



Akuru picks edible leaves to  
help her and her family survive

## Annual Narrative Report 2021

Building Sustainable Peace and Gender Equality in South Sudan

## List of Acronyms

<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CBO's</b>	Community Based Organizations
<b>CoC</b>	Champions of Change
<b>CS</b>	Civil Society
<b>CSO's</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CYPP</b>	Children and Young People's Parliament
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GE</b>	Gender equality
<b>GYW</b>	Girls and Young Women
<b>LoP</b>	Leaders of Peace
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental health and psychosocial support
<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MP</b>	Members of Parliament
<b>NAP1325</b>	National Action Plan 1325
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>PCCA</b>	People's Coalition for Civic Action
<b>PFP</b>	Psychosocial Focal Point
<b>PME&amp;L</b>	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>R-ARCSS</b>	Revitalized Agreement on The Resolution of The Conflict in South Sudan
<b>RECs</b>	Regional Economic Communities
<b>RTGONU</b>	Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity
<b>R-TNLA</b>	Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly
<b>SEAH</b>	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
<b>SCS</b>	Strengthening Civil Society
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>UNSCR1325</b>	UN Security Council Resolution 1325
<b>UNMISS</b>	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
<b>W/G</b>	Women & Girls
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security
<b>WRGE</b>	Power of Voices Women's Rights and Gender Equality
<b>WRO</b>	Women Right Organizations
<b>W/Y</b>	Women & Youth

## General information

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# 1. Introduction

The Leaders of Peace (LoP) Alliance is a 5-year joint programme (2021-2025) implemented by Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA), EVE, HealthNet TPO (HNTPO), PAX and Plan International and is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme is implemented in 5 states located in South Sudan: Unity, Lakes, Western Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria and Central Equatoria. 2021 is the first year in which Leaders of Peace implements its strategies with the aim of contributing to a more empowering and inclusive environment, where women and girls (W/G) feel safer and better enabled to realize their rights, to play an influential role towards conflict prevention and sustainable peace.

The LoP Alliance is led by Plan International Netherlands and is implemented in strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Strengthening Civil Society framework (Women Peace Security grant instrument). The Women, Peace and Security grant instrument is one of the grant instruments through which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributes to the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325. The Netherlands has translated the Women, Peace Security theme into the Dutch National Action Plan (NAP)1325.

LoP prioritizes 3 key strategies in achieving success in three result areas:

- capacity building and resources
- influencing attitudes and beliefs on gender equality
- influencing laws and policies supporting Women, Peace & Security agenda

This first annual report covers the period January - December 2021. With only 6 months of actual implementation in the states Leaders of Peace is present, it is too early to draw conclusions in the three interrelated result areas. This first year was characterized by starting up and building the partnership.

This annual report 2021 reflects on the context Leaders of Peace is operating, it analyses the progress made per result area of the Theory of Change. Specifically, it reflects on the achievements on output level as well as progress made towards short and medium-term outcomes. Furthermore, this annual progress report reflects on the learning agenda, and the cross-cutting issues that include gender, youth, climate, and integrity and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH). It closes with a reflection on the sustainability and partnership. The result framework and risk assessment are included as an annex to the report. The result framework is indicating the actual results for 2021 versus the programme indicators and basket indicators.

Due to a delay with the audit report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs granted the consortium a one-month extension of the submission date of its financial and narrative annual report 2021. The narrative Leaders of Peace report will be complimented with the financial and audit report which is due June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

## 2 Contextual analysis

This section describes the most important changes in the external and internal context and how it influenced implementation of the program. This section builds upon the context analysis of the Leaders of Peace programme document (2020) and the annual plan 2022.

### 2.1 Changes in the external context

#### **Covid-19**

In the first year of Leaders of Peace, Covid-19 had a serious impact on the roll-out of the programme and consortium building. Contracting the organizations, meeting new colleagues, building the partnership, materializing the Theory of Change (ToC) and operationalizing the programme all happened mostly on-line. While digital tools prove to be very efficient for meetings, it can never replace face-2-face interaction that is so crucial in building relations and trust. Hence, it is a logical consequence that it took more time investing in the relationships and learning and starting up the programme fully as anticipated in the project design phase.

As in many parts of the world, Covid-19 in South Sudan has had a particularly devastating impact on women and girls who have witnessed and experienced isolation due to movement restrictions, as well as increased incidents of gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence, and disruptions to their livelihoods. At the state level, women noted an increased level of idleness among men and boys. According to the women, men are not contributing sufficiently to family support, thus placing a greater burden on women to care and provide for the family. As a result, women and girls are enduring higher care demands within their families, leading to increased stress levels and poor (mental) health outcomes due to the lack of balance in the distribution of care responsibilities and household tasks.

As Covid-19 cases declined following the introduction of a national vaccination programme in April 2021 and Covid-19 measures were relaxed, borders were subsequently reopened, and cross-border trading could resume across the country. In the programme areas of Juba, Nimule, Terekeka, and Yambio, this resumption of trade was particularly important to women who could engage in cross-border trading and selling of commodities at local markets for income. Yet the Covid-19 vaccine coverage is very minimal with only 5% of the population being fully vaccinated. Low vaccine rates are in large part due to global inequality in vaccine distribution, difficulties with delivering vaccines in remote areas and reluctance to get the vaccine due to cultural norms and myths related to Covid-19.

#### **Politics and conflict**

12 September 2021 marked three years since South Sudan signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS). There is growing concern from the international community, religious leaders and members of civil society over the delays and missed deadlines in the implementation of the Agreement, especially in the implementation of provisions related to the transitional security arrangements and the unification of armed forces.

Some critical issues outlined in the R-ARCSS remain unresolved, including the finalization of transitional security arrangements, the reunification of the armed forces, and the advancement of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process. The initial power vacuum at the beginning of 2021 preceding the reconstitution of the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly (R-TNLA) in May 2021 caused delays in political formation in local governments in all the states of South Sudan.

In 2021 the country continued to experience conflict at the subnational level, especially in Upper Nile, Unity, Jonglei, Warrap, Lakes, Central Equatoria and Western Equatoria states, fueled by factional fighting, intercommunal competition, lack of security and resource scarcity. Humanitarian agencies and NGOs remained the subject of protest and criticism from youth in Upper Nile, Jonglei and Western and Eastern Equatoria which has impacted implementation of project activities in certain areas. For example in Paniyar, during the first half of the year a high number of revenge killings was witnessed due to the power vacuum created by delays in the formation of the local government. The insecurity created by the revenge killings as well as the floods in Panyijiar resulted in the displacement of local communities to Yirol East. Displacement and cattle raiding by Panyijiar youth in Yirol East has resulted in resource-based conflict between different communities in both Panyijiar and Yirol East.

### **Civic space**

The civic space in South Sudan continues to shrink as human rights defenders, journalists, humanitarian workers and civil society organizations are targeted, intimidated, and threatened. In 2021, Civicus rated South Sudan's civic space as closed.

In August 2021, the government enforced strict security measures in response to the People's Coalition for Civic Action (PCCA) call for peaceful protests in Juba. While the protest, planned for 30 August, did not take place, the "threat" of the protest caused the government to closely monitor the work of NGOs. Events that followed included detentions, raiding of premises, an apparent internet shutdown, an enhanced presence of security forces on the streets of Juba, and increased surveillance of civil society organizations. As such, CSOs have not been able to conduct public lobby and advocacy campaigns due to the security threat.

In Ganyliel, severe floods resulted in major disruptions as communities were displaced and roads became inaccessible due to flooding. Owing to restricted movement and temporary suspension of civil society operations, cooperation on lobbying and advocacy became difficult. This was compounded by insecurity and fear brought on by the killing of a businessman and a humanitarian worker. 2021 witnessed also some positive developments due to limited restrictions to humanitarian work in Nimule which has resulted in easy service delivery for communities in project location. Similarly, close collaboration between civil society organizations and local government, particularly the office of the commissioner and local chiefs, has notably facilitated community engagements and other project activities.

## **Economic context**

The economic situation in South Sudan was volatile in 2021 as the country experienced concurrent shocks from floods, locust infestation, and Covid-19, resulting in an inflation which has further exacerbated people's ability to access services, livelihood opportunities, and goods. A spill over from the previous year, 2021 witnessed widespread flooding, ongoing violence, and subsequent displacement, resulting in increased economic despair and a worsened humanitarian situation, affecting in particular women and children in flood-affected areas such as Nyal and Ganyliel payams in Unity state. In Panyijiar county, heavy flooding resulted in the death of livestock and the destruction of crops which are the major sources of livelihood in the community.

## **Socio-cultural context**

In Torit, the Otuhu ethnic group initiated a new generation of Monyomiji, which occurs every 22 years. In the Monyomiji system, 'age sets' of young to middle-aged men assume responsibility for the governance and security of the community for specific time periods. Following their initiation, the Monyomiji led a demonstration against the hiring practices of humanitarian agencies. In reaction, the government imposed a long-week curfew which in turn temporarily halted operations in Torit and caused tensions amongst partner organizations.

Due to the floods people lost livelihoods, resulting in a state of economic hardship and increased risk of GBV such as forced and early girl child marriages for dowry as well as sexual exploitation as community members continue to struggle for their livelihood.

## **Gender dynamics**

Despite national efforts to promote women's participation in government and decision-making positions, women, political and civil society figures have raised concerns regarding the non-compliance of the signatories to the peace agreement with the 35% women's quota. In 2021, 159 women were appointed to the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly (R-TNLA) which falls short of the 35% quota. Nonetheless, women's representation in decision making has slightly increased in recent years. As such, there are opportunities in 2022 to build on this progress.

In some regions, the establishment of local government structures at the Boma, Payam, County and State levels has improved the communication and relationship between government, NGOs and communities which has enhanced lobbying and advocacy efforts on GBV. In Yirol East County, for example, the appointment of a new governor provided levels of order not witnessed since independence. Gender based violence reduced significantly as women and girls feel safer to go about their daily activities including collecting firewood and fetching water. In Nimule, the removal of soldiers from the main road and restriction of movement with guns have created a safer environment for civil society and women alike. In turn, this has created a space for women to conduct meetings, seminars and participate in events such as the 16 days of activism and to raise issues that affect them and their communities without fear. Similarly, the establishment of UNMISS-backed special courts in Greater Tonj, Rumbek, Yirol and Cueibet to prosecute serious crimes related to "sectional" conflicts, including rape, culpable homicide, robbery and grievous hurt, has contributed to decreasing intercommunal tensions and enhanced women's access to justice.

On the micro-level, however, power imbalances are still visible, often observed through community meetings and engagements. In Nimule, for example, women are often not willing to share their ideas, especially when men are present, as men restrict the movement of women and girls, and order WYG to seek permission to participate in community events. Even when granted permission, WYG are monitored so are often reluctant to fully participate out of fear of being questioned. During community meetings, women tend to shy away from discussing issues affecting them. Project staff faced challenges in mobilizing girls and young women (GYW) and males in some locations, especially Opari, where men do not want to participate in community meetings where women are present, while the cooperation of men as partners in the prevention of GBV is crucial.

## 2.2 Changes in the internal context

Overall, the Leaders of Peace programme was affected by some staff turnover, which caused slight delays in the implementation due to the recruitment and handover of new staff. In AMA, staff turnover impacted implementation as new staff were recruited and provided with the necessary inductions and handover to resume responsibilities under LoP. In the Netherlands, the Leaders of Peace desk, which is supporting the Leaders of Peace coordination desk in South Sudan, faced staff changes in the coordination position as the coordinator left Plan International Netherlands in early 2022 for opportunities elsewhere. Furthermore, Covid-19 affected the continuity of work. For example, a key consortium stakeholder was on sick leave for two months which impacted the finalization of the joint lobby and advocacy strategy.

Several working groups were set up to support the work of the SSD-consortium desk, and to ensure representation of all consortium organizations in all coordination-related work: communications, finances, and PMEL. The PMEL working group consists of one PMEL representative per consortium organization. The same holds for the finance group and the communication group.

To ensure the strengthening of partners' capacity as well as the coherence within the implementation of interventions, consortium partners divided the leads of the key interventions among the partners. Each lead of a key intervention was supposed to develop guidelines for its key interventions and train the partners on the implementation modus and consequently monitor progress. The development and mutual understanding of the key interventions led by each individual partner, is still in progress. Mid 2022 this process is expected to be completed, which means that by then key interventions can start to be implemented in all targeted project areas in a coherent way.

Furthermore, it was noticed that not all partners have continuous presence in the targeted locations. This issue will be further discussed in the next steering committee meeting in 2022. Irregular presence could have implications on the quality of the implementation and/or could pose other risks, such as safeguarding risks. Consequently, it will be discussed whether the targeted locations should be amended or coordinated in another way.

## 3. Progress of the Programme

### 3.0 Leaders of Peace Theory of Change: changes and adjustments

The Leaders of Peace programme aims to achieve a more empowering and inclusive environment in South-Sudan, where women and girls feel safer and better enabled to realise their rights, so they can play an influential role towards conflict prevention and sustainable peace. To achieve the overall objective, three result areas have been developed, along a multifaceted human rights-based approach contributing to SDG5 and UNSCR1325:

1. Improved implementation of policies and regulations on GBV and protection of W/G including psycho-social support and self-care,
2. Changed attitudes and beliefs of civil society (CS) to facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality (GE)
3. Increased and effective participation of W/Y in leadership and peacebuilding.

The three result areas are mutually reinforcing each other: Improving knowledge/uptake of GBV/ protection policies/regulations deters harmful gender norms; this is necessary to ensure that W/G equally participate. Equal participation of W/G in leadership and peacebuilding is key to sustainable /inclusive peace processes, and to protecting marginalised groups during (post-) conflict situations.

In 2021, a baseline study has been conducted that led to the adjustment of the LoP result framework. Six months after the start of the programme, the ToC was reviewed jointly by the alliance partners during the progress review and planning meeting. The review focused on analysing what impact the adjusted result framework has on the programme ToC and whether the expected outcomes indicated in the ToC are still valid for the coming years. The review and the analysis indicated no observable changes to the ToC and the expected programme outcomes at this point of time. Hence, it was decided that the ToC as designed during the proposal stage still holds for 2022.

### 3.1 Progress towards Outcomes per Result Area

Leaders of Peace adopted the use of a Theory of Change (ToC) and Outcome Harvesting to ensure adaptive programming in the complex environment of South Sudan. This approach was piloted under the Women and Girls 4 Change programme (the predecessor of LoP). Outcome Harvesting is part of the annual programme strategy meeting and as such an outcome harvesting session was conducted in February 2022 as part of the annual reflection meeting. For 2021, being it the first year, the focus was on adopting the methodology across all consortium members (since it is expected that during the first year progress towards medium- and longer-term outcomes will be limited). Not all partners were familiar with specifically Outcome Harvesting as an M&E

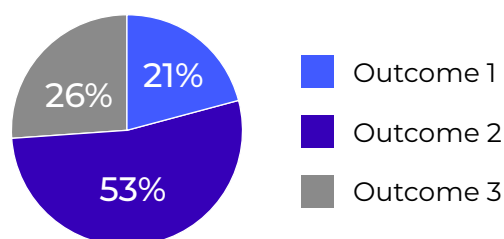
methodology. Therefore, the LoP desk produced an Outcome Harvesting toolkit and training module. Mutual capacity strengthening on M&E was organized through the Leaders of Peace PMEL working group. PMEL Officers or general representatives of all Consortium members form the Consortium PMEL Working Group (PMEL WG). It is chaired by the Consortium PMEL Officer who is part of the Consortium desk based in South Sudan. The PMEL WG met once a month (up to weekly during intense PMEL periods, i.e. midline, annual ToC reflection, learning events, etc.). The working group provides PMEL support to the Consortium Desk and Programme Committee and coordinates the overall planning of PMEL activities. It operationalizes the PMEL plan by co-designing processes and ensuring the quality and alignment of products across the Alliance. At the same time, it is committed to enabling the contextualization of PMEL and Southern Leadership in PMEL structures.

The first year of programming was used to kick-start the alliance, align the key interventions and set-up the internal and external communication and coordination systems. In some project areas the implementation could start rapidly as the Women and Girls 4 Change programme or other NAP1325 programmes had laid the foundational groundwork for engagement with community structures, platforms, gatekeepers, and peace actors. In other locations the start-up faced some challenges which impacted the ability to reach the desired outcomes.

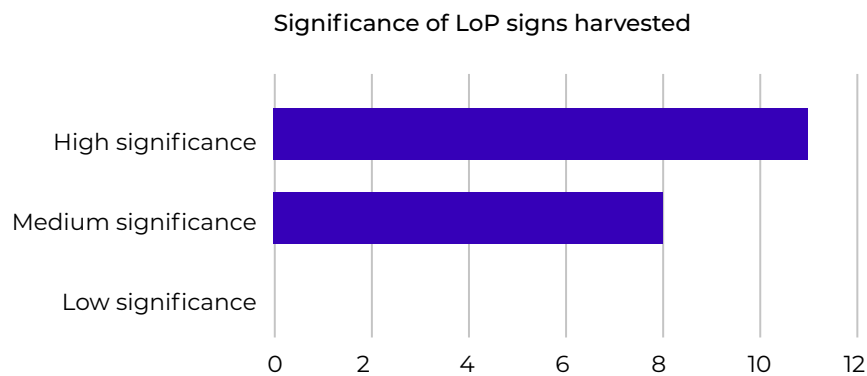
### 3.2 Analysis of signs of changes

To do justice to the complex and ever-changing realities of advocacy programs, the LoP has adopted in its PME&L system key building blocks of adaptive programming, notably the use of Theories of Change and Outcome Harvesting. All organizations involved in program implementation have kept an advocacy log of relevant changes observed at the level of key stakeholders and advocacy targets. Early 2022, partner organizations jointly reflected on the collected signs of change and determined whether and how their interventions contributed to these changes. All signs of change of the 5 partner organizations are kept in a master database. In 2021, a total of 19 signs of change have been documented by the Alliance. These are considered as changes at the level of the key stakeholders to which they assessed their interventions as a plausible contribution.

Taking a closer look at the different pathways, more than half of the signs of change observed in 2021 relate to changing norms and beliefs (outcome 2). Of the remaining signs, 4 of the signs observed relate to an increase in effective participation of W/Y in leadership and peacebuilding (outcome 3) and 3 signs relate to enhanced legal protection (outcome 1).



When analysing the changes observed further, most of these are considered highly significant in light of the envisaged outcome results of the programme. This equals 11 signs or 58% of the 19 signs harvested. 8 signs are considered of medium significance and none seem to be of low significance.



Other aspects of the changes observed in relation to the LoP programme, assessed during the Outcome Harvesting process include the fact that some changes are intended, and some are unintended. Of the 19 signs of changes harvested, 3 were unintended. Also, not all changes are positive as some may implicate a challenge for the LoP alliance to achieve its goals. This is the case for 1 observed sign of change. More details will be provided in the sections below.

The following section provides an overview of the contribution of the observed changes to the envisaged short/medium term outcomes as outlined in the LoP ToC. Realizing 2021 was the first year of implementation, it was not expected to (already) capture signs of change relating to the longer term outcomes. However if these were observed they are noted below.

### **Result area 1: Improved implementation of policies and regulations on GBV and protection of W/G incl. access to PSS & self-care**

Under result area 1 the LoP identified 2 output areas, namely 'Community groups have improved knowledge of available PSS services and legal protection/GBV services including strengthening case management' and 'Formal and traditional authorities are informed on existing legal protection framework for W/G including GBV survivors' rights' that contribute to the following short/medium term outcomes:

#### ***Short/Medium term outcome 1.1: CS strengthens community-based (MHPSS) support mechanisms***

In 2021, community-based Psychosocial Focal Points (PFPs) were selected in Nimule, Torit, Terekeka, Yambio, Nyal and Ganyiel and Juba to enhance MHPSS structures and mechanisms within communities. During the reporting period, PFPs worked closely with community groups, local leaders and women and girls to create awareness on topics such as GBV, gender equality, psychosocial impact of early/ forced marriages, and alcohol and drug abuse awareness. PFPs were trained on community mobilization, resource mapping, provision of mental health and psychosocial support, GBV, case management and referrals. In a positive sign of strengthened

community-based support mechanisms, PFPs collaborated with women, girls and community groups to identify mental health needs and priorities that requires further advocacy initiatives from CSO/CBOs and duty bearers.

One sign of change relating to outcomes of pathway 1 and 2 stood out for the alliance members. In Nyori Payam (Terekeka) 10 young couples have created a neighborhood GBV watch (so-called Jua Hila). The watch is reporting any case of GBV through the referral pathways and creating general awareness on gender equality in their neighborhoods. The couples believe that through their initiative they can change the narrative and stigma around gender equality as well as contribute to protection systems in their payam.

Another sign of change was captured under pathway 1. After participation in a GBV referral pathway workshop, the Boma chief of Moli Tokuro of Magwi County escorted GBV survivors to relevant services in Nimule as part of the referral pathway. “I am very happy to learn about the available services for response to GBV survivor [sic],” she said during dissemination of the pathway in her Boma following the workshop.

One negative sign of change was observed through young girls participating in the CYPP who noted that parents are not reporting SGBV incidents that occur at home. The programme is able to activate youth and gatekeepers on GBV awareness and reporting (refers to signs of change above). However, the programme is not able yet to activate parents; the alliance will aim to address this by engaging parents in the coming years.

***Short/Medium term outcome 1.2: Formal/ traditional authorities demonstrate capacity and willingness to work on legislation against GBV and W/G protection***

In 2021, chiefs and traditional authorities participated in trainings on enhanced legal protection for GBV survivors. In a positive sign of change, a total of 70 local authorities in Torit have shown their intention to develop local legislation against GBV and protection mechanisms for survivors on the traditional court level. There are gaps between national GBV legislation (which the ABC courts are trained on during the GBV pocket guide trainings) and the GBV legislation in the traditional courts. Chiefs sitting in the courts have expressed the wish to bridge this gap by developing/introducing additional legislation against GBV on A, B and C level following the national legal framework. Another example comes from Ganyiel and Thoanhnoam where a GBV desk tasked with maintaining records of GBV cases was established at the police stations. Knowledge sharing between the various GBV desks, including Nimule, is ensured through the community-based PFPs.

Two signs of change captured reflect women’s future inclusion in legislative accountability on the local level. In Terekeka, the paramount chief requested chiefs from each payam to select, at minimum, one woman in their community to join the ABC courts. Similarly, in a strong remark during the National Chiefs Conference in Juba, the head chief of Yirol East Payam said, “we shall go back to the community and sit down with the chiefs from the other payams and then with community members, to ask them to nominate females from their communities into the ABC Courts.”

## **Result area 2: Civil Society (CS) has changed attitudes and beliefs that facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality**

After one year of implementation, it is hard to draw conclusions on the progress of changed attitudes and beliefs, particularly as practice and policy changes are witnessed on the long-term. However, it is worthy to note below some preliminary achievements from 2021. Under result area 2 the LoP identified 2 output areas, namely 'Community groups are gender aware and committed to W/G protection, gender equality and W/G's meaningful participation in peacebuilding' and 'WY/men are empowered as Agents of Change through rights-based leadership knowledge' that contribute to the following short/medium term outcomes:

### ***Short/Medium term outcome 2.1: W/Y, men as acting Agents of Change are organized into advocacy groups***

Despite delays in implementation brought on by Covid-19 restrictions, 2021 saw significant success of the Champions of Change (CoC) model. CoC facilitators supported peer-to-peer actions organised by girls, boys and youth, and promoted dialogues and community-level advocacy on gender equality. Young men and women taking part in CoC sessions having shown initiative, steering discussions on gender equality amongst themselves as well as engaging elders in inter-generational dialogue. Over the course of the year, there were CoC school sessions, quarterly parliamentary sessions, debates, radio talk shows and youth-led peer to peer mobilization. Owing to the great community engagement CoC generated, the community offered in some areas free facilities for activities and the local radio station offered free talk shows on Saturday for discussion of the children's programme. Inside and outside of schools, CoC sessions have invited discussions on the gendered division of domestic labour, further encouraging the inclusion of boys and men in chores such as sweeping, fetching water and washing.

In a notable sign of change, male Agents of Change formed the Adam's group in Yambio to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of women and girls. Over the course of the year, the Adam's group held a radio talk show on Yambio FM and three outreach GBV awareness-raising events in their community. Since, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Western Equatoria has committed to support the Adam's group.

The positive impact of the men engagement strategy serves as another example of change; In Terekeka, young married men who participated in the gender training acknowledged their role in domestic violence and gender inequality at home and committed to advocating for women's rights. During a two-day Male Engagement Forum, men expressed their intention to change attitudes and practices that might be harmful to women and girls, with some vowing to enroll their daughters in school. In Nyori, 20 men became gender equality ambassadors and have proposed a GBV watch that would report GBV cases and mental health concerns to PFPs in the community.

The alliance noted 5 signs of change for this outcome.

### **Result area 3: Increased, effective participation of women and youth (W/Y) in leadership and peacebuilding**

Under result area 3 the LoP alliance identified 2 output areas, namely 'Gatekeepers including policy makers are activated to promote WPS agenda and create space for W/G in leadership positions' and 'W CSOs have resources and capacity to lobby on WPS agenda' that contribute to the following short/medium term outcomes:

#### ***Short/Medium term outcome 3.1: International governmental bodies (AU/EU), diplomats and media lobby and advocate to widen civic space***

LoP engaged with various gatekeepers to ensure an effective widening of the civic space. Amongst the important gatekeepers engaged are Chiefs who were addressed through the national chief forum which focused, amongst other topics, on the 35% affirmative action in all levels of government. In a significant sign of change, Terekeka chiefs committed to including women in the court council.

Through Plan International's African Union (AU) Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, a total of 38 young women and girls participated in the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) pre-Summit meeting held in early 2021. Following the Summit, participants developed a call to action urging the AU, African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and African Governments, amongst other things, to:

- Create an enabling environment for women to play more decision-making roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, including the structural challenges that women face;
- Intensify continental, regional and national efforts to end impunity for perpetrators by strengthening the legal and judicial systems and by enacting and enforcing legislation, and provide national justice systems with the necessary resources to prosecute cases of sexual and gender-based violence including the safeguarding of girls from SGBV in school;
- Foster strategic and transformative partnerships with the traditional leaders and cultural institutions for progressive legislative agenda that advance women's rights and gender equality, fight harmful practices and scale up community innovations;
- Document the role of women in peace and security processes, including highlighting their leadership in peacebuilding, dialogue and reconciliation.

LoP participants also took part in the 3<sup>rd</sup> African Girls Summit in Niamey, Niger, which aims to provide a platform for sharing good practices, evidence and data to shift and galvanize action towards the elimination of harmful practices in Africa. For 2021, the objectives of the African Girls Summit were:

- Convene a platform to share progress, challenges and mobilize concerted action to accelerate elimination of harmful practices in Africa to achieve the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063, AU Agenda 2040 and the global sustainable development goals;
- Solicit recommendations, with key milestones and evidence, to inform the 3<sup>rd</sup> African Girls' Summit Outcome and Roadmap on Girls Empowerment, as well as African Union decisions and

actions on ending child marriage and female genital mutilation;

- Contribute to strengthening efforts towards achieving Aspiration 6, priority 6.1.2 of Agenda 2063 on “Violence and discrimination against women and girls” and calls for the eradication of *“...all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls, especially child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation.”*

### ***Short/Medium term outcome 3.2: CSOs consult local and national actors to build legitimacy***

To enable CSOs to build legitimacy with local and national actors, 25 CBOs/CSOs were trained in lobby and advocacy to promote human rights, gender equality and the WPS agenda. Additionally, 37 women activists benefited from sub-granting.

Most notably, the alliance developed a draft L&A strategy in the last quarter of 2021 which will be finalised in 2022.

In 2021, a few positive signs were witnessed on the state and national level pointing to efforts in building legitimacy.

In 2021 EVE organized the two-day Annual Women Gathering bringing together members of the R-TNLA, the Council of States, representatives from the diplomatic corps and UN agencies, Government line ministries, gender focal persons, CSOs, youth, academia, the media and women leaders in their different capacities. The Gathering aimed to enable dialogue, networking and joint messaging, covering a wide range of themes and topics extending from women’s participation in decision-making to the implementation of the R-ARCSS and the 35% quota to climate change and mental health, with a wider outlook on the WPS agenda. In regards to implementation of the R-ARCSS, the Gathering put forth, amongst others, the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the full RTGONU is reconstituted – in particular the state legislative and observe the minimum 35% affirmative action;
- Call on the parties to the agreement to ensure that the 35% affirmative action is fully implemented;
- On the permanent constitution making process, ensure that women fully participate in all the phases and a minimum 35% representation;
- Urge donors and partners to improve funding for WPS particularly in the transition period to enhance mobilization and advocacy efforts of women for peace.

In regards to mental health, the Gathering made, amongst others, the following recommendations:

- Improve services and increasing population scope that the services reach to include leaders, security sector and survivors of trauma at large;
- Partners to support special counselling services for women leaders;
- Donors and Partners to fund women organization working on mental health issues.

All alliance partners participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign in their respective project locations, working closely with local and national actors to conduct joint advocacy. In Terekeka, a county-wide activism campaign to end violence against women was organized in partnership with the South Sudan Red Cross and the County Department of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. Amongst other priorities, the event called on a) all stakeholders to strengthen their systems and to remain committed to protecting women and girls; b) the survivors of GBV and their families in their communities to report all forms of violence; c) chiefs to implement existing GBV laws and regulations; d) and girls to be able to stay in school.

One sign of change was observed in Nimule where six girls took symbolic office of county leadership as part of the #GirlsTakeOver campaign during the International Day of the Girl. Following the campaign, the local government acknowledged the symbolic takeover as one that will inspire and motivate many young women to start taking up leadership in their schools and communities.

Another positive change arised from Yirol where the community has begun to include women in blood compensation committees. Additionally, peace committees are now composed of 30% women and out of the three executive officials of the committee one is a woman. Attesting to these achievements, advocacy groups comprising of women, youth, men, Champions of Change, ABC courts representatives and peace committees, and inter-church committees have undertaken joint advocacy on gender equality and the WPS agenda in Payijiar and Yirol East.

### 3.3 Realization of Outputs per Result Area

#### Result area 1: Improved implementation of policies and regulations on GBV and protection of W/G incl. access to PSS & self-care

Result Area	Output indicator	Output Target	Comment on deviation
Output 1.2.1 Community groups have improved knowledge of available PSS services and legal protection/GBV services incl. case management	# case workers provide trained in age (children / adult), gender-appropriate PSS, GBV, legal protection information and are suitable to cultural context	25	67 case workers/PFPs were trained. This exceeded the target as partners requested to train more staff than planned.
	# of members of community groups capacitated	50	60 members of the community groups were trained on basic GBV and PSS knowledge and skills. More members are planned to be reached in year 2
	# community groups capacitated, resourced and coached on PSS, legal protection services and lobby & advocacy on these topics	40	20 community groups had been mobilised and provided training GBV/PSS topics. The target of 40 was not reached because year one was dedicated for the training of PFPs who will then mobilise and work with the groups. More group work is planned for year two.
	# number of persons who are provided with age and gender appropriate PSS and GBV services	30	358 individual cases were provided with PSS and GBV services. Several partners are working on this result and the target was set too low.
1.2.2 Formal and traditional authorities are informed on existing legal protection framework for W/G including GBV survivors' rights	# of traditional authorities reached with L&A on the importance of legal protection for women and girls, including GBV survivors	30	45 ABC court member were trained on important GBV regulations and laws
	# of trained formal authorities e.g. police and prison staff on GBV legislation, human rights and GE	100	75 formal authorities have been trained by Plan, AMA and EVE

**Result area 2: Civil Society (CS) has changed attitudes and beliefs that facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality**

Result Area	Output indicator	Output Target	Comment on deviation
2.2.1: Community groups are gender aware and committed to W/G protection, gender equality and W/G's meaningful participation in peacebuilding	# of community groups capacited on gender equality, protection and W/Gs meaningful participation	25	46 community groups had been mobilised and provided training GBV/PSS topics.
	# of members of community groups capacitated on gender equality, human rights and UNSCR1325.	150	305 members were reached with gender equality and human right messages.
	# of people reached with awareness raising on gender equality, human rights and UNSCR1325.	9000	21.749 people reached with awareness on gender equality and protection of women human rights
2.2.2: W/Y, men are empowered as agent of change through rights-based leadership knowledge and organized into advocacy group	# key persons/youth in community trained as Agents of Change.	420	363 member of COCs had been selected and will start participating in COC sessions in year 2
	# of trained youth organised in groups, platforms or CYPP parliament	100	226 youth have been trained.
	# of action plans of community groups on male engagement and intersectionality developed and implemented	10	8 action plans developed by women groups and the male engagement groups. A slight under achievement is because some communities could not be reached due to bad road conditions. In 2022 more community outreach is planned and the under achievement in 2021 will be compensated.

### Result area 3: Increased, effective participation of women and youth (W/Y) in leadership and peacebuilding

Result Area	Output indicator	Target indicator	Comment on deviation
3.2.1 Gatekeepers including policy makers are activated to promote WPS agenda and create space for W/G in leadership positions	# of gatekeepers incl policy makers coached, capacitated, and resourced to lobby & advocate on the WPS agenda incl female participation in leadership positions.	20	45 gatekeepers have been coached in 2021
	# of leadership tracks for young women provided, mentored by female politicians or business leader	10	16 leadership tracks have been developed
3.2.2: CBOs/ CSOs have resources and capacity to lobby on WPS agenda	# of CBOs/CSOs with increased capacity to lobby on HR, GE, UNSCR 1325	36	25 CSOs/CBOs have been trained in L&A skills. For the training of CBOs/CSOs in lobby on HR, GE, UNSCR 1325, a lobby and advocacy strategy has been developed by the LoP consortium. With the strategy in place, training efforts will be increased in 2022.
	# of female activists/CBOs/ CSOs with increased resources (subgranting)	10	37 female activists have been provided resources
3.2.3.: International gatekeepers are activated to promote	# of joint L&A strategies developed to influence international gatekeeper	5	The LoP L&A strategy has been developed early 2022. This strategy is needed to take up
WPS agenda and civic space			L&A actions with international gatekeepers. This work will be initiated in 2022.
	gatekeepers reached with lobby and advocacy to promote WPS agenda and civic space	1	In 2021 0 gatekeepers have been reached yet with L&A. The LoP L&A strategy has been developed early 2022. This strategy is needed to take up L&A actions with international gatekeepers. This work will be initiated in 2022.

## 3.4 Good practices in implementation

Engagement with local authorities and government during this first year has facilitated the acceptance of Leaders of Peace in implementation areas. Similarly, reliance on existing structures and networks, such as local government, chiefs, women leaders and youth groups, has proven valuable in strengthening cooperation and enhancing the mobilization of communities.

Within the alliance, the division of thematic expertise and geographical locations has enabled synergies while limiting the duplication of efforts and services. Likewise, joint programming and cooperation, such as on the Annual Women Gathering, has proven necessary in elevating and amplifying grassroots work at the national level.

Amongst the most important lessons learned in 2021 are:

- Training materials and approaches must be tailored to different participant groups, taking into account, amongst others, gender, age, level of education, and political affiliation.
- Networking with other partners implementing WPS programmes should be enhanced.
- L&A capacity strengthening of CBOs and CSOs and consortium partners, including women and youth groups, should be the central focus of programme implementation and strengthened further.



Champion of Change session in Nyal, Payinjiar County

## 4. Leaders of Peace Learning plan

The Leaders of Peace alliance and its stakeholders have jointly developed in the design phase a learning agenda with three learning questions, which closely relate to the assumptions in our Theory of Change and to our Vision on the partnership. The learning agenda is developed to help the alliance collaborate with peers and colleagues, fill gaps in knowledge and generate new evidence that the alliance uses to adapt its work. It also helps guide performance management planning by setting knowledge and information priorities. The learning agenda additionally assists with prioritizing evaluations and research activities as well as in determining key indicators. The three learning questions have been discussed during a learning agenda workshop in December 2021. During the workshop the lead over the three questions has been divided over the partners. In 2022 each lead is supposed to develop and coordinate the roll-out of a learning plan with regards to their specific question, in collaboration with the other partners' learning focal points. Concrete learning activities implemented in 2021 include:

**Learning question 1:** To address learning question 1 on [Community based psychosocial support](#), participation in strategic spaces and platforms to present and receive feedback on the content of the reports was organised. During the annual planning phase in August 2021 and during the annual reflection meeting in early 2022, reflection on the Leaders of Peace Theory of Change and the specific 3 learning questions took place. Lessons learned were identified and concrete recommendations and actions for the way forward were suggested. For learning question 1 a specific action agreed upon include the need to conduct community awareness on the existing structures (Referral pathways) for GBV case management and MHPSS services. Activities regarding exchange with Colombia programme staff are planned for 2022.

**Learning question 2:** For learning question 2 on [partnership and collaboration](#), a partnership survey was conducted at the end of 2021 to assess the LoP partnership and collaboration among partners. A report was drafted based on the survey findings and recommendations were formulated. This partnership report was discussed during the strategic session of the LoP consortium early 2022. Next to the partnership survey, a lot of effort has gone into the creation of a key strategies document where each partner's strength is converted in a specific role in the LoP programme. The technical lead roles was discussed in depth and how much support offered by each partner in the alliance and how differently each would discharge expertise at their disposal to strengthen the alliance as evidenced by the key intervention summary for 2022 comparable to 2021.

**Learning question 3:** Finally, for learning question 3 [on the Role of CSOs on lobby for WPS and Sustainability](#), activities conducted in 2021 include the development of a LoP L&A strategy, the development of a CSO/CBO sub-granting approach and the male engagement strategy. The implementation of these strategies will be starting in 2022, which will provide learning insights on question 3, including on the effective and sustainable engagement of males and like-minded CSOs/CBOs on WPS. The strategies will be a useful starting point to initiate discussions with CSOs/CBOs, as well as influential males on the relevance and effectivity of their advocacy asks and their role in the advocacy actions to be conducted in the future.

## 5. Crosscutting Themes

The following cross-cutting themes addressed in the proposal were selected to reflect on integration in programme design and implementation during 2021 which are gender, youth, climate and Integrity and SEAH.

### Gender

Gender equality is perceived both as a principal objective (result area 2) and as a cross-cutting theme throughout the program. The alliance partners have been implementing projects in South Sudan for years and are known with the gender context and understand the key gender issues in the project locations. Specifically, this programme continued to build on the previous WPS project (WG4C) results, and best practices, such as strategies that addressed disparities between social groups and gender stereotypes which reinforced gender inequality. Through this experience the partners have a wide understanding of social inclusion, gendered system and structures and the overall gender context. In 2021 all staff, especially the gender focal points within each partner organization, have been acquainted through several sessions on their role to integrate and mainstream Plan's Gender transformative approach, and the gender marker throughout the implementation. As well to provide capacity building to partners and CSOs on gender under the Leaders of Peace programme. A draft of a Men Engagement strategy, including a training manual for men and boys' engagement has been prepared and will be further elaborated and finetuned in 2022. Additionally, diversity will get specific attention in 2022, as the programme aims to include diverse groups, inclusive of female and male headed households, from different ages, ethnicity, classes, religions, not only as target groups but throughout all phases of the project implementation.

Equal access, equal participation and satisfaction among women and men in the LoP programme are regularly monitored through different feedback mechanisms such as monthly meetings, field visits, outcome harvesting and activity reports. Remedial action has been undertaken through the annual review meetings and ToC review redressing any gender inequalities in the project implementation.

Below an overview of what has been done on the six elements of gender transformation according to the '**Gender Transformative Marker**':

1. Addressing unequal and discriminating **gender norms**: The programme addresses key gender norms, barriers and/or drivers throughout the different result areas. Changing underlying discriminatory norms requires phases of awareness and sensitization, internalization of new attitudes and behaviour, creation of role models before real change can take place. In year 1 under result area 1, the PFPs worked closely with community groups, local leaders and women and girls to create awareness on gender equality, as a first step to create gender sensitive community-based support mechanisms and the establishment of a neighbourhood GBV watch. In R2 tailored dialogues with communities, and peer-to-peer actions were organized by the Champions of Change in support of norm change.

2. Creating an **enabling environment**: Through result area 3 particularly, the programme aims to strengthen societal structures, systems and civil society to foster gender equality and inclusion (e.g. in legislation/policy, access to and delivery of MHPSS services, representation of women and girls in decision making processes, capacity building and commitment, as well in budget allocations). Contribution to this was the participation of (young) women in international and national fora to lobby for equal participation and decision making and create wider support for their participation and needs.
3. Strengthening girls' and young women's **agency**: Through the CoC trainings young women were given self-confidence and knowledge, while women groups were able to develop action plans and others capacitated to raise their voice for equal rights and lobby for more decision-making power.
4. Working on **women's condition and position**: The programme aims to improve equality in the conditions for adolescent girls and (young) women within their communities regarding equal decision making, resources and opportunities as well as equality in the position of girls and young women regarding equal value, status, respect and access to power, leadership positions. As shown in the other key components, activities to improve conditions and positions are mainstreamed in the whole programme as well addressed directly through R2.
5. Working with and supporting **boys, young men** to embrace positive masculinities and to promote gender equality, started with the development of a Men Engagement Strategy in 2021. At the same time some men groups were formed and trained as agents of change, acknowledging their role in domestic violence and gender inequality and acting as role models. Further implementation of the strategy will take place in the second year.
6. Consider girls, boys, young women and young men in all their **diversity** when identifying and responding to their needs and interests: The programme is supposed to identify the different needs and interests of adolescents, youth and adults in all their diversity (gender, age, ethnicity, geographical area, if possible, disability). More sensitization of all LoP partners have to take place on this including the development of a strategy how diversity will be incorporated and addressed, as this is a sensitive issue in countries as South Sudan.

## Youth

Youth are key stakeholders in the programme. Due to protracted insecurity and economic hardship, youth in South Sudan continue to face forced recruitment into military activities, lack of participation in political, civic decision-making, high unemployment, lack of business opportunities, lack of access to education, inadequate access for health-related information and services (including SRHR). Young people continue to be marginalized from effectively participating in the peace process despite their numerical strength (70% of the population is below the age of 30). Limited civic and political opportunities for youth empowerment and inclusion, stemming from lack of political will at the top leadership level, are barriers to youth engagement. Sustained engagement and dialogue between youth and duty bearers remains a critical driver of future inclusion and participation. It is from this understanding that LoP is aiming to contribute to youth's capability to become agents of transformation. The LoP alliance has taken the recommendations of the 2021 report 'Inclusion & Participation of Youth in Peacebuilding: Exploring the Experiences of Youth in South Sudan' (Search for Common Ground) to heart and has included youth in the programme in the following ways:

- *Youth should organize and develop platforms to enhance coordination, learning and advocacy on the peace process both nationally, regionally and locally. Youth should protect and safeguard their space through getting organized and elect their own representatives at national and subnational levels.* The LoP alliance supports this recommendation through self-governing platforms such as the Children and Youth People's Parliament which serve as important instruments to create an enabling environment where youth are engaged on the political level. Additionally, by linking youth in the CYPP to the African Union level, the voices of youth are amplified to the international level. The strengthening of youth-driven initiatives constitutes an important step in elevating youth to influence policy and contribute to the success of the peace agreement.
- *Youth should shun participation in communal violence and invest their energies on local peace building through dialogue and coexistence debates.* Through the Champions of Change approach (which is targeting both in and out-of-school youth) youth are activated as agents of change and encouraged not to revert to negative and violent behaviors. However, communal violence is often driven by a lack of viable economic opportunities. Therefore, a key contributing factor to make significant progress on this recommendation is economic opportunities for youth. The LoP alliance is, wherever possible, trying to link youth with economic opportunities (for example under the female apprentice leadership track) or to other livelihood programs implemented in the project areas by other actors.
- *Youth representatives in the peace mechanisms and government should increase engagement with young people across the country to strengthen their participation.* The LoP alliance has leveraged their sphere of influence to national parliament (MP's), African Union and Dutch Embassy to engage the government to value active participation of the youth to open the civic space and facilitate political space for young people to influence key decision makers in nation building.
- *The youth should harness the positive use of social media to promote peer-to-peer engagement, coordination, cohesion and shared vision.* Youth have been able to speak through radio talk-shows and in public events. However, the LoP alliance could do more to establish interactive peer-to-peer engagement on social media. The LoP alliance will explore how to harvest young people's positive use of social media for social change. This ensures young people become champions of peace through the use of social media. LoP alliance will support (youth-led) social media advocacy and campaigns. This approach will be instrumental in raising voices of youth in the peace process.

## Climate

Climate change has caused flooding in most of the states and counties. Floodwaters of last years had not even dried up by the time of rains this year, creating a compounded problem for communities this year. In Payinjiar county in particular, at times crops are dead and livestock cannot get feeding because grazing resources are submerged in water due to climate change. This means communities have no access to food except for fish. Transportation by road is at times impossible and the only way to access communities is either through walking or flying. Juba city has no single functional sewage system. All the solid waste are either dumped in residential areas, along the roads and that which is collected is dumped in outskirts of Juba close to the Nile. Most residential areas have individual septic tanks, which are emptied at least once a month. The septic wastes are also dumped in the same areas with other solid waste in and around Juba. Other than

waste being a public health hazard – exposing the public to health risks of contacting diseases, it also exposes livestock to health risk. Sometimes this waste is burned resulting to carbon fumes and contributing to carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and other carbofloro gases. When it rains all this waste is swept by the rainwaters into the Nile and other small streams contaminating the only source of water in the city. This situation is the same in all major towns of South Sudan. Also related to the problem is the dependency on wood-based fuels. The burning of charcoal to supply Juba and other towns has led to serious deforestation in and around Juba. This reduces the canopy cover, exposing soil to erosion, upsetting the ecosystem, exposing the environment to flooding, destroying fauna habitat, reducing the carbon dioxide uptake and contributing to global warming and climate change.

### ***Climate mitigation and opportunities***

The impacts of climate change are a threat to the objectives of the programme. As flooding and drought affects people's mobility, access to food, access to water, access to grazing resources and while people are pre-occupied with their practical needs related to food, security and water they may not pay attention to strategic issues of gender and women, peace and security. In its efforts to mainstream integrated risk management interventions, Leaders of Peace included in 2021 awareness raising on climate change, dialogues to encourage women to be part of risk management interventions on climate change and lobby the government of South Sudan to be responsive to factors that contribute to climate change. Specifically, consortium partner AMA held an integrated risk management intervention session with the South Sudan Coalition in Natural Resources to discuss flooding and how it is likely to affect communities. Through sub-granting, Eve has supported lobby and advocacy initiatives by Eden Foundation on the role of women in addressing climate change. Additionally, a dedicated session was devoted to climate change during the Annual Women Gathering.

Due to Covid-19, travel restrictions limited INGO staff from travelling to South Sudan. This has been a positive aspect of Covid-19 as for most of 2021 LoP consortium members only conducted virtual meetings. Mid 2021 the borders opened again, and the Dutch consortium coordinator could meet the consortium members for the first-time face to face, which remains preferable while building a partnership based on good working relations, respect and trust. However, the LoP alliance keeps on reviewing its travel frequency in light of reducing our carbon footprint. The kickoff meeting was a challenge as it is usually occurring face to face with international members, while in 2021 LoP had to conduct a virtual meeting. Additionally, both the annual review and annual planning meeting held in 2021 were conducted only with the South Sudan based partner representatives. Most of the meetings are planned already only with the steering committee and programme committee members in South Sudan, while members in the Netherlands join virtually.

## Integrity and SEAH

Leaders of Peace is committed to ensure safe involvement for GYW into the programme, and that our programme structure provides an enabling environment for their safe and meaningful engagement. Our safeguarding practices should eventually contribute to a culture of safeguarding, where everyone can have an open conversation on safeguarding and that goes beyond a compliance approach. All the organizations/groups that joined the Leaders of Peace network as a partner, worked with a safeguarding checklist to assess their internal safeguarding policies and procedures. This checklist is part of the Leaders of Peace safeguarding protocol, and based on the rigor safeguarding policy of the consortium Lead Plan International. In the application of this protocol, some “checks” not always speak to the reality of the different organizations/groups that are contracted in the network; they are too heavy and too technical. It was therefore decided that the checklist serves best as a conversation starting point with contracted organizations. A deep-dive on safeguarding presented the safeguarding protocol of Leaders of Peace to all colleagues in the consortium to provide clarity on what policy to follow, and what minimum standards should be in place. (New) colleagues within the consortium are trained or refreshed on the safeguarding protocol.

In 2021, no safeguarding incidents (or suspicion of incident) were reported to the Leaders of Peace desk. However more attention needs to be paid to adherence to the safeguarding policy to make sure safeguarding is strongly embedded in all our work and networks.



Women's group in Nyal, Payinjar County

## 6. Sustainability & exit strategy

Sustainability of the Leaders of Peace programme is ultimately about ensuring that its decisions and interventions respond to the interests and priorities of girls and young women and their organizations in light of the WPS agenda in South Sudan. Several measures have been taken to embed GYW's meaningful participation in Leaders of Peace governance and programme interventions:

- a. The appointment of young women as well as young men as WPS agents of change is a deliberate attempt to put young female (feminist) perspectives at the heart of the Leaders of Peace network and programme.
- b. The strategy of including South Sudan based NGOs working on WPS among the contracted partner organizations.
- c. In addition to WPS driven organizations as partners of the programme, the consortium also engages and supports informal GYW-led groups and clubs, CSOs and CBOs. The consortium mostly works with existing groups and clubs which have already organized themselves around WPS issues (instead of creating new organizations).
- d. The support provided to GYW-led organizations (either as partners or as informal/formal groups engaged in the programme) aims to strengthen their organizational capacity, including their ability to raise sufficient resources for their operations. CBOs and CSOs in Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria states, as well as in Unity and Lakes states have been awarded sub-grants, or received training on safeguarding, PSEA, financial administration, resource mobilization, compliance, Participatory Learning and Action, gender equality and L&A.
- e. Through a holistic intersectional approach following the ecological model partners ensure all layers of society are included in the project.
- f. To ensure continuity and sustainability, consortium partners have developed strong partnerships with local government and state authorities in implementation areas. In some instances, Ministers of Gender and County Commissioners have been invited to officiate project activities. Additionally, partners are establishing linkages between local government and CBOs and WROs through various platforms such as the annual women gathering and chief fora.

After one year in Leaders of Peace, we also experience the positive effects of building upon the work done by the WG4C project.

- a. Some of the signs of change identified by the partners are not only a result of interventions done by the Leaders of Peace project, but also by activities that were implemented under WG4C.
- b. Several youth leaders in Leaders of Peace are former Champions of Change under WG4C; the CoC approach is also being expanded under LoP to other states.
- c. Some GYW-led network member organizations were set up under WG4C as youth groups, such as the Young People Parliament, which was established under WG4C and is further being strengthened in LoP as it aims to reinforce GYW influence on decisions regarding WPS strategies, collaboration, learning agenda and governance.

In 2022, partners will start working on the exit-strategy.

## 7. Partnership and stakeholder Reflection

The Alliance's key actors concerning power relations are:

- The Leaders of Peace Alliance
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch Embassy in Juba
- Civil society groups
- Local, state, national authorities
- Intragovernmental bodies
- United Nations
- Media

These key actors and power holders have been led, collaborated with and engaged in different ways throughout 2021. A reflection on the partnership and collaboration with these key actors is outlined below:

### 7.1 The Leaders of Peace Alliance

The LoP alliance consisting of three INGOs: Plan International (lead), HealthNet TPO (HNTPO), PAX and two national NGOs: AMA, EVE. To reflect on the first year of partnership within the alliance, early 2022 a partnership satisfaction survey was conducted reflecting on the first year of collaboration. The survey intends to assess satisfaction of all partners with coordination mechanisms and procedures. Moreover, the survey seeks to identify opportunities to enhance and strengthen the partnership. Satisfaction of partners with current Power relations have been assessed through five statements. The section on the general analysis of Power relations shows that generally two out of four partners are less satisfied with current power relations. This is a point of concern and receives high priority. Other conclusions based on the partnership review:

- The *Quality/relevance of technical inputs* received from the desk is rated high for PMEL and Financial management specifically. In terms of technical advice and capacity development support, feelings seem to be mixed and it would be good to elaborate further on what type of technical advice and capacity development support could be provided in addition, to gain more satisfaction of partners in this regard.
- In terms of *Effectiveness of communication and coordination*, two partners feel that the Desk does not understand how partner organizations work. The two partners will be invited to discuss with the Desk what is misunderstood and clarify these aspects of their way of working in order to align the communication and coordination better between the Desk and these respective organizations' way of working.
- All partners agree that the Desk understands the context and working environment in South Sudan very well. Additionally, most partners agree that the Desk responds quickly to enquiries and gives useful feedback on reports and information that the partners send.
- Regarding *Power relations*, all partners feel that the LoP Alliance Desk makes good use of the

knowledge, expertise and experience of each partner organization. Partners feel mixed about being comfortable to disagree with the Desk and being treated respectfully. These aspects need to and will be discussed more in detail. Mitigation measures need to be identified and implemented. Most partners feel they have a say in decision-making and that the working relation is constructive.

The following recommendations for improvement are suggested by the partners:

1. Consortium desk to adhere to the equal power relationship principle adopted during the consortium inception.
2. Timely disbursement of funds to avoid delays in activities implementation.
3. Proper scheduling of meetings and attendance by alliance members.
4. Increased understanding partners relationship.
5. Consortium desk should have regular meetings with all partners to improve coordination and field visits should be conducted to all field locations to check and discuss progress, align activities, exchange learnings and visit stakeholders at that location for clarification.

### ***Collaboration through mutual capacity strengthening within the alliance***

By building on each partner's thematic expertise as identified in the alliance power analysis, LoP is building synergies and ensuring complementarity for specific key interventions. For example, AMA is the technical lead on the men engagement strategy, HNTPO is the technical lead on MHPSS. EVE is the technical lead for the sub-granting approach, Plan is the technical lead for youth engagement and PAX is the technical lead on L&A. In 2021, consortium partners organized several capacity building initiatives as part of their technical lead role, as summarized below.

- PAX organized a three-day capacity building training on L&A, focusing on the development of a joint strategy.
- HealthNet TPO organized capacity building sessions for MHPSS counsellors, PFPs and volunteers recruited by PAX, AMA and Plan International. Counsellors, PFPs and volunteers were equipped with PSS and GBV awareness tools, case management, reporting and documentation skills. To strengthen internal capacity and expertise, HealthNetTPO has participated in in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's MHPSS and Peacebuilding working group, which brings together relevant stakeholders to develop a global body of knowledge, tools, best practices, and advocacy for MHPSS in peacebuilding. This platform serves as a valuable opportunity to incorporate best practices, lessons learned, tools and advocacy topics for LoP programming.
- Plan International conducted a five-day CoC capacity building training for six AMA and HealthNet TPO facilitators, with a focus on facilitation methods and tools.

Other capacity strengthening:

- Safeguarding: Plan International conducted a capacity building training on safeguarding at the beginning of 2021. In turn, consortium partners trained staff in all programme areas in safeguarding.

- Capacity building on PMEL has been conducted in 2021 during two training workshops in June and October 2021. In addition, an outcome harvesting refresher course was organised in November 2021. Two of the trainings were done online and the second training on Outcome Harvesting was a 2-days physical training in Juba. Besides the development and implementation of a monitoring and learning system of the Leaders of Peace consortium, PMEL efforts in 2021 were also directed towards developing IATI reporting capacity in the consortium. AMA and EVE were completely new to IATI reporting and the other partners received training to meet newly developed IATI standards of MFA. Several partners participated in the IATI webinars organised by the MFA's IATI helpdesk and next to that own training sessions were conducted occasionally in group but mostly on an individual basis. All consortium partners managed to successfully report in IATI and are visible in the MFA's METIS dashboard. Although PMEL capacity building by the LoP Desk and the PMEL working group has been assessed as highly effective during the partnership satisfaction survey, further PMEL support is identified as a need, to ensure the PMEL system is implemented as intended. This will be addressed through trainings and the establishment of a Learning Agenda Task Force in 2022.
- Gender marker: All gender focal points participated in the gender transformative marker session. The session was online facilitated by our gender advisor at Plan International Netherlands. However, due to the connection limitations it was hard to follow remotely. A new session needs to be scheduled to complete the assessment and action plan.
- Financial capacity strengthening: at Plan International Netherlands the financial manager has been supervising the financial implementation, which is led by a finance coordinator in South Sudan. She is monthly coordinating the budget versus the actuals of all partners and per organization she is supporting to overcome challenges and ensure compliance. Additionally, before every report, or annual plan, several sessions with the financial staff of all partners have been scheduled to ensure the assignment, compliance rules, and templates are clear. Not all partners have equal capacity and liquidity. Therefore, in 2022 the partners will receive instead of one instalment three instalments, as well as additional support will be provided to ensure timely payments, adequate liquidity planning and financial management and implementation of plans.
- Communication and branding: in 2021 a LoP branding guide was developed in consultation with the partners. During the monitoring visit of the Dutch desk coordinator in November 2021 the experiences with the guide were assessed with the partners and based on their feedback the guide has been revised. Partners will be refreshed on the use of the branding materials in 2022.

## 7.2 Dutch MoFA and Embassy

Several meeting with the Dutch Embassy in Juba and LoP representatives were held to coordinate efforts and discuss partnership on the WPS agenda. No concrete joint actions have been implemented during 2021 by the embassy and the alliance, however having a close relationship and open dialogue is a good start to shape the partnership in country. The alliance participated in the Power of Voice kick-off meeting which brought together all partners implementing MFA-funded programmes in South Sudan. However, besides this kick-off the Embassy has no activities planned yet for joint learning and exchange among the strategic partnerships working in South

Sudan. Upon request of LoP the embassy is exploring to facilitate learning and appreciates the idea to set up exchange and learning meetings with the different alliances and actors incl. PAX (working on civic space within the Power of Voices framework with partners Defend Defenders and Amnesty International), Cordaid (Just Future Alliance – Power of Voices), We Cannot Wait Consortium – WCW (SIHA Network – Power of Women), World Young Women’s Christian Association – YWCA (Power of Women). The alliance members participated in the Strengthening Civil Society Dialogue organized by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2021. The discussion reflected on approaches, challenges and opportunities of local ownership and shifting power dynamics effectively. The meeting aimed to build synergies, foster collaboration and enhance complementarities amongst programmes and partners in South Sudan.

### 7.3 Civil society groups

These include peace committees, interfaith committees, women associations/ groups, male/ female influential persons and traditional leaders, youth clubs, young people’s parliament, sport clubs, and traditional judiciary systems (e.g. ABC courts, police), CSO’s, CBOs and NGOs, faith-based organizations, men and boys. These groups tend to have a lot of legitimacy in their community but less power in decision making concerning programme implementation. To balance decision-making power of local groups, a feedback mechanism was initiated in Magwi County where suggestion boxes were placed in community centers and schools. Feedback mechanisms will be similarly rolled out in all project locations in 2022.

Safeguarding and Integrity policies are endorsed and monitored by all partners, supervised by the SS-CC to ensure partners can prevent and respond to protection breaches, including CS. As was flagged in the cross-cutting themes, the safeguarding mechanisms of partners need additional attention. To further promote equal power, CSO’s were resourced to strengthen their operational and institutional capacity. CBOs and CSOs in Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria states, as well as in Unity and Lakes states have been awarded sub-grants, or received training on safeguarding, PSEA, financial administration, resource mobilization, compliance, Participatory Learning and Action, gender equality and L&A.

The LoP sought linkages with other civil society organizations operating in South Sudan through the 1325 South Sudan Country Group in the Netherlands. The group is chaired by the gender advisor of the LoP alliance and WO=MEN and encourages the NAP community to collaborate, support, learn and inspire each other in order to increase our collective strength and effectiveness in the planning and implementation of the WPS agenda in South Sudan. A strong link with a South Sudanese Platform is sought to feed, support and learn from each other. Membership is made up of (civil society and government) organizations signatory to NAP IV and when possible national partners. Their diverse level of capacity and resources is acknowledged. The group has met in August and December 2021.

## 7.4 Local, state, national authorities

These include parliamentarians, police and prison staff and are identified as key powerholders to achieve the overall objective. During the proposal development phase many public positions were vacant due to the challenges around the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. Therefore, not all key authorities could be engaged from the onset of the programme. During 2021 some (but not all) positions were filled, and this provided the LoP with target individuals and offices for L&A activities. The LoP alliance treated the newly appointed authorities with care and focused on establishing trust relationships. Despite these challenges the LoP alliance made significant progress in engaging and activating these key actors (refer to key achievements chapter).

## 7.5 Intragovernmental bodies

African Union, European Union, United Nations were engaged through GIMAC and 3rd African Girls Summit where youth representatives of the Leaders of Peace alliance participated and provided L&A information through letters and recommendations. No tangible outcomes on activated Intragovernmental bodies have been identified over 2021 yet. But access to these bodies of the representatives has been a first good step in engaging and activating these power holders.

## 7.6 United Nations

Leaders of Peace engaged UN Women and UNDP during the baseline survey. LoP has fostered a valuable partnership with UN Women and is regularly invited to WPS meetings and workshops held on the national level. LoP will continue building on this partnership in 2022 and aims to engage UN Women in advocacy efforts, including the launch of the Lobby and Advocacy Strategy.

## 7.7 Media

The national media was engaged on multiple occasions during 2021. LoP forums such as the Annual Women Gathering, the Chief Forum and the CYPP were covered by national TV and newspapers. A radio talk show on The Annual Women Gathering was held on UN Radio Miraya following the event.

In 2021, Plan International Netherlands launched a web article on Leaders on Peace and published an interview with the Programme Coordinator during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence to create wider visibility and awareness of the programme for the Dutch public.

Youth participating in LoP platforms engaged their communities through radio talk-shows and public events. The alliance will aim to establish interactive peer to peer engagement on social media in 2022.