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TRUST FUND

Reconciliation Stabilization Resilience

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

THE STORY OF THE COVER

A woman leader speaks as uniformed personnel listen during an RSRTF-supported civil-military dialogue. The image captures a central purpose of RSRTF programming: creating locally led platforms where communities, authorities and security actors can engage directly, address grievances and identify practical solutions to local conflict. In a context where security institutions hold significant authority and women often face heightened vulnerability, such spaces help ensure that community voices, including women's voices, are heard. *Photo: Muse Mohammed/IOM*

DISCLAIMER

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABP	Area-Based Programme
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AMA	Assistance Mission for Africa
ARG	Area Reference Group
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
COTAL	County Council of Traditional Leaders
DRI	Dialogue and Research Initiative
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
FCA	Finn Church Aid
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GPAA	Greater Pibor Administrative Area
HDP	Humanitarian–Development–Peace
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISAL	Internal Savings and Lending Association
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MSS	Measuring Safety and Security
NCE	No-Cost Extension
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PCRC	Police Community Relations Committee
PRAC	Peace and Reconciliation Action Committee
RSRTF	Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPEDP	Support for Peace and Education Development Programme
SSHF	South Sudan Humanitarian Fund
SSP	South Sudanese pound
SSPDF	South Sudan People’s Defence Forces
TOCH	The Organization for Children’s Harmony
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDOR	Universal Intervention and Development Organization
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
VSF-Germany	Veterinarians Without Borders Germany
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme
WPGI	Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative



FOREWORD

The year 2025 tested the assumptions, partnerships and local systems that the Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund has supported since its establishment in 2018. Across South Sudan, political and security tensions, economic pressure, climate change-induced flooding, displacement and access constraints have placed renewed strain on communities already affected by years of fragility.

These conditions affected implementation across all active Area-Based Programmes; movements were restricted, activities delayed, and operational costs increased. In addition, the conditions placed pressure on local authorities, partners, and community structures.

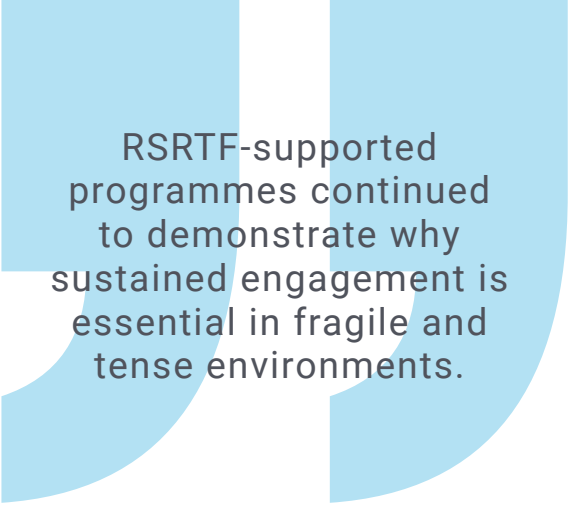
On the other hand, these conditions also underscored the continued relevance and effectiveness of the Fund's core approach: maintaining locally grounded and integrated investments in reconciliation, stabilization and resilience, even in areas where conflict or tensions are rising. Because, these are precisely the moments when communities most need trusted dialogue platforms, functioning local peace structures, access to justice, protection support and practical peace dividends to prevent further escalation and sustain hard-won gains.

RSRTF-supported programmes continued to demonstrate why sustained engagement is essential in fragile and tense environments. In areas where localised conflict and grievances risked further escalation, the Fund's investments in reconciliation, access to justice, conflict management and resilience helped communities and local authorities preserve dialogue, manage disputes and support recovery. Through peace committees, protection structures, mobile justice processes, Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups, livelihood activities and community assets, RSRTF support contributed to reducing tensions and protecting hard-won peace dividends. These results are presented alongside the risks, limitations, and adaptive measures described in this report.

The year also highlighted the fragility of many gains. Local peace structures need stronger links to formal institutions. Justice interventions require follow-up through police, courts, prisons, customary authorities and legal aid systems. Livelihood and VSLA activities remain exposed to inflation, market constraints, flooding and insecurity. Community infrastructure requires maintenance, local ownership and transition planning. These are not peripheral issues; they are central to whether RSRTF-supported gains can endure.

This Annual Report, therefore, presents both progress and constraints. It documents what RSRTF-supported programming achieved in 2025, how partners adapted to a difficult operating environment, what evidence is available, where implementation remained uneven, and what the Fund is learning about sustainability, transition and local ownership.

The RSRTF is grateful to the communities, local authorities, implementing partners, donors, UNMISS and UN Country Team colleagues who contributed to this work in 2025. Their continued engagement enabled sustained programming in difficult conditions and deepened learning about what integrated, area-based programming can contribute to South Sudan.



RSRTF-supported programmes continued to demonstrate why sustained engagement is essential in fragile and tense environments.

Ms Anita Gbeho Kiki

SRSG, UNMISS

Chair, RSRTF Steering Committee



Families from surrounding flood-affected areas arrive in Pibor town seeking temporary shelter, underscoring how climate shocks are intensifying displacement, disrupting livelihoods and placing additional pressure on already fragile communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The RSRTF 2025 Annual Report covers a year of challenging operational environment and continued community-level programming across four active Area-Based Programmes. The report presents results, challenges and learning from programming in Central Equatoria, Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, and Southern Unity. It also reflects on the Fund's seven-year experience since 2018 and identifies priorities for consolidation, evidence, transition and sustainability.

THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

South Sudan faced a difficult political, security, humanitarian and economic environment in 2025. Conflict and insecurity affected several parts of the country, while localised violence, cattle raiding, abductions, revenge attacks and resource-based disputes continued to shape conditions in RSRTF programme areas. Weak infrastructure restricted movement and flooding contributed to displacement and livelihood disruption. Economic pressure, currency depreciation and market instability affected household purchasing power and the viability of livelihoods support.

The 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan identified 9.3 million people in need¹. During September to November 2025, an estimated 5.97 million people (42% of the analysed population) in South Sudan are facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC AFI Phase 3 or above), of which around 1.3 million people are facing Emergency (IPC AFI Phase 4) conditions according to IPC². IOM displacement data recorded 1,992,513 internally displaced persons as of February 2025, while movement tracking recorded 554 movement events involving 823,007 individuals between January and December 2025³. These figures are distinct indicators and are not combined. The IPC acute malnutrition analysis projected that, during July 2025–June 2026, 2.11 million children aged 6–59 months and 1.15 million pregnant and lactating women would experience acute malnutrition⁴.

RSRTF PROGRAMMING IN 2025

In 2025, RSRTF-supported programming continued across four Area-Based Programmes. The Central Equatoria programme advanced reconciliation, housing, land and property mediation, civil-military dialogue, community security, vocational training, VSLAs, agricultural recovery, and local governance support under significant access and security constraints. The Jonglei/GPAA programme completed Phase II in December 2025, with results in abductee reunification, community violence reduction, justice-chain support, women and youth structures, customary law processes, functional adult learning, and livelihoods. The Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes Kong Koc Phase II programme was launched and operationalised in 2025, making the year primarily an inception and early implementation period. The Southern Unity programme completed its first full year of implementation, supporting community-led mediation, MHPSS, mobile justice, HLP support, VSLAs, dyke rehabilitation, peace education, and local coordination mechanisms.

Across the portfolio, RSRTF-supported activities contributed to local reconciliation, access to justice, community security, and practical resilience in selected locations. The strongest evidence is found in specific, bounded examples: local mediation processes, mobile court proceedings, abductee reunification, community security structures, HLP dispute resolution, saving groups, cash-for-work, flood mitigation, and locally led coordination. These examples do not prove durable stability across entire programme areas, but they demonstrate the relevance of integrated area-based programming under difficult conditions.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATIONS

Implementation in 2025 was affected by insecurity, flooding, economic volatility, access constraints, political and administrative changes, weak institutional capacity, and reduced humanitarian service availability.

1 OCHA, South Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 and 2025 mid-year revision.

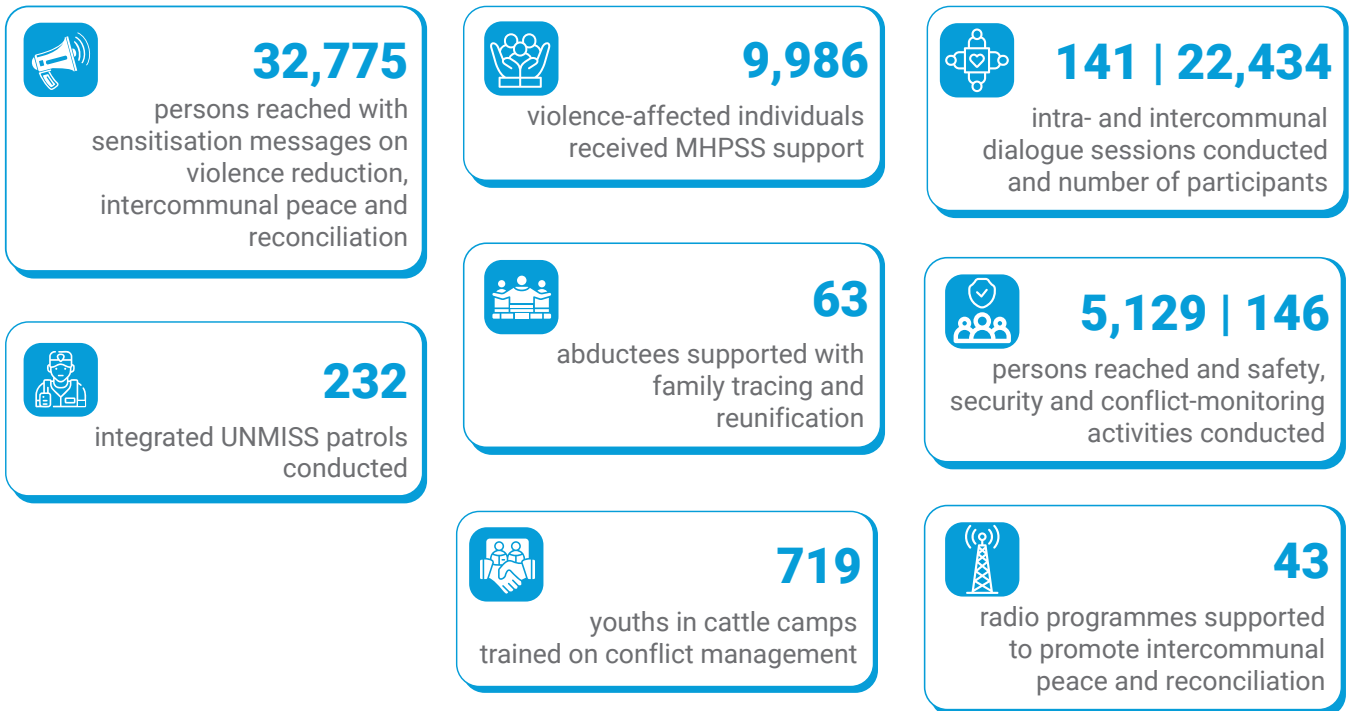
2 IPC South Sudan, Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, September–November 2025.

3 IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, South Sudan Mobility Tracking and Baseline Assessment, 2025.





4 IPC South Sudan Technical Working Group, South Sudan IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Snapshot, September 2025–July 2026. Acute malnutrition projection period: July 2025–June 2026.

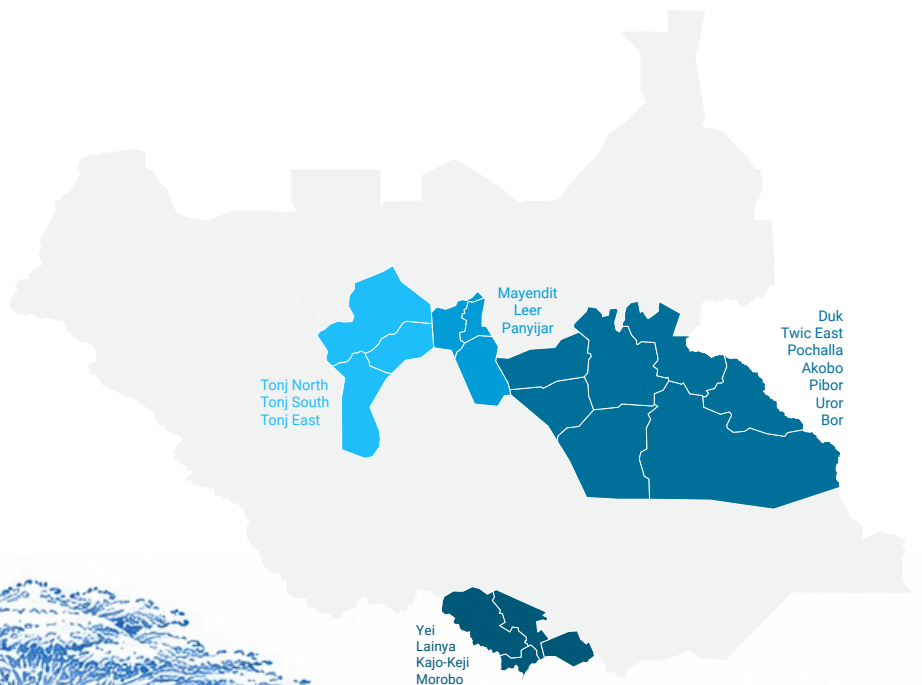
KEY PORTFOLIO RESULTS IN 2025

RECONCILIATION PILLAR



4 Active Area Based Programmes in 2025

-  Kong Koc ABP (Phase II)
-  Southern Unity ABP
-  Jonglei-GPAA ABP
-  Central Equatoria ABP



STABILIZATION PILLAR



1,179

formal and informal justice-chain actors trained



1,139

sub-national and local land authority officials trained on HLP rights and policies



1,140

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



410

SGBV survivors benefitted from victim redress mechanisms, including transitional justice-related support



408

individuals supported to exercise and assert their HLP rights



931

persons received legal support or advice



32

functional community-based protection mechanisms for crime prevention and safety established



50

police and community relationship committees (PCRC) established and operationalised



124

cases investigated and adjudicated by mobile courts

RESILIENCE PILLAR



21,030

individuals engaged in building, restoring or maintaining community assets through cash-for-work or related asset-creation activities



5,733

people received capacity strengthening, training or technical livelihood support



1,080

people participated in community-based participatory planning to identify structural drivers of recurrent crises



19

community assets built, restored or maintained



1,980

at-risk youth received conflict-prevention training and access to jobs or career support



873

persons enrolled in and graduated from functional adult learning



In Central Equatoria, UNDSS Grey Status in parts of the state temporarily restricted field movements and required partners to re-sequence activities. The closure of the UNMISS base in Yei further changed the operating environment and increased reliance on locally embedded coordination and community structures. In Jonglei and GPAA, insecurity, flooding, cholera, flight restrictions, and evacuation of international staff affected implementation and monitoring. In Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, the programme had to build implementation systems while navigating insecurity, seasonal inaccessibility, political changes and community expectations. In Southern Unity, flooding, aerial bombardment, displacement, weak justice infrastructure, and implementation constraints affected delivery and required repeated adaptation.

Partners responded through re-sequencing, remote coordination, use of local structures, crisis modifiers, revised workplans, Area Reference Groups, cross-programmes coordination, and increased reliance on national and local partners. These adaptations helped sustain programming, but they also affected timelines, monitoring, supervision and verification.

LEARNING FROM 2025

The 2025 experience confirms the continued relevance of RSRTF's integrated area-based model, while also underscoring the conditions required for results to last. Integrated programming is strongest when reconciliation, justice, community security, and resilience activities are sequenced around local conflict dynamics in the same locations. Local structures are essential for continuity, but they are not automatically self-sustaining. Mobile justice can improve access to formal justice, but only when linked to follow-up systems. VSLAs, livelihoods, community assets, and flood mitigation can provide practical peace dividends, but they remain exposed to inflation, weak markets, insecurity, and climate shocks.

The year also highlighted the need for stronger evidence discipline. Future reporting needs to distinguish more clearly between annual and cumulative figures, outputs and outcomes, contribution and attribution, programme and external data sources, and activity delivery and sustainability. The Fund also needs to strengthen transition planning so that local structures, justice systems, livelihoods, and community assets are linked to institutions, markets, and financing pathways beyond the life of individual projects.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The strategic priority emerging from 2025 is consolidation. RSRTF-supported programming has generated credible contributions in selected locations, but many gains remain fragile. The next phase of work needs to focus on strengthening local peace infrastructure, improving justice follow-up, linking resilience activities to markets and climate adaptation, improving evidence systems, and planning transitions more deliberately with government, communities, development partners, and other financing platforms.

Overall, the evidence positions RSRTF-supported programming as a relevant contribution to selected local peacebuilding, justice, and resilience priorities, at the same time recognising that wider conflict, institutional and climate-related challenges remain.

SOUTH SUDAN CONTEXT IN 2025

NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONFLICT DYNAMICS

The political and security environment in South Sudan deteriorated during 2025, increasing pressure on the peace process and affecting implementation across several regions. National political tensions, military confrontation, localised armed activity, and administrative changes interacted with long-standing local conflict drivers, including cattle raiding, abductions, revenge killings, and land disputes, among others.

In RSRTF-supported programme areas, these national and local dynamics took different forms. In Central Equatoria, there were security incidents in parts of Greater Yei, including Morobo and Kajo-Keji. Cattle migration continued to generate tensions between farmers and herders, particularly where crop destruction, movement of armed youths with cattle, and resulting competition over land and water affected community relations. Jonglei and GPAA were affected by cattle raiding, abductions, age-set violence, road ambushes, political changes, and flooding. In Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, there were cycles of revenge attacks, cattle raiding, road ambushes, armed youth mobilisation, cross-border tensions and political changes. In Southern Unity, intra-communal conflict, cross-border tensions, displacement, flooding and insecurity affected access, sequencing and community priorities.

RSRTF-supported programmes had to adapt to conditions that changed during the year and that varied significantly by county, payam, corridor, and community. This required partners to rely on Area Reference Groups, local authorities, peace committees, community structures, protection networks, women and youth groups and field-based staff to maintain context awareness and adjust implementation.

HUMANITARIAN, DISPLACEMENT AND SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The wider humanitarian and socioeconomic environment remained severe. Conflict, displacement, flooding, food insecurity, malnutrition, currency depreciation and reduced humanitarian services affected community coping capacity and increased pressure on local systems. Public data from the 2025 HNRP, IPC, IOM DTM and UNHCR reflected large-scale needs, displacement, and food insecurity across the country.

These conditions affected the implementation of RSRTF programmes in practical ways. Inflation increased the cost of construction, transport, supplies and livelihood inputs. Flooding restricted access to communities, delayed delivery of materials, disrupted markets and damaged livelihoods. Displacement and return placed pressure on land, services, and community relations. Reduced humanitarian services increased community expectations of RSRTF-supported programmes, even where the Fund was not designed to replace humanitarian assistance.

CLIMATE AND ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

Flooding and seasonal access constraints were especially important in 2025. In Southern Unity, recurrent flooding limited mobility, isolated communities, affected livelihoods, and contributed to the need for community-led dyke rehabilitation. In Jonglei and GPAA, flooding made key routes impassable and restricted partner movement. In Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, seasonal access constraints delayed delivery and installation of some materials and affected movement to cattle camps and remote communities. In Central Equatoria, insecurity and movement restrictions interacted with infrastructure and access constraints, requiring partners to adapt implementation.

These conditions underscore the importance of climate-sensitive and access-aware programming. Resilience interventions, including dykes, agriculture, livestock support, VSLAs, cash-for-work, market access and community assets, are not separate from peacebuilding in these contexts. They help address practical pressures that can contribute to conflict, whereas requiring stronger planning for maintenance, market linkages, and sustainability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RSRTF PROGRAMMING

The 2025 context has four main implications for RSRTF-supported programming.

First, local peace structures need stronger institutional linkages. Community committees, PRACs, PCRCs, protection networks, women's and youth structures and customary authorities can help manage disputes and maintain communication, but their durability depends on recognition, referral pathways and links to county, state and formal justice institutions.

Second, justice interventions need transition pathways. Mobile courts, legal aid, HLP support and justice-chain training are highly relevant where formal systems are absent or intermittent. Their sustainability depends on police investigation, prison infrastructure, judicial presence, customary court engagement, survivor support and case follow-up.

Third, resilience programming must account for market and climate risk. VSLAs, livelihoods, agriculture, livestock, vocational training and community assets can provide practical peace dividends, but their value is affected by inflation, flooding, insecurity, weak markets and limited infrastructure.

Fourth, monitoring systems need to capture outcomes, adaptation and sustainability. Reporting needs to show what changed, what did not change, why adaptations were made, and which gains remain fragile.

ABOUT THE RSRTF

WHAT THE FUND IS

The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilisation and Resilience in South Sudan is a pooled financing mechanism established in December 2018 through a joint initiative of UNMISS and the UN Country Team. The Fund supports integrated, area-based programming in locations affected by recurrent conflict, weak institutions, displacement, limited livelihoods, and climate-related shocks.

The RSRTF is designed to address linked drivers of conflict and vulnerability through three mutually reinforcing pillars: reconciliation, stabilisation and resilience. Its operating model recognises that local conflict in South Sudan is rarely driven by a single factor. Disputes over cattle, land, water, political authority, revenge, justice, livelihoods, and displacement often interact. For this reason, RSRTF-supported programmes combine dialogue, community security, access to justice, local governance support, livelihoods and community assets within the same geographic areas.

The Fund does not replace humanitarian response or long-term development financing. Its role is to provide flexible, catalytic, and conflict-informed financing that helps communities, local authorities, UN entities and civil society partners address immediate conflict drivers and at the same time building conditions for more durable recovery and institutional engagement.

HOW THE FUND WORKS

The RSRTF operates through a multi-layer governance structure designed to ensure donor oversight, UN coordination, and community accountability simultaneously. The Steering Committee, comprising donor representatives, UNMISS leadership, UN agencies, International and National NGO representatives, sets strategic direction and makes resource allocation decisions. The RSRTF Secretariat, hosted within UNMISS, provides day-to-day management, strategic coordination, programme monitoring, and evaluation functions.

Each Area-Based Programme is implemented by a consortium of implementing partners, coordinated through a Consortium Project Board and community-level Area Reference Groups (ARGs). ARGs are the key mechanism for grounding programme priorities in local conflict dynamics and community realities. They bring together county commissioners, traditional leaders, women and youth representatives, civil society, and government authorities, ensuring that programme decisions are shaped by the people who have to live with their consequences.

The Fund operates with a flexible financing model that includes a crisis modifier mechanism, allowing rapid resource deployment in response to sudden escalations without dismantling core programming. This flexibility has proven essential in a context where the security environment can deteriorate significantly between planning and implementation cycles.

THE AREA-BASED MODEL AND PILLARS

The Fund's area-based model is intended to avoid fragmented, sector-specific interventions in locations where conflict drivers are interconnected. Instead of supporting isolated projects, RSRTF financing concentrates resources in selected conflict-affected areas and links activities across the three pillars.

RSRTF programmes are structured around three mutually reinforcing pillars: reconciliation, stabilisation and governance strengthening, and resilience-oriented economic recovery. Together these pillars address both the immediate manifestations of conflict and the underlying vulnerabilities that sustain instability.

RECONCILIATION

The reconciliation pillar focuses on reducing intercommunal tensions and strengthening local mechanisms for conflict prevention and mediation. Activities typically support community dialogue processes, peace committees, early warning networks, and engagement with youth and traditional leaders. By strengthening these locally rooted peace architectures, RSRTF helps communities manage disputes before they escalate into violence.

CUMULATIVE RESULTS SINCE 2018

Since its establishment in 2018, the RSRTF has supported six Area-Based Programmes and complementary Thematic Programmes across conflict-affected locations in South Sudan. The cumulative figures below cover RSRTF-supported programming through the end of 2025 and are consolidated through the Fund's monitoring and reporting systems. They summarise selected reported outputs and are presented together with narrative analysis on context, contribution, constraints, and sustainability considerations.

6 Area Based Programmes

supported across Unity, Warrap, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Central Equatoria, Jonglei and GPAA

US\$ 119.24 million

in cumulative donor commitments from eight donor contributors

Highlights



252,111

community members reached with peace and violence-reduction messaging



44,200

people received capacity strengthening, training or technical livelihood support



71,463

violence-affected individuals received MHPSS support



13,024

young people received conflict-prevention training and access to jobs or career support



3,548

persons received legal support or advice



6,836

persons enrolled in and graduated from functional adult learning



1,411

SGBV survivors benefitted from victim redress mechanisms, including transitional justice-related support



595

intra- and intercommunal dialogue sessions conducted



1,442

public servants trained



221

community assets built, restored or maintained



548

abductees supported with family tracing and reunification

-These figures are cumulative through end-2025



STABILISATION AND GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING

The stabilisation pillar seeks to strengthen the institutions responsible for security, justice and governance at the local level. This includes expanding access to justice through mobile courts and strengthened customary and statutory justice systems, improving cooperation between communities and security actors, and reinforcing the capacity of local authorities to manage conflict and provide services. These interventions are designed to reduce impunity and restore confidence in governance institutions.

RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The resilience pillar focuses on rebuilding livelihoods and strengthening households' capacity to cope with economic and environmental shocks. Activities may include support to agricultural production, vocational training, savings groups and small enterprises, as well as community infrastructure that improves market access or protects against climate hazards. By expanding viable economic opportunities, resilience interventions help reduce reliance on conflict-linked coping strategies such as cattle raiding or armed mobilisation.

Together, these three pillars aim to generate mutually reinforcing outcomes. Improved conflict management and justice access help stabilise communities, while economic recovery provides tangible peace dividends that strengthen incentives for cooperation and stability.

LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS

A central principle of the RSRTF approach is to strengthen local system and ownership. Programmes are designed to build on existing community structures and to strengthen local capacities rather than replace them. Community leaders, women's groups, youth networks, and civil society organisations are therefore engaged throughout programme design and implementation. By strengthening local institutions and community structures, the RSRTF seeks to leave behind durable mechanisms capable of managing disputes and supporting recovery even in the absence of sustained external presence.

The Fund also emphasises strong partnerships across the United Nations system and with national and international partners. RSRTF programmes are implemented by a consortium of UN agencies and non-governmental organisations, working in coordination with UNMISS, government institutions and local communities. This collaborative model enables the Fund to draw on the comparative advantages of different partners, combining political engagement, peacekeeping presence, humanitarian expertise and development programming.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The RSRTF operates through a governance structure designed to combine donor oversight, UN coordination, partner implementation, and community accountability. The Steering Committee provides strategic direction and approves allocations. The Secretariat manages the Fund's operational coordination, monitoring, and reporting functions. Consortium Project Boards oversee implementation at the ABP level, whereas Area Reference Groups provide local platforms for coordination and consultation.

This governance model is particularly important in South Sudan because programming often takes place in areas where formal institutions have limited reach. Local coordination mechanisms help partners adapt to changing conflict, access and climate conditions, while maintaining links to government counterparts and community representatives.

The RSRTF's approach is also aligned with the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. By linking reconciliation, local governance, justice access, livelihoods, and resilience activities within the same geographic areas, the Fund seeks to address structural vulnerabilities that repeatedly generate humanitarian need. The Fund does not remove the need for humanitarian response or long-term development financing; it helps create conditions in which communities and local institutions can move gradually from crisis response toward more sustainable recovery.

DONORS AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The RSRTF has been supported by eight donor contributors: the European Union, Norway, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Republic of Korea. Their collective support has enabled pooled, multi-year, and multi-partner programming in conflict-affected areas where flexible financing and

integrated approaches are required.

In 2025, RSRTF-supported programming was implemented through consortia involving UN agencies, UNMISS, international NGOs, national NGOs, and local civil society partners. Lead agencies included IOM for Central Equatoria, WFP for Jonglei/GPAA and Kong Koc Phase II, and World Relief for Southern Unity. National and local partners played central roles in community engagement, implementation, monitoring and localisation.

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2025 reporting year was marked by continued delivery across RSRTF-supported programme areas despite a difficult and volatile operating environment. The Fund supported programming in Central Equatoria, Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, and Southern Unity. Across these areas, activities continued under the three pillars of reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience, and partners adapted to insecurity, flooding, access restrictions, economic volatility, and institutional constraints.

The year also demonstrated the importance of sustained and conflict-sensitive engagement in fragile contexts. As tensions increased in several programme areas, RSRTF-supported investments helped preserve spaces for dialogue, support local conflict-management mechanisms, expand access to justice, and deliver practical peace dividends. Rather than disengaging when conditions deteriorated, partners adjusted implementation schedules, relied more heavily on locally embedded structures, used remote coordination where necessary, activated crisis modifiers, and re-sequenced activities to maintain support to communities at moments when the risk of escalation was highest.

SELECTED RESULTS

In 2025, RSRTF-supported programming reached communities through dialogue, peacebuilding, justice, protection, livelihoods, and resilience interventions. Partners conducted 141 intra- and intercommunal dialogue sessions, reaching 22,434 people, and reached 10,341 people with sensitisation messages on violence reduction, intercommunal peace and reconciliation. These activities supported mediation, dispute management and peace messaging in areas affected by cattle migration disputes, revenge killings, abductions, land tensions, intercommunal violence and political or administrative changes.

Youth engagement remained central to conflict prevention. The Fund supported 1,980 young people with conflict-prevention training and access to jobs or career support, while 719 youth in cattle camps received training on conflict management. These interventions targeted groups that are often central to local conflict dynamics and supported their participation in mediation, early warning, livelihoods and community leadership.

RSRTF-supported programmes also provided mental health and psychosocial support to 9,986 violence-affected individuals, including communities affected by conflict-related trauma, displacement, GBV, revenge cycles and insecurity. UNMISS conducted 232 integrated patrols in support of the RSRTF programme areas, contributing to monitoring, confidence-building, early warning, and protection presence in selected locations.

Across the resilience portfolio, 5,733 people received capacity-strengthening, training, and technical livelihood support, while 21,030 individuals engaged in the construction, restoration, or maintenance of community assets through cash-for-work or related asset-creation activities. In total, 19 community assets were built, restored or maintained, supporting livelihoods, cooperation and visible peace dividends in communities affected by conflict, flooding and poor infrastructure.

Justice and accountability remained important areas of support. RSRTF-supported programmes provided legal support or advice to 931 people, supported 410 SGBV survivors through victim-redress mechanisms, and recorded 124 cases investigated and adjudicated by mobile courts. The Programmes also trained 1,179 formal and informal justice-chain actors, 1,140 community representatives, and 50 public servants on community security, service delivery, justice, and action planning.

Additional results included support to 63 abductees through family tracing and reunification, 873 learners who enrolled in and graduated from functional adult learning, 43 radio programmes promoting intercommunal peace and reconciliation, and 146 safety, security, and conflict-monitoring activities reaching 5,129 people. A further 1,080 people participated in community-based planning processes to identify structural drivers of recurrent crises.

RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Reconciliation programming focused on local dialogue, peace committees, cattle camp engagement, women's and youth participation, early warning and community-led mediation. The strongest results were observed where dialogue was linked to local authorities, peace structures, justice mechanisms and follow-up

processes.

In Central Equatoria, farmer-herder dialogue and cattle migration discussions created space to address crop destruction, cattle movement and alternative migration routes. In Jonglei and GPAA, community engagement and early warning structures supported mediation around abduction, cattle raiding, age-set tensions and retaliation. In Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, peace committee engagement contributed to local de-escalation efforts, while in Southern Unity, peace committees and dialogue platforms supported mediation around revenge killings, cross-border tensions and cattle camp mobilisation.

These interventions did not remove all conflict risks, but they helped communities manage selected disputes before they escalated and preserved space for communication during periods of heightened tension.

STABILISATION, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SECURITY

Stabilisation activities focused on access to justice, community security, housing, land and property disputes, police-community relations, customary and statutory justice linkages, and local governance. These interventions were particularly relevant in areas where weak justice presence, limited formal institutions, impunity, and distrust between communities and state actors continued to drive instability.

Mobile courts and justice-chain support were among the most visible stabilisation interventions. In Southern Unity and Central Equatoria, mobile court processes brought formal justice closer to communities with limited access to courts. In Jonglei and GPAA, justice-chain training, customary law engagement, and abduction-related support contributed to accountability and protection efforts. In Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, community policing, Police-Community Relations Committees, and the Wanh-alel customary law process laid foundations for longer-term justice and governance engagement.

Across several programme areas, stabilisation efforts contributed to improved perceptions of safety and confidence in local security actors. In Central Equatoria, monitoring results showed that 80% of respondents reported feeling safer, compared with 53% at baseline, and community confidence in police also reached 80%. These improvements have practical implications: when communities feel safer, farmers are more willing to cultivate land, traders are more able to move goods, and local markets can begin to recover.

RESILIENCE, LIVELIHOODS AND COMMUNITY ASSETS

Resilience programming included livelihoods, vocational skills, Village Savings and Loan Associations, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, cash-for-work, community assets, dyke rehabilitation, functional adult learning, and participatory planning. These activities provided practical peace dividends in contexts where conflict, flooding, displacement, and economic pressure undermined household coping capacity.

In Central Equatoria, vocational training, VSLAs, agricultural support, and feeder road rehabilitation contributed to early recovery and market access. In Jonglei and GPAA, functional adult learning, VSLAs, and livelihood support helped vulnerable households and at-risk youth. In Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, VSLAs, solar irrigation, poultry, dairy, shea butter, and labour-market assessment work laid early foundations for resilience programming under Phase II. In Southern Unity, dyke rehabilitation, VSLAs, smart farming, vocational skills, and community assets linked climate adaptation, livelihoods, and social cohesion.

The evidence supports a careful conclusion: resilience activities helped address immediate vulnerabilities and provided practical incentives for cooperation in selected communities. Their longer-term impact will depend on market access, inflation, security, infrastructure, climate risks and the ability of livelihood groups to continue beyond intensive programmes support.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Adaptation was a defining feature of implementation in 2025. Partners adjusted activity schedules, revised workplans, re-sequenced infrastructure and field activities, used remote coordination, relied on national staff and local structures, coordinated through Area Reference Groups, and activated crisis modifiers where required. These measures enabled programmes to maintain engagement during periods of insecurity, flooding, Grey Status restrictions, no-fly constraints, and logistical barriers.

At the same time, the operating environment affected delivery. Insecurity, armed clashes, road ambushes, cattle raiding, abductions, political tensions, and localised violence restricted movement and delayed activities. Flooding and seasonal access constraints disrupted movement, damaged livelihoods, isolated

communities, and increased implementation costs, particularly in Southern Unity, Jonglei/GPAA, and Greater Tonj/Northern Lakes. Economic pressure, inflation, and currency depreciation increased the cost of materials, transport, and livelihood inputs.

Institutional capacity constraints also affected implementation. Formal justice systems remained limited in several programme areas, and police, prisons, courts, customary authorities, and local government structures required continued support. These constraints reinforced the importance of flexible, adaptive, and locally grounded implementation, while also highlighting the need for stronger documentation of what changed, why it changed and what risks remained.

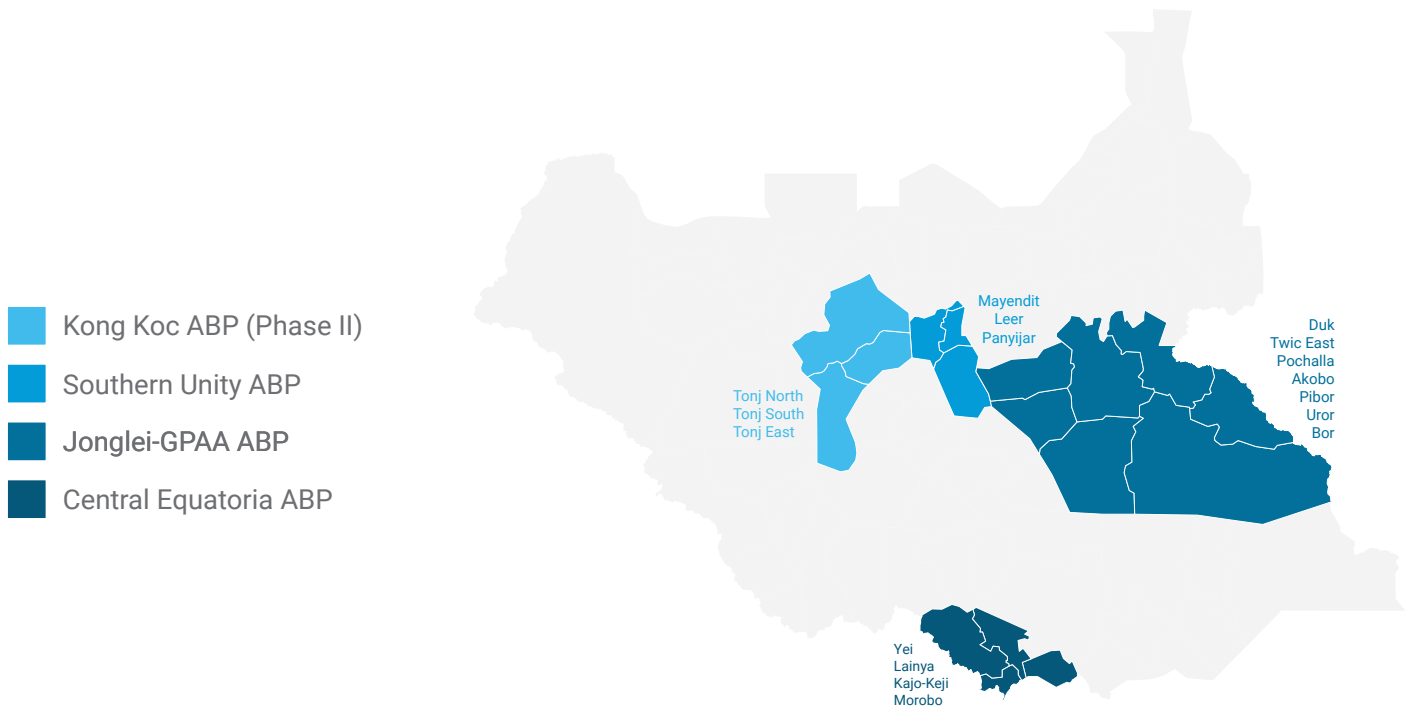
PORTFOLIO CONCLUSION

The 2025 portfolio results show that RSRTF-supported programming continued to deliver relevant outputs and selected contributions under difficult conditions. The strongest evidence lies in concrete examples of local mediation, justice access, community security, livelihood recovery, flood mitigation, abductee reunification, housing, land and property support, VSLAs, mobile courts, peace committees, and locally led adaptation.

The main portfolio lesson is that integrated area-based programming remains highly relevant in fragile and conflict-affected settings, but results require consolidation. Local structures need stronger institutional linkages; justice interventions need follow-up systems; resilience activities need stronger market and climate analysis; and evidence systems need to better capture outcomes, adaptation, and sustainability. These priorities should guide the Fund's next phase of work.

AREA BASED PROGRAMMES

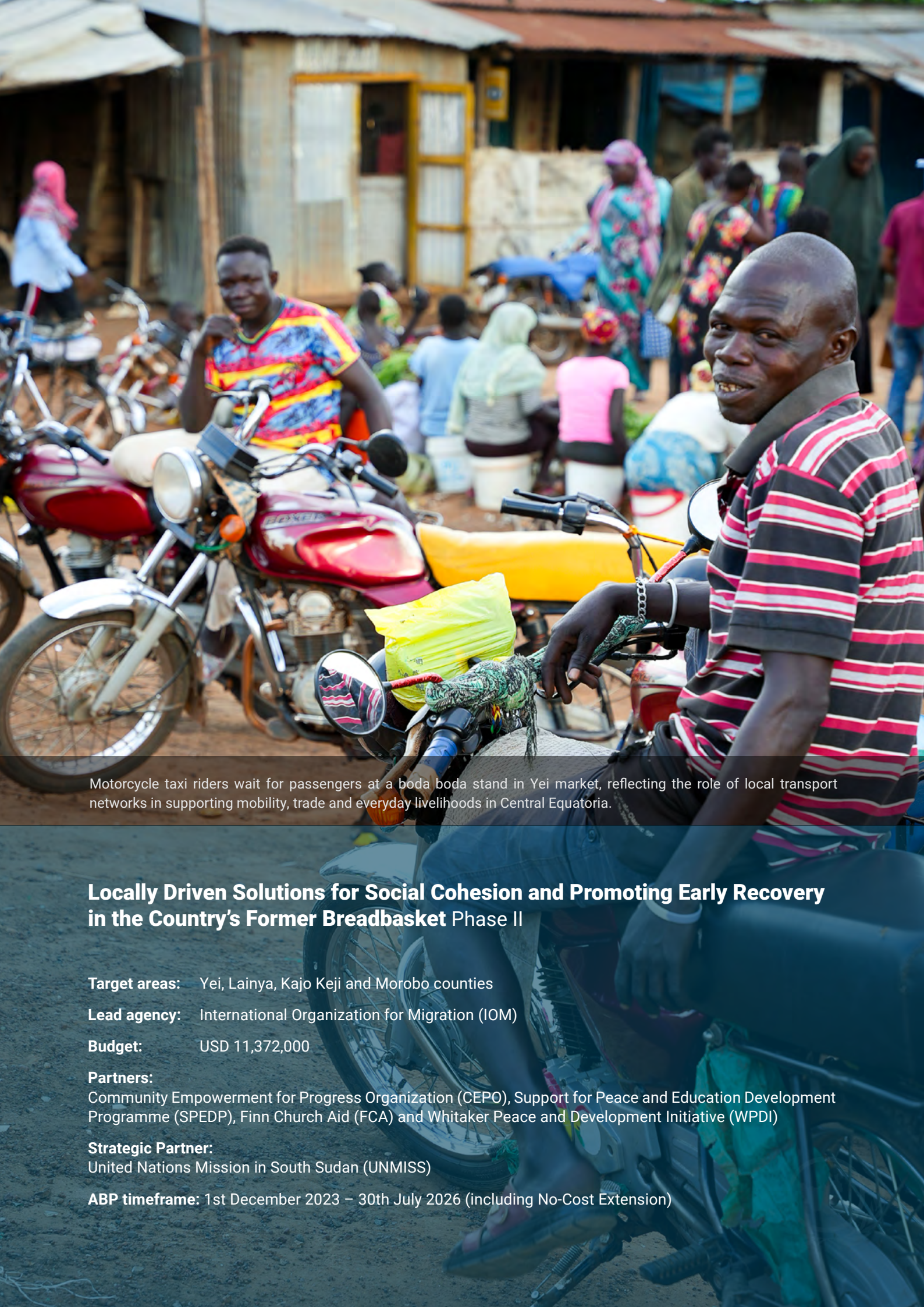
PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS



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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 2025 calendar year.



Motorcycle taxi riders wait for passengers at a boda boda stand in Yei market, reflecting the role of local transport networks in supporting mobility, trade and everyday livelihoods in Central Equatoria.

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) and Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI)


Strategic Partner:

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

ABP timeframe: 1st December 2023 – 30th July 2026 (including No-Cost Extension)

KEY 2025 RESULTS


The fund's 2025 monitoring data show the following selected Central Equatoria outputs




3,354
persons reached with sensitisation messages on violence reduction, intercommunal peace and reconciliation




3,204
people received capacity strengthening, training or technical livelihood support



303 | 7,729
gender transformative training sessions held and number of persons reached



4,781
violence-affected individuals received MHPSS support




1,139
sub-national and local land authority officials trained on HLP rights and policies




18 | 948
intra- and intercommunal dialogue sessions conducted and number of participants




294
individuals engaged in building, restoring or maintaining community assets through cash-for-work




212
community representatives trained on community security approaches and action planning




100
people trained on climate-smart activities



138
formal and informal justice-chain actors trained



8
community assets built, restored or maintained



48
SGBV survivors benefitted from victim redress mechanisms, including transitional justice-related support

These outputs show the breadth of programme delivery across reconciliation, stabilisation and resilience. They are presented alongside the implementation constraints and programme examples below.



CONTEXT AND OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Central Equatoria remained a difficult operating environment in 2025. Insecurity in parts of Greater Yei, especially Morobo and Kajo-Keji, disrupted implementation, restricted access, affected community mobilisation and required partners to adapt delivery. The declaration of UNDSS Grey Status in parts of Central Equatoria temporarily restricted field movements and required partners to re-sequence activities, rely more heavily on local structures and maintain remote coordination where needed. The closure of the UNMISS base in Yei further changed the operating environment and increased the importance of locally embedded coordination, early warning and community engagement structures.

The programme also operated amid economic volatility, cattle migration disputes, return and reintegration pressures, and continued weakness in local justice, land administration and governance systems. Cattle migration remained a major source of tension, particularly where crop destruction, armed cattle movements and competition over land and water affected relations between farmers, herders and local authorities. Returnees and internally displaced persons placed additional pressure on services, livelihoods, land administration and housing, land and property dispute-resolution mechanisms.

The Central Equatoria experience in 2025 is therefore best understood as implementation under constraint. The programme continued to deliver relevant outputs and maintain community engagement, but results remained exposed to insecurity, inflation, institutional fragility and access limitations.

Programme documentation described Central Equatoria's 2025 operating context as a combination of security gaps, economic pressure and political fluidity. A security escalation in Morobo County disrupted services, displaced civilians and contributed to the Grey Status restrictions that affected field movement. The macroeconomic environment also affected delivery, with depreciation of the South Sudanese pound increasing construction costs, eroding cash grant values and affecting the viability of small enterprises. At the same time, return and reintegration pressures remained significant, with large numbers of returnees from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo placing additional pressure on land, services and livelihoods in target counties.

WHAT WORKED	CHALLENGES FACED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-track cattle migration engagement linked state-level dialogue with community-level route mapping and dispute management • VSLA groups adapted to inflation and cross-border market realities by saving in both South Sudanese pounds and Ugandan shillings • 80% personal safety perception at endline, 27pp improvement from 53% baseline • Area Reference Groups provided regular platforms for coordination, local feedback and adaptive management across the four counties. • HLP mediation and referral pathways helped manage return-related land disputes and provided a handover mechanism for local authorities. • The Durable Solutions Roadmap provided a county-level framework for recovery planning and local coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDSS Grey Status (April 2025) requiring temporary suspension and shift to remote management • UNMISS Yei base closure led to fast-tracking shift to local bodies • Hyperinflation inflating infrastructure costs and eroding grant values, required procurement strategy adaptations • Three governor changes requiring continuous political re-engagement and Roadmap re-briefing • Kindila Bridge rehabilitation delayed by insecurity and arson, secured via no-cost extension to 2026

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation work in Central Equatoria focused on cattle migration, farmer-herder dialogue, civil-military engagement, grassroots peace structures, women's and youth participation and early warning. The programme used both high-level political engagement and community-level dialogue to address tensions around cattle



Mobile court brings justice closer to survivors in Greater Yei

In Greater Yei, an RSRTF-supported mobile court helped address a backlog of serious criminal cases, demonstrating that justice could be delivered visibly and locally while helping restore confidence in formal accountability mechanisms.

For much of 2025, Greater Yei had no resident judge, leaving serious criminal cases unresolved and reinforcing a perception that justice for survivors might never arrive. In November, a Ministry of Justice investigation mission verified 46 cases for trial, including 24 sexual and gender-based violence cases, of which 21 were rape cases, mostly involving underage survivors, as well as six murder cases.

From 5 to 16 December 2025, a mobile court sat in Greater Yei and heard 23 cases from Yei, Lainya and Morobo. Of the 10 judgments delivered, nine were in sexual and gender-based violence cases, and all nine resulted in convictions. The court's presence brought formal justice closer to communities that had been waiting for months, while also sending a visible signal that serious crimes would be heard and acted upon. Shortly afterwards, the Judiciary deployed a permanent county court judge with High Court powers to Yei, helping reduce the risk that the case backlog would build again.

The experience illustrated both the immediate and longer-term value of mobile justice. In the short term, it helped survivors access formal legal redress closer to home. In the longer term, it demonstrated that even in settings affected by institutional gaps, visible justice delivery can help strengthen confidence in accountability and challenge the expectation of impunity.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story illustrates how RSRTF supports access to justice in areas where institutional gaps can leave survivors without recourse. In fragile contexts, delayed justice can deepen mistrust and reinforce impunity. By supporting mobile justice mechanisms and follow-up institutional deployment, RSRTF helps bring accountability closer to communities, strengthen trust in formal systems and show that serious offences, including sexual and gender-based violence, do not have to remain unresolved.

movement, crop destruction and land use.

Heavily armed cattle from Jonglei State (Dinka Bor) and Ambororo communities moved through the farmlands of Kajo-Keji, Lainya, and Morobo, destroying crops, triggering retaliatory violence, and creating a cycle of grievance that required both political engagement at the highest level and practical problem-solving at the community level.

The consortium's response was multi-level diplomatic strategy. CEPO and IOM convened four high-level political conferences in Juba and Bor, engaging 55 key stakeholders (48 male, 7 female) including state officials, Members of Parliament, county commissioners, chiefs, women leaders, and youth representatives, alongside 110 farmers and herders. In the September 29–30 conference: 110 stakeholders collectively endorsed concrete measures to support cattle repatriation and strengthen community-based conflict-resolution mechanisms. A dedicated committee was established in Bor County specifically to sensitise cattle camp communities on the repatriation and evacuation procedures from the Equatoria region.

Simultaneously, WPDI led nine community dialogues across Lainya, Kajo-Keji, Yei, and Morobo, reaching 722 participants (219 female, 503 male). Three dialogues resulted in specific proposals for alternative migration routes (the Mugwo-Pakula and Kupera corridors) to divert cattle away from cultivated farmland. Four dialogues focused on strengthening cross-community participation and social cohesion. A follow-up dialogue in Morobo enabled stakeholders to review progress and assess the impact of Phase I dialogues.

Five civil-military dialogues across Yei, Lainya, Morobo, and Kajo-Keji engaged 437 participants (153 female, 284 male). These forums gave civilians a structured platform to voice grievances directly to SSPDF area commanders regarding harassment and illegal checkpoints. The reported outcome was a de-escalation of tensions and improved freedom of movement to markets and farmlands. Five training sessions for 60 youth and traditional leaders (40 male, 20 female) strengthened conflict transformation and mediation skills. A baseline survey on cattle migration collected data from 100 respondents across the migration corridor from Terekeka to Kajo-Keji, directly informing conference strategies.

Sixteen Peace Ambassadors were officially certified on 27–28 October. These individuals were not just recognised but embedded as permanent community-level conflict mediators with structured mandates, monthly meetings, and direct linkages to government security structures. An intergenerational dialogue in Yei in November brought together 40 youth and elders to address cultural erosion and the exclusion of youth from decision-making, resulting in joint recommendations for mentorship and youth inclusion in customary courts. 20 Cinema for Peace sessions delivered by WPDI reached 1,351 community members (763 female, 588 male), using film as a non-confrontational tool for dialogue on ethnic tolerance and GBV. The consortium also advocated, in coordination with religious leaders, for the release of 148 abductees (119 male, 29 female) through engagement across Yei, Lainya, Morobo, and Kajo-Keji.

Areas Reference Groups met monthly across all four counties throughout the year, chaired by county commissioners, bringing together implementing partners, local authorities, community representatives, and civil society. ARG discussions directly informed adaptive planning decisions, including the re-prioritisation of activities during the Grey Status period.

STABILISATION

Stabilisation activities focused on HLP mediation, legal assistance, community policing, justice-chain capacity, local governance, and civic engagement. These interventions were important because land disputes, weak justice access, limited police-community trust and returnee reintegration pressures remained central to the operating environment.

HLP teams across the four counties managed 308 active cases (134 in Kajo-Keji, 82 in Yei, 50 in Lainya, 42 in Morobo). The typology was dominated by secondary occupation of returnee homes, illegal land transfers, and violations of women's inheritance rights. Through mediation and counselling, 135 cases were successfully resolved without resorting to violence. A Referral Mechanism Pathway for HLP was finalised and handed over to local authorities, providing a permanent framework for routing disputes between customary and statutory courts, a structural legacy that will outlast the programme.

A mobile court was deployed in Yei in December 2025, tackling the backlog of serious cases including SGBV and homicide. The court's deployment signalled to communities that impunity for capital offences would not be tolerated even in the most difficult security environment. IOM was formally integrated into the Central Equatoria Community Policing Task Force, embedding grassroots police-community committees directly into



Holding the line on returnee land disputes

In Yei, Kajo-Keji, Lainya and Morobo, RSRTF-supported housing, land and property teams helped returnees manage disputes through mediation, reducing the risk that unresolved claims over homes, farms and inheritance would become new sources of conflict.

As returnees came back to Central Equatoria from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many found that return did not immediately mean recovery. Some homes had been occupied by others, land had been transferred without the owner's knowledge, and widows faced inheritance claims from male relatives. Each dispute carried the potential to deepen grievances or trigger local conflict, particularly in communities already managing fragile return and reintegration processes.

In 2025, housing, land and property teams across Yei, Kajo-Keji, Lainya and Morobo managed 308 active HLP cases, including 134 in Kajo-Keji, 82 in Yei, 50 in Lainya and 42 in Morobo. Through mediation and counselling, 135 cases were resolved without violence, helping households avoid escalation and giving returnees a clearer pathway to reclaim homes, access land and rebuild livelihoods.

The work also left behind a more durable local framework. The Referral Mechanism Pathway for HLP was finalised in 2025 and handed over to local authorities, providing a structure for managing the 173 cases still active at year-end and future disputes linked to return, occupation, inheritance and land access.

WHY THIS MATTERS

It shows how RSRTF supports practical stabilisation in areas of return. Housing, land and property disputes are not only legal or administrative issues. In fragile return settings, they can become drivers of local conflict. By supporting mediation, counselling and referral pathways, RSRTF helps communities and local authorities manage disputes before they escalate, while strengthening trust in locally available mechanisms for peaceful resolution.



A 10-point plan to manage cattle migration

RSRTF-supported partners brought farmers, herders, chiefs, commissioners and political leaders together to agree on practical measures to manage cattle migration, reduce pressure on farmland and prevent recurring violence.

In Central Equatoria, one of the challenges of 2025 was the movement of armed cattle through farmlands in Yei, Lainya, Morobo and Kajo-Keji. The destruction of crops and the risk of retaliation placed farmers, herders and local authorities under increasing pressure. On 29 and 30 September 2025, CEPO and IOM convened more than 80 stakeholders in Juba, including farmers, herders, Members of Parliament, commissioners and chiefs, to move the issue from repeated grievance to a shared plan for action. Participants adopted a 10-point peace plan calling for designated grazing zones, water reservoirs to reduce migration pressure and enforcement of the standing presidential order requiring non-Central Equatoria cattle to return to their states of origin. The dialogue also created space for different perspectives to be heard. Herders' representative Sultan Machar expressed satisfaction with the outcome, while Youssef Brown, a farmer from the Yei River area, recalled that farmers and herders in Central Equatoria had historically coexisted without major conflict before relations deteriorated in recent years.

The conference closed with a commitment from Central Equatoria Governor Gen. Rabi Mujung Emmanuel to support implementation, strengthen coordination with security forces and establish a mechanism to oversee follow-up. The plan's significance lies not only in the resolutions adopted, but in the effort to create a platform where farmers, herders and authorities could jointly define practical measures to prevent cattle migration from becoming a recurring trigger for violence.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story shows how RSRTF supports locally led platforms that bring communities, authorities and security actors together to address practical conflict drivers. By helping farmers, herders and authorities agree on concrete measures, RSRTF-supported dialogue contributes to local problem-solving, trust-building and conflict prevention

the state-level security apparatus. Community confidence in the police reached 80% against a 75% target.

74 local government administrators drawn from Yei, Morobo, Lainya, and Kajo-Keji received technical governance training between October and November, covering recruitment, performance appraisal, and the legal separation of powers between executive and legislative arms of county government. Participants jointly identified the need to reactivate County Legislative Councils to provide executive oversight, a recommendation formally submitted to state authorities. Two consultation meetings with 93 County Council of Traditional Leaders (COTAL) members (16 female, 77 male) strengthened the role of traditional authorities in peacebuilding and service delivery. A Civil Society Exchange Visit in Yei in October engaged 40 participants, including state legislators and CSO representatives, in direct policy dialogue with duty bearers. These activities are important because they locate stabilisation not only in justice delivery, but also in the practical functioning of local governance systems.

These activities strengthened selected interfaces between communities, local authorities, justice actors, and security structures. The programme strengthened selected justice, community security, and local governance mechanisms while broader institutional gaps remained.

RESILIENCE

The Resilience Pillar's 2025 strategy rested on three interconnected drivers: formalising the local economy, equipping youth with marketable skills, and building climate-resilient agricultural systems. The approach explicitly moved beyond humanitarian handouts toward market-systems development.

374 youth graduated from TVET programme in Yei, Kajo-Keji, and Lainya in auto mechanics, solar installation, tailoring, and construction. Critically, graduates were not just trained but organised into business start-up groups and provided with start-up kits, bridging the gap between education and employment. Vocational centres were physically renovated to ensure operational sustainability after programme closure. A Labour Market and Training Needs Assessment conducted in Yei revealed that while the selected beneficiaries were employed full-time before, none had formal business management training, prompting the programme to tailor its curriculum to focus specifically on costing, record-keeping, and marketing before releasing Enterprise Development Fund grants.

23 Small and Medium Enterprises received expansion grants after intensive ILO Start and Improve Your Business curriculum training. Five agro-input dealers received grants of USD 3,000–5,000, stocking high-quality seeds, fertilisers, and tools previously unavailable locally. Monitoring visits confirmed these businesses expanded inventory, creating a sustainable supply chain where farmers can purchase inputs locally rather than relying on NGO distributions. A honey-processing machine was procured for a cooperative in Yei, enabling value addition and premium market access. 21 farmer cooperatives were supported in cooperative governance and post-harvest handling, moving them toward collective marketing.

78 VSLAs were established or strengthened, reaching over 1,500 members. A key innovation in border counties like Kajo-Keji was the mobilisation of savings in Ugandan shillings, protecting against SSP devaluation. By year end, these groups had mobilised over 32 million SSP and 103 million UGX. 70km of feeder roads were rehabilitated by 216 vulnerable youth and women through cash-for-work, reopening critical arteries for farmers to transport produce to markets. Reforestation campaigns established nurseries for 1,500 fruit tree seedlings per county. 100 women in Kajo-Keji were trained in energy-efficient stove production, creating an eco-friendly product line and at the same time addressing deforestation pressures. A post-harvest assessment found 71% of farmers' gardens affected by dry spells, triggering a shift to drought-resistant seed distribution.

WHAT THE CENTRAL EQUATORIA EXPERIENCE SHOWS

The Central Equatoria experience shows that integrated area-based programming can continue to deliver relevant reconciliation, justice, governance, and livelihood outputs under significant constraints. The strongest evidence lies in practical contributions: cattle migration dialogue, civil-military engagement, HLP mediation, community security training, TVET, VSLAs, cash-for-work, and local coordination.

The programme's results remain fragile. Cattle migration requires sustained political and security engagement. HLP and justice mechanisms require institutional follow-up. Livelihood and savings activities remain exposed to inflation, weak markets, and insecurity. Infrastructure works depend on access and protection. Central Equatoria is therefore presented as a case of contribution under constraint, not as a completed transition to durable recovery.



Children play in a cattle camp, reflecting the central role of pastoral life in South Sudan and the importance of supporting peaceful coexistence, protection and resilience in communities affected by cattle-related conflict.

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: USD 16,499,297

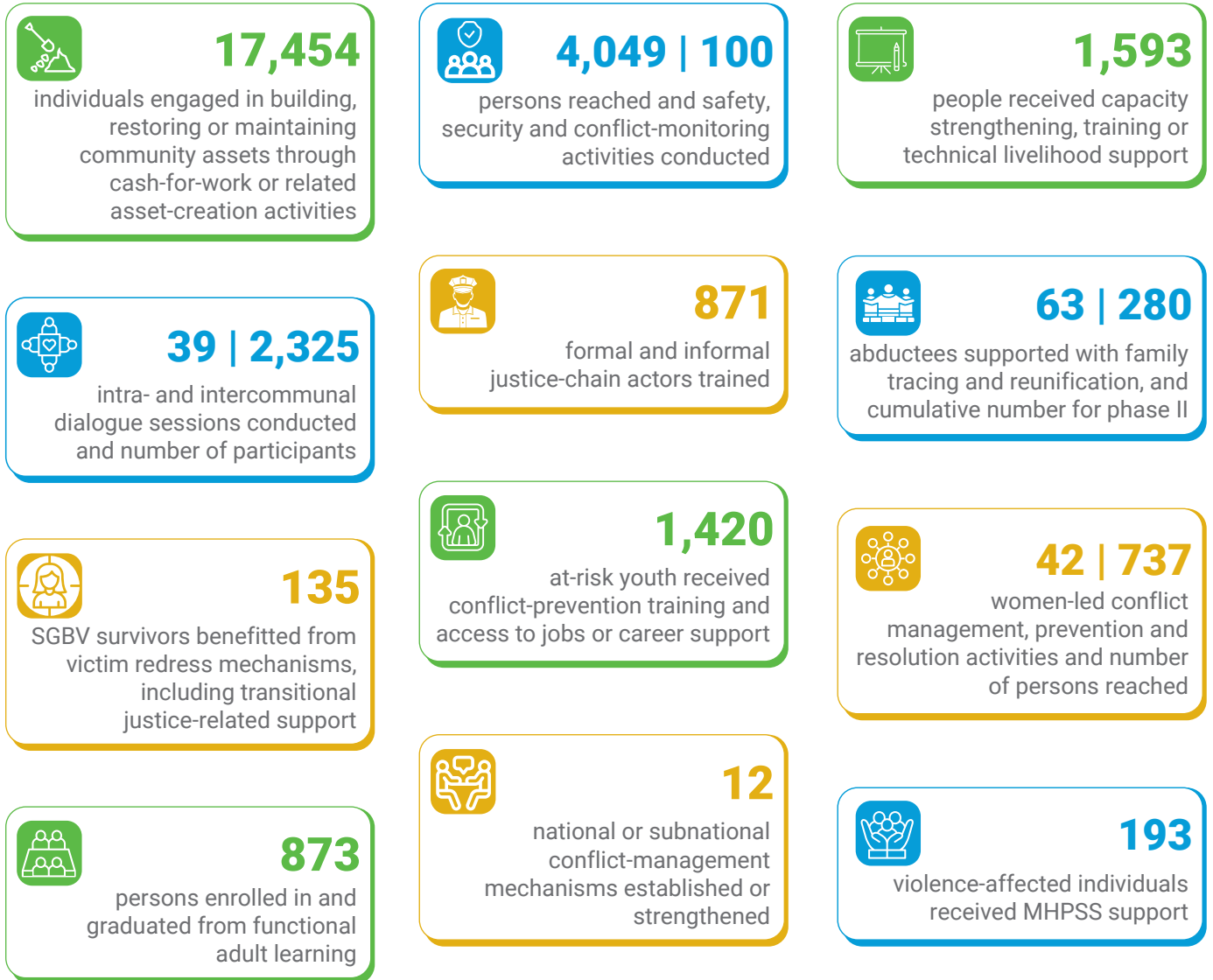
Partners:

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

KEY RESULTS 2025

The Fund's 2025 monitoring data show the following selected Jonglei/GPAA outputs:



These figures show the scale of final-year delivery and are interpreted alongside constraints on access, monitoring, security, and sustainability.



CONTEXT

The final year of Phase II was highly volatile. The programme operated amid cattle raiding, abductions, road ambushes, age-set violence, armed youth mobilisation, political changes, flooding, cholera outbreak, movement restrictions, and access constraints. Insecurity in Duk, Twic East, Bor South, and GPAA disrupted movement and delayed activities. Flooding affected agriculture, road access, supervision, and community mobility. Cholera affected public gatherings and required programme adjustments.

National-level political instability generated significant sub-national consequences. The movement of SPLM-IO-affiliated politicians into programme locations, including Akobo County, kept tensions high. An attack reportedly led by SPLA-IG targeted an SPLA-IO base in Motot Town on 22 May. Administrative reshuffles replaced County Commissioners across Nyirol, Akobo, and other programme counties. In late 2025, clashes between SSPDF and SPLA-IO intensified, with airstrikes in Nyirol, Uror, Ayod, and Duk, ultimately resulting in a no-fly zone declaration that grounded all humanitarian flights and forced the evacuation of international aid workers. These conditions required the programme to continue implementation through the local structures, which had received training-of-trainers when external staff could not access the area.

Armed youth incursions into Gumuruk and Lekuangole displaced more than 14,000 civilians early in the year. In the second quarter, GPAA recorded 39 violent incidents, more than half of which were linked to traditional age-set clashes. A cholera outbreak claimed lives and forced the temporary suspension of some group activities, and seasonal flooding made key road networks in Bichbich, Lekuangole, Gumuruk, and Walgak impassable. Political and administrative changes, including the replacement of county commissioners in several programme target counties, further affected continuity and required renewed engagement with local authorities.

Because Phase II closed in December 2025, this is a final-year consolidation and transition account. The strongest finding is that partners delivered substantial outputs and maintained local structures under pressure. The main risk is sustainability, particularly where community structures continue to depend on external incentives, logistics, technical support, and institutional follow-up.

WHAT WORKED	CHALLENGES FACED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YPTs defusing armed confrontations independently when external staff were evacuated during no-fly zone • 120+ justice actors trained, faster case processing, shrinking backlogs, survivors speaking out • 280 abductees reunified cumulatively, each recovery a potential revenge cycle averted • 107% average VSLA savings growth among armed/at-risk youth above target • Bichbich, previously a hotspot, had no reports of major security incidents across the full year, families returned, farming resumed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-fly zone declaration forcing staff evacuation and halting external monitoring in late 2025 • Commercialisation of abductions, ransoms funding ammunition, creating a conflict economy resistant to dialogue alone • Cholera outbreak in Q1 requiring suspension of group activities and shift to emergency hygiene response • Sustainability of programme gains may be challenged by uneven county-level accountability

RECONCILIATION

In 2025, the Reconciliation Pillar strengthened its shift from reactive, ad hoc dispute resolution toward a more structured and institutionalised approach to addressing local conflict drivers. Through RSRTF-supported community engagement, early warning and dialogue mechanisms, the CVR programme facilitated more than 90 community engagement initiatives, reaching over 3,000 participants, including dialogue sessions and consultations involving more than 2,000 people. These interventions helped communities identify emerging



Community radio creates space for testimony and reconciliation

In Pibor County, RSRTF-supported community radio dialogue and sustained local engagement helped turn personal testimony into a public act of reconciliation, showing how trusted local platforms can help interrupt cycles of revenge.

In January 2025, Nonviolent Peaceforce partnered with Youth and Women Protection Teams to host a three-day evening radio dialogue on Pibor Radio 90.3 FM focused on conflict prevention and reconciliation through local stories. One broadcast featured Nhial, a Youth Protection Team member trained in Unarmed Civilian Protection, who described how he chose forgiveness after losing his brother to inter-clan violence and later helped the wounded perpetrator reach hospital instead of supporting retaliation. Among the listeners was Mama Baal Ngachor, whose son had been killed in 2014. After carrying anger for more than a decade, she called into the programme live on air and publicly committed to forgiveness and to becoming a peace ambassador in her community. Her decision was not the result of a single broadcast alone, but of broader and sustained engagement, including joint patrols, protective accompaniment, awareness campaigns and church-based group counselling. Together, these efforts helped create trusted spaces where grief could be voiced, reflected on and redirected toward reconciliation. The story illustrates how community radio, when combined with longer-term local engagement, can extend peacebuilding beyond formal meetings and enable personal choices to influence wider community attitudes.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story shows how RSRTF-supported local platforms can help communities address one of the deepest drivers of violence: cycles of revenge rooted in personal loss. It also illustrates the multiplier effect of community-based peacebuilding. When testimony is shared through trusted local media and reinforced by sustained accompaniment and counselling, individual decisions can help open wider space for reflection, reconciliation and non-violent problem-solving.

tensions, mobilise local mediators, and agree on practical measures to prevent disputes from escalating.

In April, when a killing linked to an unresolved debt in Waat Payam threatened to trigger a violent feud between the Cie-Mandakni and Cie-Leek sub-clans, RSRTF supported the activation of Early Warning and Early Response committees immediately. Their intervention enabled rapid shuttle diplomacy between the parties, resulting in a mutually accepted compensation agreement of 50 cattle and helping to halt armed mobilisation. Similarly, following deadly clashes over cattle theft between the Lawol and Kongor communities, which displaced Lawol households to Pibor town, RSRTF-supported partners convened a multi-stakeholder peace dialogue on 5 May. The dialogue created space for the communities to address grievances, agree on peaceful return arrangements, and rebuild confidence. As a result, the Lawol community returned to their lands and resumed agricultural activities.

Between July and September, the programme further consolidated these gains by convening 186 opinion leaders, including traditional chiefs, youth representatives, religious leaders, women leaders, and local authorities, across Lekuangule, Gumuruk, Pibor, Uror, Duk, and Bor. Through structured community security and accountability dialogues, participants identified root causes of conflict, developed local solutions, and drafted joint action plans. These RSRTF-supported processes strengthened collaboration among police, customary courts, youth groups, and community leaders, helping move dialogue beyond one-off meetings into sustained collective action through churches, schools, markets, and radio platforms.

The Youth Protection Teams trained in Unarmed Civilian Protection proved their value most dramatically on 19 May in Ngantholoch Payam, Pibor. A violent stick fight between Thurwar and Koliyam sub-groups of the Kurenen age-set left 11 people injured, and both sides mobilised for a gunfight. In a situation where local chiefs were incapacitated by threats, YPT members used shuttle diplomacy and peer influence, the social capital that comes from being part of the same community and persuaded their armed peers to stand down. The confrontation was defused without a single shot fired. In Bichbich, where 148 PCRC members (27% female) had been trained across four Bomas: Keleru, Veveno, Thangyang, and Ngacharavashis, during the year, no major security incidents were reported in this previous hotspot.

Four peace promotion songs were produced in Dinka, Murle, Nuer, and Arabic, alongside a music video. Broadcast widely on Radio Miraya and local stations, these campaigns challenged the acceptance of the cultural norms of cattle raiding and abductions.

STABILISATION

Through sustained advocacy and Inter-Communal Governance Structures, over 40 abductees were recovered and reunited with their families in 2025 alone, bringing the cumulative Phase II total to 280. Recovered individuals received dignity kits, medical care, and MHPSS services at RSRTF-supported Interim Care Centres.

75% of Police Community Relations Committees in the programme area were youth-led by the end of the year. Community unarmed patrols, independently led by YPTs and Women Protection Teams, transitioned the responsibility of early warning and violence deterrence from external actors to localised community owners.

The revised Nuer Customary Law, drawn up through RSRTF support, was officially proclaimed, aligning traditional practices with constitutional human rights standards. Following the success of RSRTF-backed mobile court deployments, a full-time judge was deployed to Pibor, the first permanent judicial presence the town had seen in years.

On the other hand, over 120 justice actors – judges, prosecutors, police officers, prison staff, and community paralegals – from across Jonglei State and GPAA, participated in intensive trainings and mentorship sessions focused on investigation, prosecution, adjudication, record keeping, and gender-responsive, survivor-centred and child-sensitive justice. The trainings built essential skills across the formal justice chain and improved coordination between police, courts, and prisons.

“Before the training, we struggled to handle gender-based violence cases effectively. Now, survivors trust us. We know how to protect their rights,” said Dut Dau Gak, an investigator in the Special Police Unit of Bor in Jonglei.

“It reminded me that justice is not only about punishment, but also about healing communities and restoring trust,” said Enock Deng Anyuat, Magistrate, Bor Court

“People used to believe courts were for the powerful in big cities. Now even the poor are heard,” said James Allan, Community Paralegal, GPAA



From raiders to protectors

In Bichbich, one of the most dangerous cross-border corridors in GPAA, RSRTF-supported community policing and early warning structures helped former fighters take on protective roles, contributing to a year without major security incidents and creating space for families to return, farm and participate more confidently in local justice processes.

Bichbich in Gumuruk County has long been known as a high-risk cross-border corridor for cattle raiding, retaliation and displacement. In 2025, RSRTF-supported crime prevention outreach and community policing training helped create a different local dynamic. Between July and August, 148 members of Police-Community Relations Committees were trained across four payams in community policing, early warning, mediation and trauma awareness, with women making up 27 per cent of participants. Some of the youth who had previously seen themselves primarily as fighters began taking on new roles as protectors and peacekeepers, equipped to carry out patrols and support local security in difficult conditions. Throughout 2025, Bichbich recorded no major security incidents. As tensions eased, families returned, farming resumed and women's participation in local justice forums rose from almost zero to 26 per cent. The story illustrates how community-based security structures can help convert local knowledge and influence into protective roles that strengthen stability and confidence at community level.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story shows how RSRTF supports locally rooted security and peace structures that can help communities move from reactive protection to prevention. In areas affected by cattle raiding and retaliatory violence, community policing, early warning and mediation mechanisms can help reduce insecurity, increase confidence in local problem-solving and create conditions for return, livelihood recovery and greater inclusion of women.



Dialogue opens the way for safe returns in GPAA

In Pibor, an inclusive peace dialogue between the Lawol and Kongor communities helped reduce tensions, support the safe return of displaced families and create space for renewed coexistence after violence linked to cattle theft and revenge killings.

In late 2024, violent clashes between youth from the Lawol community in Gumuruk County and the Kongor community in Lekuangole County displaced Lawol families to Pibor town. The conflict, rooted in cattle theft and cycles of revenge killings, left more than ten people dead and deepened fear between communities with long-standing historical ties.

On 05 May 2025, RSRTF facilitated a multi-stakeholder peace dialogue in Pibor town, bringing together influential leaders, youth representatives, women and traditional chiefs from both communities. The dialogue was supported by community-based protection structures, including Youth Protection Teams, Women Protection Teams and Early Warning, Early Response Committees trained in conflict resolution and unarmed civilian protection. During the dialogue, participants acknowledged past wrongs, expressed mutual accountability and committed to ending hostilities. County and state authorities also participated, helping reinforce the legitimacy of the process and signalling institutional support for peace and accountability. The dialogue concluded with a mutual agreement on peaceful coexistence and reconciliation.

The following day, members of the Lawol community returned safely to their original area and resumed agricultural activities. The return marked an important step toward healing, stability and socio-economic recovery. For community members, the dialogue shifted the atmosphere from fear and tension to a renewed determination to rebuild trust and live peacefully as neighbours.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story illustrates how RSRTF-supported community protection structures can help transform local grievances into dialogue, accountability and safe return. In areas where cattle theft, revenge killings and displacement can quickly deepen intercommunal divisions, inclusive facilitation creates space for communities to acknowledge harm, rebuild trust and agree on practical steps toward peaceful coexistence.

RESILIENCE

Resilience activities sought to reduce economic incentives for violence and strengthen coping capacity through functional adult learning, livelihood training, VSLAs, agriculture, livestock, food assistance, cash-for-work, and community assets. 873 at-risk youth, including former combatants, graduated from the ABP's literacy and life skills programme, integrating reading and numeracy with psychosocial emotional regulation and economic skills. The outcomes were documented individually and collectively. For example, Medan from Wuno, a 35-year-old former warrior, used his FAL training and a micro-loan to start a vegetable farming venture and is now a community leader actively mentoring other youth away from armed violence. Makuach Chuol from Kadiang overcame deep ethnic divisions to form and chair the first mixed-tribe savings group in Kadiang. Yar Deng from Anyidi, overcoming illiteracy through the programme, launched a fishing business and now leads a women's savings group and organises financial management workshops to help others.

16 VSLA groups comprising 485 armed or at-risk youth members achieved 107% average growth in savings, pooling 51.8 million SSP. This allowed participants to access micro-loans for businesses, healthcare, and education. VSF-Germany targeted specific value chains by training and equipping women-led milk vendor groups, including the Shureu Nyalic and Warpiir groups in Bor South, with pasteurisation training, milk cans, and market linkage support, transforming a highly perishable product into a hygienic, sustainable, and profitable daily business. More than 3,000 households received farming support, and food assistance through in-kind and cash transfers reduced food gaps for over 8,000 individuals during the lean season (June-September).

COORDINATION, LOCALISATION AND TRANSITION

The programme relied on consortium coordination, pillar meetings, quarterly reviews, Project Board engagement, Area Reference Groups, state and county authorities, GPAA authorities and local structures. Community structures were involved in patrols, dialogue, abduction prevention, early warning, reintegration, justice referral and livelihoods. This local embeddedness was essential when insecurity, flooding, no-fly restrictions and staff evacuations limited external access.

The final year also highlighted sustainability risks. Programme records identified weak county-level government ownership and accountability as risks. Many local structures depend on incentives, technical support, logistics and external accompaniment. As Phase II closed, transition planning became a central concern. The programme helped identify continuity priorities and locally informed strategies for potential follow-on engagement, although future funding or follow-on programming remains subject to separate decision-making.

MONITORING, EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

Monitoring in 2025 included field monitoring, beneficiary feedback, perception surveys, outcome surveys, final evaluation processes and Measuring Safety and Security work. MSS findings provide useful nuance: selected safety perceptions improved in some areas, but insecurity remained high, safe movement was still constrained, women's mobility remained limited and weapon carrying continued. These findings show both progress and limitation.

WHAT THE JONGLEI/GPAA EXPERIENCE SHOWS

The Jonglei/GPAA experience shows that integrated area-based programming can sustain relevant community-level functions in a volatile environment. The programme contributed to local dialogue, abduction prevention and reunification, justice access, community security, women's and youth participation, livelihoods and community assets.

The evidence is strongest in specific, bounded results: 54 abducted individuals traced and reunified in 2025, 280 cumulative Phase II recoveries, 873 justice-chain actors trained, 873 functional adult learning graduates, women-led conflict-management activities, SGBV survivor support, and community security examples such as Bichbich. The stronger conclusion is that the programme strengthened selected local mechanisms and delivered practical peacebuilding, justice and resilience outputs under severe constraints. Sustainability depends on local ownership, institutional follow-through, justice presence, financing and protection from conflict and climate shocks.



Women present their priorities for Kong Koc Phase II in Tonj North, helping shape locally led planning for reconciliation, community security and resilience.

Kong Koc: Laying the foundation for Cross-Border Peace, Justice and Resilience (Phase II)

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

Lead agency: World Food Programme (WFP)

Budget: USD 12,000,000

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) and Steward Women

ABP timeframe: 1st June 2025 – 31st May 2028

KEY RESULTS 2025

Because Kong Koc Phase II was launched in July 2025, the programme focused on establishing institutional, coordination and community-entry conditions for implementation while recording early outputs.



12 | 1,384

intra- and intercommunal dialogue sessions conducted and number of participants



911

persons received legal support or advice



675

persons reached with sensitisation messages on violence reduction, intercommunal peace and reconciliation



161

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



81

integrated UNMISS patrols conducted



79

SGBV survivors benefitted from victim redress mechanisms, including transitional justice-related support



57

cases investigated and adjudicated by mobile courts



50

public servants trained



CONTEXT

Kong Koc Phase II began implementation in 2025 in a fragile cross-border area linking Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes. The programme was approved and operationalised during the second half of the year, making 2025 primarily an inception and early implementation period. The 2025 account is therefore presented differently from mature ABPs that operated throughout the full year. In 2025, the consortium reactivated systems, completed county-level consultations, began early reconciliation and stabilisation activities, and introduced selected resilience activities, while full rollout was scheduled from 2026.

The operating context remained mixed and volatile. In Greater Tonj, security was heavily unstable, dominated by cycles of revenge killings, commercialised cattle raiding, and mobilisation of heavily armed youth. In Tonj North, internal conflict erupted within the Luo community between prominent Pan Kuei and Pan Arek families. By February, new violent incidents erupted in the Kirik–Rualbet–Awul triangle. In Tonj East, three high school students were killed in a road intercept along the Ngapagok–Romic road, effectively halting civilian movement and trade. On June 5, a presidential state-of-emergency disarmament order was issued after a May 17 attack in Ngapagok that killed 4 and wounded 16, followed by Luacjang–Jalwau clashes in Guit village on May 28–29 that killed 62 people, including 20 women. SSPDF conducted airstrikes on cattle camps in Tonj East, including Wunliet, Ngapagok, Paliang, Makuach, and Mapara as a part of the enforcement between October and December, further heightening tensions, triggering mass civilian displacement, and restricting humanitarian access.

In Northern Lakes, Rumbek North recorded frequent road ambushes and revenge killings. Cueibet County faced intra-sectional violence between Ruruot and Panyar sections, with at least eight dead in November and five additional fatalities on December 31. Cross-border tensions with Unity State further destabilised the borderlands. Politically, three governors in Warrap State in the first half of the year forced the consortium to continuously rebuild political capital.

Socioeconomic conditions also affected implementation. Poverty, youth unemployment, livestock disease, gender-based violence, displacement pressures, and seasonal flooding continued to act as conflict multipliers. The programme therefore had to combine community entry, conflict analysis, local authority engagement, and early implementation under difficult conditions.

WHAT WORKED	CHALLENGES FACED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peace committees successfully de-escalating Awul-Kirik wildfire incident before it triggered retaliatory violence• Wanh-alel customary law draft bill produced for State Legislative Assembly, justice reform reaching legislative threshold• VSLA transition to ISAL models protecting community savings from hyperinflation• Increase complementarity between ABP and other development agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SSPDF airstrikes on cattle camps in Tonj East (Oct–Dec) triggering mass displacement and restricting access• Three governor changes in six months requiring continuous political re-engagement• IDP influx from Mayendit (Unity State) into Tonj East intensifying resource competition• Seasonal flooding restricting access to cattle camps and delaying furniture delivery to police posts• High community expectations on participation allowances, required board-level harmonisation of rates

RECONCILIATION

County-level meetings engaged 285 participants (238 male, 47 females, six with disabilities), representing state and county authorities, community governance structures, chiefs, cattle camp leaders, religious leaders, women and youth representatives. In the meetings, stakeholders reviewed existing peace agreements,



Trained peace committees help de-escalate tensions after the Awul wildfire

In Awul Payam, RSRTF-supported peace committees helped prevent retaliatory violence after a deadly wildfire by supporting an independent investigation, clarifying the facts and restoring communication between neighbouring communities.

In November 2025, a wildfire in Awul Payam in Tonj North County killed five women and quickly triggered suspicions against neighbouring Kirrik Payam, an area with a history of tension with Awul. Given the recent violence in February 2025, when armed youth from adjacent Rualbet Payam attacked Ayii, the headquarters of Awul, local actors feared that the wildfire could trigger retaliation and renewed intercommunal violence. In response, the Tonj North County Commissioner established an independent investigation committee made up of the County Peace Coordinator, respected community leaders and members of RSRTF-supported peace committees trained under the Kong Koc reconciliation pillar. Through community-based investigation and structured dialogue, the committee established that the fire had been caused accidentally by children, rather than deliberately by anyone from Kirrik Payam. Clarifying the facts helped calm tensions quickly, while transparent investigation, community engagement and accountability measures restored communication between the two payams. The case demonstrated the practical value of trained local peace structures in identifying risks early, addressing misinformation and helping communities resolve emerging conflict before it escalates.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story illustrates how RSRTF supports locally led peace infrastructure that can respond rapidly to emerging tensions. In contexts where mistrust, past violence and climate-related shocks can quickly fuel retaliation, trained peace committees can help communities verify facts, de-escalate grievances and strengthen local peace governance before violence spreads.

identified implementation gaps, validated current conflict hotspots, and defined Phase II priorities.

Key gaps identified across all five counties included proliferation of small arms, inadequate cattle migration frameworks, unresolved land disputes, limited justice capacity, low inclusion of women in decision-making, corruption, and poor management of shared natural resources. In response, the Reconciliation Pillar directly engaged 1,377 individuals (1,029 male, 348 females, 11 with disabilities). Cattle camp engagements across six camps in Greater Tonj and four in Northern Lakes reached 991 participants (782 male, 209 female). Two rounds of Akut de Door peace committee training – a cross-county training reaching 36 members (28 male, 8 female) in October, and county-level trainings reaching 104 members (77 male, 27 women) in December – strengthened skills in conflict analysis, early warning and response, mediation, negotiation, and dialogue facilitation.

The trained peace committees de-escalated a fatal incident that threatened retaliatory violence between Awul and Kirrik Payams in Tonj North. Committee members conducted their own investigation, facilitated structured dialogue between the affected communities, secured commitments to non-retaliation, and coordinated with local authorities to prevent armed mobilisation. No retaliation followed.

The Agurpiny (Apuk-Padoc) intra-communal dialogue held in Akop Payam, Tonj North, in December 2025 reached 233 participants (170 male, 63 female), supporting community-led reconciliation of long-standing internal divisions. Six peace-focused radio talk shows were broadcast on Kong Koc FM in Tonj North County, featuring male and female chiefs, youth leaders, and cattle camp leaders. 1,500 radio sets were procured and distributed to pastoral and border communities, increasing peace messaging reach.

The Bridges of Peace women's circles, introduced in Phase II, identified six female facilitators for training to lead women-centred peacebuilding across Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes. 27 women from six payams in Tonj South and Tonj North actively participated in the initial circle activities, significantly strengthening their confidence, visibility, and collective voice in local peace processes.

STABILISATION

Stabilisation activities in 2025 focused on legal awareness, community policing, rule-of-law infrastructure follow-up and customary law review. Legal education and awareness activities addressed human rights, GBV and protection concerns in Tonj North, Tonj East, Tonj South, Cueibet, and Rumbek North.

A final harmonisation workshop for the Wanh-alel customary law review consolidated community inputs from Greater Tonj and Greater Gogrial. The workshop was funded by IOM, and the ABP complemented by providing technical expertise to produce the draft Wanh-alel customary law bill for submission to the Warrap State Legislative Assembly. This draft represents the conclusion of a process that began under Phase I and aims to align traditional dispute resolution in Greater Tonj with constitutional human rights standards.

The 11 Rule of Law facilities constructed or rehabilitated during Phase I – police posts, prisons, and court buildings across Greater Tonj – received essential furniture to enable full operationalisation for increased access to justice. Community policing outreach reached 270 participants (188 male, 82 female) across Tonj East and Tonj South, leading to the formation of two PCRCs with 18 members total (14 male, 4 female). 20 police officers completed Training of Trainers certification on community-oriented policing, establishing an internal multiplier for continued capacity building. Legal education and awareness campaigns reached 182 participants (125 male, 57 female) in Tonj East, Tonj North, and Tonj South, with cattle camp awareness in Northern Lakes reaching 104 participants in Cueibet and Rumbek North. UNMISS conducted 63 patrols across the five counties (13 long-duration, 46 short-duration, 4 dynamic air patrols), deterring violence, supporting early warning, and contributing to de-escalation in hotspot areas.

Coordination with the UK-funded Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund (POF), which has a strong presence in Lakes State, opened pathways for joint ARG support and coordinated institutional capacity building. The Joint ARG model, designed to coordinate all peace and nexus initiatives in the area through tools that map HDP interventions and track ARG accountability for agreed actions, represents a significant step beyond the conventional gathering-and-discussion format.

RESILIENCE

The ABP facilitated the establishment of 28 VSLAs that mobilised over SSP 11,648,000 in collective savings. Members used savings and loans primarily for petty trade, food services, small retail, and vegetable production. Three VSLA groups in Pagol, Abyei-cok, and Lool-lith received solar-powered irrigation systems benefiting 80

individuals for dry-season vegetable production. VSLAs were proactively transitioned to Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) models to protect savings against currency depreciation.

15 women received poultry production training in Tonj South. 61 dairy farmers (30 male, 31 female) were trained in animal feed preservation at Abieicok and Pajiklir cattle camps, preparing silage and hay to support livestock nutrition during the dry season and shifting cattle use toward market-oriented production. 65 members were organised into three shea butter production groups in Tonj North. Gender and nutrition groups (113 members, 91 female) were formed as entry points for dietary diversification and financial literacy training. A Labour Market and Economic Framework need assessment identified construction, welding, solar installation, carpentry, tailoring, and agriculture value chain skills as the highest-priority TVET areas for 2026.

COORDINATION, LOCALISATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Coordination was one of the strongest features of the 2025 inception period. The Project Board was reactivated with agreed Terms of Reference and met three times during the year. The Board approved harmonised participant allowance rates, established a crisis-modifier subgroup, approved one crisis-modifier request, and guided initial implementation priorities. Bi-weekly consortium coordination meetings and pillar-level meetings supported sequencing across reconciliation, stabilisation and resilience activities.

The programme also began coordination with the Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund in Lakes State, particularly around Area Reference Groups, mapping of HDP interventions, action trackers, and local institutional strengthening. Coordination with the Southern Unity ABP began on cross-border issues involving Rumbek North and Southern Unity counties. These efforts show the Fund's role in linking area-based programming with other peace and nexus actors.

Localisation was built into the inception approach. County-level meetings engaged chiefs, cattle camp leaders, women and youth representatives, religious leaders, peace committee members, community governance structures, and government authorities. Community inputs shaped conflict analysis, priority setting, peace agreement review, community policing outreach, and livelihood planning. The effectiveness of these structures is framed as emerging; because full implementation and outcome monitoring have not yet taken place.

WHAT THE KONG KOC PHASE II EXPERIENCE SHOWS

The Kong Koc Phase II experience in 2025 is a credible inception-year account. The programme moved from approval to operationalisation, reactivated coordination structures, conducted community consultations, supported early reconciliation activities, advanced justice and community policing work, and introduced early livelihood and savings activities. It also demonstrated the value of sequencing: dialogue and conflict analysis created entry points for justice, community security, and livelihood activities.

The 2025 account presents Phase II as having established the relationships, structures, and early implementation platform required for full-scale integrated programming from 2026 onwards. The main risks are insecurity, political influence over local conflict, weak justice and governance systems, seasonal access constraints, community expectations, and the need for outcome-level evidence once baseline data are collected.



A deserted shipping container formerly used as a detention facility. Poor ventilation, small windows and extreme heat contributed to health risks for detainees, highlighting the need for more humane justice and detention conditions.

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: International Rescue Committee (IRC), Dialogue and Research Initiative (DRI), Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA), Universal Intervention and Development Organization (UNIDOR)

Strategic Partners: United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and six Community Based Organisations (CBO)

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

KEY RESULTS 2025

The Fund's 2025 monitoring data show the following selected Southern Unity outputs:



6,312

community members reached with peace and violence-reduction messaging



3,282

individuals engaged in building, restoring or maintaining community assets through cash-for-work or related asset-creation activities



76 | 17,775

intra- and intercommunal dialogue sessions conducted and number of participants



936

people received capacity strengthening, training or technical livelihood support



5,012

violence-affected individuals received MHPSS support



1,080

people participated in community-based participatory planning to identify structural drivers of recurrent crises



1,433

teachers, students and parents trained in peace education



560

at-risk youth received conflict-prevention training and access to jobs or career support



606

youths in cattle camps trained on conflict management



207

individuals supported to exercise and assert their HLP rights



151

integrated UNMISS patrols conducted



148

SGBV survivors benefitted from victim redress mechanisms, including transitional justice-related support



12

schools incorporating peace education into formal education and school curricula



168

formal and informal justice-chain actors trained



67

cases investigated and adjudicated by mobile courts



CONTEXT

The Southern Unity programme operated in 2025 in a setting shaped by recurrent flooding, insecurity, displacement, weak justice infrastructure, high humanitarian needs, and continued local conflict dynamics. The programme began the year in a relatively permissive environment for implementation, but conditions deteriorated as political and security tensions increased, cross-border and intra-communal violence continued, and flooding restricted access to remote locations.

Programme records note that the arrest and detention of First Vice President Riek Machar heightened tensions across Unity State and contributed to uncertainty in programme areas. They also refer to aerial bombardment in Southern Unity, displacement in Panyijiar, new county commissioner appointments, cross-border tensions with Lakes State, and continued intra-communal violence. These references explain implementation constraints and are presented carefully and proportionately.

Flooding was a central implementation and conflict-risk factor. It restricted mobility, affected livelihoods, displaced populations, increased delivery costs, limited access to services, and contributed to pressure over land, grazing and basic resources. Annual programme reporting records that parts of Panyijiar were accessible only by canoe during the flood season, delaying movement of people and materials and affecting supervision. Programme records also note that insecurity and aerial bombardment displaced households in Panyijiar and fragmented some community structures. At the same time, reductions in parallel humanitarian services increased expectations that the programme would respond to needs beyond its stabilisation and resilience mandate. These conditions required adaptive planning, crisis-modifier resources, re-sequencing, and local coordination through Area Reference Groups.

WHAT WORKED	CHALLENGES FACED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PRAC-led Tiap clan revenge killing resolved by locals without external facilitation• Youth publicly rejecting cattle raid after RSRTF training demonstrated changing norms• Conflicting communities demonstrated willing participation in community actions• Mobile court adjudicating long-standing murder cases interrupting revenge cycles• Blue economy analysis grounding livelihoods in market-validated opportunity rather than assumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airstrikes displaced 6,973 households in Panyijiar, fragmenting community structures• Panyijiar accessible only by canoe during flood season• High community expectations for infrastructure under constrained budget and logistics

RECONCILIATION

The ABP facilitated 55 dialogue sessions reaching 9,789 participants (7,270 male, 2,519 female) across Leer, Mayendit, and Panyijiar, covering critical drivers of violence including cattle raiding, revenge killings, cross-border tensions, and gender-based violence. Three critical community peace dialogues at Pachienjok in Panyijiar, conducted in direct response to violent incidents, brought together 969 individuals including armed youth and spiritual leaders, led to de-escalation of tensions and halted planned retaliation. A cross-border reconciliation dialogue at the contested Koreer grazing land engaged 80 cattle camp youth from rival factions from Panyijiar and Yirol East, directly linking peace commitments to upcoming vocational and livelihood opportunities. A dialogue convened on the 26th anniversary of the Biel age group promoted social cohesion among 829 participants — leveraging the lifelong bonds of the age-set itself to bring together members from groups that had been on opposite sides of the November 2024 Pachienjok violence, and resolving the dispute that had triggered the earlier rapid-response dialogues.

A PRAC-led mediation in Tiap, Panyijiar County resolved long-standing revenge killings between two clans.



Youth engagement creates alternatives to cattle raiding

In Panyijiar County, RSRTF-supported training and dialogue helped create space for young men to reconsider participation in cattle raids, illustrating how community-based peacebuilding can support non-violent alternatives in contexts shaped by retaliation and social pressure.

In Panyijiar County, one young man used a community dialogue to state publicly that he would not join a planned cattle raid. After participating in RSRTF-supported conflict resolution training, he said he wanted instead to remain with his family and rebuild his life. In a context where cattle raiding is closely linked to status, livelihoods and cycles of retaliation, such a statement carries significant weight. It also reflects wider efforts in 2025 to strengthen youth agency in peacebuilding. During the year, 105 cattle camp and community youth leaders in Panyijiar received Learn to Lead training in conflict management, mediation and leadership. The approach also reached cattle camps directly, including at Pakaam, where 145 armed youth met with their spear master to discuss conflict dynamics and alternatives to violence. A further 25 PRAC members, including nine youth, also completed training. Together, these efforts helped create space for young people to act as peace actors within their own communities.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story illustrates how RSRTF supports locally led platforms that enable young people to participate in conflict prevention and community problem-solving. In an environment where cattle raiding is reinforced by social pressure and retaliation, dialogue and leadership training can help make non-violent choices more credible, more visible and more locally owned.

The mediation process was designed and led entirely by the Peace and Reconciliation Action Committee, without external facilitation, and resulted in a documented peace agreement. This outcome represents exactly the transition the RSRTF has been working toward: community structures that can manage their own conflicts without external actors present.

105 cattle camp and community youth leaders participated in Learn to Lead sessions in Panyijiar; 30 in Leer. The L2L methodology was taken directly to the Pakaam camp, where 145 armed youth and spear masters engaged in structured dialogue naming the cycle of cattle raiding and revenge explicitly and asking participants to commit to different choices.

Virtual cross-county engagement between local leaders, facilitated when physical access was blocked, strengthened collaboration and generated consensus across borders. PRACs in Panyijiar and peace committees in Leer and Mayendit became increasingly proactive in incident reporting, mediation, and early warning, moving communities from fragmented responses to coordinated action.

80 participants in Mayendit received training on truth-telling, trauma awareness, and transitional justice dialogue. Two Self-Help Plus cohorts, 30 men in Thoanhum, 30 women in Pachienjok, graduated from five-session stress management programme, reporting significantly improved emotional regulation. Over 2,600 community members (including 1,805 women and 817 girls) received targeted psychosocial support ranging from individual counselling to community awareness. Peace Clubs and Teacher Learning Circles reached over 160 students and teachers in local schools. Community FM radio broadcasts across Leer, Mayendit, and Koch advocated explicitly for women and youth inclusion in local governance and generated live call-ins from listeners challenging their exclusion by county authorities.

STABILISATION

The stabilisation pillar supported access to justice, mobile court deployment, legal awareness, HLP support, justice-chain capacity building, police-community relations, community protection networks and local governance engagement. Annual programme reporting noted that Outcome 3 and Outcome 4 underperformed in 2025 due to technical and logistical challenges, particularly affecting justice, rule of law, civic engagement and governance activities.

A mobile court reached communities in Leer, Mayendit, and Panyijiar that had no access to the formal justice system for years. It adjudicated 57 cases including long-standing murder cases that had been the primary fuel for revenge cycles of violence within the target communities. Programme records also note that only 55% of surveyed beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the formal court, with dissatisfaction linked partly to cultural objections to rulings on marriage and divorce. This nuance shows both progress and the complexity of justice work.

Programme records also describe behavioural and confidence signals around the mobile court process. Residents and local traders reportedly began investing in more permanent homes and shop structures after serious cases were heard publicly. This is treated as a reported indication of confidence in local stability, not as proof that justice-sector challenges were resolved. Visible justice can influence how communities assess whether it is safe to stay, invest and rebuild.

Construction of county police and prison facilities began, providing the physical infrastructure for state security presence. Police-Community Relations Committees were operationalised, connecting grassroots security monitoring to county-level structures. The ABP Board conducted field monitoring visits to Leer and Mayendit, convening all planned quarterly meetings to approve project plans, reports, and recommendations. The Area Reference Group was functional in each of the three counties, meeting quarterly, chaired by county commissioners, and providing a structured platform for aligning programme activities with changing community dynamics.

63 GBV survivors accessed medical and legal referral services, and 269 highly vulnerable women and girls received dignity materials (soap, underwear, kitenge, sanitary materials) restoring self-esteem and safety. A Housing, Land, and Property assessment identified land governance as a critical bottleneck to peacebuilding and recovery, informing 2026 legal empowerment priorities. The Southern Unity ABP and Kong Koc ABP established a cross-programmes coordination forum focused specifically on managing cross-border dynamics between Unity and Warrap States.

RESILIENCE



Community-led dykes help Southern Unity push back against floods

In Leer, Mayendit and Panyijiar, RSRTF-supported community-led dyke rehabilitation helped flood-affected communities protect homes, reopen access, reclaim farmland and turn collective labour into a practical foundation for resilience and recovery.

For communities across Southern Unity, seasonal flooding has become a repeated shock, displacing families, submerging farmland, cutting off access to services and increasing pressure over land and grazing areas. In 2025, communities in Leer, Mayendit and Panyijiar moved from coping with the floods to organising a collective response. The issue was raised through RSRTF-supported Area Reference Group structures, where community representatives identified flood mitigation as an urgent local priority. With initial RSRTF support, local leaders and programme partners mobilised communities to rebuild dykes and drainage systems in some of the most vulnerable areas. More than 2,000 community members participated in the effort, reconstructing over 42 kilometres of dyke. The work did more than hold back water. It restored access, reopened farmland and grazing areas, and created opportunities for young people and women to contribute to community recovery. In a setting affected by conflict, displacement and climate shocks, the dyke initiative showed how flexible, area-based programming can respond to immediate needs while also strengthening local ownership, cohesion and resilience.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This story illustrates how RSRTF's adaptive area-based approach can respond to climate shocks without losing sight of peacebuilding and resilience goals. Flood mitigation became more than disaster response. By bringing communities together to protect land, restore access and rebuild livelihoods, the initiative strengthened local agency and contributed to a practical peace dividend in one of South Sudan's most flood-affected areas.

A blue economy analysis identified the fishing industry as the highest-viability livelihood pathway for Panyijiar youth, directly shaping vocational training and agricultural input provision toward market-validated opportunities. This evidence-based, demand-driven approach, grounded in local economic analysis rather than programme assumptions, ensured that livelihood interventions were genuinely relevant to the communities they served.

The Crisis Modifier was activated to fund the emergency community-led actions across Panyijiar and Mayendit following intense flooding. Communities that had participated in reconciliation dialogues proved measurably more willing to work together on building dykes, the mutual trust built through reconciliation directly enabling the collective action required for flood mitigation. As a result, 45km of dykes were built through historically conflicted communities through cash-for-work that in turn employed hundreds of at-risk youths.

Vocational skills training enrolled youth and women in multiple trades. Functional VSLA groups supported economic participation and reduced negative coping mechanisms. Nine VSLAs comprising 250 members, mostly women, in Leer and Mayendit mobilised 14.875 million SSP, providing capital for micro-enterprises.

Six local CBOs, including youth and women-led CSOs, jointly planned, implemented, and monitored activities that strengthened local ownership and accountability beyond what any external programme structure could achieve.

COORDINATION, LOCALISATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Coordination mechanisms functioned through bi-weekly planning and review meetings, thematic and county leads, technical working groups, ARG meetings, the ABP Board, joint assessments, baseline work, HLP assessment, MSS data collection and annual learning. The ABP Board conducted field visits to Leer and Mayendit and held quarterly meetings, while a planned Panyijiar visit was rescheduled to February 2026.

Area Reference Groups were functional in the three counties, chaired by County Commissioners and used for coordination, information sharing and alignment with local priorities. Programme records give a useful example: ARG discussions helped tailor the flood response by proposing community dyke rehabilitation and realigning annual planning toward priority justice and law-sector infrastructure. This is a concrete example of local coordination influencing programme adaptation.

Localisation was significant. The consortium included three national NGOs and engaged six local CBOs and other local actors in planning, implementation and decision-making. Community leaders, chiefs, women and youth representatives, peace committees, local authorities, police and prison services, and faith leaders were involved through community forums and ARG meetings. This strengthened local legitimacy and implementation capacity, whereas some activities still depended on external technical support and funding.

MONITORING, EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

The Southern Unity programme generated useful evidence through a baseline survey, HLP assessment, MSS monitoring, conflict tracking, annual learning workshop, donor and Resident Coordinator visit, field monitoring and MEAL capacity building. MSS evidence is particularly useful because it provides community-defined indicators of perceived safety and normalisation, including social events, children's movement, increased night-time movement and construction of more permanent tukuls.

These MSS findings are used carefully. They are valuable qualitative and ethnographic indicators, but they should not be overstated as proof of reduced violence across Southern Unity. The evidence supports a bounded conclusion that MSS monitoring provided early evidence of improved perceptions of safety in selected communities and helped partners adapt dialogue, MHPSS, protection monitoring, and conflict-sensitive planning.

WHAT THE SOUTHERN UNITY EXPERIENCE SHOWS

The Southern Unity experience in 2025 shows that integrated area-based programming can support community-led conflict management, justice access, livelihood resilience, and flood mitigation under severe constraints. The strongest evidence lies in specific results: PRAC-supported mediation, dialogue, and cattle camp engagement, MHPSS, mobile court proceedings, HLP support, VSLAs, community-led dyke reconstruction, community assets, and ARG-informed adaptation.

The stronger conclusion is that the programme supported selected community-level gains and practical

peace dividends while operating in an environment where insecurity, flooding, weak justice systems, and reduced humanitarian services continued to threaten sustainability. The 2025 record is one of progress under pressure, uneven implementation, and important lessons for consolidation in 2026.

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

The fourth annual RSRTF Cross-Partner Learning Workshop, held in Juba on 22–23 October 2025, brought together 71 representatives from government, UNMISS, UN agencies, implementing partners, and donors. The workshop reviewed implementation experience across the active Area-Based Programmes, reflected on findings from the 2024 Fund Evaluation, and identified priorities for improving programme quality, evidence-based reporting, localisation, sustainability, political engagement, contextual analysis, and cross-platform coordination.

The 2025 learning process took place in a difficult operating environment. Insecurity, flooding, access restrictions, political uncertainty, economic pressure, and reduced humanitarian services affected both programme delivery and the communities served by RSRTF-supported interventions. This context matters for learning. The year did not provide evidence of linear progress. It showed where locally grounded systems continued to function under pressure, where they required adaptation, and where gains remained fragile.

INTEGRATED AREA-BASED PROGRAMMING REMAINS RELEVANT, BUT SEQUENCING MATTERS

The learning process reinforced the relevance of integrated area-based programming. Across the portfolio, the strongest examples emerged where reconciliation, justice, community security and resilience activities were linked in the same locations and sequenced around local conflict dynamics. Dialogue created entry points for justice and livelihood work; justice interventions helped reduce reliance on revenge; and livelihoods and community assets provided practical incentives for cooperation.

The learning is not that integration automatically works. It is that integration is most credible when it is geographically focused, conflict-informed and sequenced. Stand-alone activities remain limited when they are not connected to local mediation, institutional follow-up and practical economic or service benefits. The 2025 evidence therefore supports a careful conclusion: integrated programming can contribute to local-level change where activities are mutually reinforcing and grounded in local conflict analysis.

LOCAL STRUCTURES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR CONTINUITY, BUT STILL NOT SELF-SUSTAINING

Area Reference Groups, peace committees, PRACs, Youth Protection Teams, Women Protection Teams, Police-Community Relations Committees, community protection networks, and customary authorities all played important roles in 2025. In several locations, these structures helped sustain communication, early warning, mediation, community security, and programme continuity when external access was limited.

The learning process also made clear that local structures are not automatically durable. Many require continued technical support, recognition by formal authorities, predictable communication channels, safeguarding, logistical support, and realistic transition plans. Treating them as permanent institutions before they are adequately embedded would overstate the evidence. A stronger conclusion is that RSRTF-supported local structures are a critical operational asset and a potential sustainability pathway, but they require deliberate institutionalisation.

MOBILE JUSTICE IS EFFECTIVE WHEN LINKED TO FOLLOW-UP SYSTEMS

Mobile courts and justice-chain support were repeatedly identified as high-value interventions because they bring formal justice to areas where courts are absent or intermittent. In 2025, mobile justice interventions helped address serious cases, reduce backlogs, and provide visible alternatives to revenge-based dispute resolution.

At the same time, mobile courts cannot substitute for a functioning justice system. Their impact depends on case preparation, survivor support, police investigation, prison capacity, customary authority engagement, legal aid, referral pathways, and follow-up by formal institutions. Where these systems are weak, mobile court results remain important but temporary. Mobile courts are therefore best understood as an access-to-justice mechanism and entry point for institutional strengthening, not as a complete solution to justice gaps.

COMMUNITY SECURITY GAINS NEED CAREFUL ATTRIBUTION

Several programme examples indicate that local security structures contributed to de-escalation, early



warning and reduced retaliation. These include reported de-escalation by peace committees in Greater Tonj, community security structures in Bichbich, PRAC-led mediation in Southern Unity and civil-military engagement in Central Equatoria.

These examples are important because they show how community security structures contributed to specific instances of de-escalation and helped maintain local communication channels during periods of instability. This distinction strengthens the credibility of the report and keeps the analysis aligned with available evidence.

RESILIENCE ACTIVITIES WORK BEST WHEN LINKED TO CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND MARKET REALITIES

VSLAs, vocational training, cash-for-work, dyke rehabilitation, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, poultry, shea butter, solar irrigation and community asset work provided practical peace dividends in 2025. These activities were strongest where they responded to conflict drivers, market opportunities or climate risks identified by communities.

The 2025 evidence also shows clear limits. Inflation, weak markets, insecurity, flooding, poor infrastructure and reduced humanitarian services affected the viability of livelihood gains. Savings totals indicate mobilisation and participation, but not necessarily real purchasing-power gains. Future reporting needs to better capture whether livelihoods are sustained, whether income changes are durable, and whether economic activities reduce incentives for conflict-linked coping strategies.

CRISIS MODIFIERS AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT ARE VALUABLE, BUT CANNOT REPLACE TRANSITION PLANNING

Partners used adaptive management throughout 2025: re-sequencing activities, shifting to remote coordination, relying on local structures, activating crisis modifiers, adjusting logistics, and modifying workplans in response to insecurity and flooding. These adaptations helped maintain implementation under difficult conditions.

However, flexibility is not a substitute for transition planning. Crisis modifiers help programmes respond to shocks, but they do not resolve the structural sustainability questions identified by the 2024 evaluation. Ongoing programmes still require clearer pathways from RSRTF-supported stabilisation to community ownership, development financing, institutional budgets and community-managed continuation mechanisms.

EVIDENCE SYSTEMS NEED TO MOVE BEYOND ACTIVITY REPORTING

A recurring learning from 2025 is that reporting must move beyond activity delivery. Programme records provide strong output data, while future reporting needs to explain outcome-level change, contribution, constraints, adaptation and sustainability risk more consistently.

The Fund needs to strengthen evidence discipline in four areas: first, separating annual, cumulative and phase-specific figures; second, distinguishing outputs from outcomes; third, documenting contribution rather than implying attribution; and fourth, tracking sustainability and transition indicators. This report separates headline results, activity-specific examples, contribution claims and sustainability considerations to support that discipline.

LOCALISATION IS A STRATEGIC REQUIREMENT, NOT ONLY AN IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY

The learning process reinforced that localisation is central to RSRTF's operating model. Local actors often maintain access, legitimacy and continuity when international staff cannot move. National NGOs, local CBOs, community structures, chiefs, women and youth leaders, and county authorities all shaped programme implementation in 2025.

The learning is that localisation must be resourced and governed. Local actors need technical support, safeguarding systems, financial and administrative capacity, monitoring tools, and clear roles in decision-making. Localisation is therefore presented as a strategic requirement for relevance and sustainability, not as a completed achievement.

CROSS-PLATFORM COORDINATION REMAINS UNDERDEVELOPED

The 2025 learning process identified a need for stronger coordination between RSRTF, PBF, SSHF, the Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund, humanitarian actors, development partners and potential international financial institution follow-on investments. Coordination remains uneven across locations and financing streams.

The practical implication is that RSRTF needs to use ABP evidence and Area Reference Groups more deliberately to identify where humanitarian response, peacebuilding, governance support and development investment can sequence around the same local priorities. This would strengthen transition planning and reduce fragmentation, but it requires deliberate coordination beyond the annual reporting process.

SUSTAINABILITY REQUIRES INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES, NOT ONLY COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

The strongest learning from 2025 is that community ownership matters, but it is not sufficient by itself. Peace committees, women's networks, youth structures, VSLAs, PCRCs, PRACs and community protection teams need links to county authorities, justice institutions, police, service providers, markets and development financing. Without those linkages, community structures risk becoming isolated project outputs.

Sustainability is therefore defined in practical terms: whether local structures are recognised, resourced, linked to formal institutions, able to continue core functions, and supported by realistic transition arrangements. This is the main bridge between the 2024 evaluation findings and the Fund's next phase of programming.

LEARNING CONCLUSION

The 2025 learning process confirms the continued relevance of RSRTF's integrated area-based model, while also underscoring the conditions required for results to last. Locally grounded structures helped communities manage selected disputes, maintain communication and adapt to shocks in a difficult year. Justice, livelihoods and community assets provided practical support to reconciliation and stabilisation.

However, the durability of these gains depends on institutional linkages, outcome-level evidence, sustainable financing, market access, local authority engagement and clearer transition pathways. The main lesson from 2025 is therefore not that the model has been proven in full. It is that the model remains relevant, has generated credible contributions in selected locations, and now requires disciplined consolidation.

Seven Years of RSRTF Implementation and Adaptation

Since December 2018, the RSRTF has supported integrated area-based programming in locations affected by recurrent conflict and fragility in South Sudan. The Fund was established on the recognition that many local drivers of violence are interconnected and that responses focused on a single sector are unlikely to address the conditions that allow conflict to recur. Dialogue, justice, governance, community security and livelihood recovery can reinforce one another when they are sequenced in the same locations and grounded in local conflict analysis.

The Fund's early programming helped establish this model. Initial Area-Based Programmes, including Koch and Wau-Warrap, tested whether multi-partner consortia could combine reconciliation, stabilisation and resilience interventions in access-constrained environments. These early experiences showed the value of concentrating resources geographically, working through local actors and combining community dialogue, justice support, livelihood recovery and local governance engagement. They also highlighted recurring challenges: local ownership needed to be deepened, monitoring systems needed to capture more than activity delivery, and sustainability pathways needed to be planned earlier.

As the Fund expanded, the area-based model was adapted to different conflict systems. Jonglei/GPAA, Central Equatoria, Southern Unity and Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes each presented distinct political, ethnic, geographic, climatic and institutional conditions. This variation reinforced an important lesson: the RSRTF model is not a standard package of activities. It is a programming approach that must be adapted to the conflict dynamics, local institutions, access conditions and community priorities of each area.

EVALUATION AND COURSE CORRECTION

Independent evaluation and learning have played an important role in the Fund's evolution. The 2021 evaluation recognised the relevance of the RSRTF approach while identifying weaknesses in local ownership and sustainability. In response, the Fund increased attention to community participation, Area Reference Groups, national NGO engagement and localisation. These adjustments helped move local actors from peripheral consultation roles toward more substantive participation in analysis, prioritisation, implementation and follow-up.

The 2024 Comprehensive Fund Evaluation provided further validation of the relevance of the area-based model, while also emphasising that results would remain fragile without clearer transition pathways, sustained institutional engagement and deeper national and local ownership. This finding remains central to the 2025 Annual Report. The Fund's seven-year record shows credible contributions across reconciliation, access to justice, community security and resilience, but it also shows that RSRTF-supported gains require consolidation if they are to endure beyond project cycles.

By 2024, the Fund had also moved toward a more flexible three-year programming model. This shift was not only administrative; it responded to lessons from earlier, more fragmented programme cycles in unstable environments. The 2025 portfolio shows why that change matters: sustained engagement is often required before local structures, justice pathways, livelihood systems and transition arrangements become strong enough to hold beyond individual project phases.

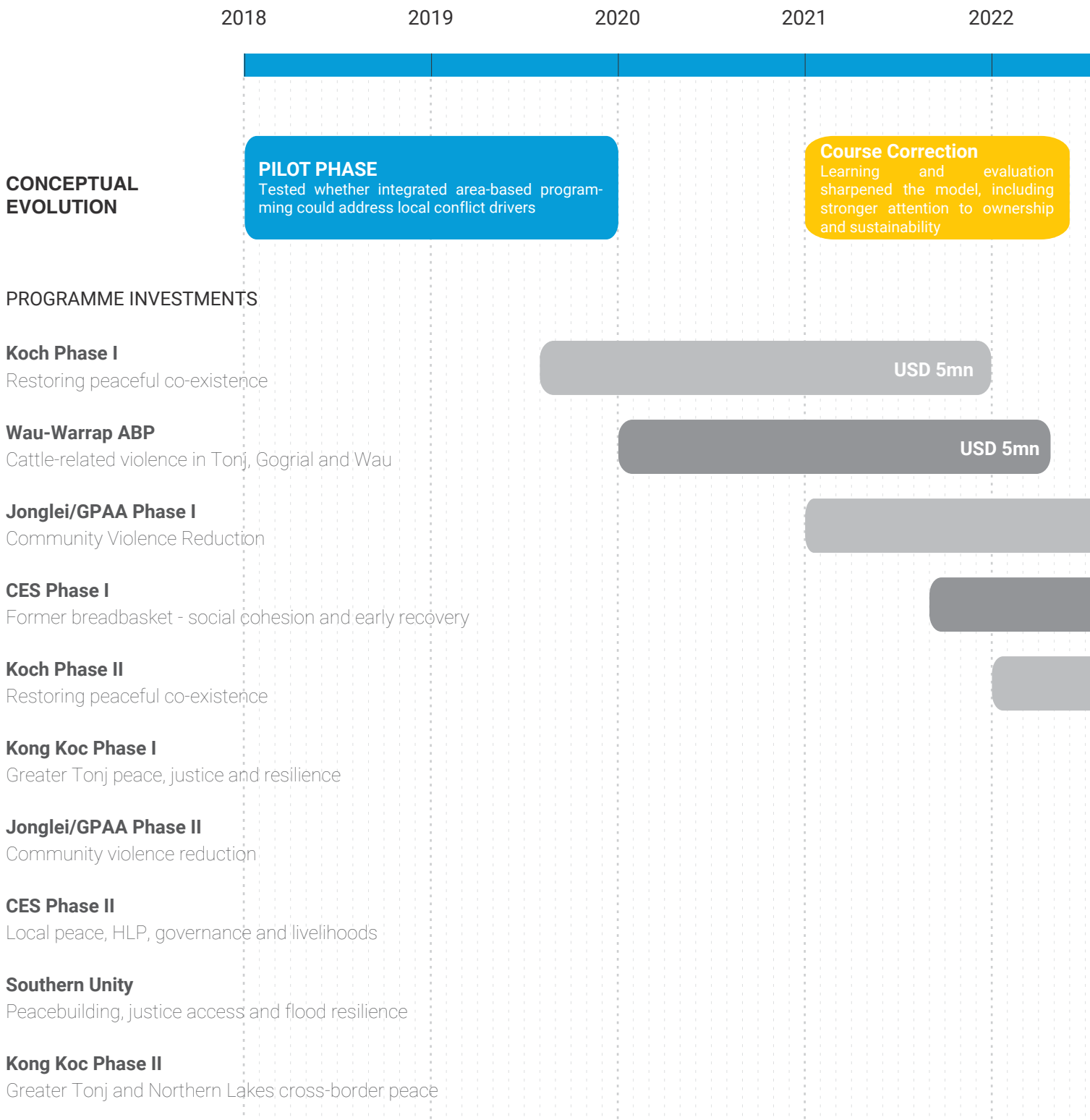
LOCAL STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES

Over time, locally embedded structures have become increasingly important to RSRTF-supported programming. Area Reference Groups, peace committees, women's and youth structures, PRACs, PCRCs, community protection teams, customary authorities, civil society organisations and county-level institutions have helped ground programmes in local realities. In several locations, these structures have supported early warning, mediation, community security, survivor referral, local coordination and adaptation when external access was restricted.

The cumulative results from this period reflect that depth of engagement: 323 community peace dialogues held; 123 community-based conflict structures supported; 181,000 community members reached with peace and violence-reduction messaging; 3,099 persons provided with legal support and advice; 2,149 justice chain

RSRTF EVOLUTION AND TIMELINE

RSRTF programme investments and conceptual evolution from proof of concept to consolidation.



Thematic Grants Window

Complementary targeted grants supported national-subnational linkage, civic/political space and COVID-19 peace messaging.

- USD 0.5mn
COVID-19 peace and solidarity
- USD 0.5mn
Targeted
- USD 0.63mn
Empower

2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028

Localisation turn

Community structures, women, youth and local institutions moved closer to the centre of programme design

Validation and crisis test

Evaluation validated the model, while 2025 tested whether local peace infrastructure could function under pressure

Consolidation and transition

Focus shifts to sustainability, institutional linkages, financing continuity and transition pathways

USD 13.2mn

USD 10.6mn

USD 9.24mn

USD 12.27mn

USD 16.499mn

USD 11.37mn

USD 10mn

USD 12mn

support to peace implementation

ing the grassroots

actors trained; 865 public servants trained. In Southern Unity alone, RSRTF-supported programming covered 42 payams with an estimated population of 269,008

This does not mean that all the local structures are already self-sustaining. Many continue to depend on technical support, recognition by formal authorities, basic operating resources, protection, referral pathways and predictable links to county and state institutions. The Fund's experience since 2018 suggests that community ownership is essential, but not sufficient on its own. Sustainability requires institutional linkages and transition planning.

THE 2025 STRESS TEST

The 2025 reporting year tested the Fund's approach under particularly difficult conditions. Programmes operated amid insecurity, flooding, economic volatility, access restrictions, no-fly constraints, UNDSS Grey Status in parts of Central Equatoria, and reduced humanitarian service availability in some areas. In this context, local structures became critical to continuity. Partners relied on community-based mechanisms, national and local staff, remote coordination, crisis modifiers and re-sequenced workplans to maintain implementation where possible.

The year showed that RSRTF-supported structures and partnerships can contribute to local dispute management, community security, justice access and practical resilience under pressure. It also showed the limits of those gains. Peace committees cannot replace formal institutions. Mobile courts cannot substitute for permanent justice presence. VSLAs and livelihoods support cannot by themselves withstand inflation, insecurity and market weakness. Community assets require maintenance and local ownership. The Fund's record is therefore not a completed success story; it is an evolving institutional platform with a clear agenda for consolidation.

WHAT SEVEN YEARS SHOW

Seven years of implementation point to five conclusions. First, integrated area-based programming remains relevant in South Sudan because local conflict drivers are interconnected. Second, local ownership improves relevance and continuity, but requires sustained capacity, recognition and institutional linkage. Third, justice and accountability interventions are central to reducing reliance on revenge and customary retaliation, but they need follow-up systems. Fourth, resilience activities provide practical peace dividends when connected to conflict analysis and market realities. Fifth, sustainability must be planned from the beginning rather than treated as an end-of-project issue.

The Fund's next phase needs to build on these lessons. The priority is not to expand claims, but to consolidate evidence, strengthen transition pathways, improve reporting discipline and ensure that RSRTF-supported structures are linked to the institutions, markets and financing pathways required for longer-term durability.

Strategic Priorities and Transition Considerations

The 2025 reporting year provides an important basis for reflection on the next phase of RSRTF-supported programming. Across the portfolio, RSRTF continued to support local reconciliation, access to justice, community security, livelihoods, flood mitigation and locally led coordination in a difficult operating environment. These results demonstrate the continued relevance of integrated area-based programming in selected conflict-affected locations.

At the same time, the year also confirmed that many gains remain fragile. Community structures need stronger links to formal institutions. Justice interventions require follow-up by police, courts, prisons, customary authorities and legal aid systems. Livelihood and savings groups need market linkages and protection from inflationary pressure. Community assets require maintenance arrangements and local authority ownership. Evidence systems need to better capture outcomes, not only activities. These considerations should shape the Fund's priorities going forward.

THE VALUE OF THE RSRTF APPROACH

The RSRTF's comparative value lies in its ability to provide flexible pooled financing for integrated area-based programming in locations where conflict, weak institutions, limited livelihoods, displacement and climate shocks reinforce one another. The Fund brings together UNMISS, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, local authorities, community structures and donors around a shared geographic and conflict analysis.

The 2025 results show the practical relevance of this approach. In Central Equatoria, RSRTF-supported dialogue, HLP mediation, vocational training, VSLAs and community security engagement remained relevant despite insecurity, Grey Status restrictions and changes in the operating environment. In Jonglei and GPAA, Phase II closed with evidence of abductee reunification, justice-chain support, youth and women's structures, customary law processes and community security mechanisms operating under severe constraints. In Greater Tonj and Northern Lakes, Kong Koc Phase II completed its inception and early implementation period, laying foundations for cross-border reconciliation, community policing, customary law review and livelihood diversification. In Southern Unity, community-led mediation, mobile justice, MHPSS, VSLAs, dyke rehabilitation and ARG-informed adaptation provided practical examples of integrated programming under flood and security pressure.

These examples do not mean that the underlying drivers of conflict have been resolved. They indicate that locally grounded, multi-pillar programming can support specific community-level functions that are relevant to reconciliation, stabilisation and resilience.

Across seven years, the Fund has helped build a form of local peace infrastructure: peace committees that investigate and mediate disputes, women's networks that advocate for inclusion in local processes, youth structures that support early warning and de-escalation, paralegal and justice actors who accompany communities through formal and customary pathways, savings groups that provide practical economic cooperation, and radio and community communication channels that reach areas where physical access is often constrained. This infrastructure is not yet self-sustaining, but it is a central part of the Fund's contribution.

RISKS TO SUSTAINABILITY

The 2025 record identifies several risks that require attention.

Local peace structures may weaken if they are not recognised, supported or linked to formal institutions. Mobile justice gains may be temporary without permanent judicial presence, police investigation capacity, prison infrastructure and case follow-up. Livelihood activities may lose value if inflation, insecurity, poor market access and flooding continue to undermine household income. Community infrastructure may deteriorate without maintenance plans, local authority ownership and realistic financing.

Reporting may continue to understate or overstate results if evidence systems do not distinguish outputs, outcomes, contribution and attribution. Transition planning may remain incomplete if RSRTF-supported stabilisation is not connected to government systems, development financing and other peacebuilding platforms. These risks do not diminish the Fund's value. They are implementation realities that need to be

managed transparently if results are to last.

PRIORITY 1: CONSOLIDATE LOCAL PEACE INFRASTRUCTURE

RSRTF-supported community structures are a central sustainability asset. In 2026 and beyond, the Fund should prioritise consolidation of Area Reference Groups, peace committees, PRACs, PCRCs, women's and youth structures, community protection networks and customary authority linkages.

Consolidation needs to focus on clear mandates, links to county and state authorities, safeguarding, basic reporting tools, referral pathways and practical operating arrangements. The objective is not to create parallel institutions, but to strengthen locally legitimate mechanisms that can support early warning, mediation, community security and coordination.

PRIORITY 2: STRENGTHEN JUSTICE FOLLOW-UP AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES

Mobile courts and legal support have shown clear relevance in areas with limited access to formal justice. The next priority is to strengthen follow-up systems so that mobile justice contributes to longer-term institutional capacity. This includes case preparation, police investigation, prison management, customary court engagement, survivor support, HLP referrals, legal aid and community awareness.

Justice interventions also need to be linked more deliberately to local governance and community security structures. This would help prevent mobile courts from remaining episodic interventions and strengthen their contribution to accountable local stabilisation.

PRIORITY 3: LINK RESILIENCE MORE DIRECTLY TO MARKETS AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Livelihood support, VSLAs, vocational training, cash-for-work, agriculture, fisheries, livestock and small-enterprise activities are most effective when they respond to local market realities and climate risks. The Fund therefore needs to strengthen market analysis, business-cycle monitoring, inflation-sensitive reporting, climate-smart livelihoods and infrastructure maintenance planning.

Resilience programming needs to remain linked to reconciliation and stabilisation. The strongest peace dividends are not simply economic activities; they are economic activities that reduce incentives for violence, support cooperation across divided communities and help households withstand shocks without resorting to conflict-linked coping strategies.

PRIORITY 4: IMPROVE EVIDENCE, LEARNING AND REPORTING DISCIPLINE

The 2025 experience shows the importance of stronger evidence discipline. Future reporting needs to separate annual and cumulative figures, output and outcome data, programme and external data sources, and contribution and attribution more consistently. Annual programme reporting also needs to give equal attention to results, constraints, adaptations and sustainability risks.

A more disciplined evidence system would strengthen accountability to donors, communities, government counterparts and UN leadership. It would also help the Fund identify which interventions are most likely to produce durable results and where course correction is needed.

PRIORITY 5: STRENGTHEN TRANSITION PLANNING AND CROSS-PLATFORM COORDINATION

The 2024 evaluation and 2025 implementation experience point to the same conclusion: RSRTF gains will remain fragile without clearer transition pathways. Transition planning needs to begin earlier in the programme cycle and identify which functions can be transferred to local authorities, which require continued technical support, which require development financing, and which can be maintained through community structures.

Coordination with other financing and programming platforms also needs to be strengthened. This includes humanitarian actors, PBF, SSHF, the Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund, development partners and potential international financial institution investments. The purpose is not to expand coordination for its own sake, but to ensure that RSRTF-supported stabilisation gains are not left without follow-on support where transition is required.

PRIORITY 6: KEEP THE FUND ADAPTIVE WHILE STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Flexibility remains one of the Fund's most important assets. In 2025, partners adapted to insecurity, flooding, access restrictions, no-fly constraints, Grey Status restrictions, humanitarian service reductions and economic volatility. Crisis modifiers, local structures, remote coordination and re-sequencing helped maintain delivery.

The next phase needs to preserve this flexibility and at the same time strengthen accountability. Adaptive programming needs to be documented clearly: what changed, why it changed, what was delayed, what was achieved, what could not be completed, and what risks remain.

CONCLUSION

RSRTF-supported programming remained relevant in a difficult year and contributed to local reconciliation, justice access, community security, resilience, and adaptation in selected programme areas. The Fund's integrated area-based model continues to provide a useful platform for addressing linked conflict and resilience challenges in South Sudan.

The work is not complete. Results remain uneven, context-dependent and exposed to political, security, economic and climate risks. The strategic priority is therefore consolidation: strengthening local structures, improving evidence, linking justice and resilience gains to institutions, and planning transitions more deliberately.

The 2025 reporting year shows a relevant model, credible contributions and a clear consolidation agenda. Sustaining and strengthening these gains will require disciplined evidence, stronger institutional linkages and deliberate transition planning.



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Reconciliation Stabilization Resilience

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