

## **Executive Summary**

### **Summative Evaluation of the UNDP South Sudan Community Security and Arms Control Project 2017**

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South Sudan is a fractured nation with deep ethnic division, a break down in social cohesion and a lack of trust among the citizens and between the state and the citizens. The UNDP Community Security and Small Arms Control (CSSAC) project aimed to develop a comprehensive and strategic approach to address the many challenges faced by South Sudan (resource based conflicts, lack of government services, ethnic tensions, the proliferation of arms, and the legacy of decades of conflict) and to promote peace and reconciliation in South Sudan. The CSAC project endeavoured to tackle the complex situation by focusing on the absence of government services, the proliferation of arms and resources based conflicts around land, grazing and water. It supported communities to identify conflict causes, develop local responses and building local capacity to prevent and resolve these conflicts. The project supported communities and local governments to identify common interests strengthen and develop interdependencies across tribal and ethnic divides. CSAC played an important role around peacebuilding and community security at a critical stage in the establishment of the new State and in this regard it has made a contribution to governance and stability at the local level. The project worked to strengthen and develop four sets of relationships; intra community where there is a break down in relationships within communities, inter group along tribal and ethnic fracture lines, between IDPs and host communities (often with an ethnic dimension) and between communities and the State particularly at county and state level.

The CSAC approach to addressing community security was relevant and appropriate despite the continual changes in the context and the project was aligned with both national priorities and with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UDAF) and the UN Interim Co-operation Framework (ICF) outcomes over the implementation period. However this work has been somewhat isolated and has not reached the scale to make a difference at national level or to address the deteriorating ethnic based conflicts.

At national level, the project promoted reconciliation and prevention of violence through its support for the South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission (SSPRC), the National Platform for Peace and Reconciliation (NPPR) and the Bureau of Community Security and Small Arms Control (BCSSAC). Despite the challenges encountered, the project implemented several relevant and strategic interventions particularly the support for county level work by the SSPRC, support to the SSPRC to get the NPPR off the ground and support to the BCSSAC in introducing the firearms bill. The support for the NPPR and the creation of space for civil society and other actors to engage with and to input into discussions on the peace negotiations was important at a time when there was little or no opportunity for this to happen. The support for the BCSSAC has not produced immediate results but it has left a legacy of the Firearms Law which can underpin future disarmament initiatives.

## **Main findings**

### **Relevance**

The focus on community level initiatives and on strengthening conflict resolution structures and processes at local and county level was the most appropriate response both before and after the 2013 crises. Efforts to introduce arms control, to build a peace infrastructure and support wider engagement in the peace process through the NPPR were all relevant and timely.

### **Effectiveness**

The Project was effective in a number of key areas. At local level it has increased people sense of security, Improved inter group relationships, helped create more resilient communities and strengthened the peace infrastructure at local level. The project has also facilitated the engagement and empowerment of women through capacity building, increased engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding and through livelihoods interventions including ones which specifically targeted marginalised women.

The CSO component has been significant and was an effective mechanism to extend the reach of the project and to strengthen sustainability. However the short term nature of the support provided to these NGOs limits effectiveness and CSAC should extend the support provided and should also strengthen links and synergies between these NGOs

The evaluation identified a number of issues relating to the CSAC theory of change. The project was designed when the international community was focusing its efforts on state building, extending the reach of the GoSS, and creating a “peace dividend” and CSAC was aligned with this overarching national and international strategy. However there are questions over the validity of this approach and the analysis which underpinned it on the basis that it was not addressing the critical issues of power and ethnic divisions at national level. As a result the CSAC theory of change was not sufficiently geared to the core conflict drivers and this reduced the overall effectiveness of the project.

### **Impact**

The evaluation has found that CSAC interventions have contributed to peace and security at a local level by increasing peoples sense of security, improving inter group relationships and by building more resilient communities which are better able to resist violence and provocation. This work has also strengthened the peace infrastructure at local level, built the capacity of local government and strengthened the social contract in these states. The project made significant progress and has established a useful platform for scaling up and taking these approach to a national level. However the project was not of sufficient scale to make a significant impact at state and national level and the ongoing political and security crises has eroded earlier gains in several states.

Efforts to bring about change at the national level have been frustrated by the lack of progress on implementation of the peace agreement, a lack of political will, and institutional weaknesses and despite a significant investment the overall outcomes are disappointing. Despite this the evaluation has found that this was the right strategy and that SCAC played an important role in supporting and sustaining a

national peace infrastructure at a difficult time. This provides a basis for further work when the space opens up for national dialogue and possible disarmament. There are lessons for CSAC on how to work in this arena which can inform their approach to the planned National dialogue process.

### **Sustainability**

The ongoing conflict and the devastating impact on communities have limited the sustainability of some of CSAC work particularly early conflict sensitive development projects. However some elements have reasonable potential to be sustained in particular the work at community level on resource based conflicts, establishing and/or strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms and the interdependencies projects. The work with local government also has some potential for sustainability especially the peace structures at county level. CSAC needs to main its focus on sustainability and also needs to ensure that all projects remain conflict sensitive.

### **Key issues going forward**

The evaluation identified a number of important issues for the next phase of CSAC

- CSAC has been involved in substantial work on livelihoods and in work related rule of law/access to Justice. There is scope and a need to connect the work of UNDP on livelihoods and access to justice/rule of law and this should be prioritised in the next phase.
- There is a huge need for enhanced citizen engagement in peacebuilding in order to push for implementation of the agreement and to rebuild a fractured society and contribute to nation building. However there are limited opportunities for this to happen and CSAC needs to build on and extend its work in this area and collaborate with other partners particularly CSOs, Universities and the Media to generate a more substantial dialogue.
- The work at community level and the focus on interdependencies needs to be amplified and disseminated to highlight the value of peaceful co-existence and to build hope and the UNDP can play a key role in co-ordinating and creating synergies at local level, and at state and national levels.
- Transitional Justice is a core element of the Peace agreement and will be critical to reconciliation and the future stability of South Sudan. CSAC can build on its work with the Peace Commission and at local level to support this process in the coming years. In order to engage effectively in this challenging area it will need to strengthen its capacity in both National Dialogue and Transitional Justice and form partnership with key international actors with expertise in these areas.

### **Strategic recommendations**

1. The CSAC project should be sustained and strengthened by the UNDP through the implementation of similar activities in order to enable it to build on the work implemented so far and to achieve the necessary scale to have national level impact.
2. CSAC should continue to use the twin track approach – working on security and social cohesion at local level and increasing its contribution at national level through national reconciliation and dialogue.

3. Donors should continue to support CSACs work on both community security /social cohesion and on national reconciliation and ensure that there is sufficient flexibility to enable CSAC to respond to the changing context.
4. Chapter 5 of the Peace Agreement (Transitional Justice, accountability, reconciliation and healing) will be a core element of any sustainable peace process in South Sudan and CSAC should engage with and support this process through a twin track approach; building grassroots initiatives and engaging strategically at the national level.

### **Summary of programmatic recommendations**

1. CSAC should strengthen its own capacity and the capacity of its implementing partners in political analysis, transitional justice, reconciliation and dialogue to enable it to effectively operate at the national level and contribute to the implementation of the agreement.
2. CSAC should ensure that the next phase of work is based on a clearly articulated and tested theory of change based on an up to date conflict analysis and taking into account the damage caused by identity politics and the deep ethnic division in the country.
3. CSAC should put in place strategies to ensure that there is ongoing support, and mentoring of projects implemented in this phase to ensure that they are sustainable, that they remain conflict sensitive and that there is ongoing support for gender equality and empowerment.
4. As soon as it is feasible CSAC should carry out an audit of facilities established in the earlier phase to identify the current status and usage and where appropriate develop a sustainability strategy to use them or to ensure that they are handed over to local government or relevant NGOs/CSOs
5. The UNDP should ensure that there is increased internal collaboration and that CSACs work with in livelihoods and rule of law, gender and SGBV is integrated with and supported by the relevant sections of UNDP.
6. CSAC should strengthen the CSO network and continue to build the capacity of the CSO both to deliver their own projects and to support specific approaches and thematic areas of work across the project in areas such as livelihoods, gender, SGBV, media and mediation.
7. CSAC should provide more long term funding strategies for the implementing partners and provide annual support at a minimum to ensure that they can develop more effective and sustainable projects on the ground.
8. CSAC should examine how it can expand the public dialogue element of the project and increase the geographic reach, the level of engagement and the range of issues being researched and debated.
9. CSAC should collaborate closer with other stakeholders involved in community security initiatives particularly the Churches and NGOs/CSO to look for synergies, identify gaps and to build a momentum towards peace and security.
10. CSAC should develop strategic partnerships with INGOs/ institutions involved in transitional justice and national dialogue to strengthen its capacity and to ensure that it can effectively engage in and support the National Dialogue and Transitional Justice efforts.