



Strengthening trauma awareness and social cohesion in Greater Jonglei, South Sudan

A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAMMING

APRIL 2022

Acknowledgements

Robert Groelsema of CRS's Africa Justice and Peacebuilding Working Group (AJPWG), Hyppolite Reynold of CRS Haiti, and David Malual of CRS South Sudan co-led the field work for the case study.

Disclaimers

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Cover photo: Atoch Mawut Lat, 36, gestures on the farm of a vegetable producer group in Malou village, Bor county, Jonglei State, South Sudan, April 9, 2019. *Will Baxter/CRS*

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AJPWG	Africa Justice and Peacebuilding Working Group
BHA	Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance
BCSCP	Building a Culture of Social Cohesion and Peace Project
CMDRR	community managed disaster risk reduction
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EU	European Union
FFP	Food for Peace
FGD	focus group discussion
GPAA	Greater Pibor Administrative Area
HROC	Healing and Rebuilding our Communities
IR	intermediate result
JFSP	Jonglei Food Security Program
KII	key informant interview
KSA	knowledge, skills, and attitudes
MEAL	monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
RF	results framework
RFSP	Resilience and Food Security Program
SILC	savings and internal lending community
ToC	theory of change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WPUC	water point user committee
3Bs	binding, bonding and bridging

Executive summary

When people act together for stronger, healthier and more just social ties, they can better achieve their recovery and development priorities in peace

Purpose of the case study

This case study explores CRS’s initiative in Greater Jonglei, South Sudan to integrate trauma awareness and social cohesion within multisector resilience programming.¹ The case study documents the emerging and additive impact that trauma awareness and social cohesion training are making on mainstream resilience activities, participants and staff, and what the results portend for future programming. Only recently have trauma awareness and social cohesion strengthening been viewed as critical to the ability of a distressed population to recover from and cope with shocks and stressors whether human-induced or natural. Similarly, the combination of relief, development and peacebuilding—the triple nexus—is still being tested and has much to prove in the way of accelerating recovery, building resilience and tackling poverty, injustice and violence.

The study looks at the framing of CRS’s efforts—the integrative results framework; the training curriculum and content including CRS’s social cohesion methodology: *binding, bonding and bridging* (the 3Bs); the investment in connector projects; and the selection of project participants.² How effective were these approaches and methods? What challenges did the implementers encounter and how were they overcome? What gaps remain? Were lessons learned and best practices identified that would produce more sustainable and optimal outcomes in the future?

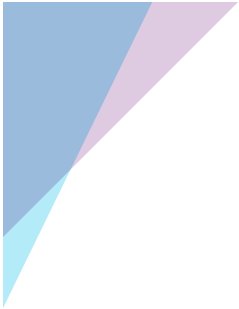
The findings of this study offer learning and insights useful for the design, implementation and measurement of multisector resilience strengthening programs. They provide reflections about relief and development programming, and suggest practical recommendations for effective courses of action. Lastly, they inform directions for further research regarding the additive value of trauma awareness and resilience and social cohesion for recovery, coping, and rebuilding lives and livelihoods in contexts of recurring violence.

Background to South Sudan and to CRS’s resilience programming

After nearly half a century of war, South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011. In the wake of fighting lies a culture of violence fueled by political conflict, the proliferation of automatic weapons and insecurity, bloody inter-ethnic conflicts, population displacements and trauma. South Sudan’s refugee crisis is the largest in Africa and third largest in the world, with 2.4m refugees seeking safety outside the country and 1.87m internally displaced.³

Jonglei State and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), the subject of this case study, are populated by Dinka, the Gawaar and Lou Nuer people and the Murle. Other smaller ethnic groups include the Anuak, Jie and Kachipo. These groups are

1 “Greater Jonglei” refers to Jonglei State and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) combined.
2 This report uses the term “project participants” to refer to project participants, and at times uses the two terms interchangeably.
3 UNrefugees.org.



mainly cattle herders, fishers and farmers. Jonglei is South Sudan's largest and most populous state, but its poor infrastructure, and seasonal widespread flooding makes it one of the country's most inaccessible states. The recent civil war starting in 2013, along with abductions of women and children, cattle thieving, and criminal banditry and attacks on unarmed civilians including women and children have caused grievances to accumulate, and a culture of violence to prevail in Greater Jonglei.

Beginning in 2014, CRS used private funding to pilot a trauma awareness intervention in Greater Jonglei. Three years later, the intervention became part of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Resilience Food Security Program (RFSP), a multi-sectoral, integrated program featuring agriculture, livelihoods, resilience, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition, microfinance using the CRS savings and internal lending community (SILC) model, disaster risk reduction (DRR), adult learning, youth engagement and social cohesion and trauma awareness. The program used USAID Title II food commodity as conditional assistance to support resilience building, the creation of community assets and the development of peaceful linkages between rival or hostile communities.

Since 2017, CRS directly implemented the RFSP as the lead in a consortium with Save the Children International to improve food security for conflict-affected households in six counties of Greater Jonglei (Bor, Twic East, Duk, Uror, Akobo and Pibor). The program was funded as an emergency intervention by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and was scheduled to close in July 2022. In 2020 the European Union (EU) provided CRS in Greater Jonglei with complementary funding to augment RFSP's activities in livelihoods, resilience and social cohesion under the Building a Culture of Social Cohesion and Peace (BCSCP) project. The BCSCP is implemented in Pibor, Duk, Uror and Ayod and is integrated with RFSP interventions. RFSP and BCSCP teams in social cohesion cooperate, coordinate, plan and integrate the implementation of social cohesion and trauma awareness activities in the target zones. The BCSCP project is scheduled to end on September 30, 2022.

Greater Jonglei's human relief and development needs are great. The intensity and frequency of recent flooding has destroyed crops and left no seeds for replanting. Boreholes have been flooded and neglected, and need repair. Few health facilities or personnel exist. Many people have been displaced and where they have returned, are living in temporary shelter. The main supply roads into Greater Jonglei are often inaccessible due to poor road conditions and insecurity.

Methodology: The case study team included Robert Groelsema of CRS's Africa Justice and Peacebuilding Working Group (AJPWG), Hyppolite Reynold of CRS Haiti, and David Malual of CRS South Sudan. They conducted field visits and conducted key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD) February 13-27, 2022, interviewing 91 project participants (65 men, 26 women)—traditional leaders and local authorities, members of peace committees, and women and youth. The site visits included Pajut, Yuai, Pibor and Bor and Juba.

Key findings: The team divided its findings into three parts: project framing and design; social cohesion approach and methodology; and project participants.⁴ The results framework, budget and staffing, which explicitly acknowledged the

4 The case study uses the term "project participants" to refer to RFSP and BCSCP project participants.



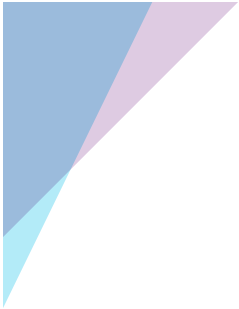
Lochia Mama Kudumoch (right) talks to her daughter-in-law Ngun Kiziwo Oleyo, 21, and another daughter-in-law in Pibor, Jonglei State, South Sudan, April 25, 2021.

Photo by Will Baxter/CRS

significance of social cohesion and trauma healing to resilience programming, were found to have raised the visibility of non-traditional components in resilience strengthening, bestowing on them an equal status among other, more mainstream resilience components like food security, livelihoods and WASH. The intentionality of integration, its compliance with CRS's key integration criteria, and its home within the projects' central management structure housed in Bor, ensured that the vulnerabilities associated with triple nexus approaches did not compromise interventions.

The projects' social cohesion approach and 3Bs methodology—binding, bonding and bridging—were found to be highly effective, but fell short of directly improving relationships and bridging divides separating the Dinka and Nuer groups from the Murle ethnic group. The training curriculum comprising leadership, social cohesion, trauma awareness and resilience, reconciliation and stress management were uniformly appreciated by project participants of all groups regardless of ethnic identity, gender, age or function.

Although the connector projects received enthusiastic praise from all participants, the projects might have been even more effective had it been possible to bring the different groups together at the outset to jointly plan, design and implement the projects side-by-side. Owing to the armed hostility amongst the groups and the lack of any agreed safe space where such an inter-community meeting could be held without risk to the participants and to CRS staff, such joint planning was too dangerous to be attempted. Nonetheless, the team found that the selection of project participants—civil authorities, chiefs, religious leaders, and elders; peace committee members; and women and youth was appropriate to strengthening social cohesion while helping these groups build and recover their lives and livelihoods in a more peaceful environment. The team also observed that participants and project



staff had internalized key concepts from the training, and were transforming learning into action in their homes, communities and livelihoods.

Key conclusions:

1. A single management entity for RFSP and BCSCP for triple nexus integration improved chances of successful project implementation and impact.
2. The selection of primary project participants for the project proved strategic.
3. The training approach and curriculum were appropriate to the context.
4. For the most part, the 3Bs methodology aptly addressed personal trauma and improved personal agency, and it prepared single identity groups to bridge with other ethnic groups; however, it stopped short of bridging Dinka-Nuer with Murle peoples.
5. The connector projects were win-win—highly appreciated and instrumental—but could have been configured to contribute to stronger bonding and bridging.

Key recommendations:

1. Expand and reinforce binding.
2. Intensify bonding among the Murle.
3. Scale up horizontal and vertical bridging.
4. Mainstream social cohesion and trauma awareness into future CRS programming.
5. Reinforce peace infrastructure.
6. Mobilize women and youth for social cohesion and peacebuilding.
7. Document and disseminate program learning.

Purpose and background

Purpose of the case study

This case study explores CRS's initiative in Greater Jonglei, South Sudan to integrate trauma awareness and social cohesion within multisector resilience programming.⁵ The case study documents the emerging and additive impact that trauma awareness and social cohesion training have on mainstream resilience activities, participants and staff, and what the results portend for future programming. Only recently have trauma awareness and social cohesion strengthening been viewed as critical to the ability of a distressed population to recover from and cope with shocks and stressors whether human-induced or natural. Similarly, the combination of relief, development and peacebuilding—the triple nexus—is still being tested and has much to prove in the way of accelerating recovery, building resilience and tackling poverty, injustice and violence.

To this end, the study looks at the framing of CRS's efforts—the integrative results framework; the training curriculum and content including CRS's social cohesion methodology: binding, bonding and bridging (the 3Bs); the investment in connector projects; and the selection of project participants.⁶ How effective were these approaches and methods? What challenges did the implementers encounter and how were they overcome? What gaps remain? Were lessons learned and best practices identified that would produce more sustainable and optimal outcomes in the future?

The findings of this study therefore offer learning and provide insights that are useful for the design, implementation and measurement of multisector resilience strengthening programs. They also inform assumptions and theories about integrated relief and development programming, and propose practical recommendations for effective courses of action. Lastly, they suggest directions for further research like exploring the additive value of trauma awareness and resilience and social cohesion for recovery, coping, and rebuilding lives and livelihoods.

South Sudan and Greater Jonglei as a case study

After nearly half a century of war, South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011. In the wake of fighting lies a culture of violence fueled by political conflict, the proliferation of automatic weapons and insecurity, bloody inter-ethnic conflicts, population displacements and trauma. South Sudan's refugee crisis is the largest in Africa and third largest in the world, with 2.4m refugees seeking safety outside the country and 1.87m internally displaced.⁷

5 Greater Jonglei refers to Jonglei State and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area(GPAA) combined.

6 This report uses the term "project participants" to refer to project participants, and at times uses the two terms interchangeably.

7 [UNrefugees.org](https://www.unrefugees.org/).

Typologically, South Sudan falls into a category of extremely fragile and failed states. On the Fragile States Index (2021), the country is listed fourth from the bottom in the “high alert” group.⁸ On other major indices, South Sudan ranks last or near the bottom—185/189 on the Human Development Index (2019); 167/167 on the Legatum Prosperity Index (2021), 180/180 on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (2021), and for lack of data, is accorded “alarming hunger severity” status on the Global Hunger Index (2021)⁹. The rankings reflect South Sudan’s weak democratic foundation; resource predation; and chronic, recurring cycles of violence.¹⁰ But South Sudan is not alone. In 2021, 28 countries shared an “alert” to “very high alert” ranking on the Fragile States Index, and many more were experiencing the combined and cumulative effects of political destabilization, poverty, shocks and stressors, and cycles of violence.¹¹

Jonglei State and the GPAA are situated in the middle-northeast part of the country. Bor, located on the Nile River, is Jonglei’s capital and largest city. The state comprises nine counties spanning an area of 122,581 km² (47,329 sq mi)¹², making it South Sudan’s largest and most populous state. But its poor infrastructure, and seasonal widespread flooding also makes it one of the most inaccessible states by road.

The largest single group in Greater Jonglei are the Nuer, Gawaar and Lou, followed by the Dinka and then the Murle. Other ethnic groups include the Anuak, Jie and Kachipo. These groups are cattle mainly herders, fishers and farmers. Most combine cattle-rearing with rainy season agriculture, and migrate according to the rains and the inundation of seasonal floodplains. Ethnicity, ethnic identity and competition for natural and productive resources, especially cattle, define the main lines of cleavage.

The immediate drivers of violent conflict are abductions, cattle thieving, and attacks on innocent civilians including women and children. But the area’s history of civil war in Sudan, and the post-independence civil war starting in 2013 have caused grievances to mount along ethnic lines, creating a culture of violence in Greater Jonglei.

CRS South Sudan’s resilience programming

CRS has operated in South Sudan since the 1970s. Its main interventions have been in the relief to development space where it has significant experience implementing integrated, multi-sectoral portfolios of humanitarian and development assistance. Funding for these “omnibus” activities comes principally from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Food Program, the European Union (EU), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other private donors. In 2021, CRS South Sudan had an estimated operating budget of \$78m. In 2021, the country program (CP) counted more than 800 staff, spread across 39

8 “High Alert” states include Afghanistan, Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan. “Very High Alert” states include Syria, Somalia and Yemen. There are also 20 countries ranked in the “Alert” category. Fund for Peace, 2021.

9 Insufficient data to give a number rank the country on the GHI.

10 Legatum Prosperity Index 2021

11 Fund for Peace, 2021 Fragile States Index.

12 Before reorganization.



Joseph Korok, 43, a member of a peace committee, poses for a portrait in Pibor, South Sudan, April 24, 2021.

Photo by Will Baxter/CRS

locations in Greater Pibor Administrative Area and Jonglei, Lakes, Eastern Equatoria, and Central Equatoria states.

On average, CRS South Sudan's programs have reached over 1.5 million people annually. The program has opened over 3,000 miles of roads for access to services and markets, supported over 400 community savings and lending groups, and anticipates delivering in 2022 food assistance to 1 out of 10 people in need in South Sudan.

Resilience and Food Security Program

Beginning in 2014, CRS used its private funding to pilot a trauma awareness intervention in Greater Jonglei. The resonance of this program with staff and project participants garnered the attention of donors. Three years later, the intervention became part of USAID's Resilience and Food Security Program (RFSP). The RFSP is a multi-sectoral, integrated program that features interventions in agriculture, livelihoods, resilience, WASH, nutrition, microfinance disaster risk reduction (DRR), adult learning, youth engagement and social cohesion and trauma awareness. The program used USAID Title II food commodity as conditional assistance to support resilience building, the creation of community assets and the development of peaceful linkages between rival or hostile communities.

In 2016, CRS's Africa Justice and Peacebuilding Working Group (AJPWG) conducted an evaluation of the intervention and made several recommendations on the approach and the use of the CRS 3Bs methodology, which subsequently were implemented. In 2017 the AJPWG trained program staff and helped develop a two-day training manual in English on trauma awareness targeted at RFSP project

participants. In 2021, the RFSP developed visual aids to support understanding of training content for non-literate communities.

Since 2017, CRS directly implemented the RFSP as the lead in a consortium with Save the Children to improve food security for conflict-affected households in six counties of Greater Jonglei (Bor, Twic East, Duk, Uror, Akobo and Pibor). The program was funded as an emergency intervention by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and was scheduled to close in July 2022. The RFSP goal was to "improve food security of conflict-affected households in six operational counties;" The program aimed to reach over 689,000 people and distribute 37,217 MT of food commodities. The program employed 449 national, and 18 international staff.

Building a Culture of Social Cohesion and Peace (BCSCP) project

In 2020 the European Union (EU) provided CRS in Greater Jonglei with complementary funding to augment RFSP's activities in livelihoods, resilience and social cohesion under the Building a Culture of Social Cohesion and Peace (BCSCP) project. The project's stated goal is that Communities in Jonglei State and Greater Pibor Administrative Area develop and sustain their resilience against recurrent conflict by 2022.

CRS implements BCSCP in Pibor, Duk, Uror and Ayod counties and integrates BCSCP activities with RFSP interventions. RFSP and BCSCP teams in social cohesion cooperate, coordinate, plan and integrate the implementation of social cohesion and trauma awareness activities in the target zones. One significant addition in the BCSCP project is its efforts to strengthen the capacity of local, traditional courts, and to improve their ability in the absence of formal state structures to render justice, mitigate disputes and prevent them from turning violent. The BCSCP award was scheduled to end in March 2022 but has been extended to September 30, 2022 on a no-cost extension basis. The project expects to reach nearly 165,000 people in the target counties.

In summary, Greater Jonglei's human relief and development needs are great. The intensity and frequency of recent flooding has destroyed crops and left no seeds for replanting. Boreholes have been flooded and neglected, and need repair. Few health facilities or personnel exist. Many people have been displaced and where they have returned, are living in temporary shelter. The main supply roads into Greater Jonglei are often inaccessible due to poor road conditions and insecurity.

Methodology

Robert Groelsema of CRS's Africa Justice and Peacebuilding Working Group (AJPWG), Hyppolite Reynold of CRS Haiti, and David Malual of CRS South Sudan co-led the field work for the case study. The field visits took place during February 13-27, 2022. To ensure that a diversity of voices would be heard, the researchers adopted a qualitative design featuring focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) of traditional leaders and local authorities, members of peace committees, women and youth representative of the three major ethnic groups of Greater Jonglei: Nuer, Dinka, and Murle. The site visits included Pajut, Yuai, Pibor, Bor and Juba. During this study, 91 project participants (65 men, 26 women) were reached through FGDs and KIIs.

The researchers relied on questionnaires with guiding questions that allowed for follow up questions and probes. For example, “How are your lives different now than they were before you participated in the program? What changes have you noticed within yourself, your immediate circle of family and friends, and in your relationships with other groups? Can you share an example of how safety, security and peace have changed in your community? Which project activities impacted you and your community the most? What should the project do more of/keep doing, less of, or stop doing? What remains the most difficult challenge you/your community face?”

Following the field visits, the team conducted CRS staff KIIs in Bor and made presentations in validation sessions with RFSP staff in Bor, CRS staff in Juba, BCSCP staff in Juba, and remotely with RFSP staff in Juba.

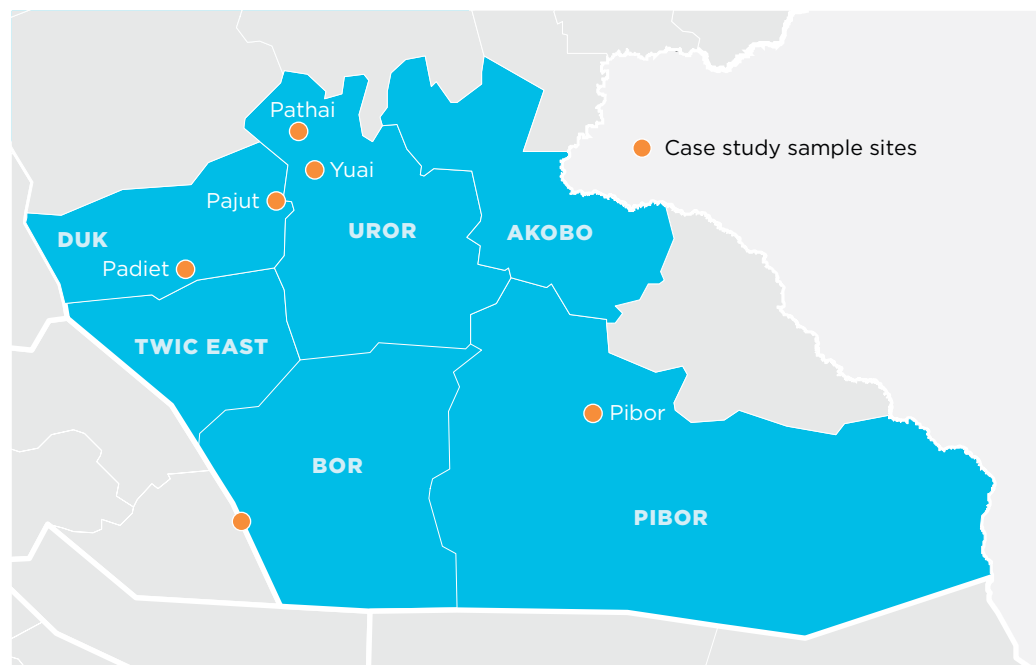


Figure 1. Location map of social cohesion case study sample sites



Findings

The case study findings are divided into three parts. The first part considers the *Project Framing and Design*—the way the project implementers thought about designing and implementing a multisector omnibus resilience activity for Greater Jonglei. What were their motivations, and how did their thinking affect program organization, structure and staffing? The findings in this part examine the results framework (RF) and theory of change (ToC).

The second part considers the social cohesion approach and methodology. It examines the peacebuilding training curriculum—stress management, trauma awareness and resilience, reconciliation, leadership and social cohesion strengthening. The team focused on how CRS’s flagship methodology for social cohesion strengthening—*binding, bonding and bridging* (3Bs) was received by the project participants, and how it and the connector projects impacted their lives, relationships, social networks and economic activity.

The third part concludes with a review of the project’s *targeting of project participants*—traditional leaders and local authorities; peace committee members, and women and youth.¹³ The selection of these actors speak to the intentionality of the projects’ emphasis on locally-led peacebuilding, the inclusivity of the intervention for marginalized groups, honoring and leveraging prevailing faith and belief systems, and working with and through local peace infrastructure. The relationship between RFSP and BCSCP staff and local actors should also be recognized in the way it underscores the importance in a context like South Sudan of joining the international to the national and local.

Project framing and design

Results framework

RFSP project managers elevated social cohesion and trauma awareness to a result level, which obligated the team to design, budget and plan for, implement, track and report on progress toward achieving the result and evaluate the consequences of the action. This level of scrutiny did not exist under the pre-cursor program funded under USAID, the Jonglei Food Security Program (JFSP), implemented in Greater Jonglei by CRS 2011-2017 under which CRS private funds supported the trauma awareness intervention. The RFSP team specified the result as intermediate result (IR) 2.6, “Communities have improved capacity to mitigate trauma.” The activities specified under the IR were:

- Activity 2.6.1: Facilitate community-led social cohesion and trauma awareness process;
- Activity 2.6.2: Train targeted community members and leaders on social cohesion and trauma awareness.

¹³ The training materials also reached members of water point user committees (WPUC), SILC groups, WASH groups and community managed disaster risk reduction (CMDRR) committees.

- Activity 2.6.3: Identify and implement social cohesion activities to reduce vulnerability of unemployed young men to the risk of violence

Three observations are instructive for resilience framing:

First, the intentional, deliberate and conscious positioning of trauma awareness and resilience and social cohesion within the overall RFSP resilience framework of the project triggered project modifications and budget authorizations that assured adequate funding for trauma awareness and resilience and social cohesion. It also sent a message to staff and partners that integration would receive equal status with other project components, thereby positioning the team leaders of these components to call meetings, organize trainings, and become part of the greater recovery and rebuilding effort.¹⁴ Technicians in food security, nutrition, livelihoods, SILC, WASH and other sectors affirmed the training had made them better leaders, and helped them cope with personal and secondary stress and trauma.

Second, integrating social cohesion and trauma awareness and resilience into the RFSP was not without challenges and risks to community members and staff. The Chief of Party noted the importance of the “do no harm” imperative to take rapid action in risk reduction for CRS staff doing program implementation in what had then become a war zone. JFSP piloted the trauma awareness intervention in Duk which was then, in 2014, on the front lines of the civil war. CRS had sent in a JFSP team to try to deliver food support to communities in Duk displaced by the war. When the team reached Duk they discovered that they were standing directly in the firing line between adversaries: on the one side a Duk local community of IDPs in Dorok boma, whose original village had been razed by Lou fighters from Uror and half a mile away on the other side of Dorok boma, a settlement of Lou IDPs from Uror who had come into Duk seeking humanitarian assistance.

When the JFSP team reached Duk, they realized that it was a powder keg. There were only two choices, either get out of Duk as fast as possible and save their own skins, or try and reach an agreement with both communities of IDPs settled in Dorok that JFSP would be allowed to provide support to both communities separately and that each community would not interfere with the assistance delivery by JFSP to their local enemies.

The JFSP team had been trained in trauma awareness and set out to conduct awareness raising sessions in each of the Dorok communities using that training experience. JFSP first approached the chiefs in each community and laid out the options, i.e. either JFSP can aid both communities or neither community gets assisted. The Lou and Dinka chiefs understood and accepted and it was then down to the JFSP team to use the trauma awareness approach to bring the community members themselves in both communities around to accepting the idea of two separate registrations and two separate deliveries of food assistance to what then became referred to as Dorok A village and Dorok B village. Having used this approach and seen it work to prevent conflict and potentially save lives, including their own, the JFSP team decided to try it out on a broader scale and use trauma awareness as the entry point for work with other communities and in other sectors since everyone was living through the trauma of the civil war at that point.

¹⁴ The project managers identified CRS private funds to launch the integrative intervention, and after demonstrating success, received funding from USAID.

Third, genuine obstacles to impeding the success of triple nexus projects were ever-present to RFSP and BCSCP. Challenges like bureaucratic infighting and competition, prioritizing humanitarian response over less urgent, but sustainable interventions for longer-term development and impact, and higher transaction costs—coordination and consultation, cooperation, and communications—needed to be addressed. These were managed and minimized by assigning responsibility for the design, organization and implementation of the effort within the same management entity. With its operations situated in Bor, the RFSP and BCSCP could prioritize the relief-to-development continuum as the main center of gravity for the intervention, while project staff themselves needed little convincing to buy-into trauma awareness, having experienced directly the negative impacts of violence on their personal relationships and their ability to perform their duties in the larger relief-to-development arena.

A focus group discussion with RFSP staff representing agriculture, livelihoods, WASH, and capacity-building affirmed the impact that trauma awareness and resilience and social cohesion training had had on staff. When asked how the training had affected them personally and their work, they mentioned how the sessions had helped them handle stress, interact more positively within the household, learn how to forgive and when provoked, how to reconcile rather than retaliate, how to become more productive in their tasks and assignments, and show leadership in working with community-based organizations like water point user committees.

SOCIAL COHESION

Peace, resilience, and prosperity are more often present in societies with greater social cohesion, interpersonal safety, and intergroup trust. (USAID Policy Framework 2019). Yet, lasting peace largely depends on the willingness and capability of society members to (re)forge their relationships in the face of legacies of violence and conflict.

The capacity-building program manager mentioned how he had learned to overcome and cope with personal trauma. He also was proud that his personal growth had permitted him to help others do the same, including colleagues and project participants. The livelihoods program manager noticed the difference in his familiar relationships. Following the training, they were much healthier because of the dialog, cooperation, and not allowing stress to interfere with home relationships. The WASH program manager said that because he understood what trauma was, how it worked, and how it affected behavior, he felt he had become a more effective leader at home and working with water user groups. The agriculture program manager had benefitted from the project to better manage his stress at home and in working with youth and producer groups.

EVALUATION

In the JFSP final evaluation in February 2017, the report noted that the project had “For the most part...succeeded in doing no harm;” responded “swiftly to the changing situation and changing needs”; and “adapted under the most difficult circumstances and the project’s ongoing flexibility and adaptability based on the changing situation were project strengths”

In sum, and importantly for CRS, the project fulfilled the Agency’s six criteria for integration, thereby passing the threshold for what CRS considers an adequately integrated multi- or inter-sectoral integrated project.¹⁵ The criteria are not exhaustive, but include: 1) the peacebuilding components should be important, and clearly recognizable among others; 2) the Intended changes in unjust structures or policies or in

¹⁵ Under the Agency’s previous strategy, *Hope to Harvest*, the integration of justice and peacebuilding with other sectors was elevated to an Agency core competency. The Justice and Peacebuilding Team established six criteria by which to measure a fully-integrated project.



Manyok Akoy Ajak, 35, a youth leader, poses for a portrait at a cattle camp on the outskirts of Duk-Padiet, Duk County, Jonglei State, South Sudan, May 4, 2021.

Photo by Will Baxter/CRS

a conflict (be it violent or not yet so) should be specified; 3) significant resources should be dedicated to each sector involved; 4) there should be professional competency for each sector; 5) coherence and synergies should be built in, and 6) results should be demonstrable and evidence-based. These criteria are critical because they require an intentionality of purpose and action that place the activity on a par with more traditional mainstream resilience activities.

The final evaluation of the Jonglei Food Security Program conducted in 2017 was silent, however, about social cohesion and trauma awareness and resilience activities, and the difference these had made for resilience outcomes. This silence was notably transformed by the inclusion of IR 2.6 and activities 2.61-

3 in the 2021 annual report where it was obvious that not only was the team now reporting on social cohesion and trauma awareness and resilience activities, but that significant progress was being made in awareness-creation, training, action plans and consultations to identify unemployed youth and cattle camp youth for training in stress management, reconciliation, trauma awareness and leadership to strengthen relationships among cattle camp youth and set up agreements on how to share resources including grazing land and water points.

Social cohesion approach and methodology

Training curriculum and content

CRS South Sudan's social cohesion team divided the training curriculum into five components: stress management, trauma healing, reconciliation, leadership and social cohesion. International consultant Paul Boyle was identified by CRS and conducted all the sessions for leaders and key stakeholders except social cohesion, which were delivered by CRS project staff, David Malual and Daniel Biar Guluak.

Participants in the FGDs and KIIs uniformly appreciated the sessions, and during the interviews several of them could remember specific exercises and content that they found meaningful and had incorporated in their lives and relationships. The vacuum of state presence, that is one of the impacts of the civil conflict since 2014, meant that traditional authorities, religious leaders, and local officials needed to step up to fill the leadership void. Without training and accompaniment, they would not have had the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) to advance inclusive respect, harmony, unity and equity.

The components reflect criteria that emerge from the literature on trauma and stress, as well as the experience of the international consultant, who has spent more than 30 years in Sudan and South Sudan, much of which he dedicated to trying to understand the impacts of violence on individuals and groups, and helping them cope with human-induced and natural shocks and stressors. While these components do not encompass all there is to convey to survivors of trauma—direct, indirect and other forms—they are appropriate to the Greater Jonglei context, and from a practical standpoint, are about as much content as can be transmitted in 2-3-day trainings.

The training session components are conveyed by poster-size hand painted and reproduced images, effective for reaching low literacy audiences. The drawings are context specific to South Sudan, depicting scenes and environments familiar to the audience. The visual aids provide the presenters and facilitators a format that engages the audience, prompts critical thinking, suggests questions, and initiates and guides discussion on the content and topics.

Binding

The emphasis on individual and group trauma and stress management appeared to have strong impact. Key informants and focus group participants unanimously praised the project's accent on personal healing. Individuals cited the benefits they received such as controlling their stress and channeling their anger in peaceful ways that avoided self-destructive behavior or striking out at spouses, children, neighbors and others or retaliating against perceived injustices and violence with violence. A few mentioned the benefit of breaking out of self-isolation to connect with family and community. Many interviewees spoke about how they learned to appreciate their spouses, elders and leaders. Others spoke about having their faith, hope and trust in members of their communities and their leaders restored because of the training. The case study team found several instances of where respondents remembered specific principles, exercises and examples used in the training. Perhaps most significant was the assertion by several people that their self-healing had grown them to be leaders of their families and communities, leading them to model behavior and to help others.

Bonding

The bonding training and activities focused on introspection, harmony, unity and solidarity within single identity groups, mainly based on ethnic identity. The interviews revealed that because of the training and follow up by project staff, intra-group conflict had diminished, and was more manageable than previously. FGD

participants reported that there were fewer incidences of cattle raiding between clans, fewer arguments among neighbors, and a reduction in land disputes. The payment of blood compensation for past harms was also occurring. Respondents credited connector projects like road construction, well digging, and cooperative farms for fostering dialog, social interactions, and financial cooperation between previously isolated bomas and payams.

Murle members of BCSCP peace committees in GPAA noted the improvement in intergenerational relationships. In the past, cattle camp youth did not respect their leaders and elders, but after the stress management and trauma healing, respect between the generations had increased while blaming, fault-finding, accusing, insulting and demonizing had decreased. One elderly member of a BCSCP peace committee noted that listening and tolerance were becoming common. It was also observed that members of the Lango and Kurenen age-sets amongst the Murle community were more frequently seen in town taking tea and meals together. Previously, the age-set members had denied each other access to certain neighborhoods and areas in towns, which was no longer practiced. However, FGD participants cautioned that relational change would also require more training and accompaniment.

Challenges to bonding included making connections between the plateau-dwelling Murle of Boma and the lowlander Murle in Pibor, and uniting members of the two youngest and most violent age sets in Murle culture, the Lango and the Kurenen. Nonetheless, FGD respondents claimed that the trauma awareness and resilience and social cohesion training had positively impacted relationships between and among age-sets. In one example cited, it was observed that age-set members who previously herded their cattle separately from other age-sets, could be seen herding together, even to the point of building temporary shelters, which they would share at water points.

In addition to the sharing of cattle camps, water points and pastures, the case study team heard stories of increased women's empowerment and the ability—and willingness—of women to speak in public. In Greater Jonglei, women are pressured socially to not speak in public spaces where men are present. This finding indicated that the training across groups was making a beneficial impact on women's voice and inclusivity.

Bridging

Per the KIIs and FGDs in all sites visited, relationships between Nuer and Dinka groups have improved significantly. However, relationships between members of these two groups and members of the Murle group remained strained or broken. The interviews evoked expressions and examples indicating that understanding and appreciation of the “other” had improved significantly between the Dinka and Nuer and in instances were leading to cooperation and a willingness to resolve differences peacefully.

Notably, little evidence of demonization between Dinka and Nuer was evident, despite the inter-ethnic violence fomented by the 2013 civil war, and to the contrary, participants indicated a willingness to dialog and make peace with members of

the different group. Interviewees reported that Nuer and Dinka had rekindled social relationships involving dancing and singing, were inter-marrying, and where mixed households and neighborhoods existed, crossing over in language use was becoming commonplace. In one of the FGDs, the predominantly Dinka participants preferred to conduct the interview in the Nuer language.

Nonetheless, bridging between the Dinka and Nuer groups and the Murle group was far less advanced. Linkages appeared to be stalled by ongoing attacks, cattle raids, abductions, and other harmful acts which the Dinka and Nuer blamed on the Murle—mainly young men. On the Murle side, FGD participants expressed their frustration with mounting, unaddressed grievances that fell into the category of structural violence. For example, roadblocks manned by Dinka were preventing the passage of goods and services along major trunk roads to Pibor. However, the Murle FGD participants also expressed their willingness to resolve differences peacefully. They said that people were tired of fighting and if the opportunity arose, people would reconcile and negotiate peace with their Dinka and Nuer neighbors.

When asked to cite examples of dialog and cooperation, participants from the various sites and FGDs mentioned the Peace Conference held in Pieri, and the BCSCP-led conflict analysis workshop in Juba. FGD participants also mentioned that cattle raiding, child abduction, attacks and killings—although still present—were no longer occurring as frequently as five years ago. One of the common causes of disputes—insecure grazing corridors—was being mitigated by consultations and agreements between Dinka and Nuer, who also bought and sold cattle with each other. Participants were eager to see such arrangements extended to the Murle.

Connector projects

Of the various project activities mentioned in KIIs and FGDs, none was as popular and well-received as the connector project intervention. Connector projects were an obvious win-win in that they provided gainful employment using much-needed cash income (BCSCP) or food (RFSP) to sustain distressed and impoverished communities while establishing a platform for sustained social and financial interactions. The projects increased contact between neighboring, but latterly separated, denizens of isolated payams and bomas. The intervention was clearly building trust, mutual respect, and understanding across rival communities. In one FGD, a young Nuer man could scarcely contain his enthusiasm about his participation in a cooperative farm.¹⁶ He ventured that peace could be nurtured and sustained if the size of the farm were expanded, and if similar operations could be situated along the boundaries and borders between Nuer and Murle communities. Similar overtures were heard in Pibor from Murle youth.

The case study team noted, however, that the impacts of the connector projects might have been still more pronounced had it been possible for the participating communities, Dinka, Nuer and Murle to jointly plan, and co-design, implement, monitor, and evaluate the projects. However, doing so would have violated the first law of humanitarian intervention, namely ‘Do no harm’. The deep divisions and the continuing retributive violence amongst the communities in Greater Jonglei

¹⁶ Yuai FGD.



Rebecca Nyathiai Wan poses for a portrait in Panyok, South Sudan, May 2, 2021. Rebecca's community took part in a project to build a 16-kilometer road to connect Panyok to Pajut, the nearest town with a health facility.

Photo by Will Baxter/CRS

mean that there is no agreed safe space where such a meeting could be held and attempting such a gathering would have been reckless and high risk for both CRS staff and community participants.

Project participants

Part three of the findings reviews the project's selection of main project participants: traditional leaders and local authorities, peace committee members, and women and youth.¹⁷ Empowering local leaders and devolving authority through subsidiarity has been found to be a formula for successful development and peacebuilding.¹⁸ By focusing training resources on leaders, peace committees, women and youth, the project leveraged local customs and traditions to allow positive values and norms to flourish and be the glue that reconnected communities in customary conflict resolution approaches.

Leaders

It was apparent from the KIIs, FDGs and project reports that local leaders were benefiting significantly from the trainings. The leadership component in the curriculum targeted local officials, traditional authorities including chiefs and religious leaders, and elders and other influencers. The international consultant Paul Boyle told the story of a chief, who was so struck by a session in leadership, that he abruptly left the room to make a call sending instructions to his assistants to organize a village

¹⁷ The training materials also reached members of CRS supported WPUCs, SILC groups WASH groups, and CMDRR committees.

¹⁸ Connaughton and Berns, *Locally-Led Peacebuilding: Global Case Studies*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2020.

meeting immediately upon his return so that he could begin implementing action steps.¹⁹ To maintain their reputation as trustworthy and respected authorities in civil matters, local leaders need special knowledge, skills and attitudes, especially in conflict environments where keeping peace is a critical function.²⁰

Peace committees

Through BCSCP funded by the EU, CRS support local peace committees in Duk, Pibor and along the borders between Duk and Uror and Duk and Ayod to address existing conflicts and respond to potential violence in a timely manner. The committee comprises thirteen members of both women and men locally identified and nominated to serve as the community's 'go-to' peace group. The committees were found to play an instrumental role in shaping community cohesion and engaging youth leaders in peaceful conflict resolution. To date, the local peace units have had significant positive impacts in reducing intra-community tensions and enabling trust in the local system of dispute resolution. The committees collect and analyze data on conflict incidents and provide locally led and context appropriate settlement of violent conflict within identity groups in Pibor and across the borders of Dinka and Nuer in Duk, Ayod and Uror.

Peace committees are the backbone of local peace infrastructure. Although they may be largely invisible, and at times inactive, they lead reconciliation processes in their communities. The committees initiate and guide dialog between community members who are at odds with each other, they provide moral and material support to distressed families, and they mobilize their communities to rehabilitate the houses of IDPs, repatriated persons, and orphans.

A peace committee member in Pajut talked about the value of training youth and women together, and ensuring that the committees comprise a balanced mix of women and men. He noted how the local culture of violence toward women was changing. He said that traditional roles and divisions of labor no longer were the norm. For example, women were keeping cattle, milking them, and bringing milk to their families.

Where they previously had no decision-making authority, women were now participating in cattle camp meetings, and exercising a voice in decisions regarding the movement of cattle. "It's not like before where women had no participation in cattle camp activities."²¹ Previously, women could not be represented or elected to leadership of cattle camps. The communities also see examples of increased women's participation in government as well. From the social cohesion training the participants learned that women have the capacity to talk, decide, and participate directly in community activities.

19 Conversation with Paul Boyle, 19 February 2022.

20 See conclusions and recommendations from *Steps Toward Peace*, a conflict analysis in the Liptako-Gourma area of the tri-border region of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, 2020.

21 FGD with chiefs, elders and peace committee members in Pajut, 15 February 2022.

Women, youth and persons with disabilities

It is well-documented that conflict affects men and women differentially with women most often bearing the brunt of violence. The BCSCP project's training of women as local court assistants was effective both for the confidence it instilled, but also for the increasing numbers of women who defended themselves against charges of adultery and brought other cases to the courts, including allegations of rape.²² The projects' social cohesion component stimulated discussions on issues like women's participation in town hall meetings, the timing of meetings so that women could attend, and women's participation in cattle camp decisions and activities. One woman commented that whereas previously, women could not be elected to government positions, women and men now acknowledged that women could speak up in public, be involved in community and household decisions, and contribute to civic activities. The key informant also noted that the translator at the local court was blind, and that his example was proving an inspiration to people with disabilities and to the community generally.²³ In Yuai, a woman said she and her sisters were now becoming involved in community decision making, and consequently, "we have fewer conflicts—the training has gotten women involved in the Church." The churches have become a path of upward mobility for women where they occupy positions as deacons, elders and pastors.²⁴

In Pajut, a woman member of a CRS-supported Water Point User Committee (WPUC) spoke about how much the training on reconciliation had helped reduce fighting between children and neighbors, and how husbands and fathers no longer committed acts of violence against their wives and daughters. She also said that her training in leadership had encouraged her to learn how to respect individuals, to not discriminate, and to forgive when small mistakes were made, such as cutting in line when waiting for water. She admitted that it was difficult at first, but she and others were practicing the principles and putting them into action. She did, however, recommend additional training on listening, communication and reconciliation.²⁵

If there was a recurring theme emerging from the women's FGDs and KIIs, it was "peace with the Murle." The case study team read aloud a recommendation from a learning study they had conducted with a mixed Dinka-Nuer women's group in Potkap in February 2020. In that FGD the women had suggested that not only was peace possible, but that it could be jump-started by convening a women's peace conference in Gadiang, almost the dead center geographically of Greater Jonglei and spoken of historically as offering a potential location to establish a neutral and safe site for the three main ethnic groups. The Pajut women's response was: "We agree with the Potkap women's suggestion about Gadiang. Our husbands are dying

22 Atel Ongee Paito, Advocate and Commissioner for Oaths, a consultant to BCSCP, thought that the local courts were handling rape and murder cases for which they are not trained and which were outside their normal jurisdiction. In his opinion, the courts' capacity is very low, and their judgements specifying the number of cows to be paid by the perpetrator for an offense sends the wrong signal, indicating that "you commit a crime and you get off too easy." The courts hear evidence and take decisions in public under trees and judges keep documents at home. There is little record-keeping and little knowledge about how cases are handled outside the communities. Knowledge of jurisprudence is low. Interview 18 February 2022.

23 FGD in Pajut, 16 February 2022.

24 FGD, 17 February 2022.

25 Pajut women's FGD, 16 February 2022.

and our children are being taken from us. So, if we can join with the Murle women we would like to do that to stop the violence.”²⁶

EXPRESSIONS OF JOY: SONG AND DANCE

At the women’s FGD in Pajut, the women performed a peace song they had composed, which they sang and danced for the case study team. The lyrics went as follows: “We have received many things—roads are open, we have water points for our animals, we are living in peace, women are represented, and we are very happy with CRS.

The pressure on young, unemployed males to raid cattle and to stage attacks on neighboring ethnic groups, coupled with the available of cheap automatic weapons has resulted in armed herder groups and cattle camp youth with little supervision or feeling of conformity to laws, regulations and traditional rules and norms. On the way to Yuai, a large Nuer town of about 200,000 that had much violence and destruction during the civil war between Government and Opposition forces starting in 2013, the case study team stopped to visit with a small group of herders where cattle were watering at a hole. The young men, who carried automatic weapons, said they needed them to ward off would-be attackers.

Key informants and focus group participants in Yuai said that they had used the connector projects to dig catchment ponds. There were now more sources of water, and herders spent less time in distant camps. The social cohesion and reconciliation training had helped them to coexist with Dinkas—not with Murle—and share cattle camp life together where they ate and danced together.

THE VALUE OF PEACE

A young woman living in Pibor town said that she feared for the future of her 13-year-old son. “We wear the bead color of the husbands’ age-set, but we do not engage in violent activities—we want peace. We do not need our husbands and sons to be killed...as it is now, if we have a baby boy, maybe in ten years he will be killed. We really need peace in our communities. In Murle culture we have four children and send one of them to school. If we had more peace, we would send more children to school. Bringing up a good child starts when they are young. Then when a child grows up, they will not engage in violence.”

In Pibor, a group of young men and women talked about their understandings and applications of key concepts from the training and connector projects. A young man living in Pibor town said he thought a lot about reconciliation, reconciliation and appreciation for others and acts of kindness. A young woman said that when she is wronged she no longer seeks revenge. Another woman talked about how peace for her began with simple things like sharing salt or fire with her neighbors, and using “very good language” with them. She said that they shared more, and that she shares ideas from the training with her neighbors and friends. Her advice for a more peaceful community was straightforward: “First we have to share simple things with each other.”²⁷

A herder from the Murle Lango age-set concluded by saying that traditionally, it had been very difficult for members of different age-sets to visit with each other. He described how the cooperative farm, developed with CRS’ support, had helped them rebuild livelihoods with seeds, tools, fishing hooks and nets, SILC, and small livestock. He said the social cohesion training had helped them make big changes that improved their relationships with members of other age-sets, including their rivals, the Kurenen.²⁸

²⁶ FGD 16 February 2022.

²⁷ FGD 19 February 2022.

²⁸ Ibid.

Conclusions

From the findings, the case study team draws five conclusions:

1. A single management entity for RFSP and BCSCP for triple nexus integration improved chances of successful project impact
 - Despite the threats and drawbacks to triple nexus approaches documented in the literature—trading efficacy for coherence; bureaucratic infighting; and high transaction costs—locating the multiple sectors under the same project and management umbrella reduced and lowered these costs and minimized opportunities for spoilers to derail the potential of the triple nexus approach.
 - The design, RF and ToC satisfied CRS’s threshold criteria for integrated projects, thereby enhancing chances for successful impact.
2. The selection of primary project participants by the two programs proved strategic
 - Leaders benefitted from stress management, trauma awareness and resilience and leadership training, enabling them to model good behavior, to instruct youth and others in peaceful resolution of conflict, and to intervene in disputes before they turned violent.
 - Training peace committee members reinforced local peace infrastructure.
 - Focusing on women and youth honored inclusivity and enhanced the prospects for the greatest peace gains within the shortest timeframe.
3. Training approach and curriculum for the two programs were appropriate to the context
 - The insistence of the program to include social cohesion strengthening and trauma awareness and resilience in the Greater Jonglei context was highly appropriate and has paid dividends
 - Though it was not the main thrust of social cohesion, the approach and methodology improved vertical relations and linkages.
 - The activities improved trust and respect of citizens to traditional and state leaders, and the access to justice component of BCSCP contributed to stronger vertical relationships.
 - The use of visual aids was particularly effective in the Greater Jonglei context of near universal levels of non-literacy amongst adults.
4. For the most part, the 3Bs methodology used in the programs aptly addressed personal trauma and improved personal agency, and it prepared single identity groups to bridge with other ethnic groups; however, it stopped short of bridging Dinka and Nuer with Murle peoples.
 - The methods and materials were appropriate and effective for the groups that experienced it—project staff, leaders, and women.

- The Murle ethnic group shows weak bonding between the lowlanders and the plateau Murle, and between age sets, especially between the Lango and the Kurenen.
 - A strong community-based trauma awareness and resilience approach to reinforce and sustain ongoing psycho-social support such as “Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC)”²⁹ could solidify gains made under JFSP, RFSP and BCSCP.
 - Lessons and learning emerging from RFSP and BCSCP have not been part of CRS’s broader social cohesion learning agenda, but if they were included, they would offer fresh directions for research.
 - Mental and emotional health are not optional components for resilience and form an essential component in resilience interventions, particularly in “multiply-wounded” counties.
5. Connector projects were win-win—highly appreciated and instrumental—but could have contributed more to bonding and bridging
- A multiply-wounded context like South Sudan requires multiple, overlapping, contextualized approaches such as connector projects.
 - The roads, small infrastructure, and farms were extremely popular with project participants and helped achieve the goals of the project because they provided income or food subsidies, they created connective tissue between isolated groups, they built assets and infrastructure, and they mitigated trauma in a highly food-insecure environment.
 - The connector projects bonded rival neighboring communities belonging to the same ethnic group and between the Dinka and Nuer, but did not bridge the conflict between both those groups and the Murle. Connector projects have improved connective tissue between Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups and among different youth age-sets of Murle tribe.

²⁹ HROC is a community base trauma healing approach developed in the Africa Great Lakes region to help participants examine and discuss consequences of violence in their lives by bringing people from opposing sides of the conflict

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Expand and reinforce binding

- *Awareness creation.* Interviewees indicated that they had benefitted greatly from the trauma awareness and reconciliation units in the training they received. They also advised that more people receive the training, and that the public needed to be made aware that conflict was normal, natural and neutral, and that people could resolve their differences by means other than violence. While radio stations have little reach in Greater Jonglei, only in Bor town (which was not part of the target population for RFSP or BCSCP) and around Padiet in Duk there may be some scope on a limited scale to use radio public service announcements to sensitize the public and reinforce learning and messaging covered in the trauma healing and reconciliation training workshops.
- *Establish community trauma healing groups.* The trauma healing sessions conducted by CRS staff have been received enthusiastically by program participants. For sustainability, it is advisable that recipients of the treatment form community groups and meet regularly where they can continue to share experiences and fortify each other. The HROC, which evolved from the Rwandan and Burundian genocides, and which CRS employs in the Central African Republic and elsewhere, could serve as an effective model for community trauma healing networks.³⁰

Recommendation #2: Intensify bonding among the Murle

- Conduct Binding, Bonding and Bridging for:
 - *The Lango and Kurenen age sets.* Study participants reported that the Lango and Kurenen age sets, the youngest of the age sets, were the main perpetrators of the worst violence, and at the time of this study, were the least exposed to the 3Bs methodology. However, careful conflict analysis should be undertaken to protect the CRS local staff undertaking trauma awareness amongst these youth cohorts. The risks of age set violence targeting CRS Murle staff, who are themselves all members of age-sets, would be considerable, as would the risk to the Agency of being perceived to violate Murle social norms. CRS should attempt the approach of training the members of age-sets separately before attempting to bring them together.
 - *Cattle camp youth.* Many cattle camp youth, besides members of the Lango and Kurenen age sets, have not received training in the 3Bs. Although cattle camps can be located far from towns and difficult to reach, peace committee members and elders indicated that they would be willing to go to the camps to conduct 3Bs exercises.

³⁰ Operations research conducted by Palo Alto University in Central African Republic revealed that participants in the HROC program showed significantly reduced signs of anxiety and depression after the conclusion of the program.

- *Traditional authorities.* Chiefs and other traditional leaders still command respect and are influential figures in their communities. Those who received the training report that they have greatly benefitted from it, but many in this demographic have yet to receive training, and recipients of the training will need reinforcement and accompaniment.

Recommendation #3: Scale up horizontal and vertical bridging

- *Conduct bridging activities.* These can include youth and women forums to promote peaceful coexistence among Dinka, Murle and Nuer cattle camp youth leaders. Also, women could hold a conference to discuss conflict prevention strategies and roles of women in deescalating violence and child abduction among communities.
- *Implement connector projects.* Examples include feeder road construction linking different communities and helping businessmen and women to transport commodities and encourage business interactions.³¹
- *Design and conduct joint « People to People » activities.* Although RFSP and BCSCP have conducted inter-group dialogues and consultations, as the intra-group bonding solidifies, and oppositional groups progress along the continuum from “understanding” to “willingness to resolve differences peacefully,” donors and implementing partners can increase the number and frequency of dialogues and consultations to advance horizontal inter-group cooperation.
- *Design and conduct inter-group (mixed groups) connector projects from beginning to end.* Plan, design, implement, monitor and evaluate jointly with mixed groups, and where possible with rival groups, connector projects to increase “face time” between groups as they tackle challenging and contentious, but mutually beneficial livelihoods and infrastructure projects.
- *Intentionally strengthen horizontal and vertical socio-economic linkages across multiple identities (horizontal) as well as different levels and institutions (vertical).* The connector projects should be continued in areas where bonding has improved, and expanded to areas where connective tissue is weak.

Recommendation #4: Mainstream social cohesion and trauma healing into future CRS programming.

- *Build social cohesion and trauma awareness and resilience into future CRS programming at the project design stage.* As Martha Cabrera argued in “A Multiply-Wounded Country,”³² healthy minds and emotions are critical to advancing development in contexts that experience recurring shocks and stressors. In such environments, trauma healing is not optional. Trauma awareness and resilience can be made more effective and lasting if it receives equal weight in resilience programs.
- *Elevate trauma awareness and resilience to a high result level.* Include trauma awareness and resilience in the ToC and RF for multi-sector resilience programs.

³¹ These two recommendations emerged from the Juba conflict analysis meetings sponsored by RFSP.

³² “Living and Surviving in a Multiply-Wounded Country, Martha Cabrera, n.d. https://www.medico.de/download/report26/ps_cabrera_en.pdf.



Maker Lam, Peace Committee member, poses for a portrait in Pajut, South Sudan, April 28, 2021.

Photo by Will Baxter/CRS

- *Budget for trauma awareness and resilience.* To avoid having to modify the project or source additional funds, plan for and budget sufficient funding for trauma awareness and resilience and social cohesion strengthening.

Recommendation #5: Reinforce peace infrastructure

- Strengthen the capacity of existing peace committees to achieve greater impact. Specifically, to:
 - *Leverage their roles.* Support them to build stronger relationships between divided communities and link peace committees at the grassroots to higher levels, e.g., county and state.
 - *Strengthen knowledge, skills and attitudes.* Fortify training in conflict analysis, management and resolution, including mediation processes that promote the participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities.
 - *Promote cross-fertilization.* Encourage coordination, collaboration and learning across various peace committees to yield broader benefits and impact.
- *Institute mobile courts.* Increase access to justice for cattle camp youth by investing in alternative dispute resolution mobile courts, that can be staffed by trained traditional court assistant judges and peace committee members.
- *Institutionalization.* Projects are not meant to last forever. The learning must be internalized and institutionalized for sustainability and lasting impact.

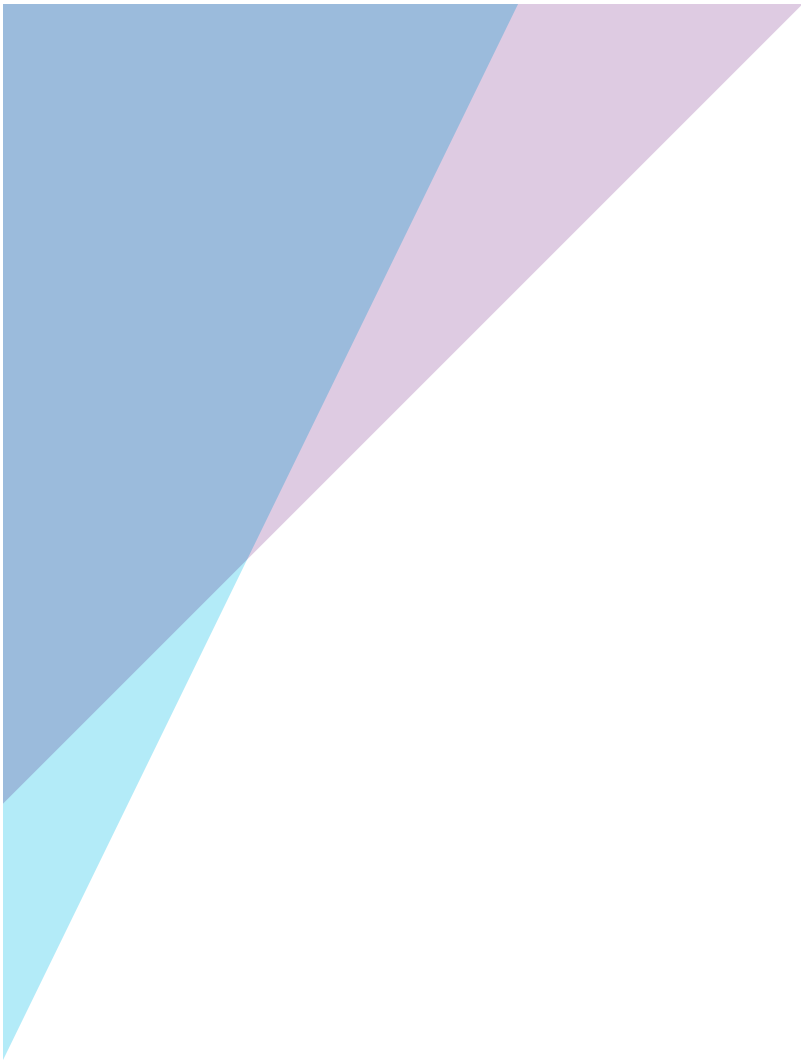
Recommendation #6: Mobilize women and youth for social cohesion and peacebuilding

- *Train women facilitators.* Empower women, youth, and marginalized groups to meaningfully engage in decision-making spaces and link them to religious, traditional and community institutions and leaders at the payam and boma levels. Address norms and values that obstruct women's literacy, positive agency, and acquisition of productive skills.
- *Support inclusive, consultative, and participatory decision-making fora and spaces.* Utilize local, traditional spaces such as community gatherings to demonstrate and reinforce the importance and benefits of inclusive and participatory decision-making.
- *Implement inclusive horizontal social cohesion interventions.* Bridge multiple identity groups (ethnic groups and age sets, women and men, and generational groups) as a platform to build mutual trust for collaborative efforts and a cohesive voice when engaging vertically. However, careful conflict analysis must be conducted to prevent staff and the agency from being perceived as breaking social norms related to age-sets and to protect CRS local staff from being targeted for intra- or inter communal violence.
- *Create a mentorship and shadowing program.* Encourage and support women serving in positions of authority and influence such as on traditional courts to serve as role models and to mentor young women and girls.

Recommendation #7: Document and disseminate program learning

- *Improve program measurement.* Employ and expand the use of the Adult Hope Scale and the Hopkins Symptom Checklist to measure trauma healing effectiveness and sustained impact.
- *Apply the Social Cohesion Barometer.* To better understand the status of and trends in social cohesion in given contexts and environments, apply CRS's mini-Social Cohesion Barometer, and improve social cohesion measurement by using or adapting indicators from CRS's Social Cohesion Indicators Bank.
- *Conduct learning reviews.* Fill information gaps and capture, share and use knowledge that supports and improves resilience, social cohesion and trauma outcomes by conducting intentional, periodic collaborating, learning and adapting.
- *Identify a research agenda.* Identify a key research question and engage a university partner or think tank to test psychosocial resilience assessment metrics and tools.
- *Add a dignity indicator to the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) and the performance management plan.* CRS has developed tools and indicators to measure human dignity in households, communities and organizations.³³ The tools help project managers, service providers and project participants understand how the project contributes to or detracts from human dignity, and heighten the importance of respect for human dignity, what it entails, and what can be done to improve it.

³³ Also see Donna Hicks, *Leading with dignity: how to create a culture that brings out the best in people*. Yale University Press, 2018.



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