
Norway	0		29,190,125	29,190,125
European Union	10,928,500	6,591,000	23,068,500	23,068,500
Germany	0		21,517,039	21,517,039
Netherlands	3,832,500		18,315,000	16,990,000
Sweden	0		18,221,074	18,221,074
Canada	0		3,961,769	3,961,769
Switzerland	352,469	559,871	2,769,951	2,553,968
Republic of Korea	0		2,200,000	2,200,000
Grand Total	15,113,469	7,150,871	119,243,458	117,702,476

PROVING RELEVANCE IN A FRAGILE CONTEXT

The RSRTF's integrated programming focuses on three pillars: reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience. This year, the Fund successfully leveraged these pillars to reduce intercommunal violence, strengthen governance, and improve livelihoods through community-driven solutions.

Throughout 2024, the RSRTF's relevance was reaffirmed in three critical ways:

- 1. Providing Stability Amidst Political Uncertainty:** As the peace process stalled and elections were delayed, the RSRTF filled critical gaps by strengthening local governance and mitigating local tensions.
- 2. Responding to a Fragmented Security Landscape:** The RSRTF's rapid response capabilities were critical in hotspots like Warrap, Jonglei, and GPAA. Targeted reconciliation and stabilisation efforts prevented escalation.
- 3. Addressing the Economic and Humanitarian Fallout:** As the economic crisis deepened, the Fund's resilience and livelihoods programming helped buffer vulnerable communities from further deterioration.

The RSRTF evaluation echoed these findings, highlighting its area-based approach as a major strength. While

2024 OUTPUTS ACCORDING TO RSRTF INDICATORS

16,514

people reached with sensitisation messages on violence reduction promoting inter-communal peace and reconciliation efforts (5267 female and 7583 male)



17

radio programmes supported to promote intercommunal peace and reconciliation

9,026

individuals affected by violence were provided with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and rehabilitation (4506 female and 7583 male)

1,119

youths in cattle camps trained on conflict management. (279 female and 840 male)

161

Abductees recovered and supported with family tracing and reunification (27 female, 53 girls and 81 boys)

93

safety and security/conflict monitoring activities conducted and reports disseminated to inform advocacy and programmatic direction



69

UNMISS patrols conducted



3,882

community representatives, including women- specific clusters trained on community security approaches and action planning (916 female and 2966 male)

2,072

justice sector actors trained (464 female and 1508 male)

443

SGBV survivors benefitting from victim redress mechanisms (276 female and 635 male)

210

government officials trained to better manage and provide basic services (22 Female and 188 male)

154

cases investigated and adjudicated by the mobile courts deployed



911

individuals provided with legal aid service (276 female and 635 male)

1,5020

women, men, boys, and girls received capacity strengthening, training and technical support (5960 female and 9039 male)

2,556

at-risk youth provided access to career development and employment/ livelihood opportunities (276 female and 635 male)

13,650

individuals engaged in building restoration or maintaining community assets through cash for work (3773 female and 8484 male)

1,356

students enrolled and graduated from functional adult literacy and second chance education (SCE) program (356 female and 982 male)

69

community assets built, restored or maintained

3,303

people actively participated in Harmonised Community-Based Participatory Planning exercises to identify structural drivers of recurring crises in their communities (669 female and 2634 male)



challenges remain in strategic coordination with other funding streams like the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF), the RSRTF's flexible, locally driven model has consistently delivered impact where larger systems struggle to operate.¹

In a year marked by setbacks and volatility, the RSRTF delivered where it mattered most: at the community level. Through localised initiatives, the RSRTF enabled concrete improvements for community peace and security.

Greater Tonj, has seen a significant improvement in social cohesion and peaceful co-existence within and between the different communities. Systematic and sustained community engagement processes, complemented by engagement of armed youth in vocational skills training and productive livelihood activities are proving effective to disengage youth from violence.

In **Central Equatoria State (CES)** Peace dialogues on cattle migration played a crucial role in fostering reconciliation, while infrastructure projects—such as the Kubri Bridge—are enhancing connectivity and strengthening community resilience. At the same time, effective civil-military dialogue, leading to removal of multiple checkpoints is enhancing economic access and enabling safe returns. The programme's localisation approach, which prioritises engagement with local stakeholders, has been instrumental in ensuring community ownership and long-term sustainability.

One of the most significant RSRTF achievements has been the decline in large-scale mobilisation for violence, particularly between **Jonglei and GPAA communities**—driven by proactive conflict prevention, strengthened community engagement, and sustainable, locally led approaches such as inter-communal governance structures (ICGS), age-set reconciliation and joint peace missions. This shift has been reinforced by improved access to justice, enhanced police-community relations, and the revival of customary legal systems, all contributing to greater accountability and trust in the rule of law. At the same time, livelihood and resilience programmes—including vocational training and agricultural support—have empowered individuals economically, fostering stability and reducing the appeal of violence.

While programme activities in Leer, Mayiendit, and Panyijiar areas of **Southern Unity** are still in the early

1 Comprehensive Evaluation of the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Resilience and Stabilisation (RSRTF) (Juba: DETCRO, December 2024). Available at <https://www.rsrtf.org/our-impact-1>.

NAVIGATING PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

The 2024 operating environment faced considerable challenges:

- **Dwindling Donor Funding:** Inflation and shifting foreign policy priorities reduced the availability of predictable funding, underscoring the need for broader donor engagement.
- **Political Volatility:** Inconsistent leadership at the subnational level, frequent changes in governors, and poor implementation of the R-ARCSS agreement weakened governance structures and delayed project rollouts.
- **Insecurity and Violence:** Armed clashes, cattle raiding, and the activities of groups like NAS continued to endanger communities, especially in Jonglei, GPAA, and CES.
- **Macroeconomic Instability:** A 383% depreciation in the SSP and skyrocketing inflation affected procurement and household resilience, weakening market functionality.
- **Climate Crises and Access Constraints:** In Southern Unity, Jonglei and Tonj East, prolonged flooding displaced communities and delayed infrastructure projects coupled with poor access through road networks.
- **Weak Rule of Law:** There is an existing lack of coordination between customary and statutory justice systems which the partners are prioritising to address however, they face challenges while recruiting justice actors and ensuring their salaries from the central government. This was evident in Greater Tonj and CES during the period which hindered the effective rollout of the legal programme components in due time.

Despite these constraints, RSRTF partners adapted programme operations to sustain delivery. Key measures included prepositioning supplies, flexible implementation planning, crisis-modifier activations, and increased coordination with partners and local authorities.

stage's activities undertaken in 2024 have laid important groundwork for peace and social cohesion. Through initial peace dialogues, reconciliation meetings, and inclusive community forums, the programme has brought together chiefs, youth, women, religious leaders, and local authorities to address key conflict drivers such as revenge killings, cattle raids, and land disputes. These efforts have fostered a strong sense of collective responsibility for peace, encouraging communities to take ownership of conflict prevention and resolution moving forward.

ENHANCED COORDINATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

RSRTF's Area Reference Groups (ARGs) continue to play a central role in fostering inclusive, multi-stakeholder planning and oversight. Where functioning well, ARGs have allowed local leaders, government officials, and NGOs to co-design and oversee interventions, ensuring contextual relevance and community ownership.

One of RSRTF's standout achievements in 2024 was its improved coordination with external partners and funding mechanisms. In Jonglei and GPAA, coordination with UNMISS Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) enabled joint delivery of vital infrastructure such as court buildings and feeder roads. In CES, collaboration with humanitarian response teams reduced land disputes between returnees and host communities.

In Jonglei and GPAA, the RSRTF has achieved notable success under the reconciliation pillar through a coordinated approach with the IOM programme in GPAA, the Shejeh Salam initiative funded by USAID, the UN PBF and the Peacebuilding Opportunity Fund (PoF) of FCDO.. This collaboration has contributed to a significant reduction in mass mobilisations, fewer youth joining conflict actors, and improved protection of women and children from gender-based violence and abductions.

Additionally, RSRTF's adaptive management approach allowed budget reallocations and rapid deployment of crisis modifiers. This ensured quick, community-led responses to emerging threats, such as cattle raiding or political violence.

Yet gaps remain. The Fund evaluation identified challenges in aligning timelines and strategies with other donors and called for improved internal communication and broader inclusion within ARGs. Addressing these gaps will be critical for maintaining coordination and maximising joint impact.

LOOKING FORWARD: BUILDING PEACE AMIDST UNCERTAINTY

As we move forward, the RSRTF is strengthening its exit strategies, deepening government engagement both at the national and subnational levels and ensuring that gains are sustained through development investment. Enhanced monitoring refined internal coordination, and stronger alignment with national development actors will help realise these goals.

As South Sudan prepares for elections in 2027, the RSRTF must strike a delicate balance:

- **Address short-term instability** while laying foundations for long term peace and development initiatives.
- **Maintain programmatic flexibility** while driving long-term resilience-building.
- **Bridge the humanitarian-development-governance nexus**, ensuring local gains are protected and scaled.

As South Sudan navigates the road ahead, the Fund remains an indispensable tool for stabilising conflict-affected regions and promoting locally owned peace. With adaptive management, strategic partnerships, and continued donor engagement, the RSRTF stands ready to build on its achievements and lead the way toward a more stable and resilient South Sudan.

MEASURING SAFETY AND SECURITY (MSS) IN 2024 RSRTF PROGRAMMES

The RSRTF's area-based programmes (ABPs) remain complex interventions, tailored to specific local contexts with comprehensive results frameworks and outcomes. Common across all RSRTF programmes is the overarching objective of establishing sustainable peace and stability within communities affected by conflict. Understanding community perceptions of peace, security, and conflict is thus essential to evaluate the impact of RSRTF initiatives and to inform future programme designs effectively.

To capture nuanced insights on community safety and security perceptions, the Measuring Safety and Security (MSS) tool, initially developed in 2019 and adapted for subsequent years, continues to be employed across RSRTF target areas. This participatory methodology has been refined through continuous learning and

evaluation, ensuring relevance and accuracy for 2024 contexts.

The MSS approach encompasses a two-stage process that integrates qualitative and quantitative methodologies:

1. Indicator Identification and Baseline Assessment: This involves extensive qualitative research, including key informant interviews, life stories, and focus group discussions, to document everyday indicators of peace, security, and conflict. Community participants prioritise these indicators to reflect what safety and security genuinely mean to them.

2. Monitoring and Follow-Up Surveys: Regular surveys are conducted at mid-term and programme completion stages, employing household questionnaires that track changes in community-identified indicators of safety and security. This approach enables RSRTF partners to systematically capture shifts in community perceptions over time.

COMMON INDICATORS IN 2024

Building upon previous years' MSS exercises, several indicators continue to resonate strongly across RSRTF intervention areas in 2024:

- **Freedom of Movement:** Communities consistently identify the ability to move freely without carrying weapons as a fundamental indicator of peace.
- **Carrying weapons:** Communities reported their ability to move freely with or without weapons which reflects their sense of safety.
- **Economic Activities:** Safety in pursuing economic activities such as farming, cattle grazing, and fishing far from homes remains crucial.
- **Social Activities:** Safe participation in community gatherings, including nighttime social events and celebrations, highlights community perceptions of security.

2024 MSS INSIGHTS AND TRENDS

In 2024, MSS findings highlighted diverse outcomes across different ABPs²:

- **Central Equatoria State (CES) ABP:** A comprehensive MSS assessment was conducted in the second half of 2024, capturing perceptions of safety among cattle herders, the effectiveness of law enforcement, and impacts of conflict resolution efforts. This complemented the initial MSS study at the programme's inception phase. Findings will be used to guide the programme design to respond to the main conflict trigger in the CES region between farmers and cattle herders.
- **Greater Tonj ABP:** MSS endline study indicated 82%-83% of respondents felt safer, citing improvements in freedom of movement and public participation. Implementation challenges included accessibility to remote areas due to poor roads and intermittent insecurity, leading to data collection delays. Despite these challenges, MSS findings were critical for identifying security hotspots and directing targeted interventions by the second phase of the programme that is planned to start in mid-2025.
- **Southern Unity ABP:** Although the MSS survey has not been fully implemented, significant preparatory steps such as questionnaire development and initial community consultations were completed to identify the context-specific peace indicators. Field data collection delays were primarily due to flooding and localised insecurity, highlighting challenges in timely MSS deployment.

APPLICATION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The strength of the MSS tool lies in its ability to generate contextually rich, actionable insights that support adaptive programming. As the RSRTF continues to navigate complex security environments in 2025 and beyond, regular MSS assessments will remain integral to the lifecycle of area-based programmes—at key milestones such as baselines, midlines, and endlines. These assessments are essential for understanding local dynamics, adjusting interventions in real time, and ensuring that communities experience sustained and meaningful improvements in peace and security.

Continuous refinement and broader application of the MSS methodology will further enhance the RSRTF's

² The MSS survey for Jonglei/GPAA is planned for 2025.

capacity to deliver effectively on its mandate of promoting long-term stability and reconciliation in South Sudan.

GENDER INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING (GENDER MARKER 2)

All four Area-Based Programmes (ABPs)—Central Equatoria State (CES) RSRTF, Jonglei/Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), Kong Koc, and Southern Unity—have been assessed at **Gender Marker Level 2**, signifying that gender equality is not only a cross-cutting concern but a **core and measurable objective** embedded throughout their design, implementation, and monitoring frameworks. During 2024, 31955 women and 4385 girls were reached through the RSRTF Programmes.

Each programme demonstrates a strong commitment to **gender-responsive peacebuilding** by integrating gender analysis into conflict assessments and tailoring interventions to address the specific needs, roles, and vulnerabilities of women, men, girls, and boys. This includes identifying and addressing structural and sociocultural barriers that limit women's participation in peace and recovery processes.

KEY STRATEGIES INCLUDED IN 2024:

- **Promoting women's leadership** in peace negotiations, local governance, and community reconciliation platforms. 685 women participated with equal stakes as men peace negotiation, 1825 women joined the local governance and community reconciliation platforms.
- **Supporting targeted interventions** to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including survivor-centered services and referral pathways. 297 of girls and women were provided such support during the year.
- **Ensuring inclusive participation** through the use of gender disaggregated data, programmes ensured to track women's involvement, and prioritised their engagement in women-led community based organizations (CBOs) in programme delivery.
- **Facilitating women's economic empowerment** via capacity strengthening / training / technical support , support to women's cooperatives and value chains, establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and inclusion in community asset-building initiatives. 5960 women participated in capacity strengthening / training / technical support , 3773 women participated in asset building projects

These programmes also recognised and elevated the role of women as agents of change in conflict-affected settings, not only as beneficiaries but as active contributors to peacebuilding, social cohesion, and long-term resilience.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Throughout 2024, the RSRTF significantly enhanced its Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems across all ABPs, focusing on improving data quality, accountability, and adaptive management. Each ABP implemented context-specific MEL frameworks that integrated both quantitative and qualitative tools, including baseline and midline evaluations, Measuring Safety and Security (MSS) assessments, outcome monitoring, and learning workshops. These efforts ensured that interventions remained responsive to evolving needs, particularly in justice sector reform, community security, and economic resilience.

Evaluations in Central Equatoria and Greater Tonj confirmed progress in reducing intercommunal violence, enhancing freedom of movement, and increasing access to services and livelihoods. Mechanisms such as mobile legal clinics, alternative dispute resolution, and expanded psychosocial support were recognised as particularly impactful, leading to tangible improvements on the ground. However, challenges persisted in areas such as market access, justice system coordination, and climate-related vulnerabilities. Recommendations from the evaluations included scaling up financial inclusion initiatives to reduce economic dependency, investing in climate adaptation to increase food production and reduce climate-induced conflicts, and harmonising customary and statutory legal processes to enhance the justice system and strengthen the rule of law.

In parallel, MSS assessments and community-led monitoring efforts, carried out with active partner participation, helped track public perceptions of safety and guide targeted security interventions. Despite logistical and access challenges, particularly in Southern Unity, coordination among partners remained strong. Regular data-sharing meetings, joint field monitoring, and the establishment of a dedicated M&E working group enabled standardised reporting and strengthened cross-partner learning. Capacity-building

sessions addressed data inconsistencies and reporting delays.

ABPs hosted learning workshops and outcome review sessions in Bor, Juba, and other locations, fostering experience-sharing, strategic alignment, and collaborative problem-solving. The Fund Secretariat continued to provide tailored support through regular field visits, mentorship, and written and verbal feedback to improve reporting quality, particularly in areas such as data quality assurance, beneficiary counting, and gender disaggregation. Data quality improvements were observed across six dimensions: accuracy, completeness, consistency, validity, uniqueness, and timeliness, as clearly reflected in this year's annual report compared to previous cycles.

These MEL efforts, undertaken in close collaboration with partners, provided a robust evidence base for decision-making, driving real-time programme adjustments and reinforcing the RSRTF's commitment to adaptive, accountable, and learning-driven peacebuilding across South Sudan.

AREA BASED PROGRAMMES

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

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Due to contextual differences across the areas where the RSRTF operates—which require tailored ABP designs to address specific conflict drivers—and variations in each ABP's timeline, the results presented in this report will differ in both the type and availability of data (qualitative and quantitative) from one ABP to another during the 2024 calendar year.



IMAGE: MUSE MOHAMMED/IOM

Locally Driven Solutions for Social Cohesion and Promoting Early Recovery in the Country's Former Breadbasket Phase II

Target areas: Yei, Lainya, Kajo Keji and Morobo counties

Lead agency: International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Budget: USD 11,372,000

Partners:

Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), Support for Peace and Education Development Programme (SPEDP), Finn Church Aid (FCA), Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI), United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (*Strategic partnership, not recipient*)

ABP timeframe: 1st December 2024 – 30th November 2025



2024 OUTPUTS ACCORDING TO RSRTF INDICATORS

11,377

people reached with sensitisation messages on violence reduction promoting inter-communal peace and reconciliation efforts
(4211 female, 3502 male, 1952 girls and 1712 boys)

151

teachers/students/parents trained in peace education
(78 female and 73 male)

7,441

individuals affected by violence were provided with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and rehabilitation
(3621 female, 3445 male, 194 girls and 181 boys)

12

intra- / inter- communal dialogue sessions conducted

8

gender transformative training sessions held
(3266 female, 2215 male, 1709 girls and 1301 boys)

2

women and girl safe spaces established and provided GBV prevention and response services

24

schools where peace education is incorporated in formal education and school curriculums.



29

national and subnational conflict management mechanism established or strengthened (1825 female, 2172 male, 132 girls and 115 boys reached)

213

community representatives, including women- specific clusters trained on community security approaches and action planning (66 female and 147 male)

7

police and community relationship committees established and operational at community level

519

justice chain actors, formally and informally trained
(152 female and 267 male)



7,179

women and men received capacity strengthening, training and technical support
(3394 female and 3737 male)

72

at-risk youth provided access to career development and employment/ livelihood opportunities (25 female and 47 male)

54

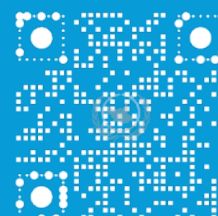
People actively participated in Harmonised Community-Based Participatory Planning exercises to identify structural drivers of recurring crises in their communities (15 female and 39 male)



33

individuals engaged in building restoration or maintaining community assets through cash for work (4 female and 29 male)

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BACKGROUND

The Central Equatoria State (CES) Phase II Programme was initiated in December 2023 as the second phase of an ongoing effort to address deep-rooted challenges in conflict-affected areas of South Sudan. As returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities navigate the challenges of reintegration, the project is designed to resolve intercommunal tensions, enhance governance and the rule of law, and promote economic resilience.

The first phase of the programme laid the foundation for peacebuilding by fostering community dialogue, promoting reconciliation efforts, and stabilising governance structures in Yei, Kajo-Keji, Lainya, and Morobo counties. Building on the success of Phase I, the programme continues to prioritise reducing violence, strengthening social cohesion, and supporting early recovery in communities affected by prolonged conflict, displacement, and economic hardship. In this second phase, the programme also broadens its scope to include economic empowerment, governance strengthening, and long-term resilience strategies.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past year, the RSRTF Programme has made considerable progress in achieving its goals across the three interlinked pillars: reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience. These pillars collectively aim to reduce violence, strengthen institutions, and improve livelihoods in a way that supports long-term recovery and self-sufficiency for conflict-affected populations.

RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Reconciliation remains at the heart of the programme's approach, with significant efforts over the past year focused on healing divisions between communities and security actors. Through a combination of high-level political engagements, grassroots dialogues, and psychosocial support initiatives, the programme has fostered trust and strengthened social cohesion. A key achievement has been the significant reduction in intercommunal conflict, cattle raids, and armed violence. High-level forums and localised training sessions equipped stakeholders with tools to address local disputes between farmers and herders, intercommunal tensions, and civil-military relations.

By sustaining peacebuilding efforts—including community-led dialogues, the reinforcement of traditional and statutory justice systems, and the introduction of community policing and peace monitoring committees—the programme has restored faith in local governance and justice mechanisms. Additionally, the establishment of conflict resolution structures has empowered local actors to mediate disputes and prevent cycles of revenge killings, contributing to long-term stability.


A series of civil-military dialogues were conducted in Yei, Kajo-Keji, Lainya, and Morobo counties, bringing together civilians, security forces, and local government officials to discuss ways to rebuild trust and prevent future conflicts. These dialogues provided a platform for frank discussions on human rights, the role of the military in community protection, and strategies for improving civil-police relations. The engagements have contributed to a growing sense of mutual understanding and accountability, reducing the instances of arbitrary arrests and fostering a more cooperative relationship between communities and security personnel.

High-level political conferences were also organised to address tensions arising from farmer-herder conflicts, which have been a persistent source of violence in the region. By facilitating dialogue between cattle herders, farmers, and local authorities, the programme has contributed to the development of locally led solutions to prevent disputes over land use and grazing rights. These conferences have yielded concrete agreements, including the establishment of committees to monitor and mediate disputes as they arise.

In addition to these efforts, the programme placed a strong emphasis on psychosocial support and trauma healing. More than 7,400 individuals participated in training sessions on conflict resolution, gender-transformative approaches, and trauma awareness. These activities have helped address the psychological impact of conflict, particularly among youth and women, empowering them to become active contributors to peacebuilding efforts in their communities.

STABILISATION AND GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING

Stabilisation is a critical pillar of the RSRTF Programme, ensuring that reconciliation efforts are reinforced by strengthened governance structures and the rule of law. Over the past year, the programme has worked to build local governance capacity by training officials in effective administration, accountability, and resource

A portrait of Reverend Levi, a Black man with a shaved head, wearing a purple clerical shirt and a white collar. He is looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile. The background is a red curtain with gold-colored patterns.

“The relationship between civilians and soldiers was broke. We began to bring civilians and soldiers to sit down and discuss their problems. We use scripture to preach love and peace.”

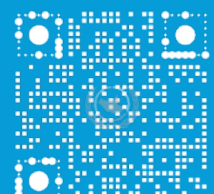
- Reverend Levi

IMAGE: MUSE MOHAMMED/IOM

FROM PULPIT TO PEACE TALKS: HOW THE CHURCH HELPED RECONCILE

Reverend Levi, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese in Yei, has been instrumental in fostering peace and reconciliation in a region deeply scarred by war. Since 2016, Yei has faced significant unrest, with civilians viewing the military as adversaries and vice versa. “The relationship between civilians and soldiers was broken,” Reverend Levi recalls, explaining how fear and mistrust dominated during the conflict. Civilians saw soldiers as enemies, and soldiers suspected civilians of aiding rebels.

Thanks to various peace initiatives supported by RSRTF through its IOM-led ABP consortium, the church has played a central role in bringing these divided groups together. Reverend Levi emphasizes the importance of dialogue: “We began to bring civilians and soldiers to sit down and discuss their problems.” He highlights how over 29 dialogues have been conducted since 2021, leading to a notable improvement in security and relationships in Yei. Markets reopened, roads became safer, and trust slowly began to rebuild. The church, being the only institution present in remote areas, used its influence to preach messages of forgiveness, reconciliation, and unity. “We use scripture to preach love and peace,” he says, referencing verses like Matthew 5:9, which calls peacemakers the “sons of God.” According to him, forgiveness is not an easy process but is vital for true healing. He acknowledges that many people who lost loved ones or experienced violence may seek revenge, but emphasizes that the price of revenge is far higher than the price of peace.



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management. By addressing structural drivers of conflict, the programme has played a key role in promoting stability through the rehabilitation of justice infrastructure, training of chiefs and law enforcement, and deployment of mobile courts to improve access to justice. These efforts have led to increased legal dispute resolution, a decline in extrajudicial violence, and a shift toward peaceful mediation of conflicts. Additionally, security improvements have facilitated the return of displaced populations and contributed to economic recovery, further reinforcing long-term stability.

One of the key achievements has been the establishment of Community Policing Committees, which have enhanced the relationship between law enforcement agencies and civilians. In Morobo County, for example, the programme supported the formation of local policing initiatives that work closely with traditional authorities to address security concerns through dialogue and mediation rather than confrontation.

Legal aid services have also been a major focus, particularly in relation to housing, land, and property disputes, which are a major driver of tension among returnees and host communities. The programme has facilitated legal awareness sessions, ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to mechanisms for resolving disputes without resorting to violence.

Additionally, the programme has played a key role in coordinating governance efforts through Area Reference Group (ARG) meetings, which bring together local authorities, community leaders, and development partners. These meetings have been instrumental in aligning programme activities with government priorities and ensuring that interventions are sustainable beyond the project's lifecycle.

RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Resilience-building efforts under the RSRTF Programme have created sustainable livelihood opportunities, particularly for youth and women, reducing incentives to engage in violence while fostering economic recovery. By expanding vocational training, supporting agricultural productivity, and promoting income-generating activities such as farming cooperatives, the programme has strengthened economic interdependence among previously conflicting communities. This has led to greater social integration, increased market access, and a growing acceptance of peaceful coexistence. Recognising economic empowerment as a cornerstone of sustainable peace, the programme has also invested in infrastructure improvements to enhance self-reliance and long-term stability across communities.

Technical and vocational education training (TVET) has been rolled out in Yei, Kajo-Keji, and Lainya, equipping youth and returnees with practical skills to improve their employability. In parallel, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) have been formed to provide access to credit and financial literacy training, particularly

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 52,729 returnees successfully reintegrated into their communities in Southern CES, facilitated by improved security conditions and livelihood support.
- 158 stakeholders engaged in high-level peace dialogues on cattle migration from Jonglei State into Southern Central Equatoria State, resulting in agreed resolutions to reduce conflicts between farmers and herders.
- 46 faith-based leaders trained in mediation and dialogue facilitation, strengthening local reconciliation mechanisms.
- Since the start of Phase 2, at least 18 checkpoints have been removed in Southern CES as a result of civil-military dialogues, improving security and mobility in high-risk areas.
- 19 Police Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) were established in all target counties, leading to improved cooperation between law enforcement and local communities.
- Over 6150 farmers supported with agricultural inputs and climate-smart training, enhancing food security and livelihood resilience. 222 of them were at-risk youth who participated in cash-for-work planting activities.
- Vocational training provided to 225 youth and women, with 98% graduation rate. and 48 youth-led businesses received seed capital and business mentorship.
- 134 young individuals participated in savings and loan associations (VSLAs), gaining access to credit and financial literacy training.

for women entrepreneurs. These initiatives have reduced economic dependency and increased household resilience to economic shocks.

Agricultural support has been another cornerstone of the programme. More than 6000 farmers have received training in climate-smart agriculture, along with seeds and tools to enhance food security. By integrating modern farming techniques with traditional knowledge, the programme is enabling farmers to increase yields and sustain livelihoods despite climate-related challenges.

Infrastructure rehabilitation has also been prioritised, with the ongoing renovation of Kendila Bridge significantly improving access to markets and social services. This investment in infrastructure is not only enhancing economic opportunities but also facilitating social cohesion by connecting previously isolated communities.

CHALLENGES

Despite its effectiveness in advancing area-based stabilisation, RSRTF faces several persistent and emerging challenges:

- **Weak Justice Systems:** Under-resourced courts and legal mechanisms hinder accountability, trust, and conflict resolution.
- **Political Instability:** Delays in implementing the peace agreement and fragmented governance disrupt local service delivery and coordination.
- **Cross-Border Conflicts:** Armed pastoralist clashes, porous borders, and the proliferation of small arms continue to threaten security in border regions.
- **Climate Shocks:** Floods, droughts, and environmental degradation exacerbate displacement, food insecurity, and resource-based conflict.
- **Youth Marginalisation:** High unemployment among youth and ex-combatants fuels recruitment into armed groups, undermining peace dividends.
- **Coordination Gaps:** Fragmented interventions and weak engagement with local authorities limit the scalability and sustainability of results.

Addressing these challenges requires sustained investment, stronger coordination frameworks, and integrated partnerships at national and sub-national levels.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Throughout the reporting period, several assessments and evaluations ensured programme interventions stayed aligned with objectives and responsive to emerging challenges. A midline evaluation measured progress in security, community engagement in peace initiatives, and access to justice, informing adjustments like expanded mobile legal clinics and targeted mediation in high-risk areas (for details see the paragraph below).

A Measuring Safety and Security (MSS) assessment captured the cattle herders' community perceptions of safety, effectiveness of law enforcement, and impacts of conflict resolution initiatives in high-risk locations was conducted in the second half of 2024 to complement the initial MSS study that was done at the launch of phase I.

Coordination among ABP partners improved through regular data-sharing meetings, joint field monitoring missions, and standardised reporting frameworks. These efforts harmonised progress tracking, identified implementation gaps, and facilitated collaborative problem-solving. Despite effective coordination, challenges remained regarding inconsistent data collection methods and reporting delays. To mitigate these issues, capacity-building sessions enhanced data accuracy and reporting timeliness.

Overall, M&E activities significantly contributed to informed decision-making, increased responsiveness, and enhanced accountability across interventions.

MID-TERM EVALUATION FINDINGS

The mid-term evaluation, conducted in 2024, provided a comprehensive assessment of the programme's

HOW INTEGRATED RSRTF EFFORTS DRIVE IMPACT

The RSRTF's multi-sectoral approach reinforces the interconnected nature of reconciliation, stabilization, and resilience, proving that sustainable peace cannot be achieved through isolated interventions. The programme's success is driven by its ability to integrate these three pillars in a complementary and reinforcing manner:

RECONCILIATION AND STABILIZATION SYNERGIES

- o The establishment of peace committees, community policing structures, and strengthened justice mechanisms has increased trust between communities and authorities. This has directly reduced the reliance on armed retaliation for conflict resolution.
- o Conflict resolution through traditional justice mechanisms is increasingly effective because of improved state-backed judicial structures that ensure follow-through on community-led decisions.

STABILIZATION AND RESILIENCE LINKAGES

- o Improved security has facilitated economic activity, allowing communities to engage in trade, farming, and small enterprises without fear of violence.
- o The construction of key infrastructure such as informal courts has not only contributed to law enforcement but has also enhanced the ability of communities to engage in productive activities without fear of exploitation or insecurity.

RECONCILIATION AND RESILIENCE REINFORCEMENT

- o The programme's emphasis on livelihood interventions—such as farming cooperatives and vocational training—has changed perceptions among youth, providing them with alternatives to engaging in violence.
- o Intercommunal trade, intermarriages, and social gatherings have re-emerged as indicators of improved relationships, demonstrating that economic cooperation reinforces long-term peace.

impact, progress, and areas for improvement. The evaluation highlighted substantial progress in achieving programme objectives, particularly in reducing violence, fostering social cohesion, and promoting economic resilience. Stakeholders at local, state, and national levels widely acknowledged the programme's contributions to community stabilisation, conflict resolution, and economic recovery.

One of the most significant findings was the noticeable reduction in intercommunal violence, with reports indicating a decline in revenge killings, cattle raiding, and armed robberies in programme areas. Freedom of movement has improved considerably, with previously displaced populations returning to their communities to rebuild their lives. Many beneficiaries reported increased access to basic services, markets, and economic opportunities as a direct result of infrastructure rehabilitation and security sector support.

The programme's reconciliation efforts were particularly commended, with community dialogues, traditional justice mechanisms, and intercommunal engagement contributing to improved trust between groups that were previously in conflict. The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms introduced in several counties were recognised as effective in resolving land disputes, property claims, and other intercommunal grievances. Additionally, the expansion of psychosocial support services was highlighted as a key success, helping communities address the long-term effects of trauma caused by conflict and displacement.

However, several challenges were identified that require urgent attention to ensure the programme's sustainability and long-term impact. The evaluation underscored gaps in economic resilience programming, particularly in ensuring that livelihood and vocational training initiatives lead to sustainable employment and income generation. Market access remains a critical barrier for returnees and small-scale producers, with weak financial support mechanisms preventing beneficiaries from scaling their businesses or investing in agricultural productivity. The report emphasised the need for improved financial inclusion strategies, including the expansion of microfinance opportunities, business incubation, and vocational training linked to employment pathways.



“There was no food, no schools for the children, and the rebels would capture you if you didn’t join them”

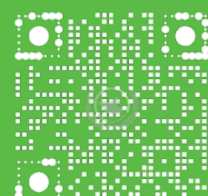
- Joel John

IMAGE: MUSE MOHAMMED/IOM

HAMMERING OUT HOPE: HOW JOEL REBUILT HIS LIFE

Joel John, a 35-year-old father of five, found a new path to stability through vocational training in Yei. “I chose vocational skills because I love the work,” he shared, now working as a builder after completing a six-month carpentry course. Before the training, Joel’s life was uncertain. He had fled to Uganda during the war in 2013, escaping violence that claimed lives and destroyed communities. “There was no food, no schools for the children, and the rebels would capture you if you didn’t join them,” he recalled. After returning to Yei in 2019, Joel struggled to find work. The war had decimated farmland, leaving him without the means to support his family. But with his newly acquired carpentry skills, he began taking small contracts and slowly rebuilt his life.

“If I get money, I can build my own house or help others and get paid,” Joel said, explaining how the training provided him with a stable income. Though life in town has improved, Joel remains wary of the rebels that still operate in the rural areas. “If you go to the villages, it’s not over,” he warned. For now, Joel is focused on the future, using his trade to support his family and praying for lasting peace in South Sudan.



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Another key finding was the limited institutional capacity of justice and governance structures, particularly in rural areas where formal legal institutions remain weak. While community-based policing and legal aid services have improved access to justice, the evaluation noted delays in case processing, inconsistencies in the application of legal frameworks, and a lack of coordination between customary and statutory justice systems. To address this, the evaluation recommended greater investment in justice sector capacity building, training for law enforcement officers, and increased collaboration between local government and community policing committees.

EFFECTIVE COORDINATION IN THE CES RSRTF PROGRAMME

One of the key strengths of the CES RSRTF Programme has been its effective coordination mechanisms, which have facilitated alignment among stakeholders, improved resource efficiency, and strengthened local ownership of interventions. Coordination has played a crucial role in ensuring that programme activities remain contextually relevant, responsive to emerging needs, and sustainable beyond the programme cycle.

The Area-Based Programming (ABP) approach has played a key role in facilitating joint planning and decision-making through structures like Area Reference Groups (ARGs), Community Policing Committees (CPCs), prominent national and local civil societies and Legal Aid Centres. These platforms have strengthened local governance, improved dispute resolution, and enhanced the effectiveness of justice mechanisms by linking traditional and statutory legal systems. The programme's multi-stakeholder collaboration, particularly with local authorities and customary leaders, has helped improve trust between communities and security forces, reduce conflicts, and increase access to legal services.

Another major coordination success has been the integration of reconciliation, stabilization, and economic resilience efforts, ensuring interventions reinforce one another. Peace dialogues, governance training, and community policing have been closely linked to livelihood support and climate adaptation initiatives, providing a holistic approach to recovery.

The programme's ability to adapt to security threats and political shifts has been a key factor in its effectiveness, allowing for flexible implementation strategies in volatile areas. Additionally, the coordination of early warning systems and rapid response mechanisms has helped mitigate violence, while joint efforts between peace committees, law enforcement, and justice actors have led to improved security and economic stability.

At the community level, locally led coordination structures have ensured that programme activities remain inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to local needs. By engaging women, youth, and traditional leaders in governance and economic recovery efforts, the programme has strengthened local ownership and legitimacy. Regular consultations between stakeholders, peacebuilding committees, and economic actors have contributed to more effective resource allocation, knowledge-sharing, and accountability.

Overall, the CES RSRTF Programme's coordination framework has proven to be a model for integrated and community-driven development, fostering long-term stability in Central Equatoria State.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

A central element of the programme's coordination success has been its strong collaboration between government institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), humanitarian actors, development agencies, and local communities. The Area-Based Programming (ABP) approach has enabled effective joint planning, implementation, and monitoring, ensuring that interventions are aligned with local priorities and do not operate in silos.

- **Area Reference Groups (ARGs):** The programme has effectively leveraged ARGs as coordination hubs, bringing together local government representatives, community leaders, security actors, implementing partners, and development organisations to discuss challenges, set priorities, and align activities.
- **Local Government Engagement:** Close collaboration with county commissioners, chiefs, and traditional authorities has ensured that programme interventions are embedded within existing governance structures, reducing duplication and increasing local ownership.
- **Consortium Approach:** The CES RSRTF Programme is implemented through a multi-partner consortium, ensuring a diverse range of expertise, including peacebuilding, governance, justice, livelihoods, and

infrastructure development. The coordination among consortium members has led to efficient resource allocation, knowledge-sharing, and improved responsiveness.

ADAPTIVE COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The programme has demonstrated strong adaptive capacity, adjusting its coordination mechanisms in response to shifting political dynamics, security threats, and economic challenges.

- **Flexibility in responding to security challenges:** Regular coordination meetings between implementing partners, local authorities, and security actors have allowed the programme to adapt its delivery approach, relocate activities when necessary, and ensure continuity of interventions in volatile areas.
- **Crisis response integration:** The coordination of early warning systems and conflict mediation has improved the prevention of violence and response to emerging conflicts. In cases where tensions escalated, joint efforts by peace committees, local authorities, and security actors facilitated rapid interventions, preventing conflicts from spreading.

COMMUNITY-LED COORDINATION STRUCTURES

A major success factor in the programme's coordination efforts has been ensuring that community voices are central to decision-making processes.

- **Peace and reconciliation committees:** These locally led structures play a key role in dispute resolution, violence prevention, and early warning coordination.
- **Women and youth leadership forums:** The inclusion of youth and women in governance and peacebuilding processes has improved programme impact, ensuring that interventions address gender-specific and generational concerns.

Infrastructure challenges also emerged as a persistent obstacle to economic and social recovery. The report stressed the importance of continued investment in transport networks, roads, and market infrastructure to support the movement of goods and services. Climate-related challenges, particularly flooding and droughts, were identified as growing risks to food security and economic stability, necessitating greater investment in climate adaptation programming to protect livelihoods.

The evaluation strongly recommended scaling up resilience programming, including:

- Enhanced vocational training and technical education to increase employability, particularly for youth and women.
- Improved financial support mechanisms, including access to micro-loans, savings groups, and business grants for returnees and entrepreneurs.
- Targeted interventions for returnees and displaced populations, ensuring that economic reintegration efforts are sustainable and linked to long-term market opportunities.
- Strengthening governance and justice systems, with a focus on harmonising customary and statutory legal processes, improving policing, and enhancing access to legal aid.
- Investment in climate adaptation strategies, including drought-resistant agriculture, improved water management, and environmental conservation efforts.

Overall, the mid-term evaluation reaffirmed that the RSRTF programme is on track to achieving its objectives but requires strategic adjustments to maximise its long-term impact and sustainability. The report emphasised that continued engagement with local actors, expanded economic opportunities, and strengthened governance mechanisms will be essential to ensuring lasting peace, stability, and resilience in Central Equatoria State.



Community violence reduction in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) Phase II

Target areas: Central-southern Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA): Weikol-Pulbura, Kadiang, Nanaam-Bishbish-Keriak-Kotome-Wuno-Lekuangole, Burmath-Nyandit, and Anyidi-Manyabol-Gumuruk corridors.

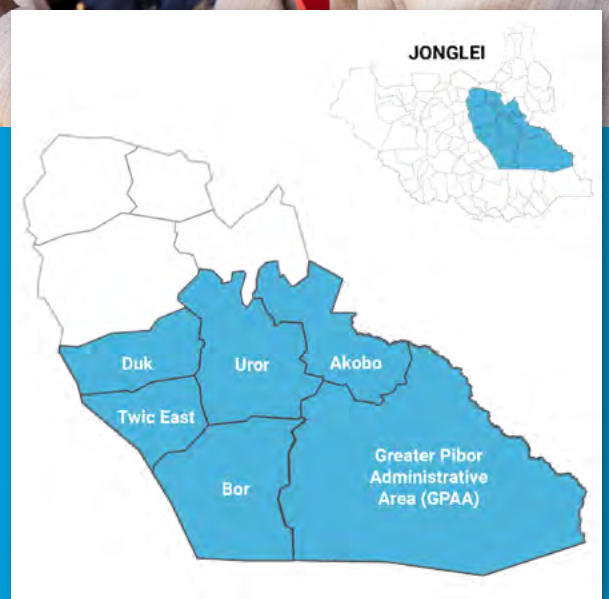
Lead agency: World Food Programme (WFP).

Budget: USD16,499,297.

Partners:

International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNMISS Rule of Law and Security Institutions Section (RoLSIS), Peace Canal, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), Save the Children International (SCI), Vétérinaires Sans Frontières -Germany (VSF-G).

ABP timeframe: 1st April 2023 to 31st December 2025



2024 OUTPUTS ACCORDING TO RSRTF INDICATORS

618 individuals affected by violence were provided with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and rehabilitation (157 female, 157 male, 180 girls and 224 boys)

26 intra- / inter- communal dialogue sessions conducted (1110 female and 1631 male reached)

24 instances when political engagement and opportunities to leverage political influence are used to resolve conflicts/reduce tensions

183 abductees supported with family tracing and reunification



90 safety and security/conflict monitoring activities conducted and reports disseminated to inform advocacy and programmatic direction (1110 female and 1631 male reached)

455 community representatives, including women- specific clusters trained on community security approaches and action planning (208 female and 247 male)

958 justice chain actors, formally and informally trained (227 female and 731 male)

9 functional community based protection mechanisms/networks for crime prevention and safety established and/or strengthened



318 SGBV survivors benefitting from victim redress mechanisms

2,097 women and men received capacity strengthening, training and technical support (614 female and 1483 male)

1,365 students enrolled and graduated from functional adult literacy and second chance education (SCE) program (356 female and 982 male)

1,016 at-risk youth provided access to career development and employment/ livelihood opportunities

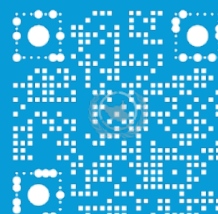
74 ex-combatants integrated in social cohesion initiatives (22 female and 52 male)

4,473 individuals engaged in building restoration or maintaining community assets through cash for work (1024 female and 2056 male)



3,193 People actively participated in Harmonised Community-Based Participatory Planning exercises to identify structural drivers of recurring crises in their communities (643 female and 2550 male)

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BACKGROUND

The RSRTF Programme in Jonglei and Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) was launched to address persistent intercommunal violence, weak governance structures, and economic instability in one of South Sudan's most volatile regions. With decades of conflict exacerbating poverty and displacement, this initiative seeks to create a foundation for sustainable peace, effective governance, and economic recovery.

The programme builds on earlier stabilisation efforts and incorporates lessons learned from previous interventions to reduce violence, rebuild trust in local governance, and support the reintegration of displaced populations. By focusing on reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience, the RSRTF Programme fosters locally owned peacebuilding efforts that prioritise community participation, particularly among women and youth. Strengthening community-based conflict resolution mechanisms, improving access to justice, and promoting economic cooperation are at the heart of the initiative, ensuring long-term self-reliance and security.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past year, the RSRTF Programme has made notable progress across its three interconnected pillars. Through reconciliation efforts, trust between communities and security forces has improved, local governance structures have been reinforced, and economic stability has been enhanced. These interventions have resulted in a reduction in armed confrontations, increased reliance on legal dispute resolution, and greater economic interdependence among previously divided communities.

RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Reconciliation has been a key focus of the RSRTF Programme, with community-led initiatives playing a significant role in mitigating conflict. One of the most significant achievements has been that there was no large-scale mobilisation for violence, particularly between Jonglei and GPAA communities. The project's success in averting mass violence was attributed to Continuous engagement, relationship building, joint missions, community dialogues, and youth exchange visits, which fostered cross-age and cross-community collaboration. The Intercommunal Governance Structure (IGS) in Jonglei/GPAA successfully prevented a planned large-scale mobilisation in Kadiang Boma, demonstrating the effectiveness of community-led early warning mechanisms.

In areas where revenge killings and cattle raids were once common, structured dialogue sessions have enabled communities to address grievances and develop non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms. A particularly impactful initiative was the engagement with youth leaders in Gumuruk, where recurring tensions over resource competition had previously led to cycles of violence. Through sustained dialogue facilitated by community elders and supported by the RSRTF Programme, youth groups agreed to a local peace accord that has significantly reduced violent mobilisation.

The programme has also played a critical role in supporting the recovery and reintegration of abducted individuals, a deeply rooted issue in Jonglei and GPAA. 183 abductees, including women and children, have been reunited with their families and provided with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). This support has not only facilitated individual healing but has also strengthened intercommunal relationships, as many returning abductees have become advocates for peace within their communities.

STABILISATION AND GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING

The stabilisation pillar has focused on improving access to justice and ensuring that communities can engage with governance structures in meaningful ways. One of the most notable successes has been the deployment of mobile courts to remote areas, significantly increasing legal dispute resolution. In Anyidi and Nyandit, where previous disputes over land tenure had escalated into violent confrontations, the presence of legal mechanisms has enabled fair adjudication of cases, reducing the need for communities to resort to self-administered justice.

Simultaneously, the establishment of Police-Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) has significantly enhanced collaboration between local law enforcement and civilians. In Lekuangole, for instance, tensions between the police and youth had previously led to a breakdown in community policing. However, through targeted training and facilitated dialogue, trust was restored. This restoration of trust has resulted in improved cooperation in reporting crimes and preventing violence. Consequently, there has been a notable decline in extrajudicial violence and increased engagement with formal justice structures. To further bolster governance, the programme has provided training for traditional leaders and paralegals on alternative dispute



“Every raid felt like I might lose him. I lived with no certainty about our future”

- Anyot Yar Mach

NO MORE WAITING IN FEAR: HOW FARMING GAVE HER FAMILY A FUTURE

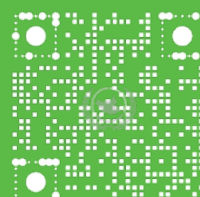
“Before, my husband used to go on cattle raids—I never knew if he would come back alive. Every raid felt like I might lose him. I lived with no certainty about our future,” said Anyot Yar Mach, a resident of Anyidi Payam.

“Now, he goes to the farm, and I know he’ll return home. When I have time, I join him in the field—we work together. And I can dream of a good future for our children,” she added.

Under the resilience pillar, youth like her husband have gained the skills and tools to farm sustainably, cultivating 30 feddans of sorghum across Anyidi and Kadiang Payams.

“Farming gives us a stable income and takes away the unpredictability of cattle raiding. So he does not go anymore,” she added.

The shift is not just economic—it’s restoring dignity, strengthening families, and building lasting peace. The project has also improved food security and enhanced shelter and hygiene—making farming a real peace dividend.



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resolution mechanisms. This training has significantly strengthened local mediation capacity, leading to a marked increase in community-led conflict resolution sessions in Jonglei State. During 2024 alone, more than 300 cases have been successfully mediated.

RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Economic vulnerability has long been a driver of conflict in Jonglei and GPAA, with competition over scarce resources exacerbating tensions. The RSRTF Programme has addressed this issue by supporting livelihoods that reduce dependence on conflict-driven economies.

In Pulbura and Wuno, vocational training has provided over 500 young people, including former combatants, with new skills in agriculture, tailoring, and construction. This intervention has led to a shift in attitudes, with many youth now seeing economic engagement as a viable alternative to cattle raiding and armed violence.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Community Dialogue Sessions:** Over 60 intercommunal dialogues were conducted, engaging traditional leaders, youth, and women in constructive conversations addressing historical grievances resulting in reconciliation among communities to achieve peaceful coexistence.
- **Mediation and Peace Agreements:** Seven localised peace agreements were brokered between conflicting groups, notably between the Jonglei and GPAA communities, helping to prevent further retaliatory attacks.
- **Conflict Early Warning and Prevention:** The RSRTF established and trained community-based early warning systems to identify potential sources of conflict before they escalated into violence which prevented and defused number of mass mobilisations. Over the year, 2,510 individuals (1,035 men, 855 women, 355 boys, and 255 girls) actively participated in conflict prevention and resolution activities, demonstrating increased community ownership of peacebuilding efforts.
- **Recovery and reintegration of abducted individuals:** 183, including children and women, were successfully returned to their families.
- **Establishment of Police-Community Relations Committees (PCRCs):** 14 PCRCs were formed across key conflict-prone areas, 2 of them were led by women and the rest were led by youth, facilitating cooperation between law enforcement agencies and local communities which strengthened the relation between PCRCs and the communities and given confidence to women and girls to use their service
- **Mobile Courts and Legal Aid Clinics:** To expand access to justice, one mobile court was deployed for a month to 4 remote areas, adjudicating cases that ranged from intercommunal disputes to cases of abduction and gender-based violence, improved security of women, girls. Members of the communities found confidence in resolving disputes through legal system, hence revenge attacks reduced. These mobile courts handled 68 cases, covering land disputes, gender-based violence (GBV), and intercommunal grievances.
- **Training for Law Enforcement and Traditional Leaders:** Over 300 police officers, paralegals, and traditional leaders received training on conflict-sensitive policing, human rights, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
- **Vocational Training for Youth and Ex-Combatants:** Over 1,000 young people, including former cattle raiders, completed vocational training in trades such as carpentry, tailoring, and mechanics, providing them with alternatives to engaging in violence.
- **Agricultural and Livelihood Support:** 1,392 farmers received seeds, tools, and training in climate-resilient farming techniques, leading to improved food security and economic stability.
- **Market Linkages and Business Development:** The creation of market linkages, including cattle auction centres and milk hygiene training for vendors, has increased household incomes and fostered economic interdependence between communities.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The programme supported the construction of 4.64 Kilometers of access roads and small-scale irrigation systems to improve economic opportunities and reduce resource-based conflicts



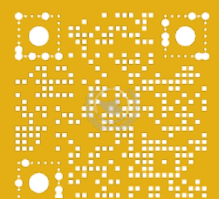
"We feel more secure.
We now walk with
hope. Now we know
our role in ensuring our
security"

- Rebecca

WE NOW WALK WITH HOPE: REBECCA'S TAKE ON COMMUNITY PROTECTION

"We feel more secure. We now walk with hope," says Rebecca, a resident of Kadiang, where years of insecurity had made violence a daily threat. In the absence of formal policing, local youth took it upon themselves to patrol the area—but lacked training and support. That changed in 2024 when the RSRTF, through UNDP and WFP, helped form Police Community Relations Committees and joint youth-police patrols. These efforts, backed by training in crime prevention, justice systems, and civic accountability, have empowered communities to take ownership of their safety.

With joint patrols now protecting roads and escorting women collecting firewood and water, fear is giving way to stability. Incidents of attacks and abductions have dropped, and life is returning—people are farming, fishing, and trading again. Kadiang's story is a testament to how community policing, when paired with institutional support, can restore trust, rebuild livelihoods, and lay the foundation for lasting peace.



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HOW INTEGRATED RSRTF EFFORTS DRIVE IMPACT IN JONGLEI/GPAA

The success of the RSRTF Programme lies in its ability to integrate reconciliation, stabilization, and resilience-building in a mutually reinforcing manner.

RECONCILIATION AND STABILISATION SYNERGIES

The establishment of peace committees and customary justice structures has enhanced trust in governance, reducing reliance on retaliatory violence. In Gumuruk, for instance, where land disputes often escalated into violence, a strengthened justice framework has ensured peaceful conflict resolution through community arbitration.

STABILISATION AND RESILIENCE LINKAGES

Improved security conditions have enabled greater economic activity. In Kadiang, where markets were previously disrupted by intercommunal fighting, improved policing and legal mechanisms have facilitated safer trade, allowing businesses to flourish and communities to engage in cross-border trade without fear of violence.

RECONCILIATION AND RESILIENCE REINFORCEMENT

Economic cooperation between previously conflicting groups has fostered social cohesion. The successful reintegration of recovered abductees into livelihood initiatives has demonstrated how economic inclusion can contribute to long-term peace.

Additionally, agricultural resilience has been strengthened through targeted support to farmers. In Burmath and Manyabol, 3,000 farmers have received training in climate-resilient techniques and have been provided with seeds and tools. As a result, agricultural productivity has increased, and market participation has grown, reducing dependence on food aid.

The introduction of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) has also created financial opportunities for women, fostering economic independence. In Anyidi, women-led VSLAs have expanded access to credit, enabling small business development and increasing household incomes. These economic advancements have contributed to a more stable environment, as communities are now more focused on shared prosperity than historical grievances.

The ABP supported agricultural and livestock initiatives in Jonglei State and GPAA, significantly empowering community members. Two agro-pastoralist groups, each comprising 20 women from Pulbura and Burmath, received specialised training in group dynamics, leadership, hygiene, and milk marketing, subsequently choosing milk production as their enterprise. Additionally, 53 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs), including 38 men and 15 women, were trained in basic animal health care, enabling them to participate actively in vaccination and treatment campaigns. These campaigns reached 2,126 households, successfully treating and deworming 47,102 livestock in the area. The consortium partners facilitated agricultural activities for 1,392 individuals (1,083 males and 309 females) in Burmath, Kadiang, and Pulbura, providing maize, sorghum, and vegetable seeds alongside essential farming tools for 300 households in Manyabol, GPAA.

CHALLENGES AND ADAPTIVE ACTIONS

Despite significant progress, challenges remain, requiring adaptive measures to sustain achievements.

SECURITY CONSTRAINTS

Localised violence and cattle raiding continue to threaten stability. To counteract this, the RSRTF Programme has expanded early warning systems, enabling communities to report and respond to threats more effectively. A key adaptation has been the inclusion of youth peace ambassadors in hotspot areas, providing real-time information to prevent violent escalations.

WEAK JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Limited legal infrastructure has hindered access to formal justice. In response, the programme has



Supported by RSRTF under the first phase of the Jonglei-GPAA Area-Based Programme, this community radio station in Bor now runs independently—powered by its own income. Once a tool to counter misinformation and promote peace, it has become a self-sustained platform for dialogue, civic awareness, and local resilience.

strengthened customary justice mechanisms and trained community mediators to handle disputes at the local level, reducing reliance on overstretched judicial institutions.

CLIMATE-RELATED DISRUPTIONS

Seasonal flooding has impacted agricultural production and market access. To mitigate this, the programme has introduced flood-resistant farming techniques and supported the development of alternative livelihood sources, such as fishing cooperatives, to ensure food security during flood seasons.

POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

Changes in local leadership have posed challenges for programme continuity. To navigate this, RSRTF has engaged in continuous dialogue with new government representatives, ensuring alignment between programme goals and evolving political priorities.

POOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Poor and often nonexistent access roads pose a significant challenge for implementing partners, especially during the flood season and when security situations deteriorate. These conditions hinder the movement of staff, volunteers, and ICGS members responsible for early warning. Additionally, they create opportunities for criminals to ambush programme supplies and community traders. The RSRTF Programme in Jonglei and GPAA has demonstrated that an integrated, community-driven approach can lead to measurable reductions in violence, strengthened governance, and economic recovery. Moving forward, sustained investment in local leadership, adaptive programming, and climate-resilient economic initiatives will be essential in ensuring that the progress achieved translates into long-term stability. By prioritising local ownership and inclusive governance, the RSRTF approach offers a sustainable model for peacebuilding and development in South Sudan.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Throughout 2024, the RSRTF programme in Jonglei and GPAA implemented a structured Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework to assess effectiveness, track progress, and ensure accountability. Routine monitoring visits, post-distribution evaluations, and learning review workshops informed programme adjustments, enhancing overall intervention impacts.

EFFECTIVE COORDINATION IN THE JONGLEI/GPAA RSRTF PROGRAMME

Coordination among stakeholders in the Jonglei and Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) has notably improved since the inception of the RSRTF's Area-Based Programme. While the first phase of the programme was characterized by fragmentation due to the presence of four largely distinct projects managed by 16 different agencies—the second phase marked a turning point.

Learning from earlier inefficiencies, the RSRTF introduced reforms that fostered greater collaboration among partners, streamlined planning processes, reduced duplication, and strengthened information and knowledge sharing for swift action and adaptive programming.. This shift enabled a more coherent operational model, where partners shared resources, engaged in joint implementation, and collectively addressed programmatic challenges. In areas like Akobo, this improved coordination has been directly linked to a reduction in violence and a stronger sense of community trust in the programme's peacebuilding interventions.

Moreover, local coordination mechanisms such as the Area Reference Group (ARG) in Pibor have started to function more effectively as inclusive platforms for dialogue and decision-making. While challenges persist in locations like Bor—where local authorities have expressed concern over limited information sharing—Pibor's ARG has been praised for facilitating collaboration among civil society, government, and traditional leadership.

These forums have supported initiatives to prevent retaliatory violence, enforce customary law, and mediate long-standing disputes. Additionally, improved coordination with external actors, including UNMISS and humanitarian agencies, has allowed the programme to respond more flexibly to emerging needs.

In Q2, the ABP monitoring teams evaluated crop and vegetable production in Burmath, Kadiang, and Pulbura. Findings led to improved post-harvest handling strategies, enhancing food security and market potential. A post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercise gathered community feedback on food assistance effectiveness, ensuring efficient and equitable aid distribution.

Justice sector monitoring included weekly monitoring of detention facilities in Bor, Uror, and Akobo, assessing human rights conditions. Findings contributed to procedural reforms via a bi-monthly judicial review process, reducing pretrial detention numbers by 27% and boosting public confidence.

Although no Measuring Safety and Security (MSS) study was conducted in 2024 (endline scheduled for 2025), security monitoring continued through community-led risk assessments and local mitigation strategies. Reports from Pibor and Akobo highlighted increased community engagement in security planning and preventive measures.

Coordination among ABP partners was crucial for consistent and actionable data collection. Joint monitoring visits, data-sharing exercises, and quarterly learning review workshops, notably in Bor (June 2024) and Juba (November 2024), facilitated adaptive programming and strategic alignment.

Challenges persisted, particularly regarding data synchronisation and reporting delays caused by logistical issues, security risks, and competing priorities. To address these, staggered reporting schedules and enhanced field coordination mechanisms were introduced, improving efficiency without overwhelming field teams.



Kong Koc: Laying the foundation for peaceful, stable, and resilient communities in Greater Tonj

Target areas: Greater Tonj, Warrap State: Tonj South, Tonj North, Tonj East counties

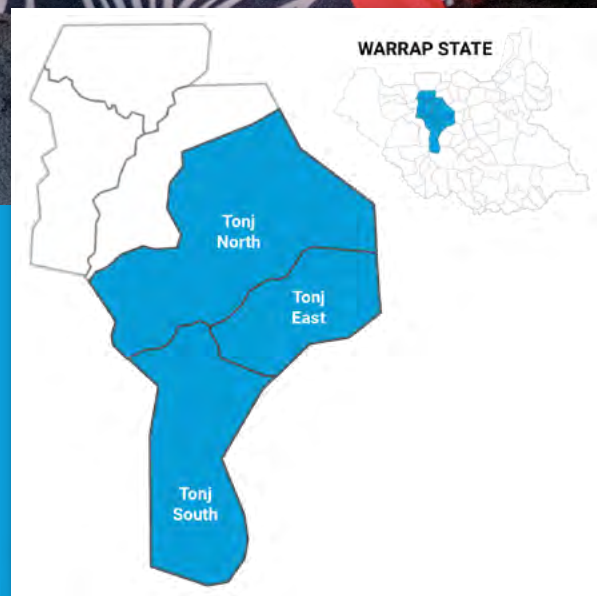
Lead agency: World Food Programme (WFP)

Budget: USD 12,273,540

Partners:

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Peace Canal, The Organisation for Children's Harmony (TOCH), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)

ABP timeframe: 15th August 2022 – 31st March 2025



2024 OUTPUTS ACCORDING TO RSRTF INDICATORS

978

youths in cattle camps trained on conflict management. (237 female and 741 male)

10

intra- / inter- communal dialogue sessions conducted (213 female and 405 male reached)

14

instances when political engagement and opportunities to leverage political influence are used to resolve conflicts/reduce tensions (34 female and 110 male reached)

16

conflict management, prevention, and resolution activities held that broaden the space for women and youth leadership in peace processes (441 female and 542 male reached)

58

UNMISS patrols conducted



595

3,214

community representatives, including women-specific clusters trained on community security approaches and action planning (642 female and 2572 male)

justice chain actors, formally and informally trained (85 female and 510 male)

180

government officials trained for better management and provision of services. (18 female and 162 male)

86

cases investigated and adjudicated by the mobile courts deployed

911

individuals provided with legal aid services (276 female and 635 male)



125

SGBV survivors benefitting from victim redress mechanisms (88 female and 37 male)

5,564

women and men received capacity strengthening, training and technical support (1894 female and 3797 male)

41

events organised to facilitate linkages between market actors, producer groups and communities (134 female and 41 male participated)

1,354

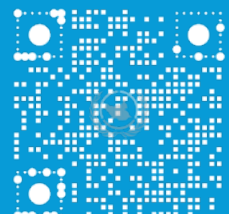
at-risk youth provided access to career development and employment/ livelihood opportunities (552 female and 799 male)



9,144

individuals engaged in building restoration or maintaining community assets through cash for work (2745 female and 6399 male)

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BACKGROUND

The Kong Koc Area-Based Programme (ABP), implemented under the Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF), has emerged as a model for integrated peacebuilding in Greater Tonj.

The Greater Tonj area continues to witness a notable restoration of relative peace and stability, as reported by both government authorities and community members. In the targeted payams, incidents of intercommunal conflict and crime have significantly decreased in both frequency and severity, with fewer cases of cattle theft, murder, armed robbery, intercommunal attacks, and revenge killings. In the endline report, 74% of respondents reported that at least one person from their village traveled and stayed in a previously conflicted community.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This initiative has successfully integrated conflict management, justice reform, and livelihood support to foster peace and resilience. Its holistic approach has strengthened social cohesion, reduced violence, and enhanced community resilience—contributing to a safer, more stable, and self-reliant environment. In doing so, the programme has effectively mitigated conflict risks while laying the groundwork for long-term social and economic development in the region.

The programme's branding and messaging—centered on the Dinka phrase for restraint (Kong Koc), meaning “first, wait”—has proven to be a powerful tool for fostering local ownership and influencing behaviour. This simple yet resonant message has gained widespread traction in both community dialogues and everyday interactions, reinforcing the value of restraint, reflection, and mediation over retaliation. By shaping perceptions around conflict resolution, Kong Koc has contributed to meaningful behavioural change and strengthened the programme's impact at the grassroots level.

RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

A significant achievement of the Kong Koc initiative has been the marked reduction in intercommunal conflict, cattle raids, and armed violence. These longstanding issues, often exacerbated by the absence of effective dispute-resolution mechanisms, have been addressed through community-led peacebuilding dialogues and strengthened justice systems. Radio talk shows featuring peace messages have significantly influenced behavior change and reduced misinformation that often triggers conflicts. Announcements about raided or lost cattle facilitated their tracing and recovery, mitigating potential violence. Additionally, the radio provided a vital platform for government authorities, particularly the Governor, to address communal conflicts directly, easing tensions in affected areas.

The programme has fostered trust in governance and justice by introducing community policing, peace monitoring committees, and structured conflict resolution frameworks. These mechanisms have empowered local actors to mediate disputes effectively, preventing cycles of revenge killings. By supporting traditional leaders and statutory justice institutions, the initiative has facilitated dialogue-based solutions and reinforced adherence to legal decisions, gradually shifting societal norms away from violence-driven retaliation.

A cornerstone of Kong Koc's conflict resolution strategy has been its innovative engagement with conflict actors, including youth from cattle camps (Mijook Wut) and traditional spiritual leaders (spear masters). By integrating these groups into structured Crime Prevention Committees (CPCs) and community dialogues, the programme has helped curb cycles of revenge violence and strengthen locally-led peace structures.

STABILISATION AND GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING

Addressing the structural drivers of conflict is central to the stabilisation component of the RSRTF approach. This has been pursued through the rehabilitation of justice infrastructure, training for chiefs and law enforcement personnel, and the deployment of mobile courts. Collectively, these efforts have improved access to justice, resulting in an increase in legal dispute resolution, a reduction in extrajudicial violence, and a growing reliance on peaceful mediation.

A significant contribution to deterring violence has been the gradual restoration of public trust in the justice system. This progress is attributed to the construction of critical rule of law infrastructure, the active role of community governance structures in resolving issues through traditional mechanisms, the enhanced performance of justice actors, and the deployment of circuit courts. One such court successfully resolved over 47 cases—absolving wrongfully accused individuals, delivering justice to aggrieved parties, and reinforcing



"When the judge said I was not guilty, it gave me back my life. RSRTF didn't just renovate a prison—they restored my future"

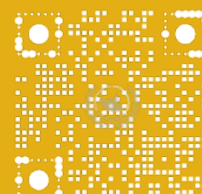
-Luelle

A SECOND CHANCE FOR LUELLE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Falsely accused of murder, 22-year-old Luelle spent nearly two years in detention without trial—first in an overcrowded metal container where extreme heat caused serious skin infections. As his family's main provider, his arrest was devastating: they lost livestock, and his young stepbrother died without medical care. "If Kong Koc's mobile court hadn't come, I would still be there—or worse," he said.

With RSRTF support, the prison was upgraded from inhumane containers to proper brick structures. A mobile court deployed a High Court judge to Tonj South where Luelle's case was reviewed, and he was acquitted when the court found the accusations were based only on rumours. "When the judge said I was not guilty, I felt like my life started again."

Now free, Luelle works as a motorcycle rider to support his family and dreams of starting a small business. The prison renovation and mobile court didn't just provide justice—they gave him back his health, dignity, and hope for a better future. While the experience has left lasting emotional scars, he remains deeply grateful. "When the judge said I was not guilty, it gave me back my life. RSRTF didn't just renovate a prison—they restored my future."



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accountability. The review of the Wanh Alel customary law code in collaboration with IOM, has also been a significant achievement, ensuring that legal frameworks reflect evolving social norms and promoting greater accountability for intra-communal violence.

Nine Police-Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) have also been established, improving collaboration between local security forces and communities. Reports from Police and Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) and cattle camp committees indicate that road ambushes in Tonj North have drastically declined, largely due to regular patrols conducted by these local bodies. In Tonj South, human rights abuses have also decreased. A notable example is when cattle camp committee members intervened to rescue 19 suspected cattle raiders from Cueibet from an angry mob, placing them in custody at the newly constructed Akon Chok Police Post. This intervention likely prevented cross-border conflict and acts of revenge, further reinforcing the impact of community-led justice and conflict prevention mechanisms. The enhanced security environment has also facilitated the return of displaced populations. This return has, in turn, contributed to economic recovery as displaced individuals regain access to land, markets, and livelihoods. The combination of security interventions and justice reforms has reduced impunity and increased confidence in legal institutions, leading to a greater reliance on formal dispute resolution processes.

RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Recognising the link between economic insecurity and conflict, Kong Koc has placed a strong emphasis on resilience and livelihoods as part of its holistic approach. Resilience-building efforts have played a vital role in reducing incentives for violence by creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. Initiatives such as vocational

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Food Consumption Score (FCS) among targeted communities improved- the proportion of people classified as 'poor' declining from 31% to 27%.
- In Greater Tonj, 83% of community members reported feeling safe compared to 24% at the baseline, and 94% reported no violent incidents, a major improvement attributed to the engagement of community-led peace structures.
- 86 cases adjudicated by the Circuit Court, including 24 rape cases and 23 murder/culpable homicide cases, significantly reducing prolonged pre-trial detention.
- 16 intercommunal peace dialogues facilitated, addressing cattle raiding, land disputes, and revenge killings, with key agreements reached on peaceful restitution of stolen cattle.
- 9 Police and Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) established, strengthening collaboration between law enforcement and local communities, leading to a sharp decline in road ambushes.
- Over 4,300 farmers engaged in crop and vegetable production, cultivating 4,221 feddans of land with traditional and newly introduced climate-resilient crops such as rice, cassava, and sweet potatoes.
- 119 ox-ploughs were distributed, benefiting 22 bomas and significantly easing land preparation for smallholder farmers.
- Vocational training was provided to 178 youth and women, equipping them with skills in catering, tailoring, beauty services, and masonry, with 88 participants successfully graduating and receiving startup kits.
- 178 vocational training graduates were provided startup kits to promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce incentives for violence.
- 3,210 individuals participated in communal asset creation, including road rehabilitation, flood control dyke construction, and tree planting for climate change adaptation.
- 1,450,000 SSP disbursed as microloans through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), supporting small business growth and economic resilience in the community.
- Decrease in cross-border cattle raiding incidents following targeted reconciliation efforts between Tonj East, Rumbek North, and Cueibet communities in Lakes State.

HOW INTEGRATED RSRTF EFFORTS DRIVE IMPACT IN GREATER TONJ ABP

The Kong Koc Area-Based Programme (ABP) in Greater Tonj effectively integrates the three RSRTF pillars—**reconciliation, stabilization, and resilience**—to address complex conflict dynamics and build sustainable peace.

RECONCILIATION AND STABILIZATION SYNERGIES

- o Peace structures like **peace committees and crime prevention committees** have reduced communal violence and strengthened early warning and mediation.
- o The **deployment of a mobile circuit court** and construction of justice infrastructure increased access to justice and trust in legal systems.
- o **Kong Koc FM radio** supported conflict prevention by spreading peace messages, countering misinformation, and supporting accountability.

STABILIZATION AND RESILIENCE LINKAGES

- o Improved **security enabled economic activities**, such as farming and business startups.
- o Justice infrastructure helped maintain public order, essential for safe economic engagement.
- o **TVET programs trained 178 youth (92F, 86M)** in practical skills, providing alternatives to violence.

RECONCILIATION AND RESILIENCE REINFORCEMENT

- o **Joint farming and cooperative groups** fostered social cohesion among formerly conflicting communities.
- o Livelihood activities transformed attitudes, shifting youth from violence to productivity.
- o **Women-led savings groups (VSLAs)** empowered women economically and enhanced social stability.

training, agricultural support, and income-generating programmes have offered economic alternatives to conflict—particularly for youth who are most at risk of engaging in violence.

Over 4,300 individuals have engaged in climate-smart agricultural initiatives, with farmers trained in drought-resistant crops, flood-resistant rice farming, and improved livestock management. Livelihood programmes supported producer groups, vocational skills training, and village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), contributing to increased household incomes and greater economic stability. 178 youth graduated from vocational training programmes, equipping them with small business management and trading skills. Special attention has been given to youth and women, who have traditionally been marginalised in economic activities.

Participants of the programme in Manalor Payam of Tonj North, reported that the support given by Kong Koc has encouraged communities to embrace farming and other livelihood activities such as small enterprises, for instance the trainings and also provision of tools such as Ox-ploughs make it easier to increase the scale of farming. This engagement in productive activities has reportedly diverted attention of the youth from fighting to concentrating on improving their livelihoods.

A key outcome of these interventions has been the expansion of market access and intercommunal trade. Community Infrastructure investments—including road construction and improved water access—have further enhanced market connectivity and agricultural productivity, strengthening the foundations for long-term resilience. These RSRTF activities have fostered economic interdependence among previously conflicting communities, reinforcing peace through shared prosperity. By promoting cross-community economic cooperation, the programme has facilitated greater social integration and encouraged peaceful coexistence.

CHALLENGES

Despite notable progress under the Kong Koc ABP, several persistent challenges threaten the sustainability of peace and development in Greater Tonj:

- **Justice System Limitations:** While new infrastructure and paralegal services have improved access to justice, the system remains under-resourced, with limited trained personnel, case backlogs, and weak integration between customary and statutory courts.
- **Political Instability:** Frequent leadership changes and political tensions, especially in Tonj East, have disrupted program implementation and fueled mistrust among communities, often manipulated by local elites.
- **Climate and Environmental Shocks:** Recurrent flooding and erratic weather have damaged livelihoods, displaced communities, and delayed activities, exposing the region's vulnerability to climate change.
- **Cross-Border Conflicts:** Unresolved tensions with neighboring counties in Lakes and Unity States continue to drive violence, particularly cattle raids and revenge killings, exacerbated by slow progress in organizing cross-border dialogues.

Sustaining RSRTF gains will require ongoing investment in justice, strengthened governance, climate resilience, and effective conflict resolution mechanisms.

EFFECTIVE COORDINATION IN THE TONJ PROGRAMME

The evaluation highlights several positive aspects of RSRTF coordination, particularly in relation to multi-stakeholder engagement, adaptive programming, and joint planning mechanisms. Key strengths noted include:

1. STRONG COORDINATION AMONG RSRTF PARTNERS

- The multi-agency approach, involving WFP, UNMISS, UNDP, national NGOs (Peace Canal, and TOCH) and an international NGO ADRA, has enabled complementary expertise in peacebuilding, stabilization, and resilience programming.
- The co-location of UNMISS and UNDP personnel in Warrap State has facilitated joint implementation, especially in justice sector interventions such as the mobile circuit court and law enforcement support.
- Coordination platforms, such as the Peace Actors Forum and the Resilience Technical Committee alongside the ARGs, have ensured regular information-sharing and alignment with broader peacebuilding efforts in Warrap State.

2. EFFECTIVE USE OF COORDINATION MECHANISMS

- The Kong Koc Project Board has provided a forum for strategic oversight, ensuring that the programme remains aligned with RSRTF's broader objectives.
- The planned Partners' Forum to take place in March 2025, was endorsed by the Governor of Warrap State. This presented an opportunity to further institutionalize government engagement in RSRTF programming.

3. ADAPTIVE AND CRISIS-RESPONSIVE COORDINATION

- The RSRTF crisis modifier was successfully used to convene a cross-border peace conference, addressing intercommunal conflicts between Greater Tonj, Lakes, and Unity States. This demonstrates RSRTF's flexibility in responding to emerging threats.
- The budget realignment mechanisms within RSRTF have allowed the Kong Koc programme to adapt to changing conflict dynamics, ensuring that resources are directed toward the most pressing needs.

4. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER PEACE AND RESILIENCE PROGRAMMES

- The RSRTF approach has encouraged collaboration beyond direct programme partners, engaging actors from the Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund (POF) and other resilience-focused initiatives in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, and Unity States.
- The alignment of Kong Koc activities with the Warrap State Development Plan is seen as an important step in ensuring coherence with broader governance and development efforts.



“Before, people fought over rumours. Now, they get accurate information—and there’s no more fighting”

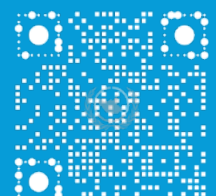
- Garang John

FROM RUMOURS TO RECONCILIATION: THE IMPACT OF KONG KOC RADIO

“People used to look at me and ask, ‘Who is this man?’” recalls Garang John, a broadcaster from the minority Bongo community in Tonj South. Despite initial scepticism, he joined Kong Koc Radio 100.4 with a clear mission—to bring accurate information and peace messaging to communities long fractured by conflict and rumours. “Our country has many issues,” he says. “So I decided to help our young people by spreading peace.”

Garang is part of a growing network of community radio champions supported by the UN’s Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF). These stations—first launched in Jonglei and now active in Greater Tonj and Central Equatoria—are proving to be essential tools for healing, dialogue, and resilience. They help debunk misinformation, broadcast early warnings, host inclusive talk shows, and connect returnees, youth, and women with opportunities and support. As Garang explains, “Before, people fought over rumours. Now, they get accurate information—and there’s no more fighting.”

His work has transformed both his life and his relationship with the community. “People greet me in the streets. They call my name. I feel like I’m in my own village,” he says. These stations have become platforms for civic accountability and reconciliation—where chiefs, youth leaders, women representatives, and government officials openly discuss tensions, solutions, and shared futures. Through voices like Garang’s, RSRTF’s radio programmes are not just broadcasting—they’re building peace, restoring trust, and turning communities into co-authors of South Sudan’s recovery.



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EVALUATION FINDINGS

A recent independent evaluation of the programme reveals important insights into both its successes and ongoing challenges. The evaluation assessed Kong Koc's impact using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria—measuring relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability—and found that the programme has contributed significantly to violence reduction, local governance, and economic resilience. These findings not only reinforce the value of integrated programming in fragile contexts but also provide critical lessons for the future of area-based approaches under RSRTF.

The evaluation highlights the programme's success in reducing violence across Greater Tonj. Since Kong Koc's inception, communities have reported a marked improvement in security, with 83% of respondents now feeling safe in their communities, up from just 24% at baseline. Additionally, the number of people attending nighttime social gatherings has increased from 58% to 77%, indicating greater freedom of movement and confidence in local stability. Importantly, cross-movement between previously conflicting communities was recorded at 74%, new marriages between members of previously conflicting communities at 61% and the proportion of the community reporting none occurrence of violent incidents at 94%.

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) among targeted communities has also improved, with the proportion of people classified as 'poor' declining from 31% to 27%. However, food insecurity remains a significant challenge, and further investment in climate-smart agricultural production, market linkages, irrigation, and alternative livelihoods is needed to sustain these gains. The limited cash economy in Greater Tonj presents a further obstacle, as TVET graduates and entrepreneurs struggle to find employment and business opportunities in an environment where disposable income is scarce. Addressing these systemic economic constraints will be a critical focus in Phase 2 of the programme.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The programme conducted quarterly outcome monitoring, integrating qualitative methods—such as focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs)—with quantitative surveys, all incorporated into the Results Framework Tracking Matrix. Assessment findings informed adjustments in operational timelines, budget reallocations, and activity targets, including accelerating infrastructure projects and enhancing community dialogue initiatives as required.

Measuring Safety and Security (MSS) surveys effectively tracked community perceptions of safety. Baseline and midline studies showed 83% of respondents reporting increased feelings of safety, noting marked improvements in freedom of movement and public participation. Implementation faced challenges, including difficulties accessing remote areas due to poor road conditions and periodic insecurity, causing data collection delays. Nevertheless, MSS findings were pivotal in pinpointing security hotspots and guiding tailored interventions by UNMISS and local authorities.

M&E coordination among ABP partners has been highly effective, enhanced by regular bi-weekly meetings and a dedicated M&E working group. These forums facilitated timely data sharing, cross-verification of findings, and collaborative troubleshooting of data inconsistencies. This coordinated approach ensured consistent capturing and integration of disaggregated data (by gender, age, and other key groups) into decision-making. Overall, effective M&E coordination increased transparency, accountability, and continuous programme improvement.

Collectively, these activities provided a robust evidence base, ensuring the programme remained responsive and adaptive to emerging challenges and changing field conditions.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

While the evaluation confirms that Kong Koc has made substantial progress, several challenges must be addressed to strengthen its long-term impact.

- **Security Risks & Political Uncertainty:** Despite improved stability, the presence of small arms and the threat of forced disarmament continue to pose risks. The evaluation warns that ill-planned disarmament efforts could reignite violence unless accompanied by strong security guarantees and alternative livelihood programmes.
- **Coordination and Government Engagement:** Although the programme has established strong community-

led governance structures, engagement with state and national authorities has been inconsistent. High turnover in government leadership has hampered the programme's ability to institutionalise peace and justice mechanisms. The planned Partners' Forum in March 2025, which aims to align the programme with the Warrap State Development Plan, will be a crucial step in strengthening government ownership.

- **Sustainability and the Role of Local Partners:** While 20% of Kong Koc's budget is allocated to South Sudanese NGOs, further capacity-building efforts are needed to ensure long-term sustainability. The evaluation also emphasises the importance of financial sustainability strategies for community-led initiatives, such as Kong Koc Radio, which has been a critical tool for peace messaging but faces funding uncertainties.

As Kong Koc transitions into its second phase (2025-2028), these findings will guide strategic adaptations to further strengthen peace, governance, and resilience in Greater Tonj.



Mitigating underlying conflict factors for stability and improved livelihoods in Southern Unity

Target areas: Mayendit, Leer, and Panyijar Counties, Unity State

Lead agency: World Relief South Sudan

Budget: USD 10,000,000

Partners: IRC, DRI, AMA, UNMISS and UNIDOR

ABP timeframe: 1st August 2024 to 30th July 2027



2024 OUTPUTS ACCORDING TO RSRTF INDICATORS

978

youths in cattle camps trained on conflict management. (237 female and 741 male)

10

intra- / inter- communal dialogue sessions conducted (213 female and 405 male reached)

14

instances when political engagement and opportunities to leverage political influence are used to resolve conflicts/reduce tensions (34 female and 110 male reached)

16

conflict management, prevention, and resolution activities held that broaden the space for women and youth leadership in peace processes (441 female and 542 male reached)

58

UNMISS patrols conducted



595

3,214

community representatives, including women-specific clusters trained on community security approaches and action planning (642 female and 2572 male)

justice chain actors, formally and informally trained (85 female and 510 male)

180

government officials trained for better management and provision of services. (18 female and 162 male)

86

cases investigated and adjudicated by the mobile courts deployed

911

individuals provided with legal aid services (276 female and 635 male)



125

SGBV survivors benefitting from victim redress mechanisms (88 female and 37 male)

5,564

women and men received capacity strengthening, training and technical support (1894 female and 3797 male)

41

events organised to facilitate linkages between market actors, producer groups and communities (134 female and 41 male participated)

1,354

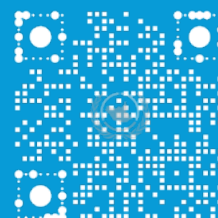
at-risk youth provided access to career development and employment/ livelihood opportunities (552 female and 799 male)



9,144

individuals engaged in building restoration or maintaining community assets through cash for work (2745 female and 6399 male)

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BACKGROUND

The Mitigating Underlying Conflict Factors for Stability and Improved Livelihoods project in Southern Unity, South Sudan, is a three-year initiative spanning from September 2024 to July 2027. This project seeks to address the deep-seated causes of conflict while simultaneously fostering economic and social stability for the affected communities. The initiative is being implemented by World Relief in collaboration with United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Universal Intervention & Development Organization (UNIDOR), Dialogue and Research Institute (DRI), and Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA). operating primarily in Leer, Mayiendit, and Panyijar Counties, with additional intervention in Mayom, Koch, and parts of Lakes State (Rumbek North and Yirol East). With a financial allocation of USD 10 million under the RSRTF, the programme takes a holistic approach by combining reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience-building efforts to reduce violence, strengthen governance structures, and provide economic opportunities for communities that have suffered prolonged instability.

This programme builds upon the previous RSRTF activities in Koch, reinforcing earlier efforts by expanding the geographic focus and scaling up integrated interventions to promote peace, security, and livelihoods. The Southern Unity ABP (Area-Based Programme) is designed to complement and sustain gains made in Koch by ensuring continuity of reconciliation and stabilisation efforts across neighbouring counties. Recognising the interconnected nature of conflicts and governance challenges in the region, this initiative works to bridge previous gaps and strengthen inter-county collaboration for long-term stability.

Since the programme officially commenced in August 2024, it has been operational for only four months. While significant groundwork has been laid, much of the implementation is still in its early stages, with initial results beginning to emerge. The following sections provide an overview of the progress achieved to date, acknowledging that further expansion and impact measurement will occur in the coming months.

PROGRESS IN 2024

Given the short timeframe since inception, initial activities have focused on establishing the foundational structures necessary for effective implementation. This includes extensive consultations with stakeholders to ensure alignment with community needs, securing local communities and government buy-in, and initiating key programme components. Notable achievements during these first four months include:

- **Establishing strong partnerships** with key political actors at all levels, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among local authorities.
- **Launching the Area-Based Programme (ABP)** to mobilise community support and ensure that the project is locally driven.
- **Signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** with county authorities to formalise commitments to supporting the initiative.
- **Formalising coordination mechanisms**, including the **creation of Area Reference Groups (ARGs)** across the three target counties, ensuring that community representatives, government officials, and local organisations participate in conflict monitoring and resolution processes.
- **Initiating key activities**, such as community peace dialogues, security patrols, and economic resilience-building programmes.

RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Although the programme has only been active for four months, it has begun fostering inter- and intra-communal dialogues aimed at resolving longstanding disputes that have contributed to cycles of violence. Early interventions have focused on revenge killings, cattle raids, and disputes over land and natural resources. Through facilitated community engagements, the project has encouraged conflicting groups to seek non-violent solutions to achieve behavioural change.

A key aspect of these reconciliation efforts has been the establishment of Peace, Reconciliation, and Accountability Committees (PRAC), which serve as community-led conflict resolution bodies. These committees have already intervened in multiple disputes, including inter-clan conflicts and tensions between displaced persons and host communities. Additionally, the reactivation of community peace committees has further strengthened local capacities to mediate conflicts without external intervention. Given the early stage of implementation, the long-term impact of these initiatives will be assessed in future reporting cycles.



“We now feel that we have a place at the table. The future is not only in the hands of officials—it’s in our hands too.”

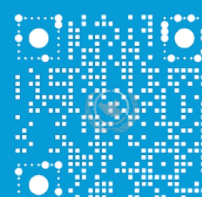
- Women leader

“WE FEEL SEEN”: COMMUNITIES EMBRACE NEW HOPE

“This programme brings hope to our people,” said a chief in Leer. “We have lived through displacement, hunger, and violence. But today, we feel seen.” The launch of the Southern Unity Area-Based Programme (ABP), led by World Relief and supported by RSRTF, has sparked a wave of cautious optimism across Leer, Mayendit, and Panyijiar counties—regions long scarred by conflict and neglect.

Held in October 2024, the launch events brought together over 300 participants from government, humanitarian agencies, and local communities. “Collaboration is not just important; it’s the key to our success,” said World Relief’s Country Director, Abiyot Mulugeta. Echoing the call for joint ownership, RSRTF Fund Manager Shamira Haider added, “It is our collective role as peace actors—government, donors, and communities—to make this vision a reality.”

What resonated most, however, were the voices from the ground. “We now feel that we have a place at the table,” said a woman leader from Panyijiar. “The future is not only in the hands of officials—it’s in our hands too.” And from a youth leader in Mayendit: “We want to be remembered as the generation that chose peace.” In a place where hope was once in short supply, the Southern Unity ABP is helping communities reclaim their future.



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STABILISATION AND GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING

To improve security in high-risk areas, the project has deployed regular security patrols, particularly in Leer, Mayendit, and Panyijiar, in collaboration with local law enforcement and UNMISS peacekeepers. These patrols have helped deter violent outbreaks and provided reassurance to communities living in vulnerable areas.

Efforts to improve access to justice have also begun, with early-stage training sessions provided to 60 local leaders on conflict analysis and early warning methodologies. These initial trainings aim to equip community members with the skills needed to intervene effectively before tensions escalate. Over the next year, the programme will work to strengthen governance structures, ensuring community members have increased participation in decision-making through civic engagement activities.

RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Economic resilience efforts have been initiated, with a particular focus on marginalised groups. The formation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) has begun, providing financial literacy training and small business opportunities to selected participants. While full-scale livelihood interventions are still being developed, early activities include preparations for vocational training that will likely be conducted in areas such as tailoring, carpentry, and agribusiness, with an emphasis on women and youth empowerment.

Additionally, the programme has undertaken flood mitigation initiatives, including assessments for dyke rehabilitation and construction. Given the prevalence of flooding in Southern Unity, these measures are crucial for preventing displacement and protecting agricultural and grazing lands. The actual construction and rehabilitation of dykes will take place in the coming months as the programme scales up its resilience interventions.

CHALLENGES AND ADAPTIVE ACTIONS

Given that the programme has only been operational for four months, challenges have largely centered on early-stage implementation hurdles. These include:

- **Delays in access to some locations** due to flooding, which has complicated logistics and delayed certain activities.
- **Security risks** in high-tension areas, necessitating careful coordination with local law enforcement and UNMISS.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Community Engagement: 5,467 people (4,156 men, 1,331 women) participated in peace and reconciliation events.

Governance Training: 30 government officials (26 men, 4 women) trained on good governance, service delivery, and conflict resolution.

Women's Leadership: 21 women leaders were trained in leadership and conflict management, promoting women's role in peacebuilding.

Conflict Early Warning System: 60 community members (47 men, 13 women) trained in conflict analysis and early warning.

Savings & Livelihoods: 4 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) were established with 100 participants (mostly women).

Youth Empowerment: 40 youth leaders (20 men, 20 women) trained in leadership, gender equality, and conflict resolution.

Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) Rights: 76 community members (41 men, 35 women) participated in a land and property rights assessment.

Safe Spaces for Women & Girls: 1 of the 2 Safe Spaces/One-Stop Centres has been completed and other in the pipeline for rehabilitation to provide psychosocial support and case management.

- **Limited community engagement** in some areas where historical grievances have made reconciliation efforts more difficult.

To mitigate these challenges, the programme has:

- **Prioritised early warning mechanisms** to anticipate and respond to security threats.
- **Strengthened engagement with local governance actors**, ensuring that community concerns are integrated into planning from the outset.
- **Scaled up economic resilience efforts**, particularly for vulnerable populations, to reduce dependency on external aid and create sustainable income-generating opportunities.

HOW INTEGRATED RSRTF EFFORTS DRIVE IMPACT

Despite being in its early stages, the project is already demonstrating the value of an integrated approach. By linking reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience activities, initial efforts have set the stage for long-term, sustainable impact. Early successes in community dialogues have created a foundation for stabilisation, ensuring that governance and security measures are well-received by local populations.

For example, in Panyijiar County, early coordination between peace dialogues and economic empowerment initiatives has helped build trust between displaced populations and host communities. By ensuring that both groups are involved in economic planning and mediation efforts, the project is working to prevent further violence and promote sustainable coexistence. Over time, these efforts will be expanded to other counties to maximise the impact.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During the reporting period, the Southern Unity ABP conducted several monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities aimed at strengthening evidence-based programming. The ABP developed a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) framework, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, an indicator tracking sheet, and a standardised reporting format. This initiative streamlined partner reporting processes and ensured consistent data collection across all targeted counties. A baseline survey framework was established, and essential preparatory activities, including tool development and partner training, were completed. This groundwork sets the stage for baseline data collection scheduled for the next reporting period. The forthcoming baseline survey will serve as a critical reference point for measuring programme progress and evaluating overall impact.

Furthermore, the ABP designed the Measuring Safety and Security (MSS) survey to assess community perceptions regarding safety, security, and stability. While the MSS survey itself has yet to be fully implemented, significant preparatory steps, such as questionnaire development and initial consultations with community representatives, have been finalised. Challenges encountered in this process primarily involved restricted access due to flooding and localised insecurity, delaying the planned field data collection.

Effective coordination among ABP partners enhanced the implementation of M&E activities. All partners actively contributed to developing shared tools and standardised reporting templates. Regular coordination meetings facilitated the exchange of updates, identification of challenges, and sharing of best practices. This collaborative approach significantly improved data consistency, reduced redundancies, and ensured comprehensive representation of each partner's contributions in overall programme reporting and analysis.

The Mitigating Underlying Conflict Factors for Stability and Improved Livelihoods Project has made strong progress in its first four months of implementation, despite challenges related to access, security, and early-stage capacity building. By integrating reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience, the programme is laying a foundation for long-term peace and economic sustainability in Southern Unity. As the programme moves forward, the focus will be on scaling up governance support, expanding livelihood initiatives, and refining early warning systems to ensure that communities remain resilient in the face of ongoing challenges. Future reporting will provide a deeper analysis of programme impact as activities continue to scale up.



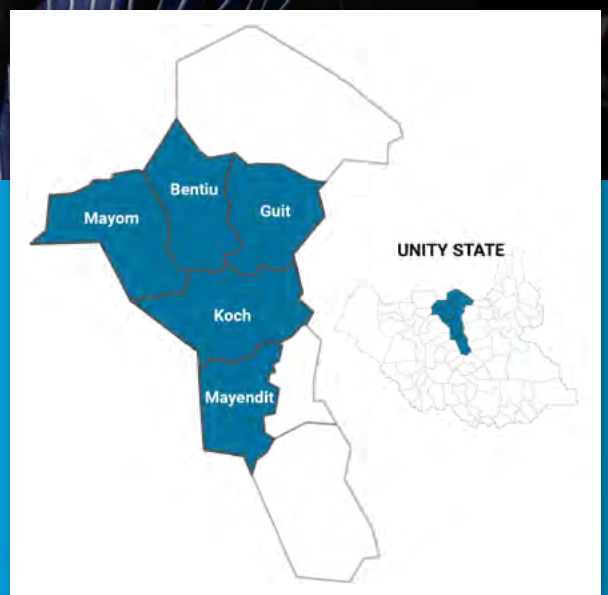
Restoring Peaceful Co-existence for Better Livelihood in Koch Phase II

Target areas: Koch County, and Mayom, Rubkona, Guit, and Mayendit Counties, Unity State

Lead agency: World Relief South Sudan

Budget: USD 9,242,942

Partners: CARE, Mercy Corps, UNMISS, UNIDOR



ABP timeframe: 1st December 2021 to 30th November 2023 (NCE December 2023- February 2024).

CUMULATIVE OUTPUTS ACCORDING TO RSRTF INDICATORS

41,335

people reached with sensitisation messages on violence reduction promoting inter-communal peace and reconciliation efforts

17

schools where peace education is incorporated in formal education and school curriculums

12,456

displaced individuals voluntarily returning/relocating to the target area

424

teachers/students/parents trained in peace education

213

individuals affected by violence were provided with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and rehabilitation

37

UNMISS patrols conducted



98

community peace agreements and reconciliation mediated/led by peace committees

307

6,424

community representatives, including women- specific clusters trained on community security approaches and action planning

political actors trained in mediation, dialogue and negotiation

177

SGBV survivors benefitting from victim redress mechanisms

2,617

individuals supported to exercise and assert their housing, land and property rights



575

justice chain actors formally and informally trained

352

government officials trained to better manage and provide basic services

4,153

women, men, boys, and girls received capacity strengthening, training and technical support

4,482

individuals engaged in building restoration or maintaining community assets through cash for work

1,067

students enrolled and graduated from functional adult literacy and second chance education (SCE) program

474

at-risk youth provided access to career development and employment/ livelihood opportunities

24

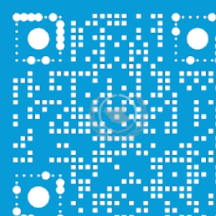
community assets built, restored or maintained



580

people actively participated in Harmonised Community-Based Participatory Planning exercises to identify structural drivers of recurring crises in their communities

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BACKGROUND

The Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) Koch Area-Based Programme (ABP) was designed to address the entrenched cycles of violence and instability in Koch County and its neighbouring areas. Launched in December 2021, the programme built upon previous reconciliation efforts and was structured to run for two years, later receiving a brief extension to conclude in February 2024. As the programme saw its final completion in the first months of 2024, this report reflects on its achievements, challenges, and the lasting impact it has had on the communities it served.

Over the years of implementation, the RSRTF initiative has played a transformative role in fostering reconciliation, strengthening governance structures, and enhancing economic opportunities for vulnerable communities. By adopting a holistic approach that integrates peacebuilding, justice sector reform, and economic empowerment, the programme has contributed to the broader goal of sustainable peace and development in South Sudan. The initiative has helped rebuild trust among communities, established platforms for dialogue, and created conditions that support long-term stability and resilience.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS:

Reflecting on the programme in 2024, the tangible impact in Koch County is clear, evident in the shifting perceptions of safety, the effectiveness of governance structures, and the growing economic independence of local populations. Communities that were once deeply divided by conflict are now engaging in productive dialogue and collaboration.

Significant improvements in governance and access to justice have had a profound impact on communities. Following the completion of the program, there was a growing demand for mobile courts in other areas. In response, the government, in partnership with UNMISS, has replicated the RSRTF mobile court component and allocated a budget for judges. This initiative has further reinforced stability in the region. Traditional justice mechanisms, which were previously inconsistent and often inaccessible, have been strengthened through capacity-building initiatives for local leaders, police officers, and court officials as part of the RSRTF Program. This has instilled greater confidence in the legal system among community members, who have witnessed disputes being resolved more effectively and fairly.

Extrajudicial killings have significantly decreased due to the implementation of modern detention and correction facilities. These advancements have ensured that individuals who are arrested are no longer confined within 20-foot shipping containers filled with bodily fluids, enduring unbearable heat and congestion, without access to toilets or fresh air. The improved infrastructure and staff training facilitate more humane treatment of individuals within the justice system. As a result, instances of arbitrary detention have decreased, leading to enhanced overall trust in law enforcement institutions.


The establishment of peace committees and school-based peace clubs has provided community-led mechanisms for resolving disputes, reducing violence, and fostering a sense of collective responsibility. These efforts have translated into a notable decline in inter-communal tensions, allowing for increased trade and mobility among previously isolated groups.

Economic recovery has been another crucial pillar of the programme, helping to break the cycle of dependency and vulnerability that has long plagued conflict-affected communities. Through initiatives that support savings and loan associations, vocational training, and small business development, individuals—particularly women and youth—have been able to regain financial autonomy. The ability to engage in productive economic activities has not only improved household incomes but has also reduced incentives for involvement in violent activities, as alternative livelihoods have become more accessible and sustainable.

CHALLENGES

Despite significant progress, the programme has faced several challenges that have required ongoing adaptation and strategic adjustments. Political instability at the local level has at times disrupted the continuity of programme activities, particularly when changes in leadership have affected institutional memory and policy direction. Additionally, recurrent flooding has hampered mobility, delayed project implementation, and increased the vulnerability of communities already grappling with displacement and resource scarcity.

Economic conditions have also posed difficulties, with fluctuations in currency values and inflation affecting the purchasing power of individuals and small businesses. Insecurity, particularly in the form of cattle raids and sporadic outbreaks of violence, has further complicated efforts to maintain stability. However, through

A portrait of Gabriel Kunang, a man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a light grey button-down shirt. He is speaking and gesturing with his right hand. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a dirt path.

"I tell my children, you must not live the life I lived. No more fighting for cattle. If you must fight, fight with a pen—go to school, get an education."

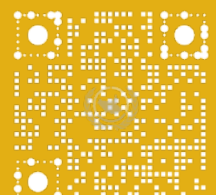
- Gabriel

MARKED BY WAR, LEADING WITH PEACE

All my life, I thought death, war, and cattle raiding were normal," says Gabriel Kunang, clerk of the chief's court in Gany Payam. "To become a man in our culture, you had to be marked on the face and carry a gun. I followed that path—raiding cattle, fighting other youth, even hurting someone. I was arrested and jailed for six months. That was my turning point."

After his release, Gabriel sought a new life. He enrolled in a 9-month life skills training programme in Payinjar, eventually becoming a teacher in Patit Primary School. But the 2013 conflict drew him back into fighting. In 2015, he lost two brothers—one on each side of the conflict. "I found both of them lying dead. That day, I handed in my gun. I told the commissioner, 'I don't want to fight anymore.'" Later, through RSRTF-supported training, he learned the rule of law and began spreading messages of peace to youth across Payams.

Now a father of 13, Gabriel is determined to break the cycle of violence. "I tell my children, you must not live the life I lived. You won't get these marks on your face like me. No more fighting for cattle. If you must fight, fight with a pen—go to school, get an education. That is the path to a better tomorrow."



CLICK OR SCAN
FOR DETAILS

targeted peace dialogues, strengthened community engagement, and flexible programming, the RSRTF initiative has been able to navigate these obstacles, ensuring that key interventions remain relevant and responsive to emerging needs.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

The end-line evaluation of the programme has highlighted a series of positive changes that underscore the effectiveness of the integrated RSRTF approach. Community perceptions of safety have improved significantly, with a majority of respondents reporting a reduction in violent conflict and an increased ability to move freely within and beyond their villages with a significant 68.4% reduction in violent incidents reported—from 95 incidents at baseline to 30 by the programme's conclusion. This improvement has translated into tangible benefits for community members, including decreased instances of revenge killings, sexual violence, and kidnappings, alongside increased freedom of movement within and beyond village borders.

The strengthening of justice sector institutions has resulted in a more predictable and accountable legal framework, with higher levels of confidence in both formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms. Notably, over 1,200 cases have been successfully resolved through these strengthened justice systems, surpassing initial programme targets and fostering higher levels of confidence among community members. The establishment of inclusive peace committees has been transformative, empowering previously marginalised groups such as women, youth, and former combatants. These committees have actively participated in conflict resolution processes, significantly shifting traditional power dynamics and ensuring inclusive and fair resolutions.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 19 Peace Committees (PCs) and 16 School Peace Clubs were established, fostering community-led conflict resolution and reducing violence across Koch County.
- Over 48 community-led peace dialogues facilitated, bringing together traditional leaders, youth, and women to mediate disputes and improve intercommunal relations.
- 1 state-level peace conference and 3 inter-county dialogues between Koch, Leer, and Mayendit led to agreements on peaceful coexistence.
- 80% of reported local disputes were successfully resolved through community peace structures, strengthening local governance and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Over 113% of planned UNMISS-led protection patrols were conducted, escorting women and girls to access humanitarian services safely.
- A mobile High Court session reviewed 100% of sentences from customary courts, increasing access to formal justice in previously underserved areas.
- 16 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and 55 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were formed, providing financial resilience and business opportunities to community members.
- Over 400 individuals (263 women, 151 men), including ex-combatants and women associated with armed groups, received vocational training, with many starting their own businesses.
- 39 community assets, including roads, markets, schools, and water points, were rehabilitated or constructed, improving access to essential services and economic opportunities.
- A 21% reduction in reported incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) was observed, linked to enhanced community awareness and support services.
- 93% of surveyed households reported improved perceptions of safety, with increased freedom of movement for women, children, and traders across county lines.
- Over 73% of respondents reported a decrease in violent conflict, demonstrating the effectiveness of reconciliation and stabilisation efforts.

Economic empowerment initiatives have yielded promising results, with programme participants demonstrating greater financial independence and resilience. The expansion of village savings and loan associations has provided a critical safety net, allowing individuals to invest in new business ventures, address household needs, and effectively manage economic shocks, significantly enhancing overall community resilience. Vocational training programmes targeting youth, including former combatants and women associated with armed groups, have successfully facilitated alternative livelihoods, reducing dependency on conflict-related activities and increasing financial independence and social integration.

Women have played a pivotal role in driving these changes, leveraging their participation in savings groups and business ventures to assert greater influence within their communities. Additionally, infrastructure developments such as the construction and renovation of schools, vocational centres, boreholes, and markets have contributed substantially to long-term improvements in governance, service delivery, and economic opportunities.

As the RSRTF Koch ABP concludes, its achievements highlight the potential of integrated, community-led approaches to reconciliation and resilience. While the programme itself is ending, its impacts will endure through the strengthened governance structures, local peace mechanisms, and economic initiatives that continue to empower communities. Moving forward, continued investment in local leadership, youth engagement, and climate-resilient economic activities will be essential to sustaining and expanding upon these achievements.

RSRTF Fund Level Evaluation

In December 2024, an independent evaluation of the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience (RSRTF) was conducted to assess its effectiveness, challenges, and future directions. The evaluation, commissioned as part of the Fund's ongoing commitment to accountability and learning, was led by David Deng, Dr. Harriet Kuyang, and Dr. Jan Pospisil, in collaboration with Detcro, an independent research and advisory firm.

The evaluation covered RSRTF's operations between 2021 and 2024, focusing on its governance, operational effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. It sought to understand whether the Fund's unique area-based approach (ABP) has been successful in reducing conflict, stabilising communities, and fostering long-term resilience in some of South Sudan's most fragile regions.¹

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

The evaluation found that RSRTF has played a crucial role in stabilising conflict-affected areas, supporting peacebuilding efforts, strengthening governance structures, and improving community resilience. However, it also identified structural challenges—including funding constraints, governance gaps, and sustainability risks—that need to be addressed to maximise the Fund's long-term impact.

POSITIVE IMPACT IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS

The RSRTF's interventions have yielded significant results in several key areas, contributing to greater stability, improved governance, and enhanced livelihoods:

- **Conflict Reduction and Peacebuilding:** In regions like Jonglei and Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), RSRTF-supported reconciliation dialogues and local peace agreements have contributed to a decline in intercommunal violence. Notably, efforts to mediate local disputes led to the return of 388 of abducted women and children until the end of 2024, a major success in reconciliation efforts.
- **Improved Security and Freedom of Movement:** The advocacy efforts of the CES ABP have made notable progress in addressing the issue of unauthorized checkpoints. Since the start of Phase 2, at least 18 checkpoints have been removed in Southern Central Equatoria making travel safer, enabling businesses to recover and helping displaced families return home.
- **Return and Reintegration of Displaced Persons:** Over 153,000 people have returned to their communities in CES, largely due to improved local security and economic opportunities. RSRTF's livelihood support programmes have helped returning families rebuild their lives and reduce dependency on aid.
- **Strengthening Governance and Access to Justice:** In locations like Koch and Greater Tonj, the construction of court buildings, police stations, and local government offices has improved access to justice and dispute resolution mechanisms. RSRTF has also supported training programmes for law enforcement and judicial officials, enhancing the rule of law.
- **Economic Recovery and Resilience:** RSRTF-funded initiatives in climate-smart agriculture, vocational training, and small business development have provided communities with alternative livelihoods, reducing reliance on humanitarian assistance and fostering economic self-sufficiency.

These findings demonstrate that RSRTF's stabilisation model is working, providing immediate relief and long-term benefits to communities recovering from conflict. However, the evaluation also highlights critical challenges that need to be addressed to ensure these gains are not lost.

CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Despite its successes, the RSRTF faces structural and operational challenges that may limit its long-term effectiveness.

¹ Comprehensive Evaluation of the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Resilience and Stabilisation (RSRTF) (Juba: DETCRO, December 2024). Available at <https://www.rsrtf.org/our-impact-1>.

- **Weak Transition to Development Actors:** One of the biggest concerns raised in the evaluation is the lack of follow-up investments from development agencies. RSRTF was designed to stabilise conflict-prone areas, creating a favourable environment for development actors to take over. However, this handover has not materialised, leaving communities at risk of falling back into instability.

Without a clear transition strategy, the progress made by RSRTF could be undermined. The report recommends that the Fund strengthen its coordination with development partners, including the IFIs like World Bank, African Development Bank, both UN and other development agencies, and bilateral donors, to secure follow-up investments that build on RSRTF's work.

- **Declining Donor Commitments and Funding Gaps:** The evaluation found that some traditional donors have reduced or withdrawn their contributions as they are re-strategising their foreign aid policies, posing a financial risk to the Fund's sustainability. Sweden, a key donor for peace and development efforts in South Sudan, has ended its support, while Canada and Korea did not contribute in 2023.

The RSRTF relies heavily on international funding, and without new financial commitments, its ability to sustain and expand its work will be limited. The evaluation suggests exploring new financing sources, including private sector engagement, innovative funding models, and partnerships with international financial institutions (IFIs).

- **Governance and Coordination Gaps:** The evaluation identified governance challenges related to the RSRTF Steering Committee and leadership within the UN. While the Secretariat has effectively managed operations, the Steering Committee and the leadership team have struggled with strategic oversight and coordination as key positions were vacant for long periods.

Additionally, bureaucratic delays and complex UN reporting requirements have sometimes hindered the Fund's ability to respond flexibly to emerging crises. It was suggested that a streamlined governance structure with more efficient decision-making could help improve the Fund's overall effectiveness.

- **The Role of Government in RSRTF's Future:** Currently, RSRTF operates with limited engagement from the national government, though local-level participation has increased. The evaluation suggests that stronger collaboration with national authorities could enhance sustainability, particularly in areas such as justice sector reform and economic recovery. However, any expansion of government involvement must be carefully managed to maintain RSRTF's neutrality and operational independence.

NEXT STEPS: THE FUTURE OF RSRTF

As the RSRTF looks ahead, the evaluation highlights a critical question that must be addressed:

- Should RSRTF remain a short-term stabilisation fund, focused purely on transitional stabilisation focused interventions?
- Or should it expand its role to include longer-term resilience and recovery programming, ensuring a smoother transition from stabilisation to development?

This decision will shape how the Fund positions itself in South Sudan's broader development landscape, how it engages with donors, and how it coordinates with other funding mechanisms.

A CALL FOR STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION

The evaluation concludes that RSRTF must strengthen partnerships, enhance its financial sustainability, and improve governance structures to remain effective. Closer collaboration with development actors, private sector investors, and local institutions will be essential to ensuring that stabilisation efforts translate into long term peace and prosperity.

While challenges remain, the evaluation underscores that RSRTF has already made a significant difference in some of South Sudan's most challenging environments. With the right strategic adjustments, the Fund can continue to serve as a vital instrument for stability and resilience in the years ahead.



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Reconciliation Stabilization Resilience

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