

SOUTH SUDAN

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



UNITED NATIONS
MULTI-PARTNER
TRUST FUND

Reconciliation Stabilization Resilience



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A photograph of three young boys in a soccer field. The boy on the left is wearing a blue patterned t-shirt and black shorts. The boy in the middle is wearing a red and yellow striped t-shirt with 'YOKO' visible and light-colored shorts. The boy on the right is wearing a white patterned t-shirt and blue shorts with the number '17' on the leg, and he is holding a white and orange soccer ball. They are all looking towards the camera. The background shows a dry, dusty field with some trees in the distance under a clear sky.

The first area-based programme, launched in Koch in 2019, is beginning to demonstrate progress towards realizing its objective to consolidate peace and realize conditions for recovery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third South Sudan Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience (RSRTF) Consolidated Annual Report. The report demonstrates the compelling relevance of the RSRTF approach currently in South Sudan as progress in the implementation of the R-ARCSS offers an opportunity to break the cycle of violence. The report highlights the value of the pooled funding mechanism to enable integrated programming across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, to link national level political and security processes to local conflict resolution and establish incentives as well as a conducive environment for peace to be sustained.

In 2020, the total financial volume of the Fund doubled from US\$20 million to US\$39.4 million owing to the generous contributions from the governments of Norway, Germany, and Sweden, as well as the Government of the Netherlands, which the Fund secured as a new donor in December 2020. While only \$1 million was recorded in transfers to partners in 2020, the Fund in fact added four new projects to the portfolio amounting to \$7 million, taking the cumulative amount allocated to implementing partners to \$12.2 million. Funding allocations and transfers were significantly below 2020 planning as a result of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of the total \$39.4 million commitments at the end of 2020, the Fund had transferred only 33 percent to partners' implementing projects. However, by the close of the year, a further \$12.5 million had been endorsed for allocation under a new area-based programme in central-southern Jonglei and the Greater Pibor administrative area (Jonglei/GPAA), for which transfers would take place in January 2021. This report provides a detailed analysis on the Fund's financial performance and gives a breakdown of RSRTF contributions, deposits and allocations against outcomes, as well as expenditure to date.

The report highlights the impact and results of the RSRTF programmes across the country against the Fund's three essential elements

and six outcome areas. The first area-based programme, launched in Koch in 2019, is beginning to demonstrate progress towards realizing its objective to consolidate peace and realize conditions for recovery. Peace committees established through the project have conducted intra-communal peace dialogues in and across both government- and opposition-controlled areas. Partners report improvements in early warning and sharing of information with local authorities, which contributed to reduced violence related to cattle raiding. The peace committees have also been supported, together with local chiefs, to resolve 56 community cases related to housing, land and property rights. A decrease in cases of forced marriage and domestic violence has been observed, and women's roles in influencing their husbands, sons and other family members to desist from revenge killings have been enhanced. The rehabilitation of the Bhang Secondary School has meant more girls are given equal opportunity to enrol in school and the project's cash-for-work activities have forged linkages and fostered trade between communities. United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) peacekeeping presence and patrols have enabled access to programme sites and made a significant contribution to improved safety, security and community confidence. The number of formerly displaced persons returning to Koch County has risen

since the start of the project, from 6,375 in 2019 to 13,043 returnees in 2020.¹

The second area-based programme was launched in January 2020 in response to an unprecedented intensification of violence between Luo farmers and Dinka cattle-keepers in the Jur River border areas between Wau and Warrap. The programme had a problematic start-up because of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, it has made significant progress in securing a warrant for the establishment of a joint special mobile court with jurisdiction over cattle-related crime in the states' border areas. Once established, the activities will make a significant contribution to RSRTF Outcome 3, which envisions justice sector actors more effectively delivering justice, even in areas with previously limited or no judicial infrastructure. The programme was able to prevent and reduce violent tensions between farming and cattle-keeper communities through a number of direct mediations, and community and high-level dialogues. The peace sensitization campaigns, ongoing support for the peace committees, and livestock enhancement activities paved the way for sustainable peacebuilding efforts in the target areas.

This report details how the RSRTF launched a Small Grants Window to allow for nimbler application of funding within a shorter implementation timeframe to deliver quick impacts, taking opportunities to build on the momentum of the February formation of a transitional unity government. The Small Grants Window, launched in 2020, specifically sought to finance initiatives that would strengthen and promote inclusive civic participation in the implementation of the peace agreement and support the development of a robust political system and a more accountable, transparent and responsive

government by building governance capacity and fostering cohesion among political actors. In 2020, allocations made through the Small Grants Window aligned to the stabilization pillar of the RSRTF Results Framework, specifically RSRTF Outcome 4, which envisions communities, including women, youth and disadvantaged groups being empowered and increasingly able to meaningfully participate in local and broader political, peace and security processes. Through the Small Grants Window programmes, the RSRTF supports the United Nations Cooperation Framework priorities of building peace and strengthening governance, and empowering women and youth.

The RSRTF is still a relatively new fund and 2020 saw further refinements and streamlining of the allocation and assessment procedures. The Fund also further developed the Everyday Peace Indicator (EPI) initiative, which will enable systematic measures of change in the local perceptions of safety and security in all its area-based programme locations. The Fund Secretariat team also strengthened and enhanced hands-on support to ensure more coherent and coordinated programming, to bridge silos and shape complementary initiatives.

2021 will see a continued commitment both to financial growth and to further refinement and development of RSRTF programming. With a growing body of evidence across its portfolio, the Fund will prioritize learning and development of best practice and undertake an early-stage Fund evaluation. The intent is to assess the extent to which the Fund is delivering on its terms of reference and to make recommendations for how the Fund can act on the lessons from early implementation in order to realize the objective of integrated programming across the triple nexus for sustained peace.

¹ IOM South Sudan Mobility Tracking Round 9, September 2020.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges as countries around the world battled the COVID-19 pandemic. In South Sudan, the daunting task of responding to COVID-19 and safeguarding staff and communities was exacerbated by pre-existing vulnerabilities, a flailing economy, intensified subnational violence, and a second consecutive year of major flooding. In Jonglei, for instance, the 2020 floods were described as the worst in 60 years, as the 2020 rains began before the previous year's flood waters had fully receded.

These events highlighted the need for innovative RSRTF programming approaches and reinforced the relevance of coordinated actions championed by the Fund. At the same time, these circumstances presented additional complications for partners, including access and logistical challenges that markedly affected the implementation pace of the Fund's programmes.

Despite these challenges, the second year of operations for the RSRTF has been one of growth and consolidation, as well as adaptation and innovation. The financial volume of the Fund doubled from \$20 million to \$39.4 million, due to the generous contributions from the governments of Norway, Germany, and Sweden, as well as the Government of the Netherlands, which the Fund secured as a new donor at the end of 2020.

The Fund portfolio grew from one area-based programme in 2019, to five active projects by the end of 2020, including one explicitly responding to the threats COVID-19 posed to exacerbate conflict drivers and undermine social and economic resilience. Utilizing the Small Grants Window modality and reflecting the Fund's ability to quickly react to changes in an evolving context, the Fund's Steering Committee acted decisively to respond to the COVID-19 context, allocating funds in support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) project *Promoting Peace and Solidarity in the Face of COVID-19*, which looks to enhance citizen participation in COVID-19 related governance processes.

In January 2020, the second area-based programme was launched, designed to respond to an unprecedented intensification of violence in 2019 between Luo farmers and Dinka cattle-keepers in the Jur River border areas between Wau and Warrap.

The RSRTF grant is enabling the operationalization of an innovative, common United Nations strategic approach to mitigate cattle-raiding-related conflict. Through its multi-sector programming, the pilot project links community-based peace building, economic security and rule of law reform with broader issues of security and peace. The area-based programme *Mitigating Cattle-Related Violence in the Tri-State Border Areas of Tonj, Gogrial and Wau* faced significant challenges as COVID-19 set in during the critical start-up phase of the programme. Despite the challenges, the RSRTF activities have contributed to a reduction in violent conflicts between farming and cattle-keeper communities and enhanced intercommunal harmony and social cohesion through sustained community dialogues, peace sensitization campaigns and conferences, capacity-building and resilience activities.

2020 also saw the first use of the Fund's Small Grants Window. Capitalizing on the political progress at the start of the year, the Fund initiated projects supporting dialogue between political actors, national and subnational government institutions and civil society actors to strengthen and promote inclusive civic



participation in the implementation of the peace agreement. While delivery rates of both these initiatives were severely curtailed by COVID-19-related travel disruptions and the prohibition of gatherings and meetings, the delays encountered as a result of the pandemic also led to innovation and adaptation that will enhance the overall outcomes of the projects. *Targeted Support to Peace Implementation: Enhancing Political and Civic Space* introduced adaptations that took planned forums online and this led to greater diversity of engagement.

Whilst unintended, the delays experienced and the adaptation of *Empowering the Grassroots: Linking National and Subnational Processes* have been fortuitous in allowing for long-anticipated appointment of subnational officials at the state and county levels and providing a crucial opportunity to expand the scope of activities towards strengthening the nexus between the national and subnational stakeholders in support of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) peace process implementation.

By the end of 2020, there were early signs of the Fund's first area-based programme in

Koch County (Unity State), *Restoring Peaceful Coexistence for Better Livelihoods in Koch* having a potentially stabilizing effect, as the number of returnees, both from within the country and outside, increased more than twofold since the programme's start. In 2020, the Koch programme strengthened social cohesion through locally-led reconciliation and conflict resolution mechanisms, enhanced participation of women and girls in conflict prevention and management, reduced violence and strengthened capacity of the justice sector actors, improved access to justice and scaled-up resilience activities.

The six established peace committees mediated conflict cases in their communities, conducted four intra-communal peace dialogues in and across government- and opposition-controlled areas, coordinated their work with three long-duration UNMISS patrols, and improved community assets such as intercommunity roads, dykes and education facilities.

In addition to the five projects under implementation, 2020 also saw the development and Steering Committee endorsement of the Fund's third area-based programme in central-

southern Jonglei/GPAA in response to the spike in violence in these areas in early 2020. The July call for proposals saw the realization of the Steering Committee’s strategic vision to establish geographic focus areas and streamline allocation processes. The *Community Violence Reduction in Central-Southern Jonglei/GPAA* programme set to commence in January

2021 is considered the flagship programme of the Fund to date, bringing together more than 16 different partners from across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus under one strategy to tackle conflict drivers at the community level through a combination of reconciliation, stabilization and resilience efforts.

SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS AGAINST SELECT OUTCOME INDICATORS

RECONCILIATION

- Outcome Indicator 2a: 114 inter- and intra-community disputes have been successfully referred to community-based conflict management mechanisms and violence prevented via mediation.
- Outcome Indicator 2c: Fifty-eight percent of disputes in Koch county were mediated by women and youth.

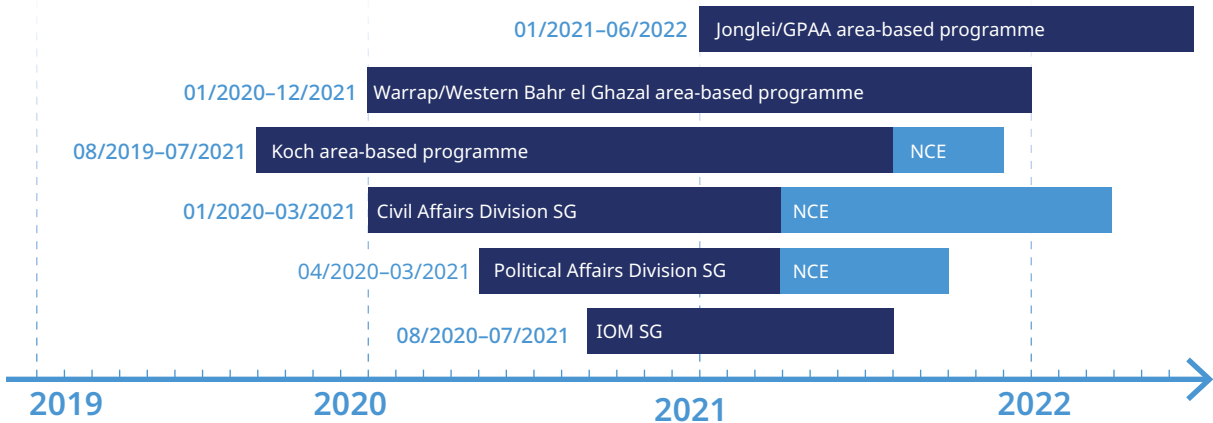
STABILIZATION

- Outcome Indicator 4a: RSRTF partners have supported at least 16 forums for youth- and women-led civil society organizations to articulate their needs and demands to governance figures/institutions.
- Outcome Indicator 4b: RSRTF activities have led to six different occasions of local government officials engaging communities in political, peace and security decision-making.

RESILIENCE

- Outcome Indicator 6c: Number of displaced individuals voluntarily returning has increased by seventy percent across two area-based programme locations.
- Outcome Indicator 6d: Humanitarian Needs Overview (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)) numbers of people in need in Koch County in 2020 was five percent lower than in 2019.

Figure 1: Timeline of RSRTF projects (SG: small grants thematic project; NCE: no-cost extension)



CONTEXT

The political and security context of South Sudan has been dominated by the brutal civil war that erupted in December 2013, and the subsequent drawn-out peace process.

While implementation of the R-ARCSS remains slow, several important milestones have been met, and the establishment of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) in February 2020 paved the way for further consolidation of peace in South Sudan.

At the outset of 2020, assessments regarding the potential for insecurity were almost entirely linked to the formation of the R-TGoNU and how the process could accommodate a diverse range of actors, while avoiding the potential to create spoilers.

In the months following the dissolution of the government, formation of the subnational structures was slow and a complex process of personal lobbying for positions in local administrations took place within the context of power-sharing at all levels. The government's failure to appoint governors at the subnational level in a timely manner created fragmentation at the local level, allowing seasonal and perennial conflict to continue unchecked. Meanwhile, local authorities took advantage of the vacuum of leadership at the state level, using it as an opportunity to expand their influence. The implementation of the transitional security arrangements, including the unification of forces, suffered protracted delays.

The ceasefire continued to largely hold, but faced serious challenges in multiple locations across the country, such as in Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap states. The conflict dynamics were mostly localized and reflected intra-party tensions, political

rivalry and fragmentation, as well as inter- and intracommunal conflicts and ethnic divisions. These divisions were tied to national and subnational stakeholders vying for power, positions and resources in the reconstitution of governance structures.

The outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic and severe flooding were additional challenges that not only intensified the subnational conflicts over the control of limited resources, but also drove economically motivated crime, including increased attacks and pressure on international actors. Economically, the country is already being hard hit by sharp declines in oil prices. Proceeds from oil exports account for 97 percent of all exports and a large share of the overall budget, and lower prices further exacerbate the persistent economic distress.

South Sudan remains a country in transition, with drivers of fragility across the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions. Despite the many challenges, there are opportunities where context-specific strategic planning and alignment of resources can bring about meaningful changes in the short and medium term.

Addressing the trajectory of escalating humanitarian requirements – saving lives sustainably while building the foundations to reduce fragility and vulnerability in the long term – is achievable in South Sudan if pursued through an integrated response across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding entities.

THE RSRTF APPROACH

The South Sudan RSRTF builds on the vision of the Secretary General for a more coherent, comprehensive and holistic approach to peacebuilding across the United Nations system as outlined in the 'sustaining peace' approach, passed by concurrent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council in 2016.

Globally, the RSRTF is unique, bringing together components of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission and members of the United Nations country team to work from the same analysis and towards the same goals to sustain peace.

Drawing on the comparative advantages of UNMISS and the United Nations Country Team, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, the RSRTF promotes integrated programming across the 'triple nexus' of the humanitarian, development and peace fields.

The Fund responds to the call for member states to come together to find new and innovative ways to finance development and peacebuilding. The RSRTF has increased opportunities for meaningful engagement on political, peace and security issues using finance as an enabler to promote more coherent, comprehensive and holistic approaches.

Often building on existing efforts to bridge political divides and reconcile community divisions, the comprehensive programmes ensure that hard won political agreements and community reconciliation initiatives are reinforced through programmatic activities undertaken by multiple partners working under a common strategy to establish incentives, as well as a conducive environment for peace to be sustained.

Through its programmes, the Fund supports comprehensive and durable approaches to

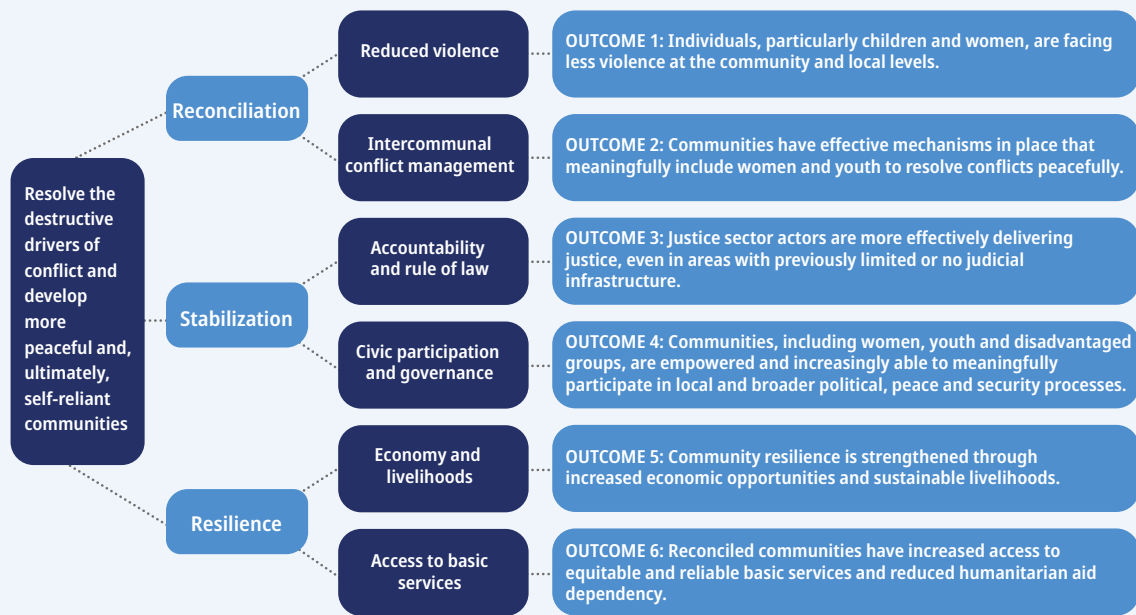
overcome fragility, political instability and societal disintegration, creating the space to pursue increased resilience-focused programming at a time when there is greater consensus than ever that the human and financial costs of responding to crisis, rather than investing in prevention, are unsustainably high.

THE FUND'S AREA-BASED PROGRAMMES ARE BUILT AROUND THREE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:

- **Reconciliation.** Restore trust and support peaceful coexistence and social cohesion through gender and age-sensitive communal conflict management, prevention, mitigation and reconciliation.
- **Stabilization.** Deter violence, restore security and reinforce the rule of law and equitable access to justice, harnessing existing peacekeeping capability and resources.
- **Resilience.** Invest in sustainable livelihoods and joint commercial opportunities of reconciled communities to increase community interdependency and realization of 'peace dividends'.

Stemming from the Fund's three thematic priorities, the RSRTF has six programmatic outcomes (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: RSRTF priorities and outcomes



THREE PRINCIPLES UNDERPIN THE FUND'S WORK:

- *Increasing local focus.* Reinforcing locally led analysis, planning, and decision-making, promoting stronger local focus in the way resources are programmed while drawing on existing capacities, experience and lessons learned to formulate evidence-based and sustainable action. The Fund ensures that implementing partners have a history of developing strong local partnerships and are respected and trusted by local communities in their areas of operation.
- *Bridging silos.* Ensuring that joint conflict and gender analyses inform design of multisectoral responses, bridging humanitarian, development and peacebuilding silos, and capitalizing on all relevant capacity and expertise to maximize results through a 'whole-of-system' approach.
- *Promoting partnership.* Strengthening coherence, complementarity, cooperation and coordination across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding entities, and improving the way capability is brought together through collective action to deliver common outcomes.

RSRTF ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING SEVEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



COVERAGE AND PROJECTS

Figure 3: Active projects in 2020: Area-based programmes

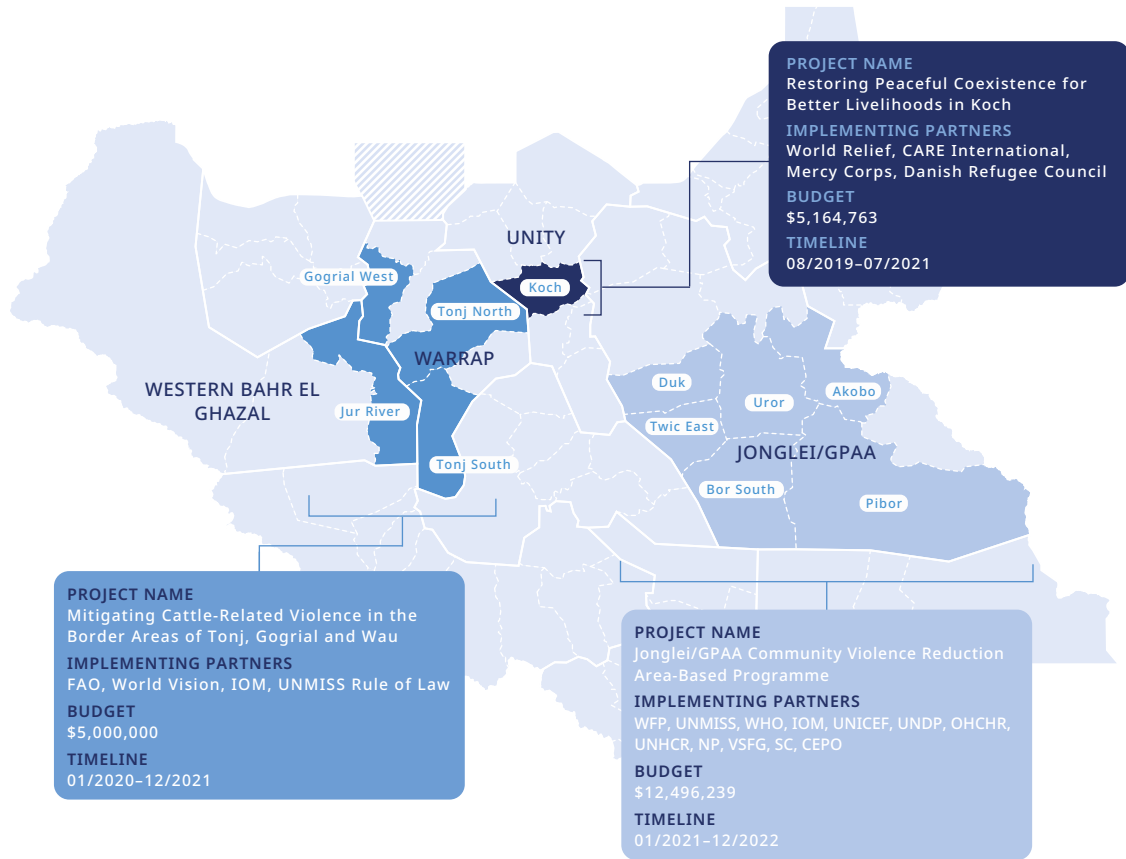


Table 1: Active projects in 2020: Small grants/thematic programmes in South Sudan

THEME	NAME	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	BUDGET	TIMELINE
Stabilization/ governance	Empowering the Grassroots: Linking National and Subnational Processes	UNMISS Civil Affairs Division	\$629,802	01/2020–03/2021
Stabilization/ governance	Targeted Support to Peace Implementation: Enhancing Political and Civic Space	UNMISS Political Affairs Division	\$500,000	04/2020–03/2021
Stabilization/ governance	Promoting Peace and Solidarity in the Face of COVID-19 in Juba, Bentiu and Wau	IOM Community Empowerment for Progress Organization Action for Conflict Resolution (ACR)	\$500,000	08/2020–07/2021

Geographic targeting

While many development actors and initiatives have focused their programming on the more stable areas of South Sudan, the Fund targets some of the most fragile and marginalized areas of the country where the security or political climates have until now often curtailed intervention possibilities.

The Fund is well-positioned to reach marginalized areas as it works through a broad network of locally-trusted NGOs and is able to draw upon the broad reach of UNMISS political engagement and peacekeeping capacities in support of its area-based programmes. The Fund also plays a unique role in bridging subnational and national peacebuilding processes, linking bottom-up approaches to efforts at the national level that support the development of accountable and inclusive governance.

In determining potential candidate areas for area-based programmes, the Fund is guided by five geographic targeting criteria:

- *Levels of violence.* As captured by UNMISS Human Rights Division monitoring and considering available intelligence, analysis and assessments of potential for future violence.
- *Potential fault lines between communities.* The nature of existing and potential future cleavages and tensions between local communities, including the risk of these tensions being manipulated by national elites, or where localized grievances have the potential to trigger local or even national insecurity that could threaten the broader peace process and the ceasefire.
- *Access and availability of implementers in the area.* Reflects whether the current level of access is sufficient for RSRTF programming, and whether there are implementers in

the area, including any opportunities to complement existing or future programmes.

- *Level of marginalization.* The level of political and economic marginalization by the central state apparatus (indicators of marginalization include access to markets and cost of basic food baskets), as well as the extent to which international or national reconciliation, stabilization and resilience activities are present in the area.
- *Feasibility and conflict sensitivity.* The feasibility of realizing an impact under current conditions in the area without doing harm, and taking into account the above criteria.

It is not envisaged that the Fund will meet all requirements for any given area, and the RSRTF strongly encourages the development of initiatives that build synergies with other complementary stabilization, development and resilience funds and programmes. As such, all applicants are specifically requested to identify existing activities, institutions and structures that are already in place that will serve as a baseline on which to build.

Furthermore, all applicants are asked to maximize opportunities to leverage existing programming and capacities (inclusive of UNMISS peacekeepers, good offices and engineering), and facilitate close exchange between implementing partners, programme participants and wider actors, and in so doing ensure rational use of resources.

It is a principle of the Fund to work with partners with existing knowledge and presence in the target locations and, where possible, the Fund opts to work with partners that are also involved in existing complementary peacebuilding and resilience programmes (such as the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund or the World Bank) to maximize complementarity.

RSRTF AT A GLANCE

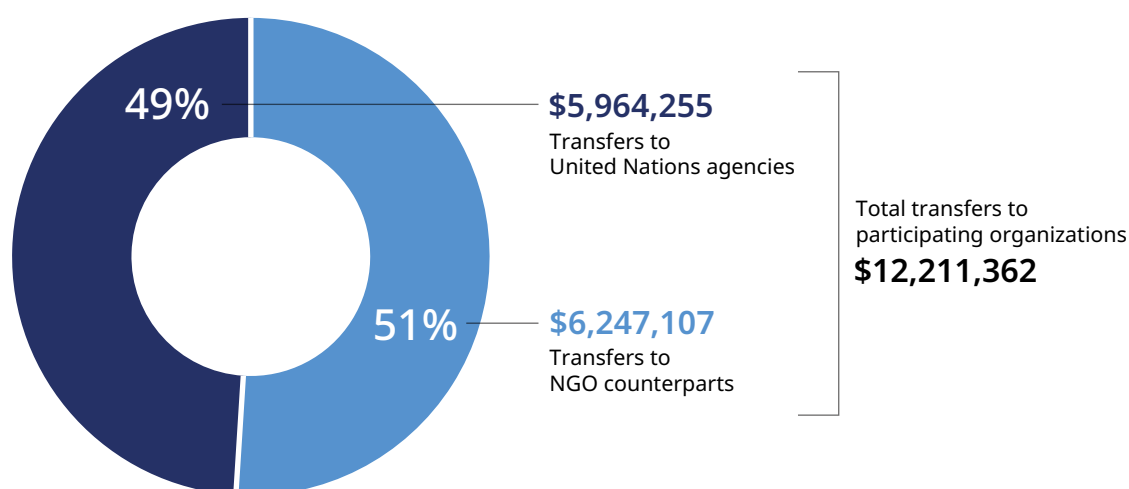
Table 2: Financial overview (US\$)

CONTRIBUTOR	2020		CUMULATIVE	
	COMMITMENTS	DEPOSITS	COMMITMENTS	DEPOSITS
Germany	3,500,000	3,500,000	14,839,417	14,839,417
Sweden	5,444,562	5,444,562	8,114,604	8,114,604
Norway	6,858,162	6,858,162	13,076,823	13,076,823
Netherlands	10,000,000	3,370,786	10,000,000	3,370,786
	25,802,724	19,173,510	46,030,844	39,401,630

Table 3: Use of funds (US\$)

USE OF FUNDS	ANNUAL 2019	ANNUAL 2020	CUMULATIVE
Transfers to participating organizations	11,211,362	1,000,000	12,211,362
Net funded amount	11,211,362	1,000,000	12,211,362
Administrative agent fees	144,109	193,077	394,016
Direct costs: (Steering Committee, Secretariat, etc.)	517,923	403,490	921,413
Bank charges	267	410	677
Total	11,873,662	1,596,976	13,527,469

Figure 4: Division of total Fund allocations of \$12,211,362



CASE STUDY: THE NEXUS IN OPERATION

Central Unity State has been particularly affected by the protracted conflict in South Sudan. Considerable violence and destruction during the years of war, as well as subsequent intra- and intercommunity disputes and attacks, have displaced much of the population and destroyed basic infrastructure.

The lack of access to justice and unresolved past grievances have prevented youth and communities from relinquishing their arms. Along with revenge killings and intra-communal violence, the normalization of sexual violence during the conflict has continued to have an adverse impact on women and girls. Under the Koch area-based programme, partners World Relief, Danish Refugee Council, CARE International and Mercy Corps are working to restore peaceful conditions so that the lives of residents and returnees can be improved. A fundamental component of the programme supports communities to resolve past and present grievances, providing access to justice in order to provide them with an outlet for resolving conflicts peacefully, without resorting to violence.

Traditional chiefs' courts still play an important role in administering justice in Koch but require a level of stability and formalization that has been eroded by the conflict. Therefore, World Relief has been supporting key improvements to these traditional mechanisms, including the referral of higher crimes to appropriate bench courts in Bentiu, providing training on relevant South Sudanese laws, building or refurbishing courthouses, and providing paralegals to support record-keeping and trial monitoring.

In parallel, the Danish Refugee Council has been supporting these justice mechanisms by creating and strengthening community-level peace committees that can mediate low-level, non-violent conflicts, complementing the more formal justice system and allowing

formal justice mechanisms to focus on high-level cases and issues. As barriers to entry (education or experience level) are reduced, these community-based committees allow for greater participation of women and youth, by offering them an entry point to contribute. The committees often act as early warning mechanisms, advocating for intervention by local authorities (police or chiefs) when they anticipate potential for escalation of violence. They also refer community members' disagreements to the chiefs' courts when they cannot be mediated at the community level.

The justice and peacebuilding components implemented by World Relief and the Danish Refugee Council reinforce and help sustain the work of CARE International in preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and providing care to survivors. In addition to providing direct legal aid to survivors of SGBV, partners look at how the chiefs' courts can provide an avenue for justice and women's empowerment. Customary law is key to gender relations and violence in times of war and peace. The customary law of the chiefs' courts has the ability to evolve, and this project encourages chiefs to develop the law to redress the current gendered gaps in provision of justice.

CARE International has been supporting women leaders' groups to attend the monthly chiefs' court forums, and has also been highlighting the work being done by the few female chiefs in Mirmir and encouraging other *payams*² to also elect female chiefs. Ensuring

² In South Sudan there are four administrative divisions: state, county, *payam* and *boma*.

women’s representation at these forums creates a unique context for women to raise issues when the courts fail to protect women. These activities also seek to address the stigma around SGBV that often prevents women from seeking help. Additionally, partners are ensuring these forums address the increasing militarized gendered demands on men, which is key to responding to the drivers of violence. CARE International has been supporting dialogue that explores changing notions of masculinity in Koch to understand non-violent

ideas of masculinity that can be supported. Vulnerable women and youth (particularly youth perceived as susceptible to be mobilized into violence) are then incorporated into Mercy Corps’ livelihoods programming that provides increased economic opportunities and ultimately strengthens community resilience. Practical skills training, small business support, secondary education and functional adult literacy classes sustain the gains made through other programming components and increase the cost of resorting to violence.



A female chief of Mirmir payam in the court centre constructed by World Relief

SNAPSHOT

Chief William from Bhang *payam* supervises the delivery of 40 cattle from one family to another as part of a blood compensation ceremony in Koch town. Chief William oversaw an intercommunal conflict case in which two families fought over a young woman who became pregnant out of wedlock. The subsequent fighting resulted in the death of one of her brothers. Under South Sudanese law, a murder case should be referred to the formal bench courts in Bentiu. However, protracted conflict has eroded the formal justice system to the point where the bench courts in Bentiu convene very irregularly and usually only when supported by an international organization. In order to stem the cycle of revenge killings and in line with Nuer customary law, Chief William ordered the perpetrator's family to pay the victim's family 40 cattle for their loss. The cattle will go towards supporting the deceased's wife and child. Paralegals funded through the RSRTF oversaw the justice and trial process, supporting the chiefs to carry out their duties, and attended the ceremony documenting the return of the cattle for the official court records.



2020 LAUNCH OF THE SMALL GRANTS WINDOW: PEACE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

The formation of a Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) in South Sudan on 22 February 2020 was a key step in the implementation of the R-ARCSS. However, far from signalling the end of a political process, the R-TGoNU marked the beginning of a longer-term undertaking of political engagement between actors, citizens and external supporters. The peace process was expected to remain fragile and will continue to be so until trust and confidence is built over time between actors.

Recognizing that such developments in the peace process had the potential to generate notable change within the transitional state of South Sudan, the Fund's Steering Committee instructed the Secretariat to establish a modality to ensure a flexible response to changing circumstances and an ability to provide rapid finance for emerging priorities.

As a result, the RSRTF has introduced the Small Grants Window to allow for nimbler application of funding within a shorter implementation timeframe to deliver quick impact. Unless otherwise determined by the Fund's Steering Committee, the Small Grants Window allows for a maximum grant of \$500,000 for the implementation of one-time small-scale independent activities or a coherent series of actions, utilizing the available funds within an agreed set of parameters over a maximum period of 12 months.

In 2020, allocations made through the Small Grants Window were aligned to the stabilization pillar of the RSRTF results framework for small-scale targeted efforts that support peace implementation in the short and immediate term, while also promoting long-term conditions for sustainable peace. Within the scope of United Nations Country Framework Priority Area I: Building Peace and Strengthening Governance, the RSRTF sought to support initiatives that enhance the informed and inclusive nature of continued peace implementation and political processes.

Small Grants Window peace and governance projects

Empowering the Grassroots: Linking the National and Subnational Processes

This project empowers grassroots stakeholders and opinion leaders across South Sudan to broaden their space for engagement by providing a platform to enhance grassroots participation in national peace implementation, bridge subnational and national processes, facilitate dialogue between local constituencies and their national leaders, and influence national policy on sustainable peace themes.

Targeted Support to Peace Implementation: Enhancing Political and Civic Space

This project aims to increase political dialogue and more inclusive civic and political participation in the implementation of the R-ARCSS peace agreement and related governance reform, including the permanent constitution-making process. Through sustained dialogue and facilitated spaces, the project supports continued engagement of political and civic actors, including civil society, women from various backgrounds and youth representatives, to foster genuine commitment and durable agreements, and to ensure the foundations of a credible future electoral process.

The Small Grants Window was also utilized to enable a timely response to COVID-19, as outlined below.

RSRTF AND COVID-19: CHALLENGES AND ACTION

The first case of COVID-19 in South Sudan was confirmed on 5 April 2020, soon after which the country was described by the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies as the riskiest country in Africa for the spread of COVID-19.

Pervasive risk factors suggested the COVID-19 pandemic would severely aggravate existing vulnerabilities and threaten devastating outcomes. These included severe malnutrition and related health complications; a weak and under-resourced health care system, with a near absence of palliative care facilities; and the large number of internally displaced persons with limited and/or cramped shelter. Uncertainty about how the pandemic would evolve in the country further challenged response planning with projections ranging from 629,275 to 10,270,978 infections, and from 408 to 26,740 deaths.

To control the spread of the pandemic, the government issued travel restrictions, closed borders and banned international flights. Additional measures followed, including curfews; restrictions on domestic travel; limits on public transport; closure of schools, non-essential shops and market stalls; and limits on staff working in offices, as well as prohibitions on social gatherings. Impelled by severe movement restrictions and health care limitations, many agencies and NGOs took precautionary measures to reduce their staff footprint and introduced strict measures to limit transmission risk, limiting all non-essential activities.

For most RSRTF partners, project implementation was severely disrupted as staff relocated and prohibitions and limitations on gatherings and meetings curtailed activities. Gradually, partners adopted creative and safe means of communication and outreach, shifting to virtual meeting spaces, using mass media for raising awareness and sensitization activities, gathering information and conducting dialogue by phone,

and strengthening mechanisms for remote management and implementation. Where feasible, activities were outsourced to local civil society organizations. This proved to be an effective strategy to ensure continuation and also to strengthen local ownership of projects.

All RSRTF activities included the adoption of COVID-19 precautions, with provision of handwashing stations and masks, adherence to social distancing rules and reduction of the number of participants at events. This latter measure, however, significantly reduced the number of beneficiaries reached and, in some cases, necessitated an increase in the number of planned events.

Within the South Sudan context, the pandemic spiked concerns that the indirect socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 and the actions taken in response could exacerbate existing drivers of conflict and undermine social and economic resilience, with the risk of reigniting conflicts or fomenting new ones. The Fund responded accordingly, allocating funds to an IOM project, *Promoting Peace and Solidarity in the Face of COVID-19*, through the RSRTF Small Grants Window. The project was designed to deter violence connected to the spread of COVID-19, promote solidarity and tolerance, and combat xenophobia, stigmatization and hate speech. Its activities leverage traditional and mass media in shaping popular views, and mobilize youth to influence the behaviours of their peer groups. The project aims to build trust between communities and state institutions responsible for prevention and response efforts, promoting civic participation in decision-making by providing platforms where community-based




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organizations (CBOs) and the wider South Sudanese community can be heard.

By the end of 2020, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in South Sudan were reported to be just 3,511, with 63 deaths. While the overall infection rate appears low, the weak health care system has prevented adequate tracing and detection of COVID-19 in the country, leading to under-reporting of cases.

Besides the number of confirmed infections and deaths, the virus has negatively impacted the country more broadly. Related access constraints amplified challenges in reaching vulnerable communities and hampered deployments to conflict-affected locations

such as Jonglei, where spikes in violence coincided with the outbreak of the pandemic. As the government reduced operations and working hours, the R-ARCSS implementation was also impacted, with a marked delay of outstanding tasks, including transitional security arrangements, appointment of state governorships and enactment of key legislation. To understand the socioeconomic and political implications of the pandemic on communities, particularly on women and youth, and their engagement in the political landscape, the UNMISS Political Affairs Division, together with a South Sudanese civil society organization, conducted a public perception survey on the impact of COVID-19 on R-ARCSS implementation.

A young woman with short dark hair is looking upwards and to the right. She is wearing a dark grey short-sleeved top under a vibrant yellow wrap with intricate black and red patterns. She is holding a pen and writing in a white notebook. The background is dark and out of focus.

*In 2020, Greater
Jonglei experienced
a renewed period of
spiralling insecurity.*

DESIGNING AN RSRTF RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE IN JONGLEI

In 2020, Greater Jonglei experienced a renewed period of spiralling insecurity. Subnational and localized violence displaced thousands of people and resulted in hundreds of casualties as violent clashes and reprisals played out between Murle, Dinka and Nuer communities.

The depth of political, economic and social marginalization and physical isolation that characterizes daily existence in Jonglei created a conducive environment for interethnic competition, as well as political manipulation of the power vacuum resulting from a lack of agreement on local government appointments.

In January 2020, three pockets of famine conditions across Jonglei State were declared through Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Extreme flooding in 2019, which destroyed food reserves, properties, pasture and livestock, was a major contributing factor to bringing about the famine conditions and sparking violence, as communities moved to replenish their lost assets and livelihoods by raiding resources from one another. This was further compounded by historically exceptional flooding in mid 2020. Provision of humanitarian assistance was routinely disrupted, and the cumulative effects of insecurity, the interruption of livelihoods practices and inconsistent provision of aid created severe, long-term consequences for all the communities of Greater Jonglei.

The 2020 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview (UNOCHA) placed 21 percent of counties in Jonglei in extreme need. The state was expected to have the highest number of people facing crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity as a consequence of severe flooding and civil war impacting access to food stocks, livestock and functioning markets. Unsurprisingly, the Humanitarian Needs Overview identified the highest nutrition needs in Jonglei and, while South Sudan generally has inadequate access to and utilization of health care services, the greatest need for

these was also found in Jonglei. Education and opportunities for formal employment were severely limited. Marginalization had normative and substantive elements, taking form through lack of political representation and influence, as well as lack of infrastructure, services and opportunities. The absence of strong and effective governance at the local level; the availability of small arms and proliferation of sophisticated weaponry; lack of security; and endemic impunity created fertile ground for the manipulation of ethnic and sub-ethnic identities and mobilization of groups around political and often violent objectives.

Drawing on evidence of past initiatives to forge peace in Jonglei, the need for a more comprehensive intervention that would go well beyond intra- and intercommunal dialogue and peace conferences was evident. Recommendations, resolutions and community agreements of past peacebuilding initiatives, such as the Bor interreligious leaders peace conference agreements, the Manyabol peace agreements and the Jebel *boma* peace agreements, remained unimplemented because of lack of coordination among actors and failure to establish the required synergies between political and peacebuilding processes and programmatic activities.

The need for an ambitious integrated programming response was clear. Evidence showed that addressing the long-term governance requirements would mean translating a long-term change agenda into programmable options to address a myriad of needs. Interventions could range from addressing ethnic and gender deficits in political



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representation and gaps in local security architecture, to the development of local administrative practices and other governance functionalities and infrastructure development. Results would include creating practical linkages between communities, developing market opportunities, dealing with resource-sharing, creating processes for the non-violent adjudication of conflicts and the formation of sustainable water and grazing land management strategies. Underpinning any interventions would require a consistent approach to conflict sensitivity while focusing on overcoming divides between groups to create opportunities for individuals to imagine a more peaceful and productive future for Greater Jonglei.

Given the unique nature of the RSRTF and its ability to bring together a wide range of actors across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus to tackle the drivers of conflict, the Steering Committee concluded that that Jonglei/GPAA should form the focus of the Fund's third area-based programme. This

was the first time the Fund initiated a call for proposals with a specified geographic target area under its area-based programme financing modality. Through extensive assessments, stakeholder engagement and actor mapping, this approach enabled the Fund to significantly strengthen and streamline the application and review process.

Following a thorough review of 29 proposals received from more than 100 organizations representing national and international NGOs and United Nations entities, the Fund's Steering Committee decided to award four separate grants to different partners under the umbrella of one area-based programme. The approach enabled the Steering Committee to allocate available funds in a manner that ensured the most comprehensive programme and multi-pronged approach based on the institutional and operational advantages of each of the projects and participating partners. The RSRTF and its partners successfully launched this new RSRTF area-based programme in January 2021.

Summary overview of the Jonglei/ Greater Pibor area-based programme

Under the overall leadership of the World Food Programme (WFP), the RSRTF is supporting 16 organizations to engage with communities directly involved in the conflict to address the cycles of violence and foster peaceful coexistence. The project has been designed to support communities, particularly women and youth, to identify drivers of conflict and priority interventions which will be implemented to sustainably address those drivers, thereby

reducing multi-layered violence and increasing peaceful coexistence. Critically, through advocacy and engagement with government and political stakeholders, the programme also seeks to link grassroots processes to state and national-level peace processes.

The programme brings together partners from across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus and aims to tackle conflict drivers at the community level through a combination of reconciliation, stabilization and resilience efforts.

RECONCILIATION

- Support norms of non-violence, conflict management and reconciliation.
- Trace and release abducted women and children, and support reintegration into society.

STABILIZATION

- Tackle criminality, improve community security, support development of police and prison services capacity (including infrastructure) in county border and hotspot areas.
- Strengthen informal justice systems and frameworks, and reduce impunity with regard to violence.

RESILIENCE

- Promote community development activities to recover/rebuild lost assets and livelihoods, and activities that enhance the connection between communities or mitigate competition between communities over resources.
- Provide access to quality secondary education and adult learning to improve education outcomes, skills development and employment opportunities, as well as participation in decision-making.

The Jonglei area-based programme comprises four separate grants to seven agencies totalling \$12.5 million (Table 4).

Table 4: Grants to agencies (US\$)

AGENCY AND PROJECT	AMOUNT
WFP, WHO and UNMISS – Community Violence Reduction in Central-Southern Jonglei/GPAA	8,029,724
IOM and UNICEF – Providing Access to Quality Learning Through Secondary School Education and Functional Adult Literacy in Jonglei/GPAA	1,700,000
UNDP – Community Security for the Most Vulnerable Groups in Jonglei State/GPAA	1,197,231
UNHCR – Ending the Cycles of Violence in Jonglei/GPAA through the Prevention of Female and Child Abductions, and their Successful Reintegration	1,569,284

SNAPSHOT OF RESULTS

7

INTERCOMMUNITY PEACE DIALOGUES

held in the area-based programme locations prevented escalation of tensions, including the high-level dialogue of governors of Tonj and Wau that led to a cessation of hostilities between the conflicting communities



6

PEACE COMMITTEES established and functioning across 6 *payams* in Koch County with 149 members (50 women)

3

PEACE COMMITTEES in the border areas of Warrap and Western Bahr El Ghazal are supported

3

integrated short- and long-duration extended UNMISS patrols conducted in Koch in coordination with the RSRTF partner

775



COURT CHIEFS, POLICE, WOMEN AND YOUTH TRAINED

in conflict management, good governance, housing, land and property rights, gender-based violence prevention and response, business skills and South Sudanese legislation

310 COURT CASES monitored by recruited and trained volunteer observers

1,565 women and youth trained in business skills, entrepreneurship and savings and loan concepts



A MIGRATION CONFERENCE

with **140 chiefs, farmers, pastoralists, women and youth**, as well as two state governors and security structures, to revitalize the commitments to the Marial Bai Agreement promoting peaceful and safe cattle migration in Western Bahr El Ghazal and Warrap states



60 km INTERCOMMUNITY ROADS & 2 BRIDGES IMPROVED

employing 730 community members (**39 percent women**) through cash-for-work activities

750 farmers, fishermen and women trained in advanced agronomic and fishing production methods; 25 demonstration gardens established



140 COMMUNITY-BASED animal health workers trained
170,907 ANIMALS VACCINATED and 30,255 animals treated

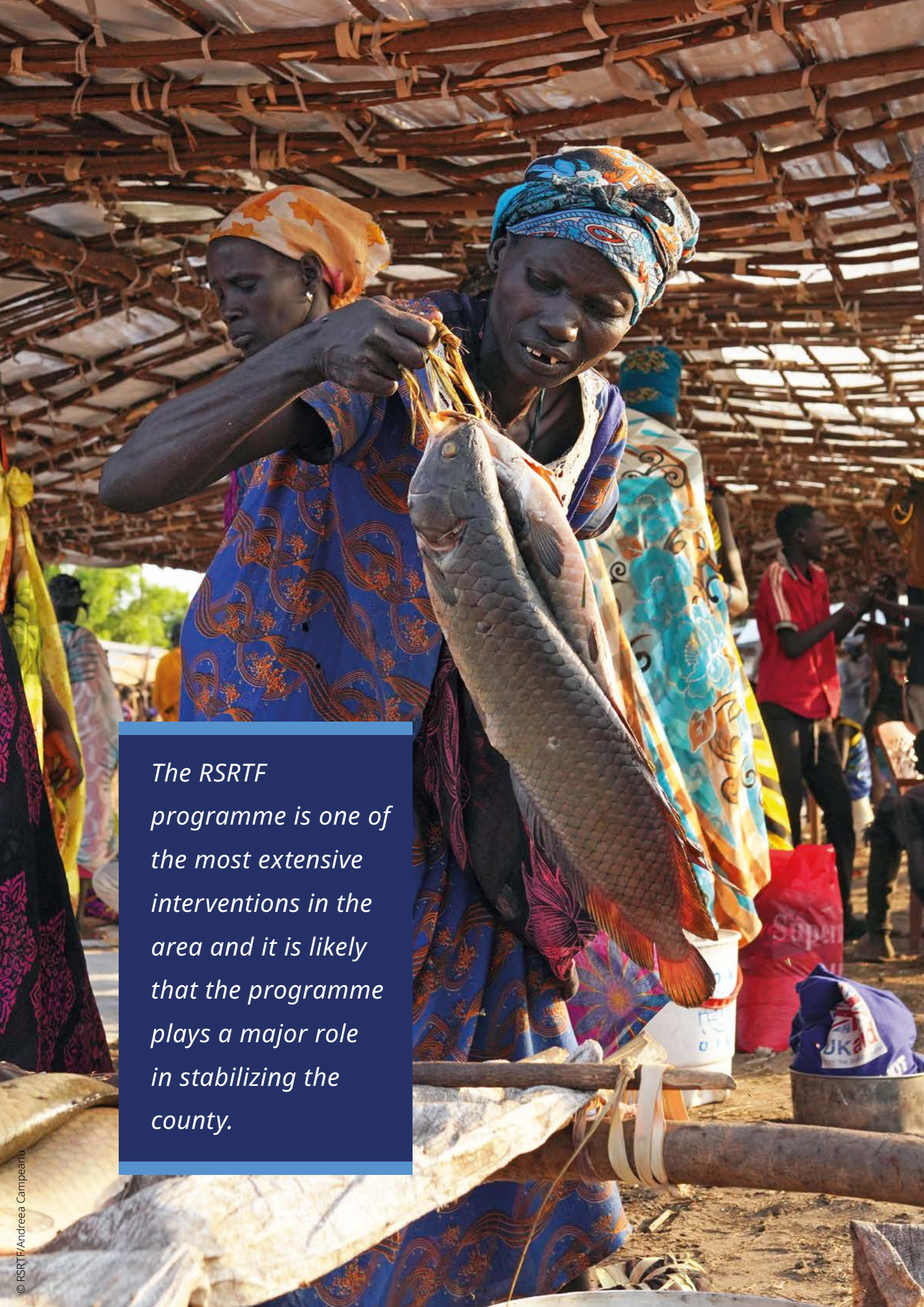
11 COMMUNITY FACILITIES CONSTRUCTED/REHABILITATED

1 secondary school
youth centre
women's resource centre



3 court offices
5 women and girl-friendly spaces, including a one-stop centre

1,315 ACTIVE MEMBER ENTREPRENEURS
in 59 community-based savings and loan groups



The RSRTF programme is one of the most extensive interventions in the area and it is likely that the programme plays a major role in stabilizing the county.

PROJECT TITLE

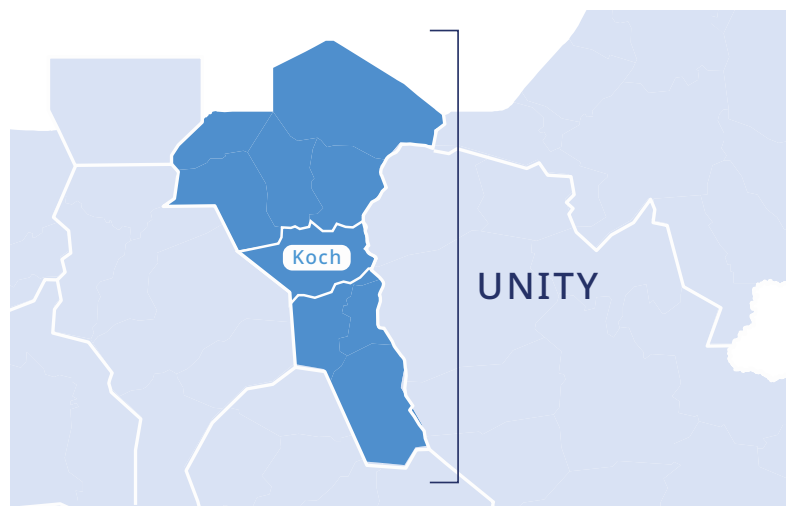
Restoring Peaceful Coexistence for Better Livelihoods in Koch

TARGET AREA

Koch, Unity

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

World Vision, CARE International, Danish Refugee Council and Mercy Corps



In 2020, Koch's population continued to suffer from the armed violence that has plagued the county for several years. The RSRTF area-based programme in Koch tackles the drivers behind this violence at the grass roots. It works to restore peaceful coexistence and improve livelihoods and justice outcomes in the target communities across six *payams* – Boaw, Mirmir, Ngony, Gany, Kuachlual and Rier.

In 2020, the area-based programme presented its Everyday Peace Indicator baseline study. This study allows the RSRTF to triangulate data sources, such as civilian casualty, returns or humanitarian needs data, to measure the impact of its programme in Koch. The programme surveyed the county's population using community-defined questions relating to their perception of safety and security, including in relation to daily tasks, such as collecting wood and grass.

At the end of 2019, 75 percent of the 480 respondents said that they had either often or sometimes feared for their immediate families' safety, demonstrating that there was still widespread concern in Koch over personal safety at that time. In 2020, however, there

are early indicators that Koch is increasingly stabilizing. The RSRTF programme is one of the most extensive interventions in the area and it is likely that the programme plays a major role in stabilizing the county. The number of returnee arrivals in Koch has more than doubled from 6,375 individuals in 2019 to 13,034 individuals in 2020 (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix). This increased return rate reflects the county's gradual recovery from the civil war and indicates that living conditions are improving. Another positive development is the decreasing number of people in need in Koch as registered by UNOCHA.

In 2020, the number of people in need in the county was 5 percent lower than in 2019, decreasing from 71,100 in 2019 to 67,400 in 2020 (UNOCHA Humanitarian Needs Overviews 2020 and 2021).

While, in the short-term, the concern over personal safety in Koch will likely continue to persist at high levels, the RSRTF programme hopes to contribute to the gradual stabilization of the county and improvements in daily safety and security for Koch's citizens. The next round of Everyday Peace Indicator surveying and

analysis of wider data sources will show the extent to which the programme succeeds in this mission. In 2020, the programme made significant steps towards that goal and Koch's population has undoubtedly benefited from the programme's interlinked reconciliation, stabilization and resilience activities.

Reconciliation

The reconciliation strategy under the Koch area-based programme focuses on deterring and reducing violence, strengthening local conflict management capacities, and supporting provision of basic response and support to affected persons. It is a broad approach that paves the way to viable stabilization and resilience endeavours, involving not only the consortium partners but also UNMISS, local government and community leaders and active community members.

UNMISS plays a key strategic role in RSRTF programming across all the area-based programming. In 2020, UNMISS peacekeeping troops conducted one short- and two long-duration patrols deterring criminal activities, boosting confidence among the community members and humanitarians in terms of safe movement and ensuring access to hard-to-reach and risky areas, such as Boaw, for humanitarian actors. The partners reported reduced cases of theft, robbery and attacks around Koch and Bang market, fewer night intrusions into NGO compounds and fewer gender-based violence (GBV) cases when UNMISS patrols were present.

The peace committees played a key role in the violence-reduction strategy of the Koch area-based programme. They acted as local mechanisms to manage disputes and raise public awareness on basic rights, and called on peaceful co-existence in and between the government- and opposition-controlled communities. In 2020, the partners established six peace committees in Mirmir, Koch, Bang, Petpet, Patit and Rier comprising 150 members, ensuring proportionate representation of women at both membership (50 percent) and leadership levels (40 percent). Nearly half of the solved cases were mediated by women and youth.

The peace committees conducted four intra-communal peace dialogues in and between government- and opposition-controlled areas – Koch, Bang and Mirmir – primarily targeting clan chiefs, sub-clan chiefs, youth, women leaders, business union leaders, religious leaders and other community leaders. They also mediated 56 community conflict cases over housing, land and property issues, such as forced eviction, occupation and inheritance, as well as cases of physical violence, petty offences and other disputes. This, in turn, contributed to building trust in the informal justice system and creating peaceful co-existence and social cohesion within the communities.

The peace committees also held group and door-to-door community sensitization activities on various critical issues, including basic rights detailed in the section on stabilization below. In addition, the partners trained 150 leaders in conflict resolution. This training will be rolled out to the new government officials deployed to Koch following the appointment of new state and local government officials in 2021.

The partners in Koch provided protective environments for women and girls exposed to GBV at the four newly constructed and rehabilitated women- and girl-friendly centres and one-stop centres in Koch, Mirmir, Jahjah and Petpet. The social workers documented 86 GBV cases, 17 of which were SGBV cases, and all the survivors were provided with psychosocial support, legal aid and referrals to services. The SGBV cases were reported to the police and supported with investigation and prosecution at the mobile statutory court in Bentiu.

Stabilization

The stabilization efforts of the partners in Koch are focused on strengthening the formal court mechanisms, promoting women's participation in justice and governance structures, and training in good governance. As a result of delayed establishment of statutory courts in Koch and Bentiu, the chiefs' courts continue to handle all the cases, including sensitive ones. The bench and mobile courts in Koch are still under the chiefs' courts, and cases referred to Bentiu, especially from Mirmir, are still



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adjudicated under customary law. World Relief has therefore trained 46 chiefs, 18 paralegals and a court clerk on the laws of South Sudan and the interface between traditional customary and statutory law. In 2020, they adjudicated and successfully resolved more than 245 court cases. To provide safe facilities for the functioning of the courts, World Relief constructed and equipped three chiefs' courts in Kuachlual, Mirmir and Gany. The paralegals recruited under the project to support the courts documented 245 cases. Two GBV cases referred to the Bentiu mobile statutory court were resolved.

To provide a joint discussion platform for leaders from different *payams* and voice concerns of women, youth and elders, as well as to advocate for women's participation in leadership positions in public offices and in local court mechanisms, CARE International facilitated eight forums in Kuachlual, Mirmir, Jaak and Gany. These were attended by 125 community members (74 men and 51 women), including women leaders, peace committee members, chiefs and youth leaders. The forums discussed the judicial referral pathway, gender equality in the courts, police and local

government structures, gender norms and cultural practices that limit women and girls in leadership and peacebuilding processes.

The peace committees created under the reconciliation component also play key roles in the area-based programme stabilization efforts. In addition to organizing peace dialogues, mediating disputes and referring to formal courts and services, the committees raise public awareness on basic human rights. In 2020, they reached over 1,000 community members with information on human rights, legal frameworks, and housing, land and property rights and responsibilities, through group and door-to-door sensitization activities.

Finally, the stabilization component of the project involves promotion of good governance. World Relief trained 100 leaders in good governance in 2020, and this training will be repeated for new government officials deployed to Koch following the appointment of new state and local government officials in 2021.

Resilience

The resilience activities in Koch aim to reinforce reconciliation and stabilization efforts by

strengthening socioeconomic capacities, linkages and interconnectedness within and between government- and opposition-controlled communities. The activities have been layered in such a way that the resilience, reconciliation and stabilization interventions are complimentary in all the targeted *payams* through, for instance, engaging beneficiaries in various activities under the three pillars. For example, GBV survivors who had been provided with legal aid, referrals and psychosocial support were also provided with income-generation skills and business start-up support. The community dialogues and consultations led by peace committees prioritized the enhancement of community infrastructure through cash-for-work activities. In 2020, the partners made significant progress, despite the political, security, disaster and COVID-19 challenges affecting the implementation rate to a certain extent. The partners used the market systems development approach to foster and strengthen community resilience through building capacities of selected early adopters in starting and creating economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods through supporting farmers, fish producers and traders. Efforts to strengthen food security in the target areas started bringing visible results in the form of increased harvests, which in turn improved the supply of vegetables in Koch and Mirmir markets. The partners observed a shift from the consumption of traditional foods (sorghum and milk) to diversification of foods with the addition of other food groups, such as vegetables, meat, fish, sugar and oil.

Mercy Corps trained 500 farmers in improved vegetable production techniques, established 21 demonstration gardens, provided seeds and linked the farmers to markets with vegetable traders and local food vendors/ restaurants to sell their vegetable produce. The programme participants were able to supply about two tons of okra, kale, tomatoes, jute melon, eggplant, onion and amaranths to the markets. Vegetables are in great demand, but there would have been very limited supply and diversity of these without this intervention. In addition, 250 fish producers were supported

with fishing equipment to improve their production while strengthening their links with identified traders for sustainable production and trade harmonization. The project also collected market prices from the major markets to help the traders make effective decisions, identify goods in demand and make fair price adjustments.

This project also provided 250 women and girls with income-generation activities, training in various skills, business management knowledge and some start-up grants; 1,315 individuals (90 percent female) became part of 59 savings and loans groups that provided access to financial services that would have been unavailable to them otherwise.

The project also created and rehabilitated 10 community assets, including seven roads, three dykes and water runways and seven intercommunity roads connecting government- and opposition-controlled communities in Kuachlual, Boaw, Gany, Ngony, Jaak and Mirmir *payams*. This strengthened intercommunity linkages and fostered trade between the communities, and mitigated the impacts of unexpected flooding. The cash-for-work modality used provided not only some income to 790 participants, but also a sense of ownership and productive interaction between the communities.

The resilience efforts also included women and youth empowerment through education and life skills. The partners provided second-chance education to 100 women and 100 out-of-school youth. The youth were also engaged in sports to deter them from violent activities and to foster social cohesion. Youth from both government- and opposition-controlled areas were brought together in joint events, such as the soccer tournaments held among three clubs in Kuachlual, Bhang and Mirmir, that not only promoted social interaction between them but also provided them with life skills. The partners rehabilitated Bhang Secondary School and Koch Youth Centre and constructed a vocational youth centre in Koch. The youth centres will provide vocational skills training, to be rolled out in early 2021.

PROJECT TITLE

Mitigating Cattle-Related Violence in the Tri-State Border Areas of Tonj, Gogrial and Wau

TARGET AREA

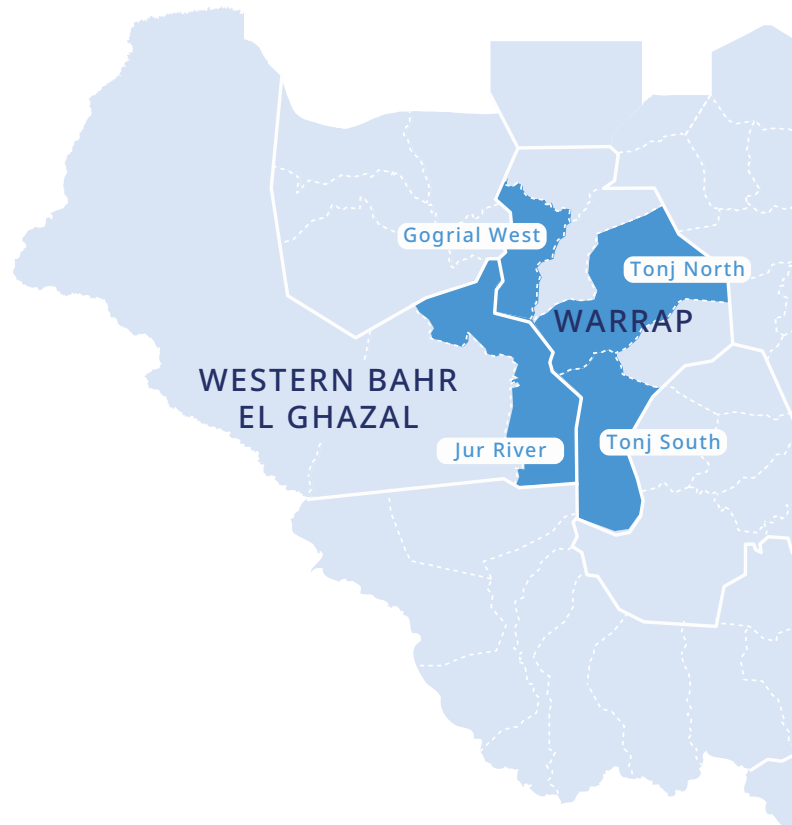
Warrap (Gogrial West, Tonj North, Tonj South), Western Bahr el Ghazal (Jur River)

PARTICIPATING PARTNERS

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IOM, UNMISS Rule of Law Advisory Section

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

World Vision International, Community Aid for Relief and Development Organization, The Organization for Children's Harmony (TOCH)



While armed violence continued to affect the border area of Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal throughout 2020, the intensity of fighting between farmers and cattle-keepers markedly decreased, particularly in Jur River County (Western Bahr el Ghazal). Fighting in the border area was less intensive than the violence the civilian population had suffered in the first half of 2019 when dozens were killed and thousands displaced. Encouragingly, there was an increase in the numbers of returnee arrivals in Gogrial West (Warrap) and Jur River counties in 2020 compared to 2019, and the number of people in need decreased significantly in Jur River, from 191,200 in 2019 to 125,400 in 2020 (UNOCHA Humanitarian Needs Overviews 2020 and 2021).

Not all areas in which the Fund's programme operates, however, saw this level of improvement. Tonj North and Tonj South continued to face significant levels of violence

in 2020, with the number of displaced persons increasing from 15,442 to 23,220 individuals, and from 616 to 36,668 individuals, respectively (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix). In November 2020, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification identified pockets of catastrophe-level food insecurity in Tonj North and Tonj South (10 and 5 percent of the population of the counties, respectively).

The RSRTF programme follows the United Nation's Strategic Response Plan to Mitigate Cattle Raiding-Related Conflict in South Sudan, aiming to reduce cattle-migration violence in the Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal border area. Supporting the implementation of the Revitalized Marial Bai Agreement,³ which has been credited with significantly reducing violence between farmers and herders, is a key goal of the programme. The area-based programme supports the implementation of this local peace agreement between farmers

³ The Marial Bai Agreement between pastoralists and farmers in Gogrial, Tonj and Wau regulates the seasonal cattle migration. Originally signed in 2016, it was revised in 2019, taking into account the lessons learned from the communities during the implementation of the original agreement.

and herders and contributes to the increasing stabilization of the border area, particularly Jur River, where progress has been most visible to date. The Fund's partners work closely with farmer and herder communities through a variety of interlinked interventions. Partners seek to enhance accountability for livestock-related crimes, advance gender equality and link livelihoods improvement to peacebuilding processes, enabling reconciled communities to realize economic benefits from making peace.

While the project made great strides in laying the necessary groundwork, it faced challenges in the reporting period, particularly with prolonged vacancies of local government positions and reoccurring insecurity in Warrap, as well as the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme plans to increase its coordination efforts in 2021 and establish strong relationships with the newly appointed government representatives in Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal.

Reconciliation

Through sustained community dialogues, mobile response interventions, peace sensitization campaigns, capacity-building activities and support for peace conferences, the project significantly contributed to reduction in violent conflicts between farming and cattle-keeper communities and enhanced intercommunal harmony and social cohesion in the border areas of Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal. In 2020, 21 project interventions were carried out to support and strengthen community-level conflict resolution and prevention mechanisms through community dialogues, consultations forums, capacity-building training and peace conferences. The programme's interventions benefited from close collaboration between different sections and field offices of UNMISS, FAO, IOM, local NGOs and the Marial Bai committees.

Three joint trust-building, conflict monitoring and peace promotion missions to respond to intercommunal conflicts, undertaken in Jur River, Tonj North and Tonj South, resulted in a reduction of hostilities, quick deployment of humanitarian assistance to the 3,000 displaced

community members, and enhanced advocacy by local peace actors for quick intervention by local authorities. Advocacy by local peace partners resulted in local authorities in Tonj and Wau calling for a high-level dialogue, which saw the declaration of a cessation of hostilities between the conflicting communities.

The intercommunal dialogue facilitated in volatile locations in border areas contributed to renewed commitment of local communities to the Marial Bai Agreement. The high-level dialogue, attended by the acting governors of both Tonj and Wau and 90 other leaders, declared a cessation of hostilities and stopped the large-scale intercommunal violence in the border areas of Tonj and Jur River.

Youth-to-youth dialogue stimulated youth commitment to address cattle migration challenges, using innovative, constructive and peaceful approaches. These included technology-enabled platforms to communicate across lines of division to address tensions, misunderstanding or incidents. Additionally, youth border committees were established in areas like Kuajena and Tonj North where youth leaders have been instrumental in helping diffuse tensions and addressing arising challenges related to cattle migration.

Capacity-building training-of-trainers sessions on conflict mediation and conflict management equipped frontline conflict mediators with the knowledge and skills necessary to play an effective role in conflict transformation, and become peacebuilding mentors in their communities and localities.

The grassroots consultations and awareness-creating forums provided an opportunity for local communities to review the Marial Bai Agreement and provide inputs for discussion and ratification by delegates attending the cattle migration conference.

The Pre-Migration Conference on Seasonal Cattle Movement in November 2020 restated the communities' commitment to work together for a peaceful and safer 2021 cattle migration season in accordance with the Marial Bai Agreement and other articulated protocols.



The conference was attended by 140 delegates, including the governors of Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal, cattle-keepers, farmers, government delegations and peace partners, including United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and CBOs, and military leaders from the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO). The active participation of the state governors and senior SSPDF and SPLA-IO military leaders was a positive step towards finding lasting solutions to address insecurity-related issues in the target areas. The three-day capacity-building workshop enabled the peace committees to develop a coordination framework to strengthen their interlinkages with the stakeholders. The annual workplan for 2021, outlining activities for current seasonal cattle movements, was also developed at the workshop.

In addition, the IOM mapped and assessed gender attitudes, behaviours and norms in Tonj South (Warrap) and Jur River (Western Bahr el Ghazal) counties to inform the development of a gender-transformative dialogue curriculum and approach to facilitate the prevention of violence in intimate relationships at community and intercommunal levels. The curriculum will be rolled out in 2021.

The latest assessment, held in December 2020, engaged 315 men, women and youths, including both state and community leaders (e.g., chiefs, government workers and civil society extension workers), and participants from cattle camps. The assessment found that the social construction of gender ideals is a key driver of violence in conflicting communities. In a focus group discussion with youth in Tonj town, a participant mentioned, "A man who does not beat his wife to discipline her when she misbehaves is called 'abuna' or 'pastor'... either he is weak or beaten by his wife." Furthermore, boys are socialized to defend their communities even if that means resorting to violence. A respondent in a youth group said, "A boy is brought up to be a warrior to defend his community ... he should be strong ... and if he does not have these qualities he will be called a coward and lazy." Dowries for marriages (i.e., monetization of girls and women) are key economic drivers and contribute to cattle raiding and intercommunal violence. A male participant of the validation session of the assessment highlighted this, "Some young men engage in cattle raiding in order to get cattle for payment of dowry."

Stabilization

During its first year, the project laid the groundwork for more effective delivery of justice in both urban and rural areas with previously limited or absent judicial infrastructure. This was done by increasing capacity and coordination along the justice chain, and building confidence and increasing trust between informal and formal justice actors. The delays in the appointment of state governors caused setbacks in the process of establishing the mobile special court. However, the partners were able to obtain the buy-in of the new governors and other important government officials at state and national levels. The commitment of the UNMISS Force to support mobile special court deployment to hotspot locations demonstrates the integrated and complementary nature of reconciliation and stabilization activities within the project.

The partners also sensitized the communities, local leaders and stakeholders who participated in the community grassroots consultations held across the Warrap and Bahr el Ghazal in Tonj South, Alur and Kuajena about the mobile special court buy-in, and consulted them on key modality and jurisdictional issues. These consultations also sought community input on key areas that required revision in the Revitalized Marial Bai Agreement. A workshop facilitated by the UNMISS Rule of Law Advisory Section for formal and informal justice officials nominated to support the mobile special court increased confidence and trust between formal and informal justice actors and their capacity to perform their mandated functions in a coordinated way, in line with human rights. On the last day of the workshop, justice actors were joined by members of the community-based dispute resolution and monitoring mechanisms established pursuant to the Revitalized Marial Bai Agreement, to clarify the respective roles of the Marial Bai committees.

Resilience

This project also aims at sustaining peace through decreasing resource competition and increasing resilience to human-made and natural disasters. The partners are working towards enhancing commercially oriented

livestock activities and alternative livelihoods, together with rehabilitating and fostering sustainable management of water and pastures along migration routes. In 2020, FAO and the partners succeeded in vaccinating 170,907 animals (cattle, goats and sheep) and treating 30,255 animals (cattle, goats, sheep, poultry, dogs and donkeys) through FAO's vaccination and treatment campaigns in synergy with other FAO projects. In addition, work to strengthen the capacity of the livestock vaccine cold chain in Wau is almost complete. A new cold room facility has been established by FAO.

To support animal health campaigns, FAO relies on a network of community-based animal health workers that routinely receives training and inputs to implement livestock health activities. In 2020, a total of 108 animal health workers were trained and deployed in the four project counties to deliver services and are being backstopped, supervised and monitored by livestock technical officers. In addition, to mitigate conflict among pastoralist communities living in the border areas of Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal, and to enhance trade, health and production, FAO piloted a livestock identification and traceability system, with a specific focus on the use of ear tags. In 2020, 11,000 ear tags were distributed in the targeted communities.

Finally, to provide a fundamental building block towards the reduction of conflicts, FAO is rehabilitating and promoting sustainable management of water and pastures along the migration routes. In 2020, FAO, in collaboration with its implementing partner, World Vision International, and building on the consultations held by IOM and the UNMISS Rule of Law Advisory Section under reconciliation and stabilization activities, identified potential sites for the construction of *haffirs* (water storage reservoirs) and the rehabilitation of water infrastructure, and initiated the selection process of rangeland management committees. This will ultimately contribute to a reduction in competition and related conflict by reducing livestock movement into neighbouring farmland other pastoralist community areas, and help prevent longer-term land and environmental degradation.

CASE STUDY

The local peace committee successfully negotiated the movement of 1,000 cattle from cultivated to non-cultivated areas in Udici *payam* in Jur River County, and this helped prevent conflict between farmers and cattle-keepers.

In response to reports of rising intercommunal tensions in parts of Udici *payam*, IOM, in collaboration with the Interstate Coordinating Committee on Cattle Seasonal Movement (ICCSM), commissioned a two-day (14–15 August 2020) mobile peace mission. The mission monitored the situation in the affected locations of Agok, Gettee, Kayango, Kangi, Udici and Bailpam in Jur River County and facilitated problem-solving dialogue between the cattle-keepers and farmers in the area, thus promoting peaceful co-existence.

The mission, supported by the RSRTF project in the Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal border area, engaged and brought together local leaders from the farming communities of Udici *payam*, including chiefs, elders and youth, as well as the *majokuots* (heads of cattle camps) for dialogue, to find an amicable way to address the issues causing tension in the area. In total, six community engagements were held, involving over 300 participants.

In the Agok area, 827 head of cattle were found in the villages of Gotongo and Golingo, and it was reported that nine cows had strayed and destroyed the crops of three local farmers. After the IOM- and ICCSM-led dialogue involving community leaders and the *majokuot* in charge of the cattle, it was resolved that the cattle-keepers would immediately move to Maluil *boma*, where they had been accepted by the area's Executive Chief using the Revitalized Marial Bai Agreement protocols. Furthermore, the local community agreed to form a committee of seven people involving chiefs of the area and for the *majokuots* to continue monitoring the cattle-keeper–farmer interactions and address issues as they arose.

In the Bailpam area, the IOM/ICCSM team engaged the head of the cattle-keepers and local leaders about the movement of 400 cattle from the Majak area of New Site in Wau to Udici *payam*. After the dialogue, the cattle-keepers agreed to return to their area of origin to avoid the conflicts with local farmers.

In Gettee, the team found that 51 head of cattle had been allowed into the area by the chief and elders of the village, who had previously formed a committee to deal with disputes as they arose. In the Kayango area, the community reported that the area regularly experiences the early arrival of cattle, before the harvest, and also complained that the cattle migration is associated with increases in GBV cases in the area. The community requested the IOM to support a youth-only dialogue to discuss mechanisms for peaceful co-existence in the upcoming cattle migration season (i.e., November 2020). The Kayango community also proposed digging *haffirs* on the border to prevent early arrival of cattle to the Jur River County farmland.

The communities visited appreciated the quick intervention, which resulted in de-escalation of the tensions and the agreement for cattle to move out of cultivated areas to locations not yet cultivated.

Targeted Support to Peace Implementation: Enhancing Political and Civic Space

Supported through the 2020 Small Grants Window, this project aims to increase political dialogue and more inclusive civic and political participation in the implementation of the R-ARCSS peace agreement. The signing of the R-ARCSS in 2018 led to a significant reduction of political violence across South Sudan and represents a major step in terms of the democratic process and governance. The slow pace of the peace agreement implementation, although frustrating to many and a risk for its success, reconfirms the importance of strengthening civic and political spaces for dialogue. In 2020, the project contributed to more inclusive discussions and dialogue on R-ARCSS implementation and related governance reform, including on the permanent constitution-making process. Furthermore, through sustained dialogue and facilitated spaces for discussion between political actors, more space was created for political and civic actors, including civil society, women from various backgrounds and youth representatives, to engage with the R-ARCSS implementation, subsequently contributing to coherent and consistent messaging on peace implementation progress across the country.

A critical part of the political governance reforms anticipated in the R-ARCSS is the process of writing a permanent constitution, as well as organizing elections. These two processes are connected, and over the course of 2020 the project enabled necessary preparations, commencing with a review of the existing electoral framework of South Sudan as provided for by the R-ARCSS, the Constitution, the Political Party Act of 2012 and the National Electoral Act of 2012. The most important achievements in 2020 were:

- The completion of the review of the legal framework for elections in South Sudan;
- Increased capacities of key stakeholder groups on the constitution-making process and other key policy reforms; and
- Enhanced involvement of stakeholder groups, including civil society, women and youth.

Considering the predominance of elite bargaining and the limited popular voice in the South Sudan peace process, the importance of the role of civil society organizations in supporting the constitution-making process cannot be overstated. The activities supported by the RSRTF ensured broad consultation on the constitutional framework with specific consultations and workshops held with youth leaders and women representatives from different backgrounds, such as the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare (represented by the Minister and Undersecretary), female ambassadors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, women from different political parties, parliamentarians and civil society leaders. A series of workshops for political leaders and civil servants was also organized to increase their awareness and capacity on the constitutional process. Delegates included the Minister of Information, Minister of Defence, Minister of Public Services, Minister of Federal Affairs, Minister of Agriculture, Deputy Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, members of the diplomatic community, heads of different institutions and senior members of different political parties, to increase their awareness and capacity on the constitutional process. In addition, the UNMISS Partnership for Africa's Development, together with other key international partners, supported the Ministry of Federal Affairs in developing a policy framework on federalism through a series of consultative workshops.

While working to enhance political space, the project also seeks to strengthen capacities of political leadership. With the formation of a political parties forum, the project has facilitated structural engagement and dialogue between political parties. The political parties forum brings together political representatives from different parties and facilitates dialogue through thematically focused workshops and training, including more policy-focused discussions. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some of these engagements took place in a virtual or hybrid form, nevertheless sustaining and widening the structural engagement of stakeholders from outside the capital. Capacity



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development took place through a combination of online training, policy development, coaching and interparty discussions and public debates. The virtual political parties forum series comprised the leadership (chairperson/ secretary-general level) of all political parties in the country. Given that there is a limited number of parties headed by females (two), the participation of the political parties forum for women was expanded to encourage and include more senior women from parties. Additionally, some younger political party representatives were able to join because of their willingness and facility to take part in virtual sessions. Overall, having a virtual series had the positive effect of expanding the participation of voices in interparty discourse at the leadership level. UNMISS also facilitated public communication of the interparty discussions through a series of radio talk shows.

The start of this project (1 April 2020) coincided with the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic. In the initial weeks of the project, staff were relocated to various parts of the

world and time was spent reconnecting and considering how to adjust the programmatic activities. Virtual planning meetings took place to adjust project planning and design. This led to delays in the start-up of activities. In the subsequent months of project implementation, efforts were made to maintain support for political actors to meaningfully engage, particularly given the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on civic and political space.

Together with the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, a public perception survey was initiated to better understand the possible impact of COVID-19 on R-ARCSS, as well as the socioeconomic and political implications of the pandemic on communities, particularly on women and youth, and their engagement in the political landscape. The survey confirmed the negative impact of the pandemic on political engagement of women and youth and an increase in gender-based and domestic violence in communities; school dropouts; early marriages; and teen pregnancies. It also identified social media and

radio talk shows as the best means of bolstering political engagement for women and youth and recommended increased advocacy and awareness on enforcement of affirmative action to achieve 35 percent representation by women. Towards the end of the year, implementation (including workshops in adapted forms and events) slowly started to get back on track, although COVID-19 precautionary measures are likely to continue to impact activities.

Empowering the Grassroots: Linking the National and Subnational Processes

This project seeks to strengthen the grassroots' role in the implementation of the R-ARCSS. This remains crucial yet challenging in South Sudan. Issues of elite capture of the peace process, inadequate resources for implementation and dissemination of the agreement, incomplete adherence to benchmarks, an extended vacuum of local authority at the state level in 2020 and the subsequent lack of grassroots participation in decision-making, all serve to continue to inhibit local stakeholder participation in the peace process, and leadership accountability to local constituencies. The UNMISS Civil Affairs Division creates a platform to help raise awareness of the aspirations of grassroots stakeholders, especially women and youth, to help achieve peace across South Sudan through forums that are initiated and facilitated by the Core Group. This comprises the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies, Finn Church Aid, South Sudan Council of Churches, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNMISS and leading researchers and practitioners from Juba University.

As stated by the Core Group, "In an environment where the government is preoccupied with politics and power-sharing, thereby delaying peace agreement implementation, these grassroots forums in Juba are providing leadership for civil society actors to mobilize their communities and to demand more action from government leaders."

In 2020, the UNMISS Civil Affairs Division conducted two national forums in Juba, along

with additional interactions organized through 20 feedback forums held at the state level. The national forums engaged 168 participants that included grassroots actors from 10 states and 13 national and subnational institutions and structures. Among these were the National Assembly; Ministry of Peacebuilding; Ministry of Federal Affairs; Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; National Peace and Reconciliation Commission; national security agencies; media and communication authorities; the Relief and Rehabilitation Committee; and two specialized committees of civil society organizations. The themes for the forums held in Juba were 'Civic and Political Space and the Role of Civil Society' and 'Identity Politics, Unity and Diversity'.

Senior national officials and institution representatives who are also responsible for subnational governance engaged participants from communities in each of the 10 states, as well as the capital, Juba, on identity politics, hate speech, peacebuilding and security issues related to rule of law, including policing and justice. The forums allowed women and youth leaders to interact with key national decision makers and influencers. Participants in the national forums also facilitated forums in preparation for and to report back on the forums in their respective communities. The aim of these was to develop messages for national leaders and communicate outcomes of the forums as a means of mobilizing citizens to engage with and demand solutions from government officials.

The National Minister of Peacebuilding, Stephen Par Kuol, said, "We need the civil society organizations, academia and intellectuals of South Sudan to take over the nation-building process this time, not political leaders."

Promoting Peace and Solidarity in the Face of COVID-19 in Juba, Bentiu and Wau

In 2020, the IOM and implementing partners Community Empowerment for Progress Organization and Action for Conflict Resolution held consultative meetings in Juba, Bentiu and Wau with the aim of enhancing understanding of how COVID-19 has impacted violence on

the country's peripheries. Specifically, they were looking to ascertain how the pandemic may have compounded wider violence and conflict trends, for example, through enhanced resource competition, a rise in intimate partner violence, and child, early and forced marriages, as well as escalating crime and insecurity. They also examined the impact of the pandemic on decreasing social connectedness, including that related to declining capacity of local CBOs. Given the conjoined nature of the pandemic and existing conflict drivers, the project's training on conflict mediation, negotiation and reconciliation assists in addressing emerging violence – not only related to COVID-19 but also as a result of other causes.

Restrictions introduced by the government to curb transmission of the pandemic, and the need to limit the number of participants involved in public gatherings, have impacted the implementation of some activities. These include project activities such as the continuation of community consultations in Juba and Bentiu, launch events and trainings. However, the IOM, in cooperation with implementing partners, embraced new ways of working, promoting localization of the COVID-19 response and efforts to address the non-health impacts of the pandemic.

Partners rolled out a series of training sessions for 20 women and youth-led CBOs on conflict mediation, negotiation and reconciliation. The first session took place in Wau with 15 participants (seven males and eight females) and represented eight CBOs. Once all CBO training is complete, a series of dialogues will be arranged between the organizations and formal governance structures responsible for responding to COVID-19. The organizations will promote localization and develop linkages and networks between differentially sized civic organizations to facilitate contributions to civic participation and governance and empower communities to participate in local processes. As the project continues, there will be further dialogue between pre-selected CBOs and

government bodies working on the COVID-19 response, which is envisaged to encompass other community members from at-risk groups, such as the urban poor and informal labourers. While reforms and reconstitution of statutory institutions were not foreseen as part of the project, the dialogue between CBOs and government in target locations is being carried out with a view to increasing confidence in newly formed governance structures associated with the R-TGoNU, and generating a degree of vertical accountability that has been largely absent, yet is essential in re-establishing the state-citizen contract. Dialogue will take place over the next two quarters and culminate in the delivery of peace dividends through the infrastructure construction and rehabilitation to be done by the IOM, which will model a strategy of civic engagement through infrastructure.

The partners also launched a series of radio messaging and talk shows on COVID-19 and peacebuilding, enabling the continual dissemination of messages to broad audiences. The first talk show, developed and broadcast in December 2020, engaged representatives from the Ministry of Health and reached around 24,000 people in Wau. Additional talk shows will be rolled out in 2021 in all the project locations. This will be accompanied by the distribution of radios in the three target intervention areas, as well as other areas hosting internally displaced persons and returnees.

An early indication of positive benefits of the programme stems from the linkages established between women- and youth-led CBOs and government bodies. The CBOs are being supported to hold the government accountable and ensure community challenges are being heard and attended to by the government. In Lokiliri *payam* of Juba County, this has seen women engaging the government to organize state dialogue between Central Equatoria state and *boma* administrative areas, in order to address the issue of child abduction experienced in the area.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

In its 2019 Annual Report, the Fund set three main priorities for 2020: (i) to establish geographic focus areas, (ii) to introduce a targeted small grants window, and (iii) to structure and streamline funding allocation processes. The Fund achieved these goals in 2020 and aims to build on the achievements and lessons learned to date to continue work in these three areas and improve its operations in 2021.

A milestone in 2020 was the refinement of the way the Fund sources and reviews project proposals. To make the its allocation process more targeted and accessible, it started issuing calls for proposals dedicated to specific areas in South Sudan. This new system replaced its previous rolling general call for proposals. Additionally, the Fund Secretariat streamlined its proposal review process by introducing project assessment and recommendation forms. The Fund Secretariat uses these forms to score submitted proposals, ensuring funding allocation is transparent and fair. The Fund has already used this new system in 2020 to allocate funds to the new area-based programme in Jonglei/GPAA and will keep streamlining its funding allocation procedures throughout 2021.

One of the key lessons learned in the Fund's first two years of operations is the need to proactively invest in strong coordination for the 'triple nexus' approach to succeed. From the start, the Fund went beyond existing coordination efforts to playing a catalytic role in bringing together a range of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors. It has increased its efforts throughout 2020 to strengthen coordination between implementing partners as well as between wider United Nations and non-United Nations stakeholders.

In 2020, the Fund deepened its relationships with key partners, including through routine coordination and information-sharing with United Nations Country Team partners and the

UNMISS Civil Affairs, Human Rights and Political Affairs Divisions, as well as the Joint Mission Analysis Cell. In 2021, the Fund will continue to explore opportunities for leveraging impact with initiatives such as the United Kingdom's Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund, the United States Agency for International Development Shejeh Salam programme, the Partnership for Recovery and Resilience, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, and the World Bank South Sudan Enhancing Community Resilience and Local Governance Project.

Looking ahead to 2021, the Fund aims to launch a new area-based programme and to further refine and develop its impact monitoring systems. The lessons learned to date – from funding allocation, programme inception, to implementation across the 'triple nexus' – will feed into this new area-based programme. Throughout 2021, it will continue to develop its approach to impact monitoring using the Everyday Peace Indicator. It uses Everyday Peace Indicator methodology to measure changes in the local perceptions of safety and security in its target locations. The Fund and its partners have successfully applied this methodology to establish baselines in the Koch and Warrap/ Western Bahr el Ghazal programming areas. It will support partners to undertake Everyday Peace Indicator assessments and develop a tool for partners to ensure that the Everyday Peace Indicator methodology is implemented consistently across its programmes.

Finally, the Fund will launch a dedicated knowledge management workstream in 2021.



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The Fund will step up its efforts in documenting and sharing lessons learned between its implementing partners and wider stakeholders. Its early-stage evaluation (due for completion in 2021) will greatly contribute to the Fund's evidence base on programming effectiveness. The evaluation will yield first insights into what is

required for the Fund's area-based programming approach to succeed. The findings will help the Fund determine how it can best leverage its role as a catalyst in supporting partners from the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding fields to resolve the destructive drivers of conflict in South Sudan.

FUND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Introduction

This Consolidated Annual Financial Report of the South Sudan RSRTF Fund has been prepared by the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) in fulfilment of its obligations as administrative agent, as per the terms of reference; the memorandum of understanding signed between the MPTF Office and the participating organizations, and the standard administrative arrangement signed with contributors.

The MPTF Office, as administrative agent, is responsible for concluding a memorandum of understanding with participating organizations and standard administrative arrangements with contributors. It receives, administers and manages contributions, and disburses these funds to the participating organizations. The administrative agent also prepares and submits annual consolidated financial reports, as well as regular financial statements, for transmission to contributors.

This report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2020 and provides financial data on progress made in the implementation of projects of the South Sudan RSRTF Fund. It is posted on the MPTF Office Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SSR00>).

The financial data in the report are recorded in United States dollars. Due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up exactly.

2020 financial performance

This chapter presents financial data and analysis of the South Sudan RSRTF Fund using the pass-through funding modality as of 31 December 2020. Financial information for this Fund is also available on the MPTF Office Gateway at <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SSR00>.

Sources and uses of funds

As of 31 December 2020, four contributors deposited \$39,401,630 in contributions and \$337,727 was earned in interest. The cumulative source of funds was \$39,739,356.

Of this amount, \$13,132,775 has been net funded to four participating organizations, and \$6,204,626 of this has been reported as expenditure. The administrative agent fee has been charged at the approved rate of 1 percent on deposits and amounts to \$394,016.

Table 5 provides an overview of the overall sources, uses and balance of the South Sudan RSRTF Fund as of 31 December 2020.

Partner contributions

Table 6 provides information on cumulative contributions received from all contributors to this Fund as of 31 December 2020.

The South Sudan RSRTF Fund is currently being financed by four contributors, as listed in Table 6. The table includes commitments made up to 31 December 2020 through signed standard administrative agreements, and deposits made through 2020. It does not include commitments that were made to the Fund beyond 2020.

Interest earned

Interest income is earned in two ways: (i) on the balance of funds held by the administrative agent (Fund earned interest); and (ii) on the balance of funds held by the participating organizations (agency earned interest), where their financial regulations and rules allow return of interest to the administrative agent. As of 31 December 2020, the Fund earned interest amounts to \$337,727 (Table 7).

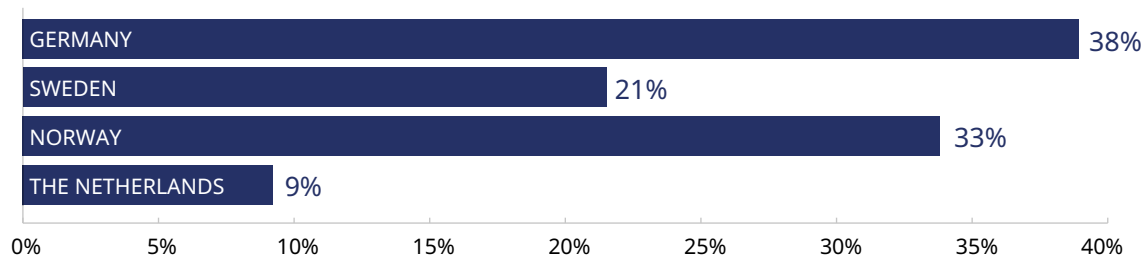
Table 5: Financial overview as of 31 December 2020 (US\$)

	ANNUAL 2019	ANNUAL 2020	CUMULATIVE
SOURCES OF FUNDS			
Contributions from donors	14,410,938	19,307,692	39,401,630
Fund earned interest and investment income	194,693	135,388	337,727
Total sources of funds	14,605,631	19,443,079	39,739,356
USE OF FUNDS			
Transfers to participating organizations	11,211,362	1,000,000	12,211,362
Net funded amount	11,211,362	1,000,000	12,211,362
Administrative agent fees	144,109	193,077	394,016
Direct costs (Steering Committee, Secretariat, etc.)	517,923	403,490	921,413
Bank charges	267	410	677
TOTAL USE OF FUNDS	11,873,662	1,596,976	13,527,469
Change in fund cash balance with administrative agent	2,731,969	17,846,103	26,211,888
Opening fund balance (1 January)	5,633,815	8,365,785	-
Closing fund balance (31 December)	8,365,785	26,211,888	26,211,888
Net funded amount (includes direct cost)	11,729,285	1,403,490	13,132,775
Participating organizations' expenditure (inc. direct cost)	1,004,865	5,199,762	6,204,626
BALANCE OF FUNDS WITH PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS			6,928,149

Table 6: Contributors' commitments and deposits as of 31 December 2020 (US\$)

CONTRIBUTORS	TOTAL COMMITMENTS	PRIOR YEARS AS OF 31 DEC 2019	CURRENT YEAR JAN-DEC 2020	TOTAL DEPOSITS
Germany , Government of	14,839,417	11,205,235	3,634,182	14,839,417
The Netherlands, Government of	3,370,786	-	3,370,786	3,370,786
Norway, Government of	13,076,823	6,218,661	6,858,162	13,076,823
Swedish International Development Cooperation	8,114,604	2,670,042	5,444,562	8,114,604
GRAND TOTAL	39,401,630	20,093,938	19,307,692	39,401,630

Figure 5: Deposits by contributor, cumulative as of 31 December 2020



Transfer of funds

Allocations to participating organizations are approved by the Steering Committee and disbursed by the administrative agent. As of 31 December 2020, the administrative agent transferred \$12,211,362 to four participating organizations (see list in Table 8).

Transfer by participating organization

Table 8 provides additional information on the refunds received by the MPTF Office, and the net funded amount for each of the participating organizations.

Expenditure and financial delivery rates

All final expenditures reported for the year 2020 were submitted by the headquarters of the participating organizations. These were consolidated by the MPTF Office. Project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each participating organization, and are reported as per the agreed upon categories for inter-agency harmonized reporting. The reported expenditures were submitted via the MPTF Office's online expenditure reporting tool. The 2020 expenditure data has been posted on the MPTF Office Gateway at <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SSR00>.

Expenditure reported by participating organizations

In 2020, \$1,000,000 was net funded to participating organizations, and \$4,657,059 was reported in expenditure. As shown in Table 9, the cumulative net funded amount is \$12,211,362 and cumulative expenditures reported by the participating organizations amount to \$5,600,199. This equates to an overall Fund expenditure delivery rate of 46

percent. The agencies with the three highest delivery rates are: NGO/UNDP (68 percent), FAO (30 percent) and UNMISS (26 percent).

Expenditure reported by category

Project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each participating organization and are reported as per the agreed categories for inter-agency harmonized reporting. In 2006, the United Nations Development Group established six categories against which United Nations entities must report inter-agency project expenditures. Effective 1 January 2012, the United Nations Chief Executive Board modified these categories as a result of adoption to comprise eight categories.

The 2012 Chief Executive Board expense categories are:

- staff and personnel costs
- supplies, commodities and materials
- equipment, vehicles, furniture and depreciation
- contractual services
- travel
- transfers and grants
- general operating expenses
- indirect costs.

Cost recovery

Cost recovery policies for the Fund are guided by the applicable provisions of the terms of reference, the memorandum of understanding concluded between the administrative agents and participating organizations, and the standard administrative arrangements concluded between the administrative agents and contributors, based on rates approved by the United Nations Development Group.

THE POLICIES IN PLACE, AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2020, WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- *The administrative agent fee.* One percent is charged at the time of contributor deposit and covers services provided on that contribution for the entire duration of the Fund. In the reporting period, \$193,077 was deducted in administrative agent fees. Cumulatively, as of 31 December 2020, \$394,016 has been charged in administrative agent fees.
- *Indirect costs of participating organizations.* Participating organizations may charge 7 percent indirect costs. In the current reporting period, \$304,668 was deducted in indirect costs by participating organizations. Cumulatively, indirect costs amount to \$370,602 as of 31 December 2020.

Table 7: Sources of interest and investment income as of 31 December 2020 (in US\$)

INTEREST EARNED	PRIOR YEARS AS OF 31 DEC 2019	CURRENT YEAR JAN-DEC 2020	TOTAL
ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT			
Fund earned interest and investment income	202,339	135,388	337,727
Total: Fund earned interest	202,339	135,388	337,727
PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION			
Total: Agency earned interest			
GRAND TOTAL	202,339	135,388	337,727

Table 8: Transfer, refund and net funded amount by participating organization, as of 31 December 2020 (in US\$)

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION	PRIOR YEARS AS OF 31 DEC 2019			CURRENT YEAR JAN-DEC 2020			TOTAL		
	TRANSFERS	REFUNDS	NET FUNDED	TRANSFERS	REFUNDS	NET FUNDED	TRANSFERS	REFUNDS	NET FUNDED
FAO	3,500,000		3,500,000				3,500,000		3,500,000
IOM	1,500,000		1,500,000	500,000		500,000	2,000,000		2,000,000
NGO/UNDP	5,581,560		5,581,560				5,581,560		5,581,560
UNMISS	629,802		629,802	500,000		500,000	1,129,802		1,129,802
GRAND TOTAL	11,211,362		11,211,362	1,000,000		1,000,000	12,211,362		12,211,362

Table 9: Net funded amount, reported expenditure and financial delivery by participating organization, as of 31 December 2020 (in US\$)

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION	APPROVED AMOUNT	NET FUNDED AMOUNT	EXPENDITURE			DELIVERY RATE %
			PRIOR YEARS AS OF 31 DEC 2019	CURRENT YEAR JAN-DEC 2020	CUMULATIVE	
FAO	3,500,000	3,500,000		1,039,121	1,039,121	29.69
IOM	2,000,000	2,000,000		463,404	463,404	23.17
NGO/UNDP	5,581,560	5,581,560	943,141	2,861,817	3,804,957	68.17
UNMISS	1,129,802	1,129,802		292,717	292,717	25.91
GRAND TOTAL	12,211,362	12,211,362	943,141	4,657,059	5,600,199	45.86

Table 10: Expenditure by project within sector as of 31 December 2020 (US\$)

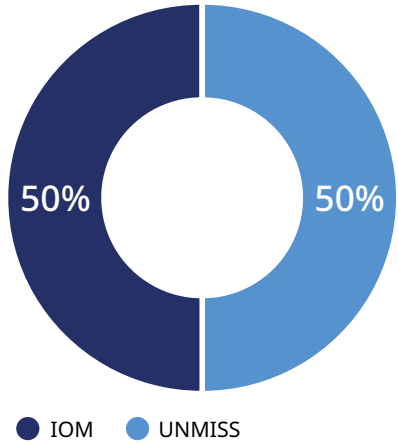
SECTOR/PROJECT NO. & PROJECT TITLE	PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION	PROJECT STATUS	TOTAL APPROVED AMOUNT	NET FUNDED AMOUNT	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	DELIVERY RATE %
00117636 Restoring Peaceful Coexistence	NGO/UNDP	Ongoing	5,581,560	5,581,560	3,804,957	68.17
00119273 Mitigating Cattle-Related Violence	FAO	Ongoing	3,500,000	3,500,000	1,039,121	29.69
00119273 Mitigating Cattle-Related Violence	IOM	Ongoing	1,500,000	1,500,000	427,726	28.52
00119364 Empowering the Grassroots	UNMISS	Ongoing	629,802	629,802	176,383	28.01
00120689 Targeted Support to Peace	UNMISS	Ongoing	500,000	500,000	116,334	23.27
00123084 Promoting Peace and Solidarity	IOM	Ongoing	500,000	500,000	35,678	7.14
RECONCILIATION, STABILIZATION AND RESILIENCE: TOTAL			12,211,362	12,211,362	5,600,199	45.86
GRAND TOTAL			12,211,362	12,211,362	5,600,199	45.86

Table 11: Expenditure by UNDG budget category as of 31 December 2020 (US\$)

CATEGORY	EXPENDITURE			PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PROGRAMME COST
	PRIOR YEARS AS OF 31 DEC 2019	CURRENT YEAR JAN-DEC 2020	TOTAL	
Staff and personnel costs	-	578,910	578,910	11.07
Supplies, commodities and materials	361	263,849	264,209	5.05
Equipment, vehicles, furniture and depreciation	7,586	(7,104)	483	0.01
Contractual services	80,862	2,233,099	2,313,961	44.25
Travel	4,462	100,744	105,206	2.01
Transfers and grants	775,453	887,532	1,662,985	31.80
General operating	8,482	295,361	303,843	5.81
PROGRAMME COSTS TOTAL	877,206	4,352,391	5,229,597	100.00
INDIRECT SUPPORT COSTS TOTAL*	65,935	304,668	370,602	7.09
TOTAL	943,141	4,657,059	5,600,199	

* Indirect support costs charged by participating organizations, based on their financial regulations, can be deducted up front or at a later stage during implementation. The percentage may therefore appear to exceed the 7 percent agreed upon for ongoing projects. Once projects are financially closed, this number is not to exceed 7 percent.

Figure 6: Transfer amounts by participating organizations, 1 January to 31 December 2020



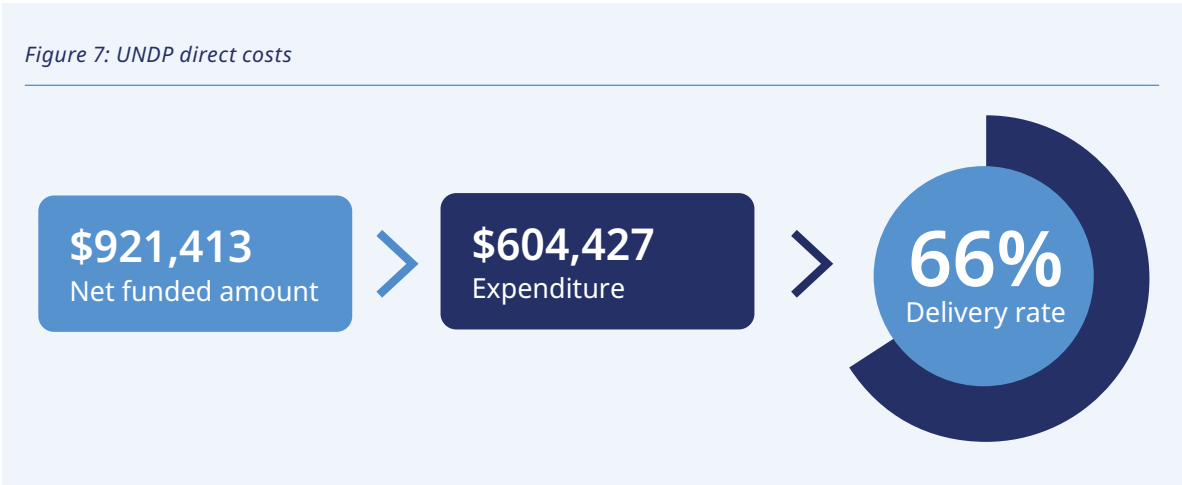
Accountability and transparency

In order to effectively provide fund administration services and facilitate monitoring and reporting to the United Nations system and its partners, the MPTF Office has developed a public website, the MPTF Office Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org>). Refreshed in real time every two hours from an internal enterprise resource planning system, the MPTF Office Gateway has set standards for providing transparent and accountable trust fund administration services.

The Gateway provides financial information, including contributor commitments and deposits, approved programme budgets, transfers to and expenditures reported by participating organizations, interest income, and other expenses. In addition, the Gateway provides an overview of the MPTF Office portfolio and extensive information on individual funds, including their purpose, governance structure and key documents. By providing easy access to the growing number of narrative and financial reports, as well as related project documents, the Gateway collects and preserves important institutional knowledge and facilitates knowledge sharing and management among United Nations organizations and their development partners, thereby contributing to coherence and development effectiveness of the United Nations.

Direct costs

The Fund governance mechanism may approve an allocation to a participating organization to cover costs associated with Secretariat services and overall coordination, as well as Fund-level reviews and evaluations. These allocations are referred to as 'direct costs'. The transfer for direct costs for the reporting period was \$403,490. Cumulatively, as of 31 December 2020, \$921,413 has been charged as direct costs.



DEFINITIONS

Allocation	Amount approved by the Steering Committee for a project/programme.
Approved project/ programme	A project/programme including budget, etc., that is approved by the Steering Committee for fund-allocation purposes.
Contributor commitment	Amount(s) committed by a donor to a fund in a signed standard administrative arrangement with the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), in its capacity as the administrative agent. A commitment may be paid or pending payment.
Contributor deposit	Cash deposit received by the MPTF Office for the Fund from a contributor in accordance with a signed standard administrative arrangement.
Delivery rate	The percentage of funds that have been utilized, calculated by comparing expenditures reported by a participating organization against the 'net funded amount'.
Indirect support costs	A general cost that cannot be directly related to any particular programme or activity of the participating organizations. UNDG policy establishes a fixed indirect cost rate of 7 percent of programmable costs.
Net funded amount	Amount transferred to a participating organization, less any refunds transferred back to the MPTF Office by a participating organization.
Participating organization	A United Nations organization or other inter-governmental organization that is an implementing partner in a fund, as represented by signing a memorandum of understanding with the MPTF Office for a particular fund.
Project expenditure	The sum of expenses and/or expenditure reported by all participating organizations for a fund, irrespective of which basis of accounting each participating organization follows for donor reporting.
Project financial closure	A project or programme is considered financially closed when all financial obligations of an operationally completed project or programme have been settled, and no further financial charges may be incurred.
Project operational closure	A project or programme is considered operationally closed when all programmatic activities for which participating organization(s) received funding have been completed.
Project start date	Date of transfer of first instalment from the MPTF Office to the participating organization.
Total approved budget	This represents the cumulative amount of allocations approved by the Steering Committee.
US\$ amount	The financial data in the report is recorded in United States dollars, and the totals may not add up, due to rounding off of numbers.

ACRONYMS

CBO	community-based organization
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organisation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBV	gender-based violence
ICCSM	Interstate Coordinating Committee on Cattle Seasonal Movement
IOM	International Organization for Migration
Jonglei/GPAA	Jonglei and the Greater Pibor administrative area
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NGO	non-governmental organization
NP	Nonviolent Peaceforce
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
RSRTF	Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund
R-TGoNU	Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity
SC	Save the Children
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VSFG	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Germany
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

The RSRTF thanks the governments of Germany, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden for their generous contributions in 2020





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2020 Annual Report: South Sudan Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience

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MPTF Gateway: <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SSR00>