



Mid-Term Evaluation Report-South Sudan

October, 2023

Inhoud

Part A:	
List of tables	3
Abbreviations	4
Acknowledgement	6
Map of lop programme states	7
Executive summary	9
1.INTRODUCTION	15
1.1Project background	15
1.5Purpose of the baseline	16
1.4Scope of evaluation	16
2.LITERATURE REVIEW	17
2.1South sudan context	17
2.2South sudan gender equality	18
2.3Status on unscr 1325	20
2.4Technological and environmental context	21
2.5Effect of the covid-19 pandemic on women and girls	21
3.TECHNICAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	24
3.1Mid-term evaluation design	24
3.2Evaluation method	24
3.3Sample size and sampling strategy	24
3.4Data collection tools	26
3.5Researchers /enumerators field training	26
3.6Data collection process	27
3.7Data analysis and reporting	27
3.8Quality assurance	27
3.9Ethical protocols	27
3.10 Evaluation challenges and limitations	27
4.MID-TERM EVALUATION FINDINGS	28
4.1Introduction	28
4.2Demographic profile	28
4.3Major developments since the programme baseline	30
4.4Findings for outcome 1	37
4.5Findings for outcome 2	49
4.6Findings for Outcome 3	60
4.7Strategies Employed by LoP Partners to Achieve Desired Results	67
5.Conclusion	70

Part B: Partnership and Collaboration	72
1.INTRODUCTION	72
1.1Conceptual framework	72
1.2Survey design, sampling and analysis	72
2. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS	
2.1Assumptions	73
2.2Limitations	73
3.1Description of respondents and their organisations	74
3.2Results and discussion per partnership dimension	74
3.3. Results and discussion on decision-making power	77
3.4Reflections on interactions with the MFA and embassies	79
3.5Conclusions	79
3. KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	
4.(ACTIONABLE) RECOMMENDATIONS	81
ANNEX I: A Review of Baseline Recommendations and Extent of Implementation	82
ANNEX II: Dimensions of Partnership & Collaboration	84
ANNEX III: Other Tables and Figures	86
ANNEX IV: Updated Result Framework (at mte)	91

List of Tables

Table 1: Women and Girls Household Survey Sample Distribution	24
Table 2: Key Informant Interviews Sample Size Distribution	24
Table 3: Focus Group Sample Size Distribution	25
Table 4: Respondents Age (N=518)	27
Table 5: Respondents' Level of Education (N=416)	28
Table 6: Respondents Marital Status (N=518)	29
Table 7: Perception of Safety when fetching firewood (N=422)	37
Table 8: Perception of Safety when fetching water (N=422)	38
Table 9: Perception of Safety when Walking to School or Market (N=519)	39
Table 10: W/G's Access to MPSS Services (N=422)	42
Table 11: W/G's Access to Medical Services (N=645)	42
Table 12: W/G's Access to Counselling Services (N=564)	43
Table 13: W/G's Access to Legal Services (N=453)	45
Table 14: Marriage Status by Age	86
Table 15: Type of Violence By Survivors Age	86
Table 16: Main Perpetrators of GBV /Violence	88
Table 17: Main Perpetrators of GBV /Violence	88

Abbreviations

ABC	Courts Traditional Customary Courts
AMA	Assistance Mission for Africa
APP	Action Plan for Peace
AU	African Union
BCSO	Blending Community Service Organization
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriage
CINA	Community in Need Aid
COC	Champions of Change
COPAD	Community Organization for Progress and Development
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CVR	Revitalized Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSRF	Conflict Sensitive Resource Facility
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGS	Federal Government state
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GE	Gender Equality
GTA	Gender Transformative Agenda
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HNTPO	HealthNet TPO
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
IDP	Internally Displace Person
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Agency for Development
LoP	Leaders of Peace
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services
NAP	National Action Plan
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Nongovernment Organization
OSC	One Stop Centre

Abbreviations

ODK	Open Digital Kit
OHCHR	Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights
PFP	Psychosocial Support Services Focal Persons
PMEL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
RPA	Revitalized Peace Agreement
RDNS	Revised National Development Strategy
R-TGoNU	The Revitalization of the Transitional Government of National Unity
TAYA	Trust Action Youth Association (TAYA)
TD	Trends Dynamiques
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPC	Tenekel Peace Committee
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
SHWO	Self-Help Women Development Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSCC	South Sudan Council of Churches
VCT	Vocational Centre for Testing
WASS	Women Advocates of South Sudan
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women in Peace and Security

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This mid-term evaluation was conducted by Independent Consultants from Trends Dynamiques Consulting (TD Consulting). The part A of the report was written by the TD Consulting team Led by Mulubi Asiligwa and Alphone Kazungu. Special thanks go to Hakim Bidong and Margaret Sinandugu for supporting the fieldwork. The part B of the report was written by Helen Evertsz (Manager of alliance desk, Plan international Netherlands). This was based on the findings from the online survey conducted within the partnership to better understand various dimensions of the partnerships.

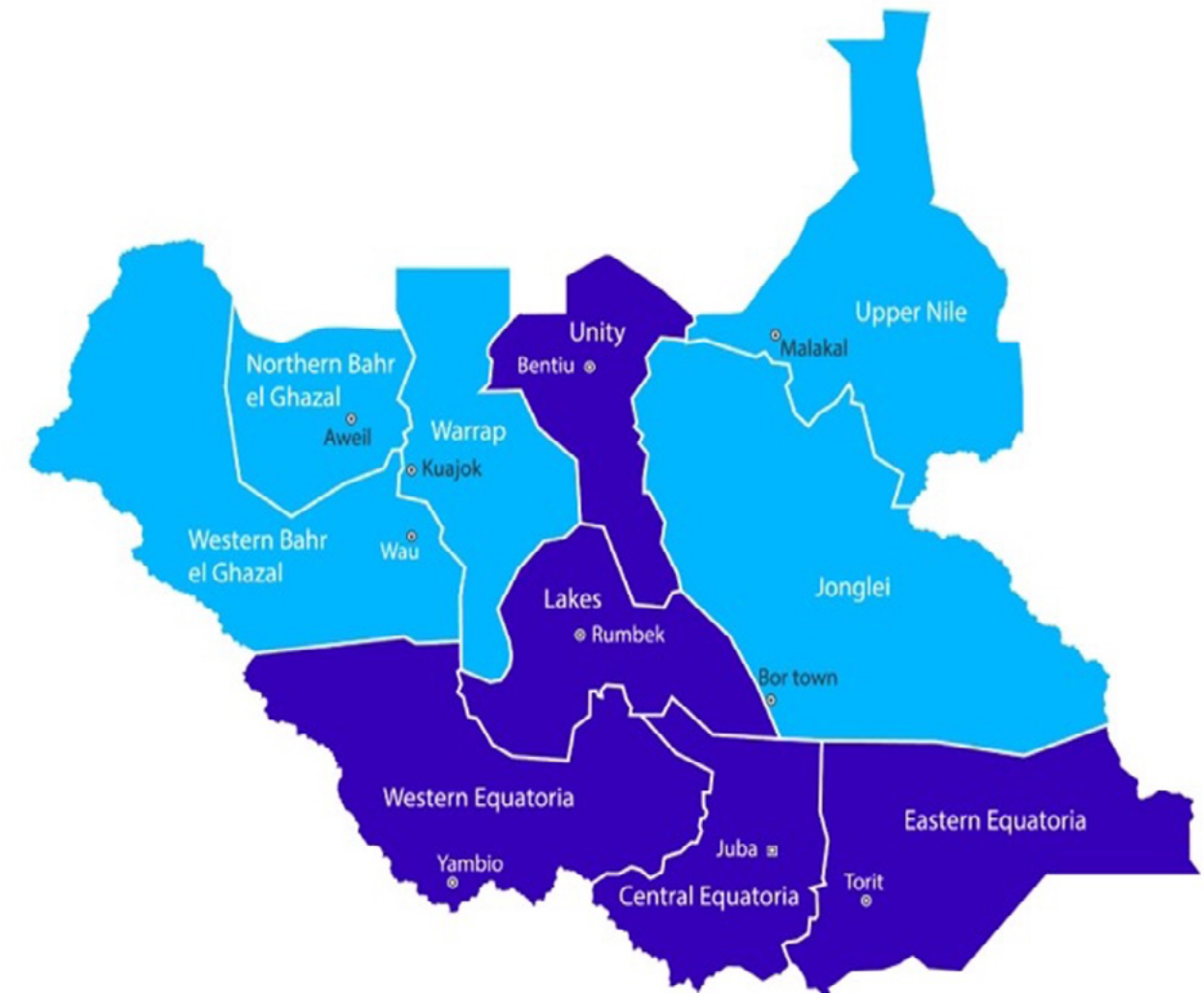
Thanks also go to all LoP partners for supporting the consultants in field key informants' mobilization and participation in the study. For Plan International, special thanks go to Pathak Himani (Plan Netherlands); Agnes Comfort (Consortium Coordinator, Plan International SSD); Justine Buga (PMEL Officer, Plan International SSD); and Anthony Onen (MEAL Specialist, Plan International SSD) for providing significant support during the Mid-Term Evaluation process.

Special thanks also go to LoP partners and their management (PAX, HealthNet TPO, EVE Organization for Women, AMA, and Plan International) for supporting the mid-term evaluation process. Special thanks also

Emmanuel Ira (PAX- Country Director); Henry Drabuga (Project Coordinator- Plan International SSD -Nimule Field Office (Magwi County); Justine Buga (PMEL, Plan International -Juba); Boniface Duku Dickson (Project Manager, HealthNet TPO); James Gathbany Machoak (Field Coordinator) & John Nyang Ran -(Social Worker) & Boll Kuch - (Field Officer), AMA) for supporting the consultants with field coordination and mobilization and participating in the interviews.

Plan International -South Sudan © 2023

MAP OF LoP PROGRAMME STATES



Part A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leaders of Peace (LoP) is a five-year programme under the Women, Peace, and Security (funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The grant instrument was provided under the Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society (2021-2025) approved in 2019. Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) grant instrument falls under the policy framework. The Leaders of Peace alliance is composed of Plan International (lead), HealthNet TPO (HNTPO), AMA (Assistance Mission for Africa), EVE, and PAX. The LoP project has three main outcome areas stated as follows: Outcome 1: Improved implementation of policies and regulations on GBV and protection of W/G including psychosocial support and self-care; Outcome 2: Changed attitudes and beliefs of civil society to facilitate inclusion of women and girls (W/G) and promote gender equality; Outcome 3: Increased, effective participation of women and youth (W/Y) in leadership and peacebuilding. Specifically, this baseline sought to: Determine quantitative and qualitative values for the outcome indicators for the period of January 2021 - June 2023; Assess and analyse the context and risks and mitigation strategies; Assess the effectiveness of key strategies employed by the Leaders of Peace consortium to achieve the outcome of Changing attitudes and beliefs of civil society to facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality; Understand the validity and extent to which recommendations from the baseline study have been employed in the programme; Develop concrete recommendations for the next annual plan Establish the current level of participation of women and youths in leadership and peacebuilding. The mid-term evaluation was conducted in five states: Unity, Lakes, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria. A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted for the evaluation combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. A total of 427 household survey was targeted. However, this was surpassed as 457 respondents participated in the mid-term evaluation. The mid-term evaluation targeted 60 Key Informant Interviews (KII), and achieved 56(93%) with 15 (27%) being female key informants; for Focus Group Discussion, 30 (6 for each region) were targeted and 30 (100%) was achieved, with 164(46%) FGDs being female.

Key Finding Summaries

Improved Women's Engagement and Inclusion

Over the last two years, there has been a notable improvement in the engagement and inclusion of women in decision-making processes, particularly in peace restoration activities. Organizations like AMA and TOCH have not only played a pivotal role by facilitating workshops on gender equality, human rights, peacebuilding, and leadership but also have played a pivotal role in driving this positive change. This has led to a dramatic decrease in cases of gender-based violence (GBV), with recorded cases dropping to 8-10 monthly, compared to the previous average of 30-40 cases. While the achievements are commendable, they also raise several critical considerations: **(1). Sustainability of GBV Reduction:** This evaluation was not able to establish whether the decrease in GBV cases is a sustained trend or a temporary shift. It is therefore essential to track these cases over the remaining programme period to ensure that the positive impact endures; **(2). Women's Empowerment:** The workshops conducted under the LoP programme have increased the engagement of women which is a positive step, but it's critical that this engagement translates

into meaningful, long-term changes in women's empowerment. The evidence of such empowerment might take a bit longer to document since it will require the partners to assess the trend and consistency with women asserting their rights and influence decision-making beyond the workshop setting.

Strengthening of MHPSS Initiatives

In our findings, access, and use of MHPSS services is average (Moderate) in urban areas and very low in rural remote areas. The most sought-after medical service is treatment for physical injuries, while reproductive health care is the least sought-after medical service. Over the last two years, the LoP programme has selected, trained and onboarded 50 MHPSS service focal persons in all 5 states, while 67 (134% achieved vs. a target of 50) community focal persons have been trained in case management (case identification, case management, documentation and referral pathways and reporting), which has contributed to the increase in GBV cases being handled from approximately 10 to 30-40 cases. Over the same period, 21 Survivor user groups (across all five states) have been formed and trained on self-care and peer-to-peer MHPSS. In Lakes, AMA has provided PSS (protection cash money, food items, counselling) to 38 women and girls, and handled a total of 76 cases out of which 15 cases were referred for further MHPSS attention, while 61 cases were solved. On the training of CBOs on lobby and advocacy of MHPSS and prevention of GBV and laws, the target of 108 members were trained and have continued to demonstrate an increased awareness of MHPSS and GBV laws. Also, 150 ABC court chiefs have been trained on the UNDP GBV pocket guide and also a national level ABC forum which was attended by 3 chiefs; 96 (64% of target) police officers had been trained on GBV legislation, human rights, and GE. There has been an improvement in the way the police are handling GBV cases, especially in confidentiality, and showing empathy and respect to survivors.

Increased Women's Participation in Decision-Making

The increased participation of women in decision-making roles within the community is a noteworthy achievement for several reasons. Firstly, it reflects a positive shift towards greater gender inclusivity in governance and community affairs. In Unity, 10 women (3 women in ABC Courts in Panyijiar as Judges, 3 Women are Board commissioners, -1 as chief advisor on Gender and social welfare; and 3 Women are now serving in Payam Ganyiel. (1 is treasurer, 1 is women leader and 1 is lead song composer), have been included in local-level decision-making structures as a result of LoP programme initiatives. The fact that ten women have been incorporated into community decision-making organs suggests progress in breaking down traditional gender barriers and recognizing the value of diverse perspectives in decision-making. The appointment of three women as judges in the ABC Courts in Panyijiar partly through the advocacy of the LoP programme is particularly significant. It not only represents a tangible step towards gender-balanced representation but also signifies a commitment to providing women with a voice in resolving legal matters. This can have a profound impact on the way justice is administered, especially in cases related to gender-based violence. Secondly, the presence of women on the board of the commissioner, including one in the role of chief advisor on Gender and Social Welfare (Roda Nyathior Mot), underscores the importance of incorporating gender expertise in policymaking. This can lead to policies that are more attuned to the needs and rights of women and marginalized groups. It is too early to determine whether this will actually translate the desired tangible benefits or not, but it is expected the voices of these women will be incorporated.

While these developments are undoubtedly positive, it's important to acknowledge that achieving gender balance and inclusivity in decision-making is not a one-time accomplishment but an ongoing process. Sustainability is a key concern. It's essential to monitor whether these changes result in substantive shifts in power dynamics and whether women in these positions are genuinely able to influence decision-making processes. Additionally, challenges and resistance to women's inclusion still persist since other LoP regions are yet to record significant high-profile women's appointments in Panyijiar.

Strengthened Local Civil Societies Organizations (CSOs)'s capacity on UNSCR 1325

WPS Agenda

Overall, in our findings, these CSOs engaged under the LoP programme in all the regions play a crucial role in advancing gender equality and the WPS agenda, and their dedication should be supported and strengthened to maximize their impact. A total of 16 CSOs have been onboarded as local partners and received capacity strengthening on the WPS agenda. In Lakes (Yirol East) 4 CSOs have been engaged (TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community in Need Aid (CINA). All four CSOs are formally registered and actively advocate for W/G and the WPS agenda. In central Equatoria (Terekeka) 3 CSOs have been engaged- (Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment) These CSOs, except for Wate Na Kita Women Groups (in the process), are formally registered to advocate for W/G. GE Agenda. In Unity State (Panyijiar) – 4 CSOs have been engaged – (Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group). Three out of the four CSOs engaged under the LoP programme are formally registered and conduct advocacy activities related to the WPS agenda. Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi) – 3 CSOs have been engaged: - (Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women, all three assessed CSOs meet registration requirements and advocate for gender equality. In Western Equatoria State (Yambio) – 2 CSOs have been engaged- (Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). All the two assessed CSOs meet registration requirements and advocate for gender equality. SHWO is working in the region but not under the LoP programme. All the 16 CSOs demonstrate a commendable level of engagement in advocacy initiatives for gender equality and the WPS agenda. Additionally, over the period, 12 CBOs – youth group, women's group, ABC courts, and Peace committee– were supported with seed grants (\$1,380) each - to facilitate them in the implementation of their lobby and advocacy plans on the different issues on WPS agenda, increased implementation of GBV laws, human rights and gender equality.

Improved Capacity Building for Local CSOs/CBOs

Out of the 16 CSOs engaged under the LoP programme, 12 CBOs – youth group, women group, ABC courts, and Peace committee have been supported with seed grants (\$1,380) to facilitate them in the implementation of their lobby and advocacy plans on the different issues on WPS agenda, increased implementation of GBV laws, human rights and gender equality. Importantly, over the period, a total of 5 CBOs/CSOs had their capacity enhanced on human rights, gender equality, UNSCR 1325, finance management report writing, and safeguarding. While the seed grants are a valuable resource, the amount of \$1,380 was very limiting in the context of South Sudan, where financial resources for community initiatives are often scarce over vast distances, for programme initiatives. Consideration should be given to potential increases in grant sizes in the future or scaling down the number of beneficiaries to have fewer, but with adequate resources to generate desired impact.

Conclusion

The LoP programme implementation over the last two years has continued to achieve the desired programme outputs and outcomes, despite the COVID-19 disruptions in 2020-2021, environmental risks such as floods and droughts that affected Lakes and Unity States, sporadic intercommunal and political conflicts, and social-economic challenges with high inflation and decline in South Sudanese Pound against the dollar. This operational context made it challenging for partners to have a smooth implementation of the programme, but adequate risk mitigation measures such as scaling on number of activities, conducting virtual meetings (during COVID), and building synergies with key stakeholders in the WPS agenda sector, including government (at national and State levels). Based on the findings we have highlighted in this executive summary and the body of this report, we conclude that the LoP programme has to a large extent, achieved its mid-term targets, including effectively addressing recommendations raised at the baseline (also to a large extent).

Recommendations for LoP Consortium Partners

- 1. Periodic Refresher Training and follow-ups:** Capacity building of ABC Courts, formal /informal traditional leaders, CSOs/CBOs, women leaders, and youth champions of change (COC) should incorporate periodic refresher training for effective knowledge and skilling. One-off training is largely not effective in the long run.
- 2. Develop Gender Action Plan (GAP) for R-NDS:** LoP should consider helping local CSOs/CBOs to develop GAP from the R-NDS as a way of localization of the WPS agenda, particularly women inclusion leadership committees at all levels.
- 3. Media and Advocacy:** Encourage media campaigns and advocacy efforts that challenge gender stereotypes and promote women's leadership and participation. Media advocacy is quite underutilized in LoP advocacy design, yet it has a significant impact on sensitization, awareness creation, and shaping behaviour and attitudes towards women in leadership.
- 4. Integrate Intergenerational Dialogues into programme initiatives:** Intergenerational dialogues are an important tool for engaging younger and older generations to share experiences on harmful gender norms and practices, and how to overcome them. Community-based programs can help shift attitudes towards gender equality.
- 5. Localization and capacity strengthening of partners should be substantive:** meaning, by the end of the LoP programme, local partners should have some level of technical skills, competency and capacity, including financial resource or resource mobilization capability. This is a very good localization practice and standard.
- 6. Seed Funding partnership:** The seed funding provided of \$1,380 is extremely limiting and inadequate to address the LoP programme initiatives that local partners are tasked with. Consider fewer CSO/CBOs/ local groups support that can have substantive effect.
- 7. Strengthen Monitoring and Reporting component:** Post training /capacity building monitoring is required over and above the normal reporting of outputs and immediate effect of these initiatives- to data (that can extract trends) to inform evidence-based initiatives customized to each state or implementation region.
- 8. Framework for Tracking Behavior Change:** The LoP programme needs to develop a standardized framework for measuring social change (abandonment of harmful behaviour, adoption of new

behaviour, retention of new behaviour) beyond anecdotal impact stories that can change from time to time.

- 9. Contingency Plan for 2024 National/State Elections:** There is a need to have a contingency plan and funds for the LoP programme. 2024 planned national elections. The Contingency fund should be able to deal with election or post-election conflict/violence, GBV, displacements, and the need for evacuation of field mission staff should the risk arise.
- 10. Enhance Dignity Kits, Sexual and Reproductive Health Services:** The need for hygiene dignity kits for girls, and GBV response kits for caseworkers /Psychosocial Support Services Focal Persons (PFPs) should be enhanced subject to the availability of budget resources.
- 11. Mentoring of Women Political Leaders:** Beyond capacity training on WPS, there is a need for mentoring, and providing resources (direct or indirectly) or support resource mobilization for aspiring women political leaders- This will significantly enhance the probability of women's election and inclusion in governance, and policy formulation on UNSCR 1325 agenda.
- 12. Scale up initiatives that are producing results:** Initiatives such as Champions of Change that incorporate men and boys should be scaled.
- 13. Peace Task Forces:** AMA's success with peace task force committees in Unity and Lakes should be adopted to the other LoP regions.

Recommendations for Policy Makers /Government

- 1. Full Enforcement of NAP 2:** The NAP2 provided mechanisms for enhancing the enforcement of the components of UNSCR 1325 (such as anti-GBV initiatives, legal framework, and resource mobilization for enhancing enforcement of peace agreements)
- 2. Review Political Parties Framework inclusion of women** in political leadership positions at partly levels (national and state)
- 3. Enforce Rights to Girls Education:** This should include banning child marriage, and enforcement of the Child Act of 2011.
- 4. Security and Stability:** Enhance security in communities through adequate policing to ensure the safety and protection of women and girls.
- 5. Conducive Humanitarian Environment:** Create a conducive environment that enhances mutual support, dialogue, accountability and transparency over development partners' humanitarian resources.

Recommendations to the Donor, INGOs, UN Agencies, and UNSCR 1325 Gatekeepers

- 1. Phase LoP Programme Funding:** Social Change programs like LoP should be implemented in phases. Behaviour, attitudes, and engrained harmful cultural norms and practises are hardly changed in a transformative manner in a single funding phase.
- 2. High-Level Advocacy:** Continue providing high-level advocacy at the international level, and in change conferences by enabling women leaders and champions of change at the national, state and grassroots levels to engage and learn – this could be realised through the funding or direct facilitation of these components.
- 3. Technical Skills Secondment:** Secondment of high-level technical skill technicians could also mitigate the challenge of capacity limitation and resource gaps.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Leaders of Peace (LoP) is a five-year programme under the Women, Peace, and Security (funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The grant instrument was provided under the Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society (2021-2025) approved in 2019. Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) grant instruments fall under the policy framework. The Leaders of Peace alliance is composed of Plan International (lead), HealthNet TPO (HNTPO), AMA (Assistance Mission for Africa), EVE, and PAX. The consortium has been implementing a five-year Programme under this grant instrument running from January 2021 to December 2025. The LoP programme is based on: (1) UNSCR 1325 and the nine resolutions that followed it; (2) The Theory of Change of the Dutch NAP 1325 (2016-2020) and; (3) The Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 and 16. In light of this, the Consortium has been utilizing the grant to re-emphasize the important role that young (women) play in peacebuilding in South Sudan, with a keen focus on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Under this Umbrella, the grant is being implemented to enhance the positive contribution of women- and youth groups, CSOs, and Human Rights Defenders (HRD) through lobby and advocacy towards sustainable peace and state-building, and have these efforts recognized, supported, and celebrated. The LoP consortium partners are also focusing on enhancing women and youth participation in peace and security through lobby and advocacy, providing resources and capacity building as well as changing discriminating social norms. The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted in five states: Unity, Lakes, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria.

LoP Project Outcomes and Specific Indicators

The LoP project has three main outcome areas stated as follows:

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

Outcome 1: Improved implementation of policies and regulations on GBV and protection of W/G including psychosocial support and self-care.

1. W/G feels safer and better protected in targeted locations.
2. Community-based support mechanisms (MHPSS) have effectively promoted and influenced the protection rights of women and girls.
3. Formal/traditional authorities demonstrate increased knowledge and changed attitudes to implement legislation against GBV and W/G protection.
4. W/G has access to and uses MHPSS and legal protection services, including case management.
5. Formal/traditional authorities implement laws and policies against GBV and protect survivors.

Outcome 2: Changed attitudes and beliefs of civil society to facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality.

1. W/Y groups, men and boys successfully advocate for gender equality, and equal participation through W/Y-led platforms.
2. W/Y groups, men and boys advocate for gender equality, and equal participation through W/Y-led platforms.
3. Formal and Informal CSOs actively initiate advocacy actions to influence the WPS agenda, including linking and learning.

Outcome 3: Increased, effective participation of women and youth (W/Y) in leadership and peacebuilding.

1. W/Y carries out leadership roles at various levels and influences the WPS agenda jointly with male counterparts.
2. Active participation of policymakers in influencing the WPS agenda, including linking and learning between all stakeholders.
3. CSOs undertake (data-driven) lobby and advocacy to influence key actors and policymakers on WPS topics.
4. International governmental bodies (AU/EU), diplomats, and media lobby and advocate to widen civic space.
5. CSOs developed and implemented their multi-annual WPS-related strategies.

1.5 Purpose of the Baseline

The mid-term evaluation was to examine the progress made under the programme for the two and half years and identify key lessons and recommendations for further implementation and completion of the programme. Specifically, the mid-term evaluation sought to:

1. To determine quantitative and qualitative values for the outcome indicators for the period of January 2021 - June 2023.
2. To assess and analyse the context and risks and mitigation strategies.
3. To assess the effectiveness of key strategies employed by the Leaders of Peace consortium to achieve the outcome of Changing attitudes and beliefs of civil society to facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality.
4. To understand the validity and extent to which recommendations from the baseline study have been employed in the programme.
5. Develop concrete recommendations for the next annual plan Establish the current level of participation of women and youths in leadership and peacebuilding.

1.4 Scope of Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation was conducted in five states: Unity, Lakes, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria. The evaluation was guided by general questions, and questions covering outcomes 1, 2 and 3. The evaluation was conducted between July 8th and August 15th, 2023.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 South Sudan Context

South Sudan achieved independence from Sudan in 2011 after more than two decades of civil strife and war and has continued to face internal conflicts and violence since independence. According to Humanitarian Affairs, it is estimated that at least 1.5 million people have lost their lives in the civil conflict that lasted 22 years¹. Unfortunately, even after achieving independence, South Sudan has been plagued by ongoing conflict, leading to further loss of life, internal displacement, and an influx of refugees into neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), widespread human rights violations and abuses have been committed by all parties to the conflict in South Sudan since December 2013. These violations include extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, forced recruitment, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians. These atrocities have resulted in internal displacement and the movement of South Sudanese people to Uganda and Ethiopia (OHCHR)². In 2017, the Greater Equatoria region, Western Bahr Ghazal, the capital city Juba, and Upper Nile witnessed spikes in armed conflict, putting nearly 2 million women and girls at risk of gender-based violence (UN estimates)³. The combination of conflict, displacement, drought, and poor governance has caused a severe deterioration of the economy and a food crisis, which worsened in 2018⁴. Unity State, in particular, experienced a state of famine, and by January 2018, 250,000 children were at risk of imminent death due to severe malnutrition. The UN declared that 5.1 million people, almost half of the population, were severely food insecure (UNICEF)⁵.

According to the UNSC Panel of Experts on South Sudan in their report (S/2020/342)⁶, South Sudan is yet to operationalize the mobile court system that would adequately respond to cases of GBV nor has the government implemented Chapter five of the Revitalized Peace Agreement (RPA), which provides for accountability and reconciliation mechanisms. Delays in the implementation of the Mobile Courts and Chapter Five of RPA mean that gender-sensitive approaches for women's inclusion in criminal justice institutions, reparations to victims of GBV, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is yet to be realized. Additionally, meaningful consultation with women's groups in gender-sensitive community violence reduction (CVR) and Gender Equality programs are yet to be prioritized. They must also incorporate an intersectional gender analysis of the broader context and ensure that women, girls, the elderly, individuals and persons with disabilities are meaningfully taken into account.

The Revitalization of the Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU), which came into effect on February 22, 2020, presented an opportunity to build peace and reduce political tension and inter/intra-communal clashes⁷. The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) remains the primary mechanism for establishing peace and security in the country⁸. However, there is a significant concern about the lack of inclusion and representation of diverse voices, especially women, in the peace process, government, and national ministries. Women's involvement falls short of the 35% quota required in the R-ARCSS. The UNMISS strategic review and the Security Council Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace, and Security have recommended meaningful participation and leadership of diverse women, support for women's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in designing protection measures (UNMISS, Security Council Informal Experts Group on WPS).

The most recent WPS South Sudan Status update to the UNSC by the organization Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA) which is part of the LoP consortium noted that inter-communal conflict and fighting among political actors have increased, especially over the past six months of 2020 in Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Central Equatoria, and Warrap States, as well as the Greater Pibor Administrative. Further, AMA noted that the situation in South Sudan has been complicated by flooding, locust invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have continued to strain resources and humanitarian access, which has resulted in more civilians being killed, while women and girls are increasingly targeted for sexual violence⁹.

2.2 South Sudan Gender Equality

According to UNDP 2023, Human Development Index (HDI) South Sudan ranks last 191/191¹⁰, with a low Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 0.597¹¹. The UNDP report further notes that gender inequality plays a significant role in the crisis, as women and girls are disproportionately affected by the effects of conflict compared to men. Despite the fact that girls and women have made major strides in access to education, health, and work, they have not yet gained gender equity. Inequality is mainly exacerbated by conflict, poor governance and patriarchy, where all too often, women and girls are discriminated against in health, education, political representation, and the labour market, which in turn loads negative consequences on their development capabilities and freedom of choice¹². More so, in South Sudan, socio-cultural norms and practices put women and girls at risk of rape, psychological/physical abuse, and denial of education and economic opportunities.

According to the Leaders of Peace (LoP) project narrative, the magnitude of gender inequality in South

1 Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). 2018. "Humanitarian Needs Overview: South Sudan." Pp. 2-4. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/South_Sudan_2018_Humanitarian_Needs_Overview.pdf

2 https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/regularsessions/session34/documents/a_hrc_34_63_aev%20-final.docx

3 Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock, "Remarks at the launch of the 2018 South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan and 2018 South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan." OCHA. 1 Feb 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-coordinator-14>

4 See UNFAO. "Crisis in South Sudan." Viewed 24 April 2018. <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/south-sudan/intro/en/>

5 Ibid

6 See Letter dated 28 April 2020 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2020/342>

7 See: The formation and revitalization of transitional government of National Unity in South Sudan: Available at: <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/the-formation-of-the-revitalized-transitional-government-of-national-unity-in-south-sudan/>

8 Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. Available at: <https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/region/africa/eastern-africa/south-sudan/>

9 See UN Security Council Briefing on South Sudan by Nyachangkuoth Rambang Tai; Available at: <https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/peacebuilder-resource-un-security-council-briefing-south-sudan-nyachangkuoth-rambang-tai-09-2020/>

10 See https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf

11 <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>

12 Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). 2018. "Humanitarian Needs Overview: South Sudan." Pp. 2-4. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/South_Sudan_2018_Humanitarian_Needs_Overview.pdf

Sudan is not well documented as collecting data is sensitive. However, studies indicate that some 65% of women and girls have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, the majority while under 18¹³. One of the major challenges imposed by conflict situations is the disruption of gender norms. On the positive end, women often take up traditionally male roles such as providing for the family, while on the negative end, there is the normalization of violence against women by men due to impunity, breakdown in the rule of law, policing and access to justice systems¹⁴.

Similarly, a study done by Plan International¹⁵, noted that in South Sudan, while all civilians face multiple forms of insecurity, adolescent girls are affected by the protracted crisis in ways that are different both from adolescent boys and from adult women, and in ways that are often overlooked. Further to this, harmful practices such as child marriage for dowry payment to a girl's family feed gender discrimination. Over 50% of girls are married before 18; 17% before 15 years¹⁶. The early burden imposed on girls diminishes development opportunities, access to education and economic livelihoods. The study by Plan International¹⁷ also revealed that Adolescent girls face constant threat of physical violence, with the most prevalent form being gender-based violence (GBV), and child-early and forced marriage (CEFM) being the most commonly reported form of GBV. Additionally, 77% of the girls in the study reported that they did not have enough to eat. Food insecurity influences their capacity to lead healthy lives, and concentrate in school, and often requires them to take on extra household labour, which in turn leads to school dropouts. The same study further highlighted that 26% of adolescent girls interviewed in South Sudan reported having considered ending their own lives at least once in the last twelve months and there is little to no evidence that there is any professional support for mental health issues. Adolescent girls have only sporadic access to a doctor or hospital for physical health needs and many find the costs of medicine or treatment prohibitive¹⁸.

The UNICEF 2021 study indicated that 72% of women (59% of men) are illiterate. The large disparity in women/girls' illiteracy compared to men/boys exacerbates the discrimination women/girls face in decision-making power and processes, and access to social economic development and livelihood resources. Considerably, women and girls have been bestowed the responsibility of household work, which, most often results in girls' school dropouts. A study that was conducted by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in January 2020 on the gender roles in South Sudan Action Plan for Peace (APP) revealed that in productive roles, both men and women play a significant role. However, full-term employment is mainly secured by men because of the levels of education and as a result of cultural and gender norms that favour boy child education over the girl child. The majority of women are involved in casual labour such as office cleaning, tilling of land, and cooking services that secure them wages to complement the basic salary that is brought in by their husbands¹⁹. Reproductive roles refer to all non-paid domestic work done by either gender. The findings of this study revealed that women and young girls are mostly the ones responsible for these types of reproductive roles (household level including child rearing and care, food

preparation, fetching water, fetching firewood, and house cleaning /hygiene). As a result, women and girls remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination, and exploitation since they do not engage effectively in economic activities that enhance sustainable livelihoods as compared to men²⁰. On access to land, property, and resources: Customary law continues to govern the use of land and other natural resources in South Sudan, with each ethnic group applying its own laws relating to land and land rights within its own territory. However, the challenge with customary rules is a lack of equitable access and distribution of that land to women and girls. This means that in most states, traditional practices and customary practices still restrict women and girls' access to land and property.

2.3 Status on UNSCR 1325

The UNSCR 1325 was established in 2000 to address how women and girls were differentially impacted by conflict and war. The resolution also recognizes the critical role that women can and already do play in peacebuilding efforts. Importantly, UNSCR 1325 affirms that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflict, the delivery of relief and recovery efforts, and the forging of lasting peace²¹. To this end, the resolution implores all actors to increase in conflict resolution and peacebuilding should enhance the participation of women and additionally, incorporate gender perspectives in all peace and security efforts. UNSCR 1325's implementation has four basic pillars: participation, protection, prevention and relief, and recovery. Before UNSCR 1325, there were many other resolutions, treaties, conventions, statements, and reports on women, children, and armed conflict; the protection of civilians in armed conflict; and the prevention of armed conflict - all of which formed the basis for the United Nations Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security. These previous conventions, though not directly addressing women, became an integral part of the Women, Peace, and Security policy framework. Since then, six other resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security have been adopted: UNSCR 1820 (June 2008); UNSCR 1888 (September 2009); UNSCR 1889 (October 2009); UNSCR 1960 (December 2010); UNSCR 2061 (June 2013) and UNSCR 2122 (October 2013). The subsequent resolutions, among other things, address the issue of sexual or other violence against women in conflict, either when used systematically to achieve military or political ends or opportunistically arising from cultures of impunity. UNSCR 1889 calls for the establishment of global indicators on UNSCR 1325 and reiterates its mandate to increase women's participation. It also amplifies calls for mainstreaming gender perspectives in all decision-making processes, especially in the early stages of post-conflict peacebuilding²².

Although UNSCR 1325 outlines women's participation in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and mediation efforts as an important pillar of its agenda, the findings of the NCA²³ study show that women remain grossly underrepresented in top-level decision-making in terms of numerical numbers due to a lack of implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP)²⁴ on UNSCR 1325, societal patriarchy, and low levels of education. Under the NAP, the government developed several legal and policy documents at the

13 <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/media/2071/file/UNICEF-South-Sudan-GBV-Briefing-Note-Dec-2019.pdf>

14 Ibid

15 Plan International 2018. Adolescent Girls in crisis: Voices from South Sudan. Available at:

https://www.plan-international.jp/about/pdf/201901_s_sudan.pdf

16 <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/what-we-do/protection>

17 Ibid

18 Ibid

19 See NCA 2020 South Sudan Gender Analysis Report, Pg v

20 Ibid

21 UNSCR 1325: Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325(2000))

22 Ibid

23 Norwegian Church Aid Gender Analysis Report, 2020

24 See: South Sudan National Action Plan 2015-2020 on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Related Resolutions <https://Gnwp.Org/Wp-Content/Uploads/South-Sudan-Nap-2015-2020.Pdf>

national, state, and sector levels, including the National Gender Policy (2013), the Local Government Act (2009), the Prison Act (2003), and the Child Act (2008); The Political Parties Act (2012), the National Elections Act (July 2012) and a National Election Commission. However, the lack of implementation of legal and policy frameworks rendered NAP 2015-2020 on UNSCR 1325 ineffective.

2.4 Technological and Environmental Context

South Sudan's technological landscape is still underdeveloped, with limited access to modern infrastructure, digital connectivity, and educational resources. A lack of basic infrastructure, such as reliable electricity and transportation networks, hampers technological advancement. The digital divide is prevalent, with limited internet penetration and access to information and communication technologies. South Sudan faces increasing environmental pressures, partly due to population growth and displacement caused by conflict. Climate change exacerbates these issues, leading to more frequent droughts and unpredictable rainfall patterns, floods, affecting food security and water availability in the LoP project regions. Addressing these challenges requires investment in technological infrastructure and sustainable environmental practices. Progress in these areas is essential for the nation's development, economic growth, and environmental preservation.

2.5 Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women and Girls

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on South Sudan, affecting various aspects of life in the country, including the implementation of humanitarian work. South Sudan, a nation already grappling with a protracted humanitarian crisis due to years of conflict and displacement, faced even greater challenges in the wake of the pandemic. Some of these challenges included:

Humanitarian Access and Delivery: One of the most significant effects of COVID-19 in South Sudan has been the disruption of humanitarian access and the delivery of essential aid. Movement restrictions, lockdowns, and the fear of virus transmission made it increasingly difficult for humanitarian organizations to reach vulnerable populations, particularly those in remote and conflict-affected areas. This hindered the distribution of food, clean water, healthcare, and other critical services, exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation. LoP partners were affected in the similar manner as restriction in movement inhibited travel to project locations which slowed project implementation, though partners recovered the time lost once the spread was contained and travel resumed.

Healthcare System Strain: The pandemic strained South Sudan's fragile healthcare system. The country had limited healthcare infrastructure to begin with, and the surge in COVID-19 cases placed immense pressure on hospitals and clinics. Humanitarian organizations had to pivot their efforts to support COVID-19 response, diverting resources from existing health programs. This diversion strained resources and impacted the ability to address other health concerns, such as maternal and child health or vaccination campaigns. LoP consortium partners and their local implementing partners were not significantly affected with the strain, apart from infections, and access to immunization that was a bit of a challenge to the downstream partners. However, once spread was contained and most LoP partners got vaccinated, scheduled activities resumed.

Economic Impact and Food Insecurity: The economic repercussions of COVID-19, including a drop in global oil prices (South Sudan's primary revenue source), compounded food insecurity in the country. South Sudan already faced significant challenges related to food availability, and the pandemic disrupted food supply chains. This, coupled with economic hardships, pushed many households further into poverty and food insecurity, which heightened GBV cases²⁵.

Mitigation Strategies

The pandemic heightened protection risks for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. School closures disrupted education, leaving children at risk of child labour, early marriage, and recruitment by armed groups. Lockdowns and movement restrictions limited livelihood opportunities, making many households more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. As indicated in the previous paragraph restrictions in travelling, closure of schools exposure more women and girls to GBV, early marriage and complete drop out of school, which to an extent, has a negative effect on the goals of the LoP programme in seeking to enhance protection of women and girls, and also championing for girls access to quality education. Some recovery has been made, but it was not possible to determine how many GBV cases went unreported over the period, and how many girls dropped out of school or were given up in early marriage, particularly in remote villages where this data has not been collected and analyzed. However, the LoP programme sensitization and awareness creation initiatives have contributed to the restoration of women's and girls' rights and dignity and the ability to participate in decision-making processes at their local level. Detailed findings are provided in chapter 4 of this report.

Conflict Dynamics: COVID-19 also intersected with South Sudan's ongoing conflict dynamics. Armed groups took advantage of the diverted attention and strained resources of humanitarian organizations to escalate violence. The pandemic complicated peace efforts and the implementation of the peace agreement signed in 2018.

In response to these challenges, LoP partners adapted their operations. This included implementing measures to protect their staff and the communities they served, including distributing personal protective equipment and conducting awareness campaigns. Remote and innovative approaches, and virtual training /meeting, were employed to continue delivering essential services.

²⁵ As highlighted in UN Women Covid-19 Impact Evaluation report 2022.

Gender Equality: Access to education for girls



Girl's symbolic take over. Hellen kemisa on the Left taking over the office of Nimule Hospital Medical Director on Dr. David on the right.

3. TECHNICAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Mid-Term Evaluation Design

A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted for the mid-term evaluation. A descriptive design was important in this case as it allowed us to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to gather benchmark project indicators. The cross-sectional design was important in helping us track the results indicators from baseline to mid-line, and also provide context factors, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for improving the programme implementation for the remaining period.

3.2 Evaluation Method

A participatory mixed methodology approach that combined qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted for this baseline study. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods provided the advantage of triangulating data and findings to ensure non-quantitative issues ordinarily treated as outliers were not excluded. Qualitative data has been used to provide meaning, reasons, and explanations behind specific quantitative figures. Triangulated data has therefore been used to enhance the usability of findings, by making it easier to draw inferences, correlate, and establish associations and relationships between programme interventions, targets, and outcomes.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Strategy

Sample Size Determination

The sample size was computed using Cochran's formula²⁶ which was also used at baseline, This was done for purposes of consistency in the programme evaluation approach. Cochran's formula is considered appropriate for large populations (above 1,000), where a study sample has to be drawn. The Cochran formula is:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

e is the desired level of precision (i.e., the margin of error),

p is the (estimated) proportion of the population that has the attribute in question,

q is 1 - p.

The z-value is found in a Z table (which is 1.96)

²⁶ Established for calculating sample sizes for larger populations.

Since we did not have adequate information on the target population sizes within the different regions, we adopted Cochran's formula that assumes that half of the target population had desired study characteristics. This approach provided us with maximum variability. So, $p = 0.5$; with the desired confidence level of 95%, and at least 5 per cent (plus or minus precision). A 95 % confidence gave us Z values of 1.96, per the normal tables. The computation was done as follows:

$$((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.05)^2 = 384 \text{ (as our sample size for households)}$$

The sample size of 385 households provided an adequate level of confidence required to make the survey component valid and reliable. We adjusted the sample size by 10% to compensate for the non-response rate, which increased the final sample size to 424. The targeted sample was achieved and surpassed as 457 respondents participated in the baseline. The baseline targeted 90 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and achieved 77(86%) with 25 (32%) being female key informants; for Focus Group Discussion, 40 (8 for each region) were targeted and 37 (87%) was achieved, with 16 (46%) FGDs being female. The summary is provided as follows:

Table 1: Women and Girls Household Survey Sample Distribution

State	Target	Achieved
Central Equatorial State	85	82 (18%)
Eastern Equatorial State	85	90 (20%)
Lake State	85	72 (16%)
Unity State	85	107 (23%)
Western Equatorial State	85	106 (23%)
Total	425	457 (100%)

Table 2: Key Informant Interviews Sample Size Distribution

State	Gender		Sample Size	Total
	Male	Female		
Lakes	8	2		10
Central Equatoria	9	3		12
Unity	8	3		11
Easter Equatoria	9	3		12
Western Equatoria	6	4		10
Directors	1	0		1
TOTAL	41	15		56

Table 3: Focus Group Sample Size Distribution

State	Target	Achieved
Lakes	6	5
Central Equatoria	6	5
Unity	6	5
Eastern Equatoria	6	5
Western Equatoria	6	5
TOTAL	30	25

Sampling Strategy

For the household's W/G survey, the sample size was distributed in a representative manner to ensure target groups are adequately covered and represented. A random sampling strategy was used to ensure that each household had an equal chance of being selected. For key informants and Focus Group Discussions, a purposive sampling technique was used. This was to ensure that only respondents with significant information were targeted and sampled. This was done as a way of enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

A Mobile Digital Platform (ODK) was used to collect household surveys and CSOs/CBOs surveys in all five regions. The use of ODK was necessitated by the need to have seamless transmission of data which made it easy to track data collection on each location and respond to emerging challenges as soon as they arise. For KIIs and FGDs, an interview guide was used for each target informant and group (s). Secondary data was collected from literature sources including LoP M&E results framework, LoP partners annual narrative reports, programme proposal, UNSC 1325 resolution status report on South Sudan, Project Logical Indicator Result Framework, South Sudan National Action Plan (2015-2020) on UNSCR1325, UNSC March 2020 Briefing on South Sudan, Human Rights Council Report on South Sudan, 2020, and Plan International Adolescent Girls in Crisis: Voices from South Sudan Report

3.5 Researchers /Enumerators Field Training

With the help of each local partner from each region, 15 enumerators (3 for Unity, 3 for Lakes, 3 for W/Equatoria, 3 for E/Equatoria. 3 for C/Equatoria) were recruited and trained for 1 day. The training included data collection process, tools and translation, testing and piloting, research ethics, Plan International Code of Conduct, and Child Safeguarding and protection. After the piloting was conducted, the tool was piloted to ensure consistency, understanding, and testing of any errors and seamless transmission of data to the server.

3.6 Data Collection Process

The enumerators were responsible for the household survey of W/G. The enumerators were supervised by one of our national associates to ensure proper and adequate processes were followed, and daily targets achieved. All KIs and FGDs were conducted by the Lead Field Manager and an associate. The national associate was responsible for translating and backtracking between English and Arabic/ local languages.

3.7 Data Analysis and Reporting

Data cleaning was done to ensure all errors, missing data, and wrong entries were cleaned. In cases where there were duplicates submitted, this was noted and corrected. There were no cases of outliers noted as most of the data was within the required central tendency distribution of the 25th and 75th percentile. For cases of missing data, names, spellings, etc., consultations were made with field teams and mobilizers and relevant corrections were made.

3.8 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance protocols deployed included constant supervision of data collection, and spot checks by the supervisors on the location's enumerators were collecting data. The lead field consultant conducted all high-level interviews. This was important in ensuring high-level quality in interview discussion and documentation. Secondly, all data collected was cleaned and checked for consistency, reliability, validity, and uniformity.

3.9 Ethical Protocols

Training of our field teams included ethical protocols such as neutrality, confidentiality, data integrity, and participation of stakeholders. Additionally, anti-sexual harassment and anti-GBV guidelines were used. Interaction with children was guided by the following: treating children with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, disability, language, religion, or other ethnic or social origins; ensuring that girls under the study were in a safe and protective environment during interviewing, all girls were interviewed in the presence of an adult (e.g., a parent/guardian); on photographs- no photographs of children or baseline respondents were taken without consent or explanation on utilization of the photos.

3.10 Evaluation Challenges and Limitations

The following the baseline study challenges experienced, and limitations on the utilization of the study:

- Delays in Data Submission:** Apart from the Central Equatoria region, all the other states have challenges with access to the Internet. This affected synchronous data transmission. Data had to be saved, and smartphones moved to locations with adequate internet access before data was transmitted to our server. This adjustment did not affect the integrity or loss of the data.
- Study Finding Limitations:** These findings are for the five study states. Findings may only be generalized to other states with similar characteristics.

4. MID-TERM EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the mid-term evaluation. The respondents' demographic profile is presented first, followed by findings for each of the three outcome areas. Findings for each outcome area are informed by the mid-term evaluation questions.

4.2 Demographic Profile

The mid-term evaluation targeted women and girls as the primary target respondents in all five states. This section provides a summary of the demographic profile of the women and girls which includes age, education level, and marital status. These findings are summarized as follows:

4.2.1 Respondents Age

Overall, 518 women and girls took part in the evaluation survey, out of which 208 (40.1%) were adolescents and young girls (11-20 years), while 310 (59.9%) were young adults and adult women. Across all states, 12.7% (66) were adolescent girls aged 11-15 years, 27.4% (142) were young girls aged 16-20 years; 32.4% (168) were young adults aged 20-25 years; while 142 (27.4%) were adult women aged above 25 years. Analysis by state shows that respondents from Central Equatoria were composed of 18.6% girls aged 10-12 years; 29% girls aged 16-20 years; 25.6% women and girls aged 20-25 years and 26.7% were aged 25 years and above. For Eastern Equatoria respondents were composed of 11% girls aged 11-15 years; 15.9% girls aged 16-20 years; 34.6% women and girls aged 20-25 years; 38.3% were aged 25 years and above. For Lake State respondents were composed of 11.1% girls aged 11-15 years; 19.4% girls aged 16-20 years; 51.9% women and girls aged 20- 25 years, while 17.6% were aged 25 years and above. For Unity state, respondents were composed of 9.3% girls aged 11-15 years; 32.4% girls aged 16-20 years; 31.5% women and girls aged 20-25 years, while 26.9% were aged 25 years and above. For Western Equatoria, 12.7% of girls aged 11-15 years; 27.4% of girls aged 16-20 years; 32.4% of women and girls aged 20-25 years, and 27.4% were aged above 25 years summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Respondents Age (N=518)

State	11-15 years (Adolescent)	16 -20 Years	20 - 25 Years	Above 25 (Adults)	Grand Total
C/Equatorial State	16 (18.6%)	25 (29.1%)	22 (25.6%)	23 (26.7%)	86
E/Equatorial State	12 (11.2%)	17 (15.9%)	37 (34.6%)	41 (38.3%)	107
Lake State	12 (11.1%)	21 (19.4%)	56 (51.9%)	19 (17.6%)	108
Unity State	10 (9.3%)	35 (32.4%)	34 (31.5%)	29 (26.9%)	108
W/Equatorial State	16 (14.7%)	44 (40.4%)	19 (17.4%)	30 (27.5%)	109
Total	66 (12.7%)	142 (27.4%)	168 (32.4%)	142 (27.4%)	518

4.2.2 Respondents Level of Education (N=416)

Out of the 518 respondents, 416 indicated they had formal education, while 102 did not have any formal education. Cumulatively, 10% (52) were still in primary school, 20% (103) had completed primary school, 19% (96) had dropped out of school; 10% (53) were currently enrolled in secondary schools; 10% (51) having completed secondary school; 10% (49) having dropped out of secondary schools, and 2.3% (12) having university-level education. This marks a significant improvement from the baseline where girls who had completed primary school improved from 10% to 20%. There was also a decrease in primary school dropouts from 21% to 19%, while at the same time, there was an increase in those who finished secondary school from 7% to 10%, and an increase from 1% to 2.3% who had university education as compared to baseline. Discussions with education sector stakeholders revealed that the improvement in enrolment and completion was mainly attributed to continued sensitization on the importance of girls' education to which LoP made significant contributions to the awareness, and advocacy campaigns in collaboration with women and youth-led organizations at the grassroots levels.

Table 5: Respondents' Level of Education (N=416)

State	Primary (currently in school)	Primary (Completed)	Primary (Dropped out)	Secondary (currently in school)	Secondary (Completed)	Secondary (Dropped Out)	University Level
C/Equatoria	11 (10%)	18 (17%)	20 (19%)	10 (9%)	8 (7%)	14 (13.0%)	1 (0.9%)
E/Equatoria	14 (13%)	31 (28%)	23 (21%)	7 (6.4%)	14 (13%)	12 (11.0%)	6 (5.5%)
Lake State	7 (8.1%)	18 (21%)	14 (16%)	6 (7.0%)	1 (1.2%)	3 (3.5%)	1 (1.2%)
Unity State	8 (8%)	19 (18%)	16 (15%)	12 (11.2%)	11 (10.3%)	12 (11.2%)	0 (0.0%)
W/ Equatorial	12 (11%)	17 (16%)	23 (21%)	18 (16.7%)	17 (15.7%)	8 (7.4%)	4 (3.7%)
Total	52 (10%)	103 (20%)	96 (19%)	53 (10%)	51 (10%)	49 (10%)	12 (2.3%)

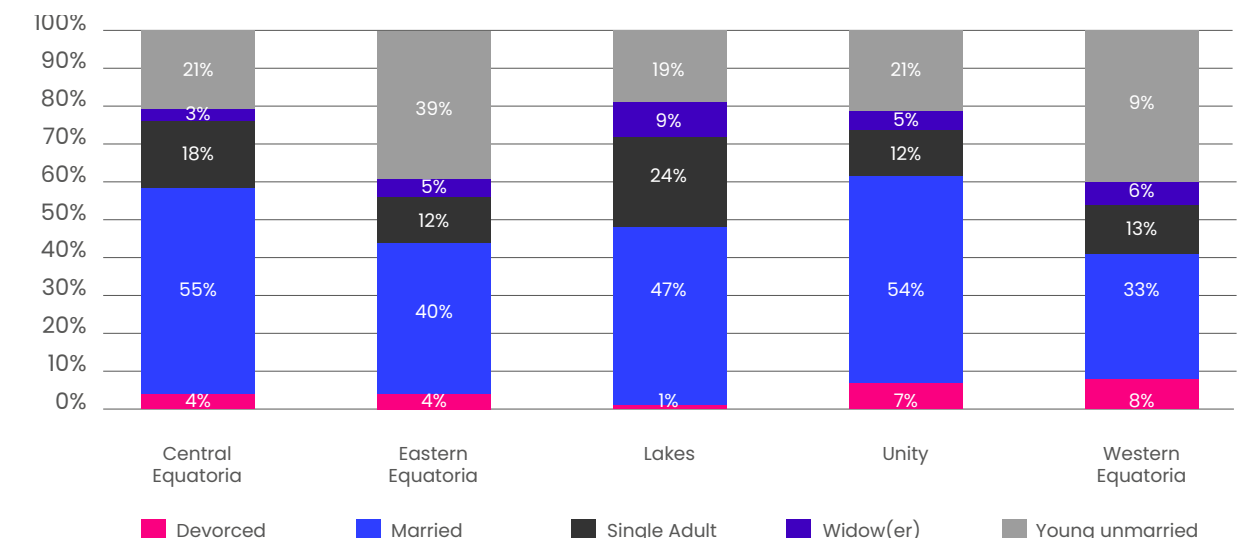
4.2.3 Respondents' Marital Status

Respondents' marital status was grouped into five categories: young not married, single adults, married, divorced, and widow(er). Based on the findings in Table 6, on average, 29% (148) were young and unmarried, 15% (80) were single unmarried adults, 46% (237) were married adults, 5% (26) were divorced, and 5% (27) widows (ers). Distribution of marital status per age group is annexed. When examined by state, Central Equatoria had the highest number of married women (55%), with the least participants being young schoolgirls (2%). Eastern Equatoria on the other hand had high married and unmarried young girls at (40%) and (39%) respectively taking part in the survey. Lakes had (47%) married women, (19%) young unmarried young girls; Unity had (54%) married women, (22%) young unmarried girls; Western Equatoria had (33%) married women, (40%) young unmarried women taking part in the survey as noted in Figure 2

Table 6: Respondents Marital Status (N=518)

Name of the State	Divorced	Married	Single Adult	Widow(er)	young not Married	Grand Total
Central Equatoria	4 (4%)	59 (55%)	19 (17.6%)	3 (3%)	23 (2%)	108
Eastern Equatoria	4 (4%)	44 (40%)	13 (11.9%)	5 (5%)	43 (39%)	109
Lakes	1 (1%)	40 (47%)	21 (24.4%)	8 (9%)	16 (19%)	86
Unity	8 (8%)	58 (54%)	13 (12.1%)	5 (5%)	23 (22%)	107
Western Equatoria	9 (8%)	36 (33%)	14 (13.0%)	6 (6%)	43 (40%)	108
Grand Total	26 (5%)	237 (46%)	80 (15%)	27 (5%)	148 (29%)	518

Figure 1: Respondents Age Percentage Distribution by State



4.3 Major Developments Since the Programme Baseline

The mid-term evaluation sought to determine any major developments in the programme context from the baseline until June 2023. This included examining any major changes in risks associated with the programme implementation, the associated impact and mitigation measures that have been put in place. Discussions with LoP partners and other key stakeholders revealed the following major developments.

4.3.1 Key Achievements

Improved Women's Engagement and Inclusion

Over the last two years, there has been a notable improvement in the engagement and inclusion of women in decision-making processes, particularly in peace restoration activities. Organizations like AMA and TOCH have not only played a pivotal role by facilitating workshops on gender equality, human rights, peacebuilding, and leadership but also have played a pivotal role in driving this positive change. This has

led to a dramatic decrease in cases of gender-based violence (GBV), with recorded cases dropping to 8-10 monthly, compared to the previous average of 30-40 cases. While the achievements are commendable, they also raise several critical considerations: **(1). Sustainability of GBV Reduction:** This evaluation was not able to establish whether the decrease in GBV cases is a sustained trend or a temporary shift. It is therefore essential to track these cases over the remaining programme period to ensure that the positive impact endures; **(2). Women's Empowerment:** The workshops conducted under the LoP programme have increased the engagement of women which is a positive step, but it's critical that this engagement translates into meaningful, long-term changes in women's empowerment. The evidence of such empowerment might take a bit longer to document since it will require the partners to assess the trend and consistency with women asserting their rights and influence decision-making beyond the workshop setting.

Strengthening of MHPSS Initiatives

Over the last two years, the LoP programme has selected, trained and onboarded 50 MHPSS service focal persons in all 5 states, while 67 (134% achieved vs. a target of 50) community focal persons have been trained in case management (case identification, case management, documentation and referral pathways and reporting), which has contributed to the increase in GBV cases being handled from approximately 10 to 30-40 cases. Over the same period, 21 Survivor user groups (across all five states) have been formed and trained on self-care and peer-to-peer MHPSS. In Lakes, AMA has provided PSS (protection cash money, food items, counselling) to 38 women and girls, and handled a total of 76 cases out of which 15 cases were referred for further MHPSS attention, while 61 cases were solved. On the training of CBOs on lobby and advocacy of MHPSS and prevention of GBV and laws, the target of 108 members were trained and have continued to demonstrate an increased awareness of MHPSS and GBV laws. Also, 150 ABC court chiefs have been trained on the UNDP GBV pocket guide and also a national level ABC forum which was attended by 3 chiefs; 96 (64% of target) police officers had been trained on GBV legislation, human rights, and GE. There has been an improvement in the way the police are handling GBV cases, especially on confidentiality, and showing empathy and respect to survivors.

Increased Women's Participation in Decision-Making

The increased participation of women in decision-making roles within the community is a noteworthy achievement for several reasons. Firstly, it reflects a positive shift towards greater gender inclusivity in governance and community affairs. In Unity, 10 women (3 women in ABC Courts in Panyijiar as Judges, 3 Women are Board commissioners, -1 as chief advisor on Gender and social welfare; and 3 Women are now serving in Payam Ganyiel. (1 is treasurer, 1 is women leader and 1 is lead song composer), have been included in local-level decision-making structures as a result of LoP programme initiatives. The fact that ten women have been incorporated into community decision-making organs suggests progress in breaking down traditional gender barriers and recognizing the value of diverse perspectives in decision-making. The appointment of three women as judges in the ABC Courts in Panyijiar partly through the advocacy of the LoP programme is particularly significant. It not only represents a tangible step towards gender-balanced representation but also signifies a commitment to providing women with a voice in resolving legal matters. This can have a profound impact on the way justice is administered, especially in cases related to gender-based violence. Secondly, the presence of women on the board of the commissioner, including one in the role of chief advisor on Gender and Social Welfare (Roda Nyathior Mot), underscores the importance of incorporating gender expertise in policymaking. This can lead to policies that are more attuned to the needs and rights of women and marginalized groups. It is too early to determine whether this will actually translate the desired tangible benefits or not, but it is expected the voices of these women.

While these developments are undoubtedly positive, it's important to acknowledge that achieving gender balance and inclusivity in decision-making is not a one-time accomplishment but an ongoing process. Sustainability is a key concern. It's essential to monitor whether these changes result in substantive shifts in power dynamics and whether women in these positions are genuinely able to influence decision-making processes. Additionally, challenges and resistance to women's inclusion still persist since other LoP regions are yet to record significant high-profile women's appointments in Panyijiar.

Strengthened Local CSO's capacity on UNSCR 1325 WPS Agenda

A total of 16 CSOs have been onboarded as local partners and received capacity strengthening on the WPS agenda. In Lakes (Yirol East) 4 CSOs have been engaged (TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA). All four CSOs are formally registered and actively advocate for W/G and the WPS agenda. In central Equatoria (Terekeka) 3 CSOs have been engaged- (Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment) These CSOs, except for Wate Na Kita Women Groups (in the process), are formally registered to advocate for W/G. GE Agenda. In Unity State (Panyijiar) – 4 CSOs have been engaged – (Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group). Three out of the four CSOs engaged under the LoP programme are formally registered and conduct advocacy activities related to the WPS agenda. Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi) – 3 CSOs have been engaged: - (Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women, all three assessed CSOs meet registration requirements and advocate for gender equality. In Western Equatoria State (Yambio) – 2 CSOs have been engaged- (Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). All the two assessed CSOs meet registration requirements and advocate for gender equality. SHWO is working in the region but not under the LoP programme. All the 16 CSOs demonstrate a commendable level of engagement in advocacy initiatives for gender equality and the WPS agenda. Additionally, over the period, 12 CBOs – youth group, women's group, ABC courts, and Peace committee– were supported with seed grants (\$1,380) each - to facilitate them in the implementation of their lobby and advocacy plans on the different issues on WPS agenda, increased implementation of GBV laws, human rights and gender equality.

Improved Capacity Building for Local CSOs/CBOs

Out of the 16 CSOs engaged under the LoP programme, 12 CBOs – youth group, women group, ABC courts, and Peace committee have been supported with seed grants (\$1,380) to facilitate them in the implementation of their lobby and advocacy plans on the different issues on WPS agenda, increased implementation of GBV laws, human rights and gender equality. Importantly, over the period, a total of 5 CBOs/CSOs had their capacity enhanced on human rights, gender equality, UNSCR 1325, finance management report writing, and safeguarding. While the seed grants are a valuable resource, the amount of \$1,380 was very limiting in the context of South Sudan, where financial resources for community initiatives are often scarce over vast distances, for programme initiatives. Consideration should be given to potential increases in grant sizes in the future or scaling down the number of beneficiaries to have fewer, but with adequate resources to generate desired impact.

4.3.2 Key Risks and Mitigation

Challenges with Flooding

Flooding, particularly in areas like Unity State, has emerged as a significant challenge to program implementation. Floods disrupted not only the planned programme activities such as sensitization, workshop

planning and training but also caused infrastructure (roads) damage which posed significant logistical and safety challenges. The LoP partners had to wait for the flood out before activities could resume.

Conflict-Related Challenges

The ongoing conflicts, especially between Lakes and Unity States, have been a significant risk factor for program implementation. For instance, communal conflicts between Panyijiar and Naing counties have affected the implementation of activities related to continuous youth engagement as most youths get engaged in the fighting, which threatens to erode the gains made in the last two years to make the lives of women and girls safe. While the challenges presented by conflict are intricate and often beyond the programme's direct control, a proactive, conflict-sensitive, and adaptive approach could be adopted to help mitigate risks and maintain program impact even in conflict-affected areas. Addressing these challenges necessitates ongoing analysis, community engagement, and an unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of both staff and beneficiaries throughout the remaining period of the programme.

Climate Change Challenges

Climate change continues to affect South Sudan causing a real threat to the communities where the LoP program is being implemented. In 2022, not much flooding was experienced although the effects of previous flooding were still felt in Yirol, Nyal and Ganyiel²⁷. Flooding and droughts have previously caused disruptions in activity implementation. As a result of floods, some areas became difficult to access thus hampering activity implementation. Drought also affects the implementation of programme initiatives since communities would rather look for food and livelihood than attend training. More so, pastoralists migrate from place to place in search of pasture and water, which, from time to time, leads to inter-communal – interclan conflicts of grazing lands, which exacerbates conflicts, GBV, violence and abuse. The effects of climate change are still going to be prevalent in 2024- 2025, and the programme should make adequate measures on how to respond to this effect. This includes mobile facilities, clinics, and schools for girls and women.

Inflation

Inflation in South Sudan with the SSP losing on the Dollar, Euro, and Pound, has had a profound impact on how number of activities that can be conducted under the program. As such partners have had to either limit the number of activities conducted or the number of participants as a mitigation mechanism.

Key Staff Turnovers

Both government institutions and local CSOs/CBOs experience quite a high number of key staff turnover. This has in the past affected programme implementation since the new staff have to get to speed with the programme initiatives, and it gets more challenging with the new staff have limited or no capacity to engage. Partners have had to slow the pace of implementation in cases where this has happened and in other cases offered rapid capacity building for new staff. For CSOs/ CBOs, the loss of skills and knowledge means that most remain in the perpetual stage of learning and capacity building, instead of maturing into viable long-term partners.

²⁷ Review of Partners Annual Narrative Reports

Poor Local CSOs/CBOs Funding

Most local /grassroots level CBOs/groups rely majorly on the one partner who is operating in their region with no other source of funding. When the project comes to and, there is a high risk of losing all the gains made due to the lack of sustainability of the local CBOs /groups. instead of maturing into viable long-term partners.

Upcoming General Elections

South Sudan is poised for the upcoming 2024 national elections. Party defections, and disagreements, could easily lead to political conflict that most often escalates to inter-clan conflicts, which affect the delivery of humanitarian work, and erode peace agreements, peacebuilding, and reconciliation efforts. LoP partners should start monitoring early to establish security and protection measures for staff and local communities. This may include establishing a contingency fund to handle elections and post-election conflict, violence etc. This also includes preparing women candidates through training, mentoring, and technical and other resource support to effectively compete. This will enhance UNSCR 1325 on the WPS agenda, by enabling women to participate in political processes, that determine policy, and governance initiatives at national and state levels.

4.3.3 Theory of Change (ToC)

Contribution of the ToC towards the LoP Programme Outcomes

Overall, in our findings, the LoP Theory of Change three pathways are valid and have continued to contribute to the achievement of the programme's three outcome areas and should be maintained.

The LoP theory of change (ToC) envisages the capacity building of formal/ traditional authorities on legislation against GBV and W/G protection will enable them to fully implement laws and policies against GBV and protect survivors. This would in turn improve the implementation of policies and regulations on GBV and the protection of W/G including access to Psychosocial Support (PSS) self-care under outcome area 1. Secondly, the ToC envisaged the capacity strengthening of Community groups to be gender aware and committed to W/G protection, gender equality and W/G's meaningful participation in peacebuilding, which would result in the active participation of formal/informal CSOs (especially women, and men, boys and youth-led groups), and policymakers in influencing the WPS agenda. This would in turn contribute to the realization of result area 2, particularly changed attitudes and beliefs of civil society (CS) to facilitate the inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality. Finally, the ToC activating gatekeepers including policymakers to promote the WPS agenda and create space for W/G in leadership positions will help advance advocacy on the WPS agenda that will enable women and youth to carry out leadership roles at various levels and influence the WPS agenda jointly with male counterparts. This, in turn, will contribute to result outcome 3 on increased, effective participation of Women and youth (W/Y) in leadership and peacebuilding.

Pathway 1: Improved Implementation of Policies and Regulations on GBV and Protection of W/G, Including Psychosocial Support and Self-Care (Result Area 1)

The program has made commendable progress in this pathway. Training individuals in case management and referral pathways, forming survivor user groups for peer support and self-care, and collaborating with community-based organizations (CBOs) for lobbying and advocacy on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and GBV prevention indicate a strong commitment to improving policy implementa-

tion. However, while these activities are promising, it is too early to measure the contribution of these efforts to the ToC result 1. This is because policies take time to be formulated, and implemented before data on their success can be quantified to measure policy improvements, or the scale to which the PSS services have been improved.

Pathway 2: Civil Society (CS) Changing Attitudes and Beliefs for Inclusion of W/G and Promotion of Gender Equality (Result Area 2)

The program has demonstrated noteworthy efforts in changing attitudes and beliefs within civil society. Activities such as engaging men through debate, training women-led organizations, empowering youth groups, and connecting advocacy groups with key stakeholders (parliamentarians, ABC court chiefs, and law enforcement) are comprehensive approaches to community transformation. While the activities are well-detailed, the evidence of attitudinal and belief changes within civil society is still anecdotal. There is a need for the programme to develop behaviour and attitude change measures that can be tested and verified at the end of the programme in 2025. Since behaviour and attitude are entrenched in social and cultural gendered structures, it will be important to see how and whether the anecdotal shift and trends in behaviour and attitudes will hold by the end of the programme.

Pathway 3: Increased, Effective Participation of Women and Youth (W/Y) in Leadership and Peacebuilding (Result Area 3)

The program demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting gender-inclusive leadership and peacebuilding. Training various committees, engaging with parliamentarians and community leaders on WPS agenda issues, and empowering female leaders through participatory learning and action (PLA) indicate a community-based approach in line with the ToC. For instance, the appointment of three women as judges in the ABC Courts in Panyijiar, the presence of women on the board of the commissioner, including one in the role of chief advisor on Gender and Social Welfare (Roda Nyathior Mot), and Margaret Oliver (head chief of the area in Pageri) enhances increased participation of W/Y in leadership and peacebuilding under the ToC pathway. However, the increase in women and youth participation in leadership and peacebuilding roles should be accompanied by tangible contributions to this space, particularly evidence of influencing laws and policies supporting the WPS agenda, which the mid-term could not measure at this stage. Probably, by the end of the project, it would be more realistic to look at the tangible contribution of the W/Y leaders since they will have occupied these positions for a while.

4.3.4 Choice of LoP Locations and Needs

The mid-term evaluation sought to answer the question: To what extent are the choices of geographical locations and target groups transparent and evidence-based given the education needs in South Sudan? The feedback from multiple key informant respondents indicates deliberate planning and strategic thinking behind the choices of the locations, target groups, and education needs, which to a very large extent are perceived as transparent and evidence based. One common thread among the respondents is the acknowledgement that the LoP program builds upon the foundation of a prior initiative, Women for Change, which was supported by the same donor. This continuity suggests a logical progression and a deliberate strategy to extend and deepen the impact of the program. More so, the evidence-based approach was highlighted through mapping exercises and assessments done at the beginning of the

programme. These exercises were conducted in all LoP programme locations considering local needs and unique regional dynamics, such as the pastoralist communities, which reflects a commitment to tailoring interventions to the specific circumstances and requirements of each location. Additionally, the consideration of the stability and security of the chosen locations is a recurring theme in our findings. Respondents view this as essential for the programme's developmental approach, to a very large extent. The stability factor is seen as conducive to the successful implementation of LoP's interventions.

4.3.5 Learning Agenda

The finding shows that the learning agenda has been initiated with significant progress on question 1 (MHPSS and Psychosocial Recovery), while the other two questions (Partnership and Collaboration, Role of CSOs and Sustainability) are in the preparatory phases, indicating **progress is to a moderate extent**.

Under the LoP programme, the learning agenda is composed of three questions: **Learning question 1:** What can we learn from the experiences of WPS in South Sudan and Colombia on the intersection between mental health, psychosocial recovery and peacebuilding efforts? **Learning question 2:** How does the collaboration of the alliance partners lead to added value to the partnership? **Learning question 3:** How do formal and informal CSOs (especially women, and youth-led groups) become sustainable lobby and advocacy allies jointly influencing the WPS agenda?

Under the LoP consortium, each partner has been assigned a specific learning question. Healthnet TPO, for instance, is addressing question one, focusing on community-based psychosocial support and drawing insights from experiences in South Sudan and Colombia. Healthnet TPO has already initiated data collection for question one, while EVE and PAX are in the process of finalizing arrangements with consultants for questions two and three. Importantly, PAX has developed an advocacy and lobby strategy document with streamlined advocacy messages and targets for each partner's issues that require to be addressed at the state or national level. The consortium partners are actively implementing the strategies outlined in the advocacy and lobby strategy document. However, no specific recommendations have been made at this stage as the report or products are yet to be finalized. Additionally, as the advocacy strategies mature, it will be crucial to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and adapt as needed.

4.3.6 Lessons Learned

The mid-term evaluation sought to examine what key lessons had been learned in the last two and half years of LoP programme implementation, what opportunities had been identified to strengthen the sustainability of the LoP programme interventions, and how they inform the exit strategy. The evaluation established four key lessons summarized as follows:

Lesson 1: Engaging local groups promotes ownership and localization of LoP initiatives.

Engaging local groups, such as the Male Engagement Group and the Women for Peace initiative in Nimule Central, has been pivotal for program sustainability. These groups, backed by Healthnet TPO and PAX, have taken ownership in fostering community trust through regular meetings and collaboration with partners like Plan International and the Women's Development Group. Also, the Male Engagement Group, with the support of Healthnet TPO, initiated community dialogues challenging harmful gender norms. This grassroots effort led to the formation of the Gender Equality Coalition; a locally driven network dedicated to sustaining gender equality initiatives. To strengthen sustainability, it's essential to continue building

partnerships with local groups and support their capacity development. Encouraging these groups to share their success stories and lessons with other communities will further enhance the program's impact.

Lesson 2: The Champions of Change programme can generate a transformative impact at the school level.

Nimule Primary School provides a compelling example of the program's success. Head Teacher Mary Akot fully embraced the Champions of Change program, seamlessly integrating gender equality education into the school's curriculum. As a result, students became enthusiastic advocates for gender equality, demonstrating the program's ability to inspire young change-makers. To build on this success, consider expanding the Champions of Change program to more schools, targeting committed educators. It is important to ensure that teachers receive ongoing training and support to continue delivering impactful gender equality education. This approach will help extend the program's positive influence on a broader audience and sustain its impact over time.

Lesson 3: Engaging respected male leaders is important in a patriarchal setting for influencing men and boys as allies gender equality and the WPS agenda.

In Yirol East County, John Deng, a respected community leader, spearheaded a campaign challenging gender stereotypes. His influence and credibility among men led to a significant shift in attitudes towards gender equality through the initiatives of the Women's Development Group, in partnership with EVE. To scale up this success, there is a need to continue identifying and supporting male champions particularly leaders with significant influence in the local communities.

4.4 Findings for Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Improved Implementation of Policies and Regulations on GBV and Protection of W/G, Including Psychosocial Support and Self-care

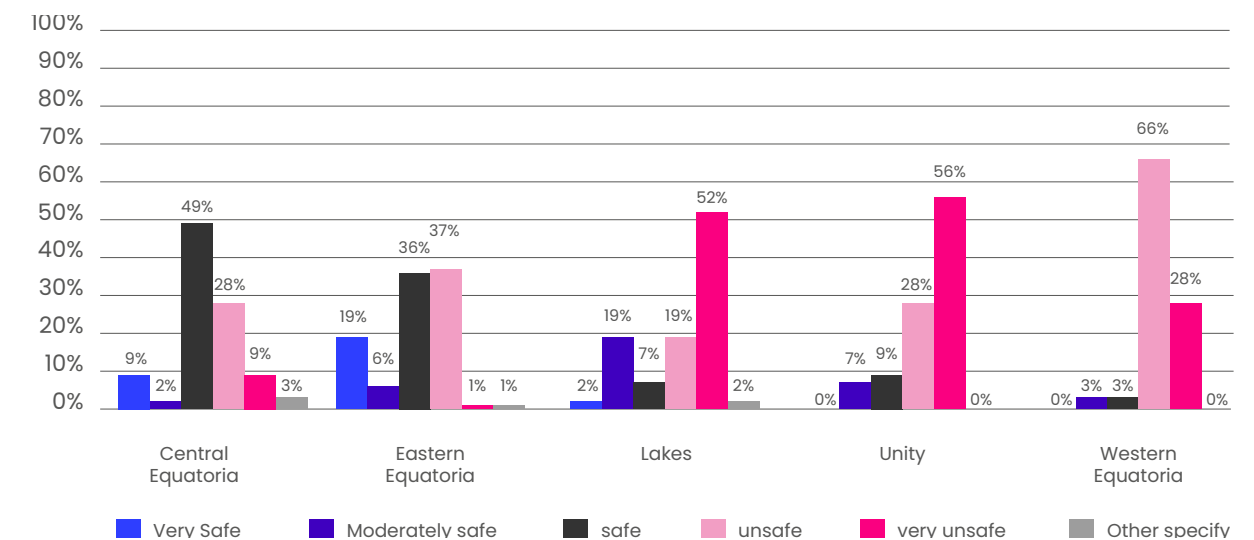
4.4.1 Perception of Safety for Women and Girls.

One of the questions that we sought to answer to determine the status of achievements under outcome one was: How safe (on a scale) do you feel in your current location? We adopted a Likert scale (scale 1-not safe at all, 2-sometimes not safe, 3 moderately Safe, 4- Safe, and 5- very safe) in the household survey for girls and women. When respondents were asked how safe they feel when they go out to fetch firewood for cooking, on average, 35.5% (149) across all 5 states indicated they were very safe, moderately safe to safe. On the other hand, 64% (268) across all five states felt unsafe or very unsafe as summarized in Table 7. When analyzed per state, Central Equatoria has the highest number of respondents indicating they felt very safe (49%), followed by Eastern Equatoria (36%). The presence of UNMISS, national police and PoCs in Juba were cited as reasons for better security compared to other states. On the other hand, Unity had the highest number of respondents indicating they felt very unsafe (56%), followed by Lakes (52%), while Western Equatoria had (66%) of respondents who felt unsafe as summarized in Figure 3. Lakes and Unity have significant challenges with floods, and inter-clan conflicts which expose women and girls to violence including GBV.

Table 7: Perception of Safety when fetching firewood (N=422)

State	Very Safe	Moderately safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe	Other specify	Total
Central Equatoria	10 (9%)	2 (2%)	53 (49%)	30 (28%)	10 (9%)	3 (3%)	108
Eastern Equatoria	15 (19%)	5 (6%)	29 (36%)	30 (37%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	81
Lakes	1 (1.7%)	11 (19%)	4 (7%)	11 (19%)	30 (52%)	1 (2%)	58
Unity	0 (0.0%)	6 (7%)	7 (9%)	23 (28%)	45 (56%)	0 (0%)	81
Western Equatoria	0 (0.0%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	62 (66%)	26 (28%)	0 (0%)	94
Total	26 (6.2%)	27 (6.4%)	96 (23%)	156 (37%)	112 (27%)	5 (1%)	422

Figure 2: Perception of Safety when Fetching Firewood by State

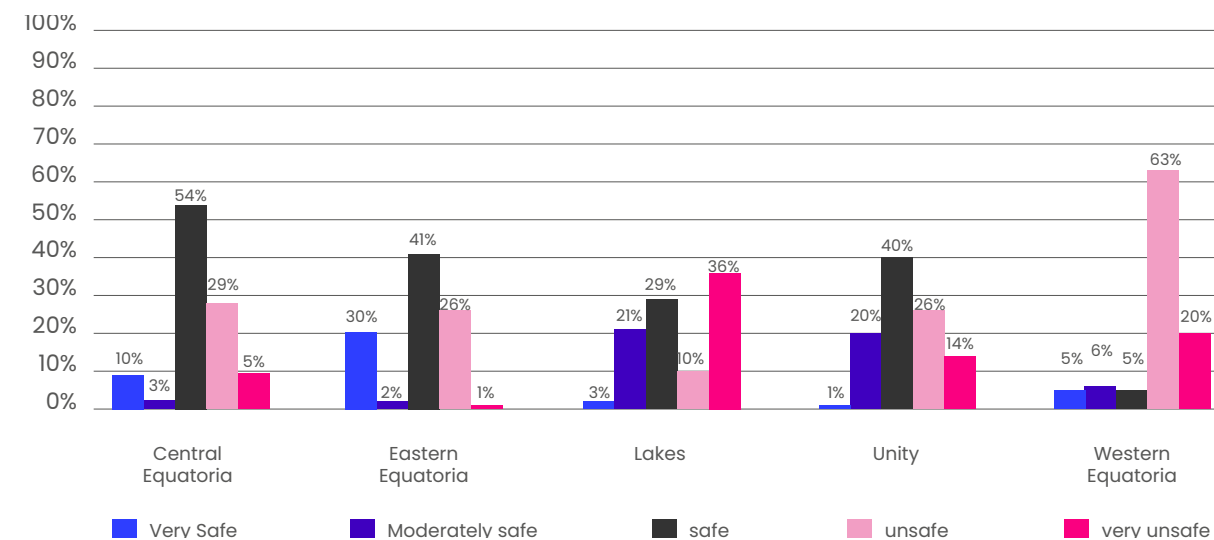


On the perception of safety when fetching water, on average 53% (227) respondents across all states indicated they felt either very safe, safe or moderately safe, while 47% (195) felt either unsafe or very unsafe as indicated in Table 8. At the state level, Eastern Equatoria respondents felt very safe fetching water (30%), followed by Central Equatoria (10%). On the other hand, (36%) of respondents were from Lakes, and 20%) from Western Equatoria.

Table 8: Perception of Safety when fetching water (N=422)

State	Very Safe	Moderately safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe	Other specify	Total
Central Equatoria	10 (9%)	2 (2%)	53 (49%)	30 (28%)	10 (9%)	3 (3%)	108
Eastern Equatoria	15 (19%)	5 (6%)	29 (36%)	30 (37%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	81
Lakes	1 (1.7%)	11 (19%)	4 (7%)	11 (19%)	30 (52%)	1 (2%)	58
Unity	0 (0.0%)	6 (7%)	7 (9%)	23 (28%)	45 (56%)	0 (0%)	81
Western Equatoria	0 (0.0%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	62 (66%)	26 (28%)	0 (0%)	94
Total	26 (6.2%)	27 (6.4%)	96 (23%)	156 (37%)	112 (27%)	5 (1%)	422

Figure 3: Perception of Safety when Fetching Water by State

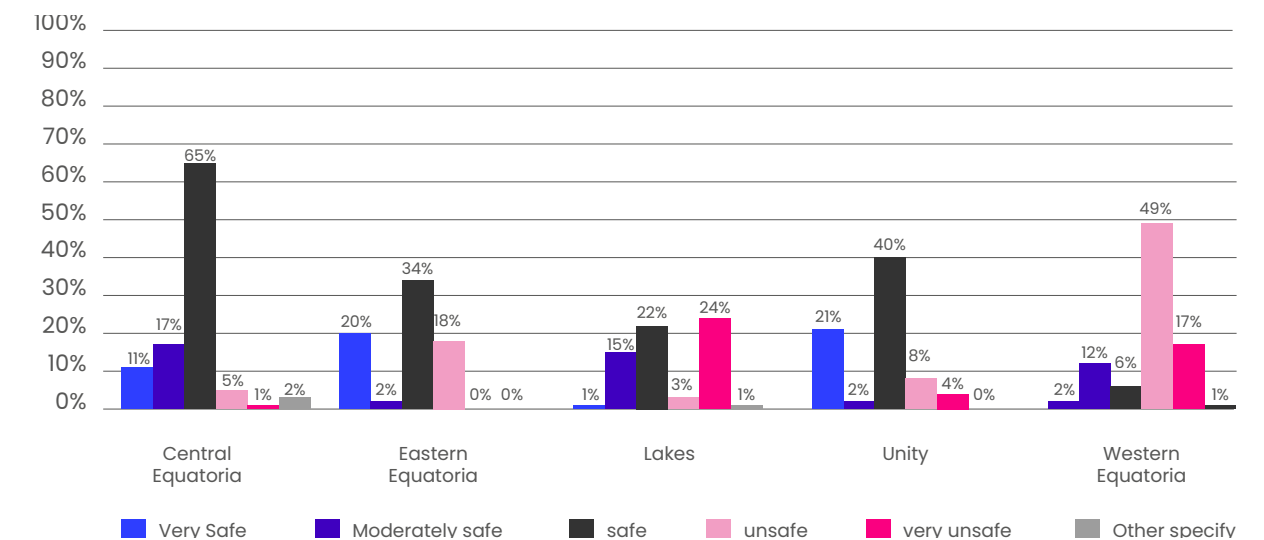


Similarly, respondents were asked to indicate how safe they felt when walking to school (for young girls) or when walking on the road to the market (for adults). On average 55% (284) respondents across all five states indicated they felt either very safe, safe or moderately safe, while 45% (134) felt either unsafe or very unsafe as indicated in Table 9. At the state level, Unity state respondents (21%) felt very safe followed by (20%) of Eastern Equatoria respondents (20%). On the other hand, (4%) of respondents were from Lakes felt unsafe and 24%) from Lakes feeling very unsafe

Table 9: Perception of Safety when Walking to School or Market (N=519)

State	Very Safe	Moderately safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe	Other specify	Total
Central Equatoria	12 (11%)	18 (17%)	70 (65%)	5 (5%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	108
Eastern Equatoria	22 (20%)	2 (2%)	37 (34%)	20 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	109
Lakes	1 (1%)	13 (15%)	19 (22%)	3 (4%)	21 (24%)	1 (1%)	86
Unity	23 (22%)	2 (2%)	43 (40%)	9 (8%)	4 (4%)	0 (0%)	107
W/ Equatoria	2 (2%)	13 (12%)	7 (7%)	53 (49%)	18 (17%)	1 (1%)	108
Total	60 (12%)	48 (9%)	176 (34%)	90 (17%)	44 (9%)	4 (1%)	519

Figure 4: Perception of Safety when Walking to School or Market by State



While there are pockets of areas where women and girls feel safe, such as regions with a strong security presence (like Juba), there are also significant concerns, particularly in conflict-affected and flood-prone areas. To continue enhancing the safety of women and girls in South Sudan, the LoP program partners could consider region-specific interventions. This would involve tailoring safety initiatives to address the unique challenges faced in each area, such as conflict-sensitive programming in unstable regions and flood preparedness in flood-prone areas. Collaborating closely with local authorities, communities, and organizations can help develop context-specific strategies for improving safety perceptions. Additionally, conducting regular safety assessments and involving women and girls in decision-making processes can contribute to more effective safety-enhancing measures.

4.4.2 Traditional /Formal Authorities Attitude on Implementation of GBV Laws and Protection of W/G

This mid-term evaluation sought to examine whether there have formal/traditional authorities have been able to demonstrate increased knowledge and changed attitudes to implement legislation against GBV and W/G protection. The key informant interviews conducted targeted traditional leaders, local government chiefs, court administrators, women leaders, and ABC court leaders. At the output level, as had been indicated earlier in the key achievements section, 150 ABC court chiefs (147 male, 3 female) have been trained on the UNDP GBV pocket guide and also a national level ABC forum which was attended by 3 chiefs (female); 96 (64% of target) police officers had been trained on GBV legislation, human rights, and GE. Over the last two years, a total of 75 traditional authorities reached with learning and advocacy on the importance of legal protection for women and girls, mentorship focused on case filling and referral from A to B Court and C court in case the requires higher courts attention. More so, the capacity strengthening of traditional authorities also focused on retooling knowledge and skills on the traditional court justice system, and the capacity of traditional court judges and clerks on basic legal knowledge.

Based on the interview analysis, over the past two years, there has been a discernible shift in the understanding and handling of GBV cases. There has been an improvement in the way the police are handling GBV cases, especially on confidentiality, and showing empathy and respect to survivors²⁸. Formal and traditional authorities have a clear understanding of anti-GBV laws and legal frameworks, with all trained ABC court chiefs demonstrating a clear grasp of their mandates. There is also a diminishing number of cases related to forced marriage, rape, and assault²⁹. Such a positive trend is a testament to the strides taken in aligning legal frameworks with real-world practices. Moreover, there is evidence that not only formal authorities but also the wider community have gained a better comprehension of GBV laws and the appropriate procedures for handling related cases. This signifies that awareness campaigns have met with some degree of success. While there is cause for optimism, challenges persist. Infrastructure deficits, notably the lack of shelters and proper sitting facilities, impede the handling of GBV cases, often necessitating hurried resolutions³⁰. This issue deserves urgent attention, as the physical environment in which cases are addressed significantly impacts their outcomes.

One concerning revelation is that certain interior areas remain underserved by GBV awareness initiatives. Leaders recognize that not all peers in remote regions have been reached by these educational efforts, resulting in a knowledge gap³¹. Thus, the need for a comprehensive and inclusive awareness strategy remains a pressing concern. Another matter of importance is the referral process for GBV cases³². It becomes evident that some cases are referred to formal courts, a practice that might lead to delays in resolving GBV incidents. Streamlining this process and ensuring that cases are addressed swiftly, irrespective of whether they are criminal in nature, should be a priority. Additionally, the fear of stigmatization and

28 Key Informant interviews with Chair ABC Courts, Lakes- Yirol East; Bench Court Chair Lakes- Yirol East; Former Commissioner- Magwi- Eastern Equatoria; ABC Court Representative – Terekeka Payam, Central Equatoria; Community Traditional Leader, - Ganyiel, Unity; Payam Administrator- Ganyiel Unity; Chair Lady- Yambio- Western Equatoria.

29 This is based on interview feedback from MHPSS-Caseworkers. Though the actual numbers to quantify the proportion reduction in these cases in not available- this data is yet to be collected and analysed. Therefore, this should be treated as anecdotal evidence.

30 Key Informant interviews with Chair ABC Courts, Lakes- Yirol East.

31 ABC Court Representative – Terekeka Payam.

32 Ibid

deeply ingrained cultural norms act as formidable barriers to reporting GBV cases. Sensitization efforts must be refined to effectively address these concerns and empower survivors to seek justice without fear. Economic constraints pose another challenge. Resource limitations hinder awareness campaigns and render some areas inaccessible due to a lack of transportation and essential resources. Overcoming these financial hurdles is imperative to maintaining the momentum of awareness initiatives³³.

“As a government, our role is to ensure the welfare of all members of the community irrespective of their gender. However, we realize that women are the more disadvantaged and the ones who suffer the most cases of GBV. I can tell you today that our resolve to fight GBV has never been stronger. We will support the fight against GBV to the end.” Community Leader, Yambio, Western Equatoria

“This programme has opened my eyes. I have realized that GBV is an enemy that must be fought, and, in this community, I will fight it. I didn’t know that it was one of the main causes of people running mad. Now that I know I will be the champion of all initiatives to fight GBV” – Court Bench Chair, Yirol East, Lakes

4.4.3 Access to and use MHPSS Services

Part of the LoP programme implementation mandate has been to enhance access to the use of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) and legal services to GBV survivors, and W/G within the larger WPS framework being implemented under the programme. Under this evaluation, we were tasked to examine whether W/G have access to, and uses MHPSS and legal protection services, including case management. *In our findings, access, and use of MHPSS services is average (Moderate) in urban areas and very low in rural remote areas. The most sought-after medical service is treatment for physical injuries, while reproductive health care is the least sought-after medical service.*

Respondents from the household survey targeting W/G’s. were asked whether they had access to MHPSS and legal services. According to the finding 57% (240) have access compared to 38% (159) who indicated they did not have access to MHPSS, while 6% (23) were not sure. When W/Gs’ access to MHPSS and legal services is examined per stage, Central Equatoria has 94% access to MHPSS. However, we treated this as an outlier since the access levels were way above 75% in normalized central distribution tendency. In this regard, removing Central Equatoria from the average analysis, the overall access to MHPSS becomes (44%), with Unity State at (69%), Western Equatoria at (39%), Lakes at (38%), and Eastern Equatoria at (28%) as summarized in Table 10

33 Chair Lady- Yambio- Western Equatoria

Table 10: W/G's Access to MPSS Services (N=422)

State	I Don't Know	No	Yes	Total
Central Equatoria	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	102 (94%)	108
Eastern Equatoria	2 (3%)	56 (69%)	23 (28%)	81
Lakes	10 (17%)	26 (45%)	22 (38%)	58
Unity	1 (1%)	24 (30%)	56 (69%)	81
Western Equatoria	7 (7%)	50 (53%)	37 (39%)	94
Total	23 (6%)	159 (38%)	240 (57%)	422 (100%)

Treatment for physical injuries was the most sought-after and provided medical service at (46%) up from 35% at baseline; followed by treatment for HIV exposure, sexually transmitted diseases, and voluntary counselling and testing at 12% respectively; down from 22%, 19% and 22% respectively at baseline. On the other hand, access to reproductive care services for W/G had improved from 2% (at baseline) to 7% (at mid-line). In as much as there has been an increase in treatment for physical injuries (partly due to LoP programme interventions), there is a worrying concern that fewer W/G are being treated for physical injuries, but not getting tested for STIs /HIV exposure. The stigma associated with STIs /HIV exposure is one of the key reasons why W/Gs are still avoiding getting tested.

Table 11: W/G's Access to Medical Services (N=645)

Name of the State	Treatment for physical injuries	HIV Exposure Assessment	Sexual Transmitted Disease Treatment	(VCT) for HIV	Mental health assessment & management	Reproductive health care	Other specify
C/Equatoria	165 (39%)	45 (11%)	65 (16%)	63 (15%)	46 (11%)	35 (8%)	0 (0%)
E/Equatoria	32 (80%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
Lakes	25 (66%)	2 (5%)	3 (8%)	2 (5%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Unity	44 (69%)	1 (2%)	3 (5%)	3 (5%)	6 (9%)	4 (6%)	3 (5%)
W/Equatoria	29 (34.5%)	6 (7%)	8 (10%)	9 (11%)	18 (21%)	6 (7%)	8 (10%)
Total	295 (46%)	55 (9%)	80 (12%)	80 (12%)	75 (12%)	46 (7%)	14 (2%)

On access to counselling services, 31% of W/G had access to trauma counselling services (a decline from 39% at baseline); 22% had access to mental health assessment and counselling (a decline from 34% at baseline); 20% had access to group counselling (an increase from 12% at baseline); 27% had access to family counselling (compared to 3% at baseline).

Table 12: W/G's Access to Counselling Services (N=564)

Name of the State	Trauma Counselling	Mental Health assessment and counselling	Group Counselling	Family Counselling	Other (Specify)
Central Equatoria	97 (29.2%)	66 (19.9%)	79 (23.8%)	89 (26.8%)	1 (0.3%)
Eastern Equatoria	19 (48.7%)	2 (5.1%)	4 (10.3%)	14 (35.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Lakes	13 (26.5%)	5 (10.2%)	15 (30.6%)	16 (32.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Unity	18 (27.7%)	34 (52.3%)	4 (6.2%)	8 (12.3%)	1 (1.5%)
Western Equatoria	25 (31.6%)	15 (19.0%)	10 (12.7%)	27 (34.2%)	2 (2.5%)
Total	172 (31%)	122 (22%)	112 (20%)	154 (27%)	4 (1%)

Achievements on MHPSS

The LoP program has achieved significant milestones in recent years. In Terekeka, for example, MHPSS caseworkers noted that a substantial portion of the community is aware of the available Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) and actively utilizes them³⁴. Furthermore, the caseworkers demonstrated an understanding of the importance of privacy and a sensitive approach in dealing with survivors, particularly when dealing with a traumatised survivor for tailored support. Similarly, the LoP programme has helped to establish a robust referral system for MHPSS case management, ensuring that survivors receive timely and appropriate care³⁵.

"Most of the services are concentrated around the township area and therefore many of those who know about the services are mostly in urban areas. Rural communities still have limited knowledge and awareness of MHPSS. However, we will continue to create awareness of the services even deeper in the villages..." FGD Caseworker, Terekeka, Central Equatoria

³⁴ The MHPSS -GBV FGD for Terekeka has 9 members (6 Female, 3 male) who all noted this significant achievement. A gender desk had been established and the contact of the MHPSS contact person shared within the community for quick referral support. Though actual community numbers who are aware of MHPSS could not be quantified or verified.

³⁵ In In Nimule, caseworkers had established referral pathways for GBV, rape, and domestic abuse, with linkages to medical assessments and transport for survivors. In Yambio, more than 20 MHPSS cases had been referred to AMREF.

Gaps and Challenges:

- 1. Stigma:** While awareness and utilization of MHPSS have improved, the persistence of stigma as a barrier to seeking help indicates that there is still work to be done in changing societal perceptions surrounding mental health and GBV issues.
- 2. Inadequate Local Partner Support:** Inadequate support from LoP programme partners to local-level partners is a significant concern. Majorly, this is due to resource constraints. Sustainable partnerships are essential for the programme's effectiveness and longevity, and addressing this issue should be a priority.
- 3. Limited Reach to Remote Areas:** The challenge of reaching remote villages underscores the importance of equitable access to services. It is imperative for LoP partners to find mechanisms to provide resource capacity building strengthening for local partners to be providing the MHPSS.
- 4. Alcohol-Related GBV:** Cases involving alcohol abuse and GBV are complex and difficult to address since abusers are also addicts who need interventions that is not envisaged under MHPSS.

Potential Improvements:

To build on these achievements and address the identified challenges, the LoP program can consider several strategic actions.

- 1. Anti-Stigma Campaigns:** The program should consider launching /enhancing comprehensive anti-stigma campaigns that not only raise awareness but also challenge and change societal attitudes towards mental health and GBV.
- 2. Strengthening Partnerships:** Efforts to engage program partners should be intensified, with a focus on creating long-term, mutually beneficial collaborations that can provide consistent support.
- 3. Expand Service Reach:** Explore options such as mobile clinics or community health worker training to address the limited reach to remote areas. This will help ensure that even the most marginalized communities have access to services.
- 4. Resource Mobilization:** Fundraising and resource mobilization strategies should be developed for local partners to bridge resource gaps and ensure that survivors receive the holistic support they need.
- 5. Specialized Interventions:** Consider collaborating with experts in the field of alcohol related GBV to develop specialized interventions that address the unique challenges posed by these cases.

4.4.4 Access to Legal Protection Services

Overall, access, and use of legal services are moderate (in urban settings) to very low (in rural settings), with the use of ABC courts being the most utilized, and the use of government court services least utilized. Access to legal services, most of the respondents had access to legal representation in ABC courts (38%) which is a marginal decline by 1% from baseline (39%), followed by receiving legal advice from a paralegal or a lawyer (22%) which is a significant decline by 35% from baseline (57%). Out-of-court settlement services increased by 6% from (8%) at baseline to (14%) at mid-line and filing cases in court increased marginally from 10% (at baseline) to (11%) at midline, 11% had representation in government courts, which is a marginal increase by 1% from baseline (10%). At the state level, Unity and Eastern Equatoria had the highest representation in ABC Courts at 79% and 71% respectively, while Central Equatoria had (32%). Western Equatorial had the highest representation (33%) in out-of-court settlements. Lakes State had the lowest representation across all the legal services examined, with their highest representation being filling the case in government court and representation ABC Courts at (23%) as summarised in Table 13.

Table 13: W/G's Access to Legal Services (N=453)

Name of the State	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Lakes	Unity	Western Equatoria	Total
Legal advice from a lawyer/paralegal	73 (25%)	5 (18%)	6 (19%)	0 (0%)	14 (29%)	98 (22%)
Filing the case in Government Court	38 (13%)	2 (7%)	7 (23%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	50 (11%)
Representation in government Court	49 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	51 (11%)
Representation ABC Courts	91 (32%)	20 (71%)	7 (23%)	45 (79%)	7 (14%)	170 (38%)
Out-of-Court Settlement	36 (13%)	1 (4%)	5 (16%)	3 (5%)	16 (33%)	61 (14%)
Other (Specify)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	6 (19%)	7 (12%)	9 (18%)	23 (5%)
Total	288	28	31	57	49	453

The following are some recommendations for the LoP programme partners to consider enhancing access to legal services for women and girls:

- 1. Awareness and Sensitization Campaigns:** Expand comprehensive awareness campaigns that target both urban and rural populations to educate women and girls about their legal rights, the available legal services, and the benefits of seeking legal assistance.
- 2. Strengthen ABC Courts:** Invest in strengthening the capacity of ABC Courts, particularly in rural areas where access is very low. This can include providing training for ABC Court personnel, ensuring they have access to relevant legal resources, and improving the infrastructure and facilities of these courts.
- 3. Community Paralegal Programs:** Expand support to community paralegal programs in rural areas. Paralegals can play a crucial role in providing legal advice, facilitating out-of-court settlements, and bridging the gap between the formal legal system and local communities.
- 4. Mobile Legal Clinics:** Consideration for implementing mobile legal clinics that can reach remote and underserved areas is recommended. These clinics can provide legal advice, assistance with documentation, and information on available legal services.
- 5. Monitoring and Evaluation:** There is a need to enhance the monitoring and evaluation system to track the impact of access and usage of legal services and adjust strategies accordingly.
- 6. Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Continue the collaboration with other sectors, such as healthcare and education for a holistic approach to address legal issues. For example, healthcare workers can be trained to identify cases of GBV and refer survivors to legal services.

4.4.5 Capacity of ABC Courts on Implementation of GBV Legislation

National Level Capacity and Influence

This evaluation sought to examine whether the ABC courts have the capacity and space at the national level to lobby for increased implementation of GBV legislation. The findings show that at the national level, [while the ABC Courts have made notable strides in capacity-building and have engaged with government officials at the national level, they have had limited direct influence in the creation of new legislation or policies on GBV.](#)

This was explained by various factors:

- 1. Limited Advocacy Focus:** One critical aspect is that the ABC Courts' advocacy efforts appear to have been primarily focused on the implementation of existing customary /traditional laws, with a limited focus on GBV legislations that have legal contexts. The ABC Chiefs have had the opportunity to participate in a national chief forum facilitated by LoP, and have had access to policymakers, which has enhanced their ability to advocate for GBV legislation at the national level. But this is yet to yield notable GBV legislative influence.
- 2. Political and Bureaucratic Challenges:** The political and bureaucratic processes involved in creating new legislation can be complex and challenging to navigate. Even with improved capacity and access to government officials, the influence required to initiate and shape new laws is still limited³⁶.
- 3. Resource Constraints:** Effective lobbying and advocacy at the national level often require significant resources, including legal expertise, research, and sustained engagement with policymakers. Currently, ABC courts do not have this high-level professional capacity.

Local Level Capacity and Influence

At the local level, the **ABC Courts have demonstrated moderate capacity and influence in advocating for GBV-related issues**. However, similar to the national level, they have not directly influenced the creation of new legislation or policies on GBV. Several factors contribute to this:

- 1. Customary Law Emphasis:** The local-level advocacy efforts have primarily focused on the implementation of customary law, which is their mandate. While this is important for addressing GBV within local communities, it has not directly translated into the creation of new national legislation or policies, despite the capacity and advocacy efforts provided by the LoP programme.
- 2. Limited Legislative Power:** Local ABC Courts typically do not have legislative authority; their role is often more centred on dispute resolution and community-based approaches. Therefore, they may lack the formal authority to propose or create new legislation or policies. While some ABC courts in all the LoP regions are referring GBV cases to normal courts, others are still handling these cases due to family requests, traditional cultural practices of reconciliation, and the need for arbitrated fines that make advocacy efforts at the local level more complex.
- 3. Limited Resources:** Similar to the national level, local-level advocacy may be constrained by limited resources, making it challenging to engage in comprehensive legislative advocacy efforts. This means that LoP efforts in engaging ABC courts should be constant and periodic since they don't have the resources to continue with the advocacy efforts, despite the training and capacity building provided under the programme.
- 4. Focus on Grassroots Initiatives:** The moderate capacity improvements observed at the local level primarily relate to raising awareness and community-level engagement. While these efforts are critical for changing attitudes and behaviours, they may not directly lead to the creation of new legislation,

³⁶ Key informant discussion with ABC Courts leaders, LoP partners, CSOs revealed that ABC Courts still lack legislative advocacy machinery at this level.

BOX 1

Empowerment & leadership

Case Stories on Preliminary LoP Programme Achievements

Training of champions of change (COC) facilitators and COC members as agents of change. The training was part of the mutual capacity-building activities under the technical lead of Plan International and HNTPO.

In our engagement with couples, the men acknowledged their role in domestic violence and gender inequality at home. In fact, one of the male participants in one of the sessions stood up and apologized to his wife after a discussion on the effects of emotional violence on a person. He expressed *"I am sorry, I have not been listening to you and for putting too much on you, Things will change from today, and thank you HealthNet TPO for this forum"*. Other men expressed interest in changing their attitudes and giving different meanings to some of their traditional practices that might be harmful. They also committed themselves in front of their wives to share roles equally and mutually at home. The men showed a very big interest in changing the narrative by putting their girls to school which is something that is not common in Terekeka. One of the male participants expressed that his major fear is stigma, He said: *"I want to help my wife, I want to clean the compound when I see her busy cooking, I want to let her work if she wants to, but my peers are always going to mock me and call me all sorts of names, things like, I have been controlled by my wife"*. That sparked a conversation on how to discourage such types of stigmas and stereotypes in the communities.

In Kuda, couples have demonstrated their commitment to implementing the knowledge they obtained through the leaders of the peace project. First, the couple groups took upon themselves the task of being role models in the community- for others to emulate. They made a commitment that no member (of the trained couples group) should be involved in the act of GBV in their households. Should any member happen to be caught up in any act of violence in his or her home, then, the entire group will take up the responsibility to ensure resolving the matter adequately and promptly. After the training, the couples group reached out to the entire community of Kuda to offer to educate them on the harmful effects of GBV on women and girls. They develop a plan of action and share with HNTPO what they wish to do where and when.

The LOP programme through engaging with, men and boys, policymakers, and traditional authorities has witnessed some significant progress for example, women and girls now come out open to demand servicers as their rights; Men and boys are willing and able to be part of the solution; authorizes demonstrated willingness to implement the GBV law and women and girls protection; policymakers and line ministries to ensure that MHPSS and GBV components are included in the strategic policy documents.

Terekeka, Central Equatoria

This is an extract from the HealthNet TPO Interview on LOP Programme success and Impact stories

4.5 Findings for Outcome 2

Outcome 2: Changed attitudes and beliefs of civil society to facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality

4.5.1 Gender Transformative Agenda

The LoP project has been implementing a Gender Transformative Agenda (GTA) composed of six elements: Gender norms, building agency, working with boys and men, improving conditions and position of girls and women, -inclusion and diversity and creating an enabling environment. The mid-term evaluation sought to examine what had been achieved so far, and whether there were any changes /adaptations required in the implementation of these elements for the remaining period.

1. Gender Norms:

Achievements: In states like Central Equatoria, the LoP project has conducted awareness and advocacy campaigns that have challenged traditional gender norms and generated awareness and sensitization on inherent discrimination and privileges that favour men and boys, while burdening women and girls, which has resulted in normal shifts in traditionally gendered roles. For example, in the town of Terekeka, there is evidence of significant change. Traditionally, cattle care was considered exclusively a male responsibility, but these campaigns have resulted in girls actively participating in cattle care. Moreover, household decision-making in Terekeka has started to shift towards a more consultative approach between husbands and wives. However, while these achievements in Terekeka are encouraging, it's important to recognize that deeply rooted gender norms may persist in other regions under the LoP programme. Thus, continued awareness campaigns and community engagement are imperative to ensure comprehensive transformation.

2. Building Agency

Achievements: In Unity State, five lobby and advocacy groups have undergone intensive training under the LoP project. These groups, including police units, have been equipped with knowledge on critical issues such as GBV, gender equality, human rights, customary law, and psychosocial support. Male Engagement Forums held in Nyori have provided a platform for men to express their intentions to change attitudes harmful to women and girls. Notably, 20 men in Nyori have become gender equality ambassadors, actively proposing initiatives like a GBV watch to report cases and mental health concerns.

Just like the gender norms element of GTA, these achievements in Unity State are commendable, but it is critical to ensure that these agency-building efforts extend to other regions of South Sudan. Furthermore, broadening the engagement of these groups to national-level stakeholders can enhance the impact of their advocacy efforts.

3. Working with Men and Boys

Achievements: The LoP project has made significant strides in working with men and boys to promote gender equality. In various states, including Unity and Central Equatoria, male engagement groups have undergone training to embrace positive masculinity. These groups have in turn used the training they received and facilitated peer-to-peer dialogues on gender equality and inclusivity. The forums have seen some men expressing their commitment to changing attitudes harmful to women and girls, with pledges

to enrol their daughters in school. However tangible numbers on the actual change in attitudes and behaviours will take time to be documented. Similarly, while these achievements are promising, attitudinal changes can be challenging to translate into tangible actions for highly patriarchal communities like South Sudan. LoP should consider providing continued support and guidance for these groups are essential to ensure that their commitments lead to concrete practices promoting gender equality.

4. Improving Conditions and Positions of Women and Girls

Achievements: In Western Equatoria, the LoP project successfully lobbied for equal opportunities for women. Advocacy efforts led to the inclusion of two women in decision-making roles within ABC courts. Additionally, initiatives aimed at reducing the workload of girls, such as encouraging boys to share domestic duties like milking cows, have been implemented. Another example is the "Takeover Program", which focuses on mentoring girls for leadership. Under the Girl Takeover program, the LoP project actively mentors girls to assume symbolic leadership roles³⁷. These girls identify leaders within their communities who engage with Plan International in further mentoring efforts. Also, under another initiative "Gender is My Agenda" program, the LoP project has provided girls with opportunities to participate in forums focused on different thematic areas. These forums have taken place in various locations such as Addis Ababa, Kigali, and Nairobi, and the most recent Women's Delivery Conference in Kigali and the Gender and Economic Empowerment Conference in Addis Ababa. While these achievements in Western Equatoria through initiatives like the "Girl Takeover" program, and "Gender is my Agenda" are commendable, it's important that the LoP programme put measures in place to sustain these initiatives and monitor their impact over time. Ensuring that these changes extend beyond specific communities and become widespread practices will be essential for long-term transformation.

5. Inclusion and Diversity

Achievements: In Niang (Lakes) and Ganyiel Unity State, the LoP project has promoted inclusion and diversity within peace-building committees, where more than six women leaders are actively participating and leading these committees as lead mediators³⁸. The LoP project also facilitated the participation of female chiefs in ABC councils at both the state and national levels. As a result, at the national level, three women now hold crucial positions in ABC councils, including one head chief who was promoted from a women leader position, and two boma chiefs. Three women have also been included in the ABC court affairs panels, and also in the running of payams³⁹. Sustaining and expanding on such initiatives should remain a priority for the LoP programme for the remaining period. Collaborating with local partners and community leaders to ensure that these changes are deeply ingrained within local communities will be crucial for their continued success.

6. Enabling Environments:

Achievements: Efforts in various states, including Central Equatoria, Unity, and Western Equatoria have had some level of success in creating enabling environments where women and girls can pursue their agendas without fear of insecurity. In Central Equatoria, particularly in the township area, the LoP project

³⁷ The total number of girls mentored was not available by the time of this evaluation was completed.

³⁸ The effect of this inclusion is yet to be documented, but it is expected that over time, it will help showcase the capacities and capabilities of women and girls and promote further the quest for gender equality and inclusion.

³⁹ Payam leaders are very influential as they play a significant role in determining domestic disputes, peace building, reconciliation, and serve as local authority leaders over villages.



Women leaders who attended the annual Woman conference



Oyella Eunice Anthony, Speaker for children and Young People's Parliament on second right participating in a panel discussion during annual women's conference.

has worked closely with local authorities to establish safe public spaces where women and girls can gather, and hold meetings, seminars, and events. International Women's Day celebrations, 16 days of activism, and discussions on issues affecting women and their communities take place in these safe spaces. The local government in Central Equatoria has become increasingly supportive, granting approvals for various groups in the community to actively participate in their activities, including women's meetings and events. In Unity State, particularly in the township, the LoP project has played a pivotal role in creating an environment where girls have the freedom to choose their partners, especially within the township area. This signifies a departure from traditional practices that constrained such choices. Maintaining and reinforcing the enabling environment is vital for LoP to sustain the gains made so far. It is also important to note that ensuring that women and girls can operate without fear is an ongoing challenge. Extending these efforts to engage national-level stakeholders is also crucial to reinforce these changes.

4.5.2 Gender Equality and Inclusive Participation

This mid-term evaluation sought to examine to what extent women and youth (W/Y) groups, men and boys were advocating for gender equality and equal participation through W/Y-led platforms. First, interview discussions with LoP partners sought to examine what had been accomplished so far. The findings revealed that, **overall, the LoP program had made significant progress in engaging women and youth (W/Y) groups, men, and boys to advocate for gender equality and equal participation, but adaptations are required to overcome challenges with limited resources and rigid cultural norms and ensure sustained impact.** These efforts have led to several notable achievements. For example, in Central Equatoria, a male engagement group comprising 20 participants formed under the programme had played a significant role in promoting positive masculinity, challenging men and boys to provide equal opportunities to women and girls. The male engagement group has continued to raise awareness about GBV, gender equality, women's rights, and inclusion within their communities in Central Equatoria. Their efforts have contributed to increased inclusion of women in peace committees and higher enrollment of girls in schools⁴⁰. In Terekeka, the program had formed two Champions of Change (COC) groups composed of 80 members (50% female) and two youth parliament groups (composed of 80 boys, and 80 girls). In Nimule, Plan International reached 135 COCs (65 female, 65 male). These groups have contributed to increasing knowledge concerning GBV, gender equality, and the rights of women, girls, and young people at the community levels. The COC members have continued to act as advocates for change in their communities. They actively champion the rights of young boys and girls against harmful practices such as early marriages⁴¹. Overall, the programme has reached over 4800 people with awareness raising on gender equality, human rights and UNSCR1325 (male 2500, Female 2300).

Despite these achievements, the LoP program operates within a resource-constrained environment, particularly in regions such as Central Equatoria and Terekeka. Limited funding poses a significant challenge, hindering the program's ability to scale up its engagements and sustain its initiatives effectively. In Unity State, where cultural norms and traditions are deeply entrenched, resistance to change remains

⁴⁰ The actual numbers in enrolment as a result of this initiative are not documented, but there is a positive perception that the group championing for girl rights and access to education helps to break norms that discriminate against women access to education.

⁴¹ Specific cases of early child marriages prevented had not been documented. This will require training this groups on how to document impact changes linked to their advocacy work.

a significant challenge⁴². The LoP programme should prioritize community sensitization and dialogue interventions tailored to the specific cultural context of Unity State. Engaging local community leaders and influencers can help address resistance more effectively.

4.5.3 CSOs Advocacy Initiatives on WPS Agenda

Overall, in our findings, these CSOs engaged under the LoP programme in all the regions play a crucial role in advancing gender equality and the WPS agenda, and their dedication should be supported and strengthened to maximize their impact.

Under the LoP programme, CBOs CSOs, or community groups were incorporated into the programme design and implementation to help in advocacy on policies and legislative frameworks that enhance the protection of women and girls, and the larger WPS agenda. The following are the highlights of the findings from each state:

Lakes State (Yirol East)

In Engaged CSOs: TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA). All four CSOs are formally registered and actively advocate for W/G and the WPS agenda.

- **Catholic Relief Services (CRS):** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **very high extent** due to substantial financial resources. CRS has achieved notable success in advocating for gender equality and the WPS agenda. Their active involvement in key advocacy events has led to increased awareness and action on these issues.
- **TOCH:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **moderate extent** due to limited funding. TOCH has focused on addressing negative cultural beliefs and traditional laws that discriminate against women and girls. The highly patriarchy culture trivializes women's rights and normalizes violence against women and girls including GBV. The advocacy initiatives have contributed to community awareness of the negative impacts of GBV and discriminatory practices against women and girls.
- **Community in Need Aid (CINA):** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **moderate extent** due to limited funding. CINA's commitment to advocacy is evident, but financial constraints may limit the scale and reach of their initiatives.

Central Equatoria (Terekeka):

Engaged CSOs: Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment) These CSOs, except for Wate Na Kita Women Groups (in the process), are formally registered to advocate for W/G. GE Agenda.

- **Trust Action Youth Association (TAYA):** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **high extent**. TAYA has engaged policymakers at the local level to advocate for women's and girls' empowerment, gender equality, and protection of their rights. The policymakers have made commitments to promote women and girls and enforce relevant laws that protect women and girls in the area. While there was a good response from policymakers in Terekeka town, violation of women's rights still persisted in rural villages due to insecurity, inaccessibility, and sometimes flooding.

42 It was reported that in Unity, most men continue to resist the idea of gender equality and discourage women's active participation.

- **Surname for Community Development:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a high extent by participating in key advocacy events. Their active participation contributes to advancing the WPS agenda, although more information on specific achievements would provide a clearer picture.
- **Wate Na Kita Women Groups:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a moderate extent as they are in the process of formal registration. Their progress in advocacy efforts, especially considering their registration status, is commendable. However, specific achievements could provide a more comprehensive assessment.
- **County Women's Association:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a moderate extent by participating in events advocating for women's rights. Their involvement is positive, but more details on their specific contributions and achievements would be valuable.

Unity State (Panyijiar)

Engaged CSOs: Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group. Three out of the four CSOs engaged under the LoP programme are formally registered and conduct advocacy activities related to the WPS agenda.

- **Tenekel Peace Committee:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **moderate extent**. Participates in international events like the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day for WPS agenda influence. Could benefit from additional support and resources to enhance their advocacy efforts.
- **Greater Dor Youth Association:** The CSO has actively advocated for anti-GBV laws and regulations in the Muni community, which has included pushing for a reduction in the number of cows required for dowry. However, tangible declarations on anti-GBV regulations and dowry reductions are yet to be realized.
- **Kondial Youth Group:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **moderate extent**. Participates in international events like the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day to promote the WPS agenda. The group could benefit from increased capacity strengthening support and resources to strengthen their advocacy initiatives.
- **Matgoi Women's Group:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **moderate extent**. The group Involves themselves in international events, such as the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day, with a focus on influencing the WPS agenda such as GBV sensitization and awareness creating and promoting gender equality at the community level. Like the other two CSOs, they could potentially achieve more with additional support and resources to bolster their advocacy work.

Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi & Nimule)

Engaged CSOs: Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women, All the three assessed CSOs meet registration requirements and advocate for gender equality.

- **Humaes:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **very high extent**, actively participating in international events, notably the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day. Humaes also focuses on raising awareness about UNSCR 1325 and advocating for the WPS agenda and demonstrates a strong commitment to advocacy despite resource limitations. Specific achievements and outcomes would further illustrate their impact.
- **Harmony Disability:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **high extent**, actively participating in key advocacy events. Focused on interpreting existing GBV laws to local chiefs and elders due to their limited understanding of the laws. Aiming to improve understanding of existing GBV laws among local chiefs and elders is expected to help enhance the implementation of these laws. Whether the chiefs are fully implementing these laws is yet to be documented. Partners should track this over the remaining programme period.

- **Vision Women:** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **high extent**, actively participating in international events like the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day. The CSO also promotes awareness of UNSCR 1325 and advocates for the WPS agenda.
- Demonstrates a strong dedication to advocacy efforts, despite resource constraints.
- In Nimule, Plan International reached 135 COCs (65 female, 65 male). These groups have contributed to increasing knowledge concerning GBV, gender equality, and the rights of women, girls, and young people at the community levels.

Western Equatoria State (Yambio)

Engaged CSOs: Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). All the two assessed CSOs meet registration requirements and advocate for gender equality. SHWO is working in the region but not under the LoP programme.

- **Self Help Women Development Organization (SHWO):** Engages in advocacy initiatives to a **very high extent**. SHWO has advocated for law reforms at the government level to protect women's and girls' rights. SHWO operates independently of LoP and has been actively engaged in advocating for legal reforms. Despite the slow pace in the implementation of GBV and human rights laws that protect women, there has been an increased commitment from political and traditional authorities to enforce these laws. Tangible results and shifts in attitude towards GBV and women's rights are still anecdotal.
- **Arise Social Cultural Foundation:** The CSO engaged in advocacy initiatives to a **moderate extent**. The CSO has engaged in advocacy on GBV and girls/ women protection laws, and efforts have been made to promote and sensitize local and traditional authorities to understand and fully implement the Child Act. Specific cases brought about as a result of the advocacy are yet to be documented.

While many of the CSOs demonstrate a commendable level of engagement in advocacy initiatives for gender equality and the WPS agenda, there are common challenges such as limited funding and resource constraints. These challenges can affect the scale and impact of their efforts. To enhance the effectiveness of CSOs' advocacy:

- **Resource Mobilization:** Partners and donors should explore opportunities for increased funding to support CSOs with limited financial capacity, enabling them to expand their advocacy efforts and achieve broader impact.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide capacity-building support to CSOs, including training on effective advocacy strategies, communications, and monitoring and evaluation to ensure that their efforts yield measurable outcomes.
- **Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing among CSOs to leverage each other's strengths and share best practices. This can enhance the overall impact of advocacy initiatives.
- **Documentation and Reporting:** CSOs should prioritize the documentation of their advocacy achievements and outcomes, including specific changes or policy influence resulting from their efforts. This will facilitate a more comprehensive assessment of their impact.
- **Addressing Specific Challenges:** Address challenges such as staff turnover and limited means of transportation, which can hinder CSOs' ability to sustain their advocacy activities.

4.5.4 Community Groups Gender Awareness and Commitment to WPS Agenda

The mid-term evaluation findings show that traditional Authorities of ABC Courts have better functioning gender-sensitive Courts and better representation of Women councillors as compared to baseline time.

Overall, 28 groups had been engaged out of which 25 were gender aware (Lakes 6 groups, Central Equatoria 5 groups, Unity 6 group, Eastern Equatoria 11 groups)⁴³. The highlights of the groups per state are presented as follows:

Lakes State

- LoP partner AMA had engaged 6 groups (ABC Courts, prison warders, police, Payam administrators, IDP groups, Town bench court, and psychosocial focal person), all of which are gender aware.
- Capacity building included training on gender equality, protection, rule of law, and GBV.
- Notable effects of capacity building included the ABC courts supporting the formation and implementation of laws addressing GBV, youth groups educating the community on gender equality and girl child education, and improved safety for women and girls due to police efforts.

Central Equatorial

- LoP partner Healthnet TPO engaged with formal and informal leaders through training, and mentorship of 5 payams (Terekeka, Muni, Reggo, Nyori and Terekeka) where 25 chiefs were trained, with at least one gender-aware community group in each payam.
- Capacity building included regular training on GBV, MHPSS, peacebuilding, identification of GBV survivors, psychosocial and mental health problems, and referral pathways.
- Notable effects of the capacity building reported were the active engagement of the groups in implementing GBV laws (referring the GBV cases to formal courts), promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding at Payams, and enhanced awareness and commitment to gender equality and women's participation in peace committees.

Unity State:

- Engaged 6 groups, all of which are gender aware and committed to advocating for gender equality, women and girls' protection, and participation.
- The capacity building involved training on GBV, gender equality, UNSCR 1325/WPS Pillars, and UNDP GBV pocket guide for ABC court chiefs and police.
- Notable effects of capacity building include the increased awareness of gender equality and women's rights, improved handling of GBV cases by ABC court chiefs and police (with most cases now being referred to government courts), higher girl school enrollment partly attributed to the sensitization efforts by the groups on the importance of girl education⁴⁴, and greater participation of women and youth in communal matters.

Eastern Equatoria:

- Engaged 11 groups (ABC Courts, Police, Women groups, Payam administrators), with 8 being gender aware.
- Capacity building covered topics like safeguarding, gender, GBV, UNSCR 1325 4 pillars, specific roles of ABC court groups, and UNDP GBV pocket guide for police/chiefs.
- Notable effects of the capacity building reported were the active advocacy for gender equality under the WPS agenda, improved performance of chiefs and police in ensuring justice by arresting most of the perpetrators of GBV, sexual abuse, assaults etc., increased girl school enrollment, and greater participation of women and youth in leadership roles⁴⁵.

⁴³ Information on Western Equatoria groups was not availed during the evaluation period. LoP partner in the region can follow up and have this documented through monitoring and evaluation reports.

⁴⁴ It was not possible to quantify the number of girls who have been enrolled specifically as a result of groups engagement since this data has not been documented and separated from increased enrolment due to other factors.

⁴⁵ Increased participation of women in leadership positions is highlighted by 3 women now seating ABC Courts.

BOX 2

CSOs/CBOs Perspectives on on W/Y inclusion and Capacity to Implement UNSCR 1325 WPS Agenda

"Women and youths are able to carry out leadership roles and can influence the WPS agenda. The youth management committees we formed in our local schools have equal gender representation. The committee is not only engaged in gender awareness issues but also in women's protection and safety. They hold peace-related talks particularly when there is conflict in the community."

Community in Aid (CINA), Education Coordinator, CSO, Lakes, Yirol East.

"Youths and women in Muni have shown that they can take up leadership roles and influence the WPS agenda. The group led by Lodu (group leader) has complimented our efforts in many ways including advocating for peace in the community. Through his leadership, the youths have been visiting other youths in cattle camps where they discuss issues of peace. The youth have also continued to engage the local chief on security matters..."

**Community Mobilizer
Terekeka, Central Equatoria**

"We do have women and youths in leadership positions in the community that have shown their capabilities influencing the WPS agenda as a result of partnering with the LoP programme. For example, we have women leaders such as Nyanin Thod and Bakhita Nyakor who are powerful women leaders who have been engaged in influencing the WPS agenda by advocating for the protection of women and girls and the imple-

mentation of GBV legislation. They have been engaging groups such as the ABC courts, the police, the prisons department, and the chiefs..."

Greater Dor Youth Association, Youth Leader Panyijar, Unity.

"We do participate on both local and national levels advocacy initiatives and creating awareness around safety and protection of people with disabilities, youth, and women. We facilitate women's groups in conducting peace dialogues in the community and also always take part in the 16 days of activism in November and the annual women's day held in March of every year. We are linked with Plan International who have been key in providing capacity strengthening to our organization..."

Harmony Disability Association, Board Chair Eastern Equatoria.

"Our organization staff received capacity strengthening and training from EVE organization for women. The training was on the areas of Gender equality, GBV, leadership skills as well as on women's rights. The training has been key in our agenda for women's rights and peace in the community. We have used what we learned to train other youths on gender equality and women's inclusion in the civic space. we have also been able to engage with the chiefs in the community to push and advocate for women's safety and protection in the community..."

Arise Social Cultural Foundation, Child Protection Assistant, Yambio Western Equatoria

This are extracts from KII extracts from Select CSOs/CBO who participated in the LoP Programme Mid-Term Evaluation.

BOX 3

Advocacy on gender Equility

LoP Partners Perspectives on Current Capacity ABC Courts

"The ABC Courts now operate much more effectively than before. This is because they have now a better understanding of the local government act as a result of the capacity strengthening offered by the project. Under the capacity strengthening, the ABC chiefs were taken through the Act which has been interpreted for them for better understanding. After the capacity-building sessions, LOP did a series of follow-ups to ensure that they were on track. LOP also facilitated a national chief forum where chiefs from all over were invited to share their own experience. In addition, ABC chiefs were trained on the UNDP GBV pocket guide so as to be able to lobby and advocate for increased implementation of GBV legislation. On lobbying at the national level, the ABC chiefs were linked with the minister for local government for the purpose of lobbying..."

**Programme manager, PMEL,
Plan International – Magwi -
Eastern Equatoria**

"The ABC court's capacity to lobby for GBV legislation and laws at the national and local levels has significantly improved as a result of the lobby and advocacy training they received under the program. The ABC court chiefs' forum at the national level which was attended by

3 chiefs (Under AMA) helped bring ABC chiefs together to jointly lobby for implementation of GBV legislation..."

**Field Officer, AMA- Yirol
East Lakes**

"At the local level we were able to form a group of 15 ABC court members who visit the payams addressing the chiefs, Payam administrators and county chiefs lobbying for the implementation of the GBV legislation laws (However there is no new law-they lobby for the implementation of the customary law) and domestic violence act. At the national level, they engage with the board of commissioners who is a representative of the state for implementation of the same law..."

**Field Coordinator- AMA
Panyijar, Unity**

"In my estimation, the capacity of the ABC Court has moderately improved in that the county and Payam chiefs now incorporate in their speeches during international events key messages about women's protection, respect for women and girls' rights (sending all children to school) and allow women to become chiefs or members to the ABC courts. A lot is happening in the capacity of the chiefs their willingness to learn more..."

**Program Manager, HealthNet TPO
Terekeka, Central Equatoria**

This are extracts from KIIs from Select selected from transcripts of LoP Partners Staff who participated in the Mid-Term Evaluation

In general, these findings show that the engagement of gender-aware community groups and the provision of capacity building have yielded positive results in promoting gender equality, women and girls' protection, and their meaningful participation in peacebuilding across these regions. These examples demonstrate that targeted training and support can lead to tangible improvements in community attitudes and actions related to gender issues and protection. However, it's essential to continue monitoring and sustaining these efforts to ensure long-term impact and progress.

4.5.5 Agents of Change Agenda using Youth-Led platforms

One of the specific objectives of this mid-term evaluation was to determine how many women, youth, and men had been co-opted into the LoP programme and empowered as agents of change through rights-based leadership and knowledge. In our findings, the initiatives across all regions demonstrate commendable efforts in empowering women, youth, and men as agents of change. However, it's vital to conduct rigorous monitoring and evaluations to measure the actual impact of these groups and programs on gender equality, community attitudes, and behaviours. The lack of this data is partly due to the challenge posed by Social Change programmes that take a long time for behaviour and attitudes to change and data on the same to be recorded. Also sustaining these initiatives and ensuring they become self-reliant is crucial for their long-term success. Regular training and capacity building should continue to strengthen the knowledge and skills of these groups, and further attention should be given to assessing the outcomes and long-term effects of their activities. The following are the highlights for each state.

Lakes State

- Under this objective, AMA not only supported the formation of organized platforms for engagement but has also trained these groups to take a leading role in matters of gender equality in the community. Notably, the Champions of Change and Male Engagement Group have successfully facilitated open discussions and debates, contributing to increased awareness within the community. This has led to improved understanding and acceptance of positive masculinity, promoting equal opportunities for women and girls.

Central Equatoria

- In Terekeka, Healthnet TPO actively engaged and empowered women, youth, and men through Champions of Change (COC) and Couple Groups (composed of 80 members, 40% female). Notably, the COC members have been championing change in their community by advocating for the rights of boys' and girls' access to education, and human rights, and campaign against GBV and early child marriage. Their efforts have contributed to the voice against child marriages⁴⁶ and also promoted gender equality. Moreover, men in the couple groups have actively engaged fellow men, raising awareness about gender equality and encouraging women and girls' participation in community affairs.

Unity State:

- In Unity State, AMA has successfully formed and empowered the Tenekel Youth Group and MAT Women Group, which have played pivotal roles in creating awareness about gender equality, GBV, and women's rights. The Male Engagement Group in the region has also been instrumental in engaging men and boys, resulting in noticeable changes in behaviour⁴⁷ and contributing to a more gender-equitable community.

⁴⁶ Data on child marriages prevented a direct result of COC initiatives have not been documented. But anecdotal evidence show that there is some change in attitude from parents who would otherwise give their daughters to early child marriage.

⁴⁷ Noticeable behaviour such as respect towards women, helping with domestic chores.

Eastern Equatoria:

- In Eastern Equatoria, Plan International supported the formation of school-based youth-led platforms that are being used to nurture youth leadership skills. The Student Parliament, for example, has gained recognition and support from local authorities. They have introduced guidelines that were approved by the local commissioner, indicating positive engagement with authorities. Additionally, the Forum Theatre team has effectively used art to create awareness about peace, gender equality, and women and youth protection during public gatherings, furthering the impact of the program.

These achievements signify the positive influence of these groups in their respective regions, leading to increased awareness and tangible changes in behaviour and attitudes related to gender equality and women's participation in various aspects of community life. To strengthen the effectiveness of these groups, LoP partners should consider the following recommendations:

- Sustained Training and Capacity Building:** There is a need for continuous investment in training and capacity building for these groups. Knowledge and skills development are foundational for their effectiveness in advocating for gender equality, peace, and security. Regular training will ensure they remain well-informed and capable of addressing evolving challenges.
- Resource Mobilization:** LoP programme should consider assisting these groups in securing adequate resources, particularly financial support (either through capacity building of their resource mobilization capabilities, or seed grants). Adequate funding is essential for expanding their reach, organizing impactful initiatives, and sustaining their activities over time.
- Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track progress and measure the impact of their efforts. Data-driven insights will enable these groups to adjust their strategies, demonstrate their effectiveness, and attract further support.
- Collaboration and Networking:** Encourage active collaboration and networking among these groups. Partnering with other civil society organizations, government agencies, and international entities will help amplify their voices, provide access to resources, and enhance their collective influence on the WPS agenda.

4.6 Findings for Outcome 3

Outcome 3: Increased, the effective participation of women and youth (W/Y) in leadership and peacebuilding.

4.6.1 CSOs Capacity and Resources to Lobby UNSCR 1325 and WPS Agenda

The LoP programme recognizes that CSOs /CBOs play a significant role in lobbying for human rights, gender equality, and full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCR) 1325). To effectively do this, the CSOs /CBOs need to have adequate resources for advocacy work at grassroots, state, national and international levels. This mid-term evaluation sought to examine whether the CSOs/CBOs partnering with LoP programme partners have the resources required for such advocacy work. The findings show that overall, the engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) across the five states—Lakes, Central Equatoria (Terekeka), Unity, and Eastern Equatoria—reflects notable progress in building their capacity to advocate for human rights,

gender equality, and the UNSCR 1325 under WPS agenda. These organizations have shown a growing commitment to advancing gender equality and women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding efforts. However, the capacity-building landscape varies among the regions, with some organizations displaying more significant potential for impactful advocacy.

Lakes State stands out for having CSOs, particularly [Catholic Relief Services \(CRS\)](#), that possess both financial and human resources, enhancing their lobbying and advocacy capabilities. The region has successfully imparted lobby and advocacy skills to its CSOs under the WPS agenda, and all the CSOs engage in evidence-based advocacy, enhancing the credibility of their efforts. In Central Equatoria (Terekeka), two CSOs, [Trust Action Youth Association](#) and [Surname for Community Development](#), have demonstrated the capacity to advocate for women's rights and gender equality. These organizations have undergone training in lobby and advocacy, positioning them for more effective engagement. Their initiatives have resulted in increased awareness about gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV) in the community. Unity State's Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) possess human resources but face financial constraints. The capacity-building support provided by the LoP program has played a crucial role in empowering these organizations. As a result, there has been a noticeable change in community attitudes towards gender equality, indicating tangible progress. However, these constraints could make it difficult for the local CSOs/CBOs to continue lobbying and advocacy activities.

In Eastern Equatoria, two CSOs (Humaes and Harmony Disability) have demonstrated relatively strong capacities, particularly concerning human resources, to engage in advocacy efforts related to human rights, gender equality, and UNSCR 1325 under the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. While they have shown potential, their advocacy work could benefit from further support and resources to expand their impact and reach.

4.6.2 LoP Partners Individual Effort on UNSCR 1325 Advocacy and WPS Agenda

Over and above examining the local CSOs/CBOs advocacy efforts and commitment to the WPS agenda, we also examined how each of the LoP programme consortium partners have participated in lobby and advocacy efforts, particularly using their platform, influence, and resources to advance the WPS agenda. In our findings, we established that each partner has unique strengths and areas of influence. These strengths complement each other and contribute to a more comprehensive advocacy strategy⁴⁸.

AMA Advocacy Efforts: In Lakes, AMA has continued to lobby and engage local Chiefs, particularly in training and sensitising them on the importance of including leadership and decision-making positions. The commitment of local chiefs to include women in the court council signifies a tangible achievement. This has demonstrated a shift towards greater gender representation in community leadership structures. AMA has also directly engaged with policymakers including parliamentarians, ABC court chiefs, and peace committee leaders to create an environment where these decision-makers are more informed about women's priorities. This knowledge from these advocacy initiatives is still in its nominal stages of critical influence, but it is expected that over time, this could lead to policy changes and increased support for gender equality.

⁴⁸ The summary of LoP partners -individual advocacy efforts covers Plan International, Healthnet TPO, and AMA. Other LoP partners (EVE Organization and PAX) were not available during the evaluation period. Their efforts should be captured in the continuous monitoring and evaluation reporting, and also final evaluation.

HealthNet TPO Advocacy Efforts: In Central Equatoria (Terekeka), HealthNet TPO's active participation in the drafting of National Action Plan 2 (NAP2) demonstrates their commitment to advancing the WPS agenda at the national level. HealthNet TPO also advocated for the inclusion of the women's annual gathering and its budgeting for sustainability, which in turn not only ensures that the voices of local women are heard but also takes practical steps to institutionalize and fund an essential element of the WPS framework. This involvement reflects HealthNet TPO's dedication to translating policy into actionable programs and budgets. HealthNet TPO has also been engaged in mentoring and coaching in collaboration with LoP partners such as PAX and EVE Organization at the national and regional levels is crucial. The mentoring and coaching focused mainly on chairpersons of specialized committees such as MHPSS, Peace Committees, and GBV clusters which are vital for building leadership capacity and understanding of the WPS agenda. This mentoring approach continues to contribute to a more holistic programme sustainability. Moreso, it shows that a collaborative approach within the LoP consortium is important as it allows partners with specific expertise or resources are support each other.

Plan International Advocacy Efforts: Plan International's approach of integrating UNSCR 1325 into training programs has led to an increase in women's leadership roles demonstrating tangible progress in promoting women's rights and gender equality in Eastern Equatoria. More so, this approach not only raises awareness but also empowers women to take active roles in promoting gender equality and peace, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. These tangible outcomes underscore the effectiveness of Plan International's advocacy efforts.

PAX: PAX's contributions to high-level advocacy on WPS have been instrumental in advancing the agenda at both national and international levels. By engaging with key stakeholders, empowering young women, strengthening international commitment, and facilitating partnerships, PAX has played a crucial role in promoting gender equality, peace, and security in South Sudan in line with UNSCR 1325. PAX is the consortium technical lead on the Learning and Advocacy (L&A) strategy. Section 4.6.5 has an exhaustive review of the advocacy achievement under PAX's leadership.

EVE Organization: The EVE Organization for Women Development has made significant strides in advocating for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 WPS agenda in South Sudan. From October 2022 to January 2023, EVE implemented a volunteer program that recruited and trained 10 young women on WPS issues. These volunteers were then deployed to national and international organizations around Juba. Impressively, four of the volunteers were subsequently offered employment contracts by host organizations, highlighting the tangible impact of this initiative. Additionally, EVE provided sub-grants to six CSOs in project locations to conduct lobby and advocacy activities, resulting in increased confidence, capacity, and networks within these CSOs. EVE successfully organized the 3rd National Conference on Women's Peace and Security, which brought together women from across South Sudan to discuss progress and formulate advocacy agendas. EVE's engagement with the Ministry of Peacebuilding and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs reinforced international commitment to the WPS agenda in South Sudan. EVE's initiatives have not only empowered women and youth but have also created an influential network for advocating women's rights, gender equality, and peacebuilding. EVE's work aligns with the objectives of the Leaders of Peace and Just Future project, contributing to increased women's participation in leadership and peacebuilding through effective advocacy at national, regional, and global levels.

4.6.3 Strengthening Capacity of Peace Task Force and Committees.

Part of the UNSCR 1325 agenda was strengthening the capacity of peace committees and helping to establish peace task forces in LoP regions. The mid-term evaluation sought to examine whether the LoP programme had managed to engage peace committees and establish peace task forces and whether there was a notable effect of the peace committees /task forces on peacebuilding in these regions. The findings show that the peace task forces were only established in Lakes and Unity by AMA, which is the LoP partner with expertise and experience in the component.

In this regard, the evaluation findings show that AMA worked closely with peace committees, border committees, and peace task forces in Lakes State. AMA provided these local structures with comprehensive training on UNSCR 1325 and used the opportunity to emphasize the critical role of including women in peacebuilding processes. As a result, the peace task force that was formed was composed of approximately 25 members (10 women and 15 men)- which was 40% female representation. The peace task force has continued to conduct community dialogues with local chiefs on vital topics such as early child marriage, gender equality, and peace⁴⁹. One of the other reported achievements of the peace task force has been handling conflict resolution cases and GBV. The committee has played a vital role in identifying and reporting cases of early marriage and gender-based violence (GBV).⁵⁰ The task force has handled these cases independently which has earned them the trust and support of local leadership. Furthermore, the task force was instrumental in organizing and mediating peace meetings between feuding communities, particularly Panyijiar and Nyang, which had been involved in conflicts stemming from cattle rustling in 2022. Despite these achievements, the task force has challenges in hosting cross-border requests for shelter on the border of Panyijiar and Nyang. The LoP programme should consider establishing this shelter as it would facilitate engagement with elders and youths from both sides and help address the frequent cross-border conflicts in the area effectively.

In Unity State AMA, just like in Lakes, AMA worked extensively with peace committees, border committees, and peace task forces, including providing comprehensive training on UNSCR 1325, covering gender equality and women's participation in peacebuilding. For instance, the Peace Committee established in Ganyiel (comprised of 25 members, including 10 women (40%) and 15 men, has played a central role in conducting dialogues with local chiefs, identifying cases of early marriage and GBV, and taking the initiative to handle GBV cases independently. Also, the task force's involvement in peace meetings between conflict-prone communities exemplifies their role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Moving forward, LoP partners should consider:

1. **Scaling Efforts:** Partners should explore opportunities to scale similar initiatives in regions where peace committees have not been established, considering the local context and priorities.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** There is a need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of peace committees and task forces in promoting peace, gender equality, and women's participation. This will help to capture data on actual changes /impact and be able to track it over the remaining 2 years.
3. **Integrating Learning into Adaptation Strategies:** Learning from the successes and challenges to inform future strategies will ensure that these local structures play a meaningful role in advancing the WPS agenda and peacebuilding efforts.

⁴⁹ Data specific to the preliminary.

⁵⁰ Approximately more than 20 cases have been handled directly by the committee.

4.6.4 Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making Processes

Transitional Constitution that provides for 25 per cent of women's representation in government institutions. However, affirmative action amendments made provision for 35% of women's representation. The work of women Members of Parliament is constrained by several factors. First, lack of political goodwill undermines the realization of women and youth participation in decision-making processes both at the National and grassroots levels. Currently, South Sudan has 550 lawmakers appointed by presidential decree, out of which 116 (28%) are women. The appointments violated the 35% women representation from a different gender. Out of the cabinet of 35 Ministers, 10 (28%) were women, while out of 10 current State governors, 1(10%) was a woman. The vast majority of female cabinet ministers and deputy ministers share familial, ethnic, and affinities with the ruling elite, and therefore, their appointment is not necessarily designed to bring about steering change and women's inclusion and transformation on gender issues but rather calculated political tactics to appeal to the international community for the continuous support of the government. Thus, the 35% gender quota has been reduced to tokenism and used for rewarding loyalists, friends, family members, and the well-connected elite political class.

The four pillars of UNSCR 1325 (2000) call for the full Participation of women in the maintenance of international peace and security at all levels and stages; Protection of women and girls from conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); Prevention of conflict and of conflict-related sexual violence; and gender-sensitive relief and recovery measures. Part of the UNSCR 1325 LoP WPS agenda was to strengthen the capacities of local partners so as to advocate for full implementation of the 35% gender quota and enhance women /girls' representation in decision-making processes.

In our findings as highlighted in section 4.6.2, the LoP partners have made commendable efforts to advance the WPS agenda, specifically in achieving the 35% provision of women's representation in leadership and decision-making processes as outlined in the Revitalized Peace Agreement (RPA). The LoP partners engaged gatekeepers, policymakers, and local leaders, and their achievements, such as increased women's representation in key bodies, demonstrate tangible progress. For instance, In Lakes, AMA engaged with key gatekeepers, including Chiefs and local leaders, through initiatives like the national chief forum which emphasizes the importance of the 35% affirmative action in all levels of government, focusing on gender representation. As a result, AMA successfully persuaded chiefs in Lakes State to commit to including women in the court council. In Unity, AMA achieved a 35% representation of women in various key bodies, such as ABC courts, the board of commissioners, and Payam Ganyiel. These achievements demonstrate their commitment to the 35% quota outlined in the RPA.

Similarly, Plan International's advocacy for women leaders in the community particularly the incorporation of women into the ABC council, and girls taking up leadership roles in schools has contributed to fulfilling the 35% provision of women's representation at some of the ABC Courts and Councils. More efforts are still required to ensure that 35% gender representation is achieved. PAX on the other hand lobbied successfully and had one of their staff Madam Elizabeth Atong appointed to the steering chair of the Maputo protocol that was launched last year. This will further help in the objectives of the LoP of championing women's participation and inclusion in leadership and decision-making processes.

Challenges in enhancing women's participation in Leadership processes.

Despite the efforts done under the LoP programme, South Sudan still has significant challenges in implementing the 35% quotas for women's representation in leadership. Some of these are highlighted as follows:

1. **Traditional and Cultural Barriers:** South Sudan still has deep-rooted traditional and cultural norms that limit women's participation in leadership. Gender roles and expectations often restrict women to domestic spheres, impeding their entry into politics and decision-making roles.
2. **Conflict and Instability:** South Sudan's long history of conflict and political instability continues to exacerbate gender disparities. The impact of conflict, including displacement, violence, and economic hardship, disproportionately affects women and makes it harder for women even in LoP regions to effectively engage in leadership activities.
3. **Lack of Education:** Access to quality education is still a limiting factor for W/G in South Sudan. Without adequate education and skills development, women face barriers to entry into leadership roles.
4. **Limited Resources:** Political campaigns and leadership roles often require significant financial resources. Women in South Sudan face challenges in accessing the funding needed to participate effectively in politics.
5. **Violence and Discrimination:** Gender-based violence and discrimination against women remain significant problems in South Sudan. Women in leadership roles may face threats and harassment.

Recommendations

Some of the recommendations that LoP can consider overcoming the above-mentioned challenges include:

1. **Enforce Gender Quotas:** Ensure the strict enforcement of the 35% women's representation provision outlined in the Revitalized Peace Agreement, extending it to other leadership positions beyond politics.
2. **Promote Women's Education:** The LoP programme should consider mechanisms for improving girls' and women's access to quality education, including the provision of scholarships, school infrastructure development, and community awareness programs.
3. **Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Part of strengthening legal framework could be partnering with national and state level agencies to translate NAP 2 into local language and continue providing capacity strengthening of leaders on the importance of women in leadership positions.
4. **Develop Gender Action Plan (GAP) for R-NDS:** LoP should consider helping local CSOs/CBOs to develop GAP from the R-NDS as a way of localization of the WPS agenda, particularly women inclusion leadership committees at all levels.
5. **Capacity Building:** Invest in training and capacity-building programs for women leaders, focusing on leadership skills, governance, and conflict resolution. This component is scarce in the LoP programme initiatives, yet it has a profound effect on building the confidence of W/G for leadership roles.
6. **Media and Advocacy:** Encourage media campaigns and advocacy efforts that challenge gender stereotypes and promote women's leadership and participation. Media advocacy is quite underutilized in LoP advocacy design, yet it has a significant impact on sensitization, awareness creation, and shaping behaviour and attitudes towards women in leadership.
7. **Expand Peace Task Force Committees:** Actively involve women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts by expanding peace task force committees in all LoP regions.
8. **Integrate Intergenerational Dialogues into programme initiatives:** Intergenerational dialogues are an important tool for engaging younger and older generations to share experiences on harmful gender norms and practices, and how to overcome them. Community-based programs can help shift attitudes towards gender equality.

4.6.5 UNSCR 1325 Gatekeepers Advocacy on WPS Agenda

PAX was the LoP consortium partner in charge of Learning and Advocacy (L&A) strategies. PAX's efforts in advancing the WPS agenda in South Sudan through high-level advocacy have yielded notable achievements.

1. **Development of Lobby & Advocacy (L&A) Strategy:** PAX has successfully collaborated with LoP consortia partners, to develop and launch a comprehensive L&A strategy document. This strategy identifies key stakeholders for influencing effective women and youth participation in leadership and peacebuilding. It also outlines desired outcomes, communication mediums, and messaging. This coordinated approach enhances the effectiveness of advocacy efforts⁵¹. The L&A's effectiveness will depend on its practical implementation and adaptation to changing contexts. Regular updates and evaluations of the strategy's impact are essential.
2. **Engagement with South Sudan National Leaders:** PAX has also facilitated open engagement with South Sudan's national leaders, such as the Chief Whip of the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly (RTNLA), Hon. Rebecca Joshua, and the Undersecretary for the Ministry of Peacebuilding, Philip Michael Pia. This engagement opened doors for other LoP partners to advocate for their priorities in lobby and advocacy. However, in as much as open engagement with South Sudan's national leaders is a positive step, it is important to ensure that such engagements translate into tangible policy changes (beyond commitments) and concrete support for women's participation in leadership and peacebuilding.
3. **Empowering Young Women in Lobby and Advocacy:** PAX supported the increased participation of young women in both national and international lobby and advocacy initiatives. One of the students who attended the African Union Campaign "Gender is my Agenda" (GIMAC) Summit in Zambia, initiated advocacy efforts at her university focusing on youth participation in peacebuilding and advocated for girl child education and women's economic empowerment⁵². Mentorship, resource support, and activation of such youth platforms could have a scaled impact on the LoP programme particularly in reaching out to the youth.
4. **Strengthening Commitment of the International and Donor Community:** PAX, along with LoP partners, conducted an exchange visit to Germany and the Netherlands, engaging with various stakeholders and policymakers. This effort reinforced the commitment of the international and donor community to the WPS agenda in South Sudan. Brigitta Tazelaar, Deputy Director General for International Cooperation at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed continued support for the WPS agenda and gender equality in South Sudan. Continued efforts to mobilize international support and maintain a dialogue on South Sudan's specific needs should be prioritized.
5. **Linking Women Activists and Human Rights Defenders with Donor Community:** PAX facilitated connections between women activists and human rights defenders and the donor community. Partners like the Women Advocates of South Sudan (WAASS) met with representatives from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explore collaboration on reviewing laws and policies related to gender-based violence (GBV). This collaboration aims to protect women and girls and promote gender equality in South Sudan.⁵³ Ensuring that these partnerships result in concrete actions, such as

⁵¹ The L&A is in its first phase of implementation and therefore, it was not possible to evaluate its effectiveness or achievement by the time this evaluation was conducted.

⁵² The effect of the students' efforts have not been monitored or documented to enable for tracking of impact of this advocacy initiative.

⁵³ It is expected that over time, this collaboration will enable Women Advocates of South Sudan (WAASS) to develop working collaborations with UNSCR 1325 gatekeepers and donors, and thereby be able to gain required capacity strengthening and grants to implement WPS agenda for components under the organizations expertise.

policy revisions and program funding, should be a focus. This means follow-up discussions should be activated before end of this LoP programme.

6. **Creating Awareness through Radio Shows:** PAX supported awareness campaigns on key WPS priorities, including women's political participation, legal protection for young girls, and mental health and psychosocial support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). These radio shows reached a significant audience of over one million listeners in Central Equatoria state. In our assessment, Radio shows are effective tools for awareness campaigns. However, the impact of these campaigns should be continuously monitored and evaluated to assess their reach, influence, and effectiveness. This could be done through regional assessment where the Radio shows happened to have documented and inform replication strategies in other regions.

PAX's contributions to high-level advocacy on WPS have been instrumental in advancing the agenda at both national and international levels. By engaging with key stakeholders, empowering young women, strengthening international commitment, and facilitating partnerships, PAX has played a crucial role in promoting gender equality, peace, and security in South Sudan in line with UNSCR 1325.

4.7 Strategies Employed by LoP Partners to Achieve Desired Results

Based on the evaluation analysis, each partner had different strength and technical skills they were bringing to the consortium. The following is our findings on each LoP partners strategies and good practices that has contributed to findings highlighted in sections 4.3 to 4.6:

Plan International:

1. **Use of Existing Structures:** Plan International effectively utilized existing structures, such as local government, chiefs, women leaders, and youth groups, to built required synergies, collaborations to implement the programme initiatives. This strengthened relationships, cooperation, and mobilization of beneficiaries.
2. **Gender-Specific Engagement:** Plan International's strategies recognized the differing willingness of participants based on gender. They observed that females and young girls were more willing to engage in GBV awareness sessions, leading to higher female participation rates.
3. **Inclusive Engagement with Local Authorities:** Their inclusive engagement with local authorities, partners, and local government during project implementation improved project acceptance and accountability. It also enhanced service delivery to project participants.
4. **Clear Project Interventions:** Plan International ensured clear interventions and geographical locations among consortium members, reducing the chances of overlapping and duplication of services to beneficiaries.

PAX:

1. **High-Level Engagement:** PAX engaged with prominent stakeholders, including women parliamentarians, civil society actors, and legal institutions through radio talk shows, meetings, and lobby and advocacy training. This engagement extended their program's reach.
2. **L&A Strategy Document:** PAX developed a Lobby and Advocacy (L&A) Strategy document for the LoP consortium program but allowed other LoP members to have an input so as to broaden the advocacy work on gender mainstreaming and gender equality in South Sudan.

3. **Youth Engagement:** PAX involved youth from various CSOs, institutions, and academia to promote peaceful co-existence and gender equality. This approach aimed to empower young leaders and promote gender equality and women's rights and has been very successful.
4. **Strong Network and Commitment:** PAX fostered strong partnerships and collaborations within the consortium and with external organizations and has leveraged on these collaborations to engage national and state level stakeholders and policymakers at the grassroots.

HNTPO (HealthNet TPO):

1. **Capacity Building in Consortium Management:** HNTPO emphasized the importance of capacity building in consortium management. This included patience, better coordination, and consistency to efficiently manage partners and resources. This approach helped in streamlining LoP capacity building approach to local partners, and technical resources and capacities within the LoP consortium partnership.
2. **High-Level Advocacy through Conferences:** The LoP program organized annual women conferences and national chief forums, providing a platform for grassroots voices to be heard nationally and internationally, which HNTPO played a significant role in coordination and successful oversight, which ensured conference success.
3. **Psychosocial Caregivers Network:** HNTPO trained psychosocial focal points (PFPs) to create a network of helpers for women and girls affected by violence. The PFPs facilitated community awareness sessions and provided psychoeducation, case management, and referrals, which has enhanced the sustainability component of the LoP programme and is being replicated and scaled.
4. **Self-Care Training:** Recognizing the stress faced by PFPs, HNTPO provided self-care training to PFPs and community advocates. This training addressed emotional awareness, coping strategies, and conflict resolution, contributing to healing and effective psychosocial support.

EVE Organization:

1. **Community of Learners:** EVE Organization fostered a collaborative environment among consortium members. They engaged in capacity-building sessions, ensuring that each partner shared expertise and knowledge.
2. **Localization Agenda:** The consortium empowered CSOs and national partners to actively participate in program decision-making. This localized approach encouraged consensus and respect for all opinions. Emphasis on localization is a great practice and strategy that enhances ownership of LoP programme goals and outcomes.
3. **Local Visibility:** By reporting LoP activities in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), the EVE Organization enhanced the visibility of national partners on the global stage.

AMA:

1. **Local visibility:** By reporting LoP activities in the IATI platform, ALA enhanced visibility of local South Sudanese organizational work at global level.
2. **Community engagement and presence:** AMA focuses on building capacities and stresses on consistent and meaningful engagement of community in members in programming.

As highlighted, the LoP consortium partners have employed commendable strategies to promote gender equality and address GBV, and UNSCR 125 WPS agenda in South Sudan. However, there is room for improvement. The following could be considered to build on these good practices:

1. While the high female participation rate in GBV awareness sessions is positive, the challenge lies in engaging more males. It's essential to develop keep-enhancing strategies that encourage male participation, as addressing GBV requires active involvement from all genders.
2. The community of learners' approach is beneficial, but there should be a clear mechanism for documenting and sharing the knowledge gained. This ensures that the lessons learned are effectively integrated into program activities and future initiatives.
3. Localization and capacity strengthening of partners should be substantive- meaning, by the end of the LoP programme, local partners should have some level of technical skills, competency and capacity, including financial resource or resource mobilization capability. This is a very good localization practice and standard.

5. Conclusion

The LoP programme implementation over the last two years has continued to achieve the desired programme outputs and outcomes, despite the COVID-19 disruptions in 2020-2021, environmental risks such as floods and droughts that affected Lakes and Unity States, sporadic intercommunal and political conflicts, and social-economic challenges with high inflation and decline in South Sudanese Pound against the dollar. This operational context made it challenging for partners to have a smooth implementation of the programme, but adequate risk mitigation measures such as scaling on number of activities, conducting virtual meetings (during COVID), and building synergies with key stakeholders in the WPS agenda sector, including government (at national and State levels). Based on the findings we have highlighted in this executive summary and the body of this report, we conclude that the LoP programme has to a large extent, achieved its mid-term targets, including effectively addressing recommendations raised at the baseline (also to a large extent).

Recommendations for LoP Consortium Partners

1. **Periodic Refresher Training and follow-ups:** Capacity building of ABC Courts, formal /informal traditional leaders, CSOs/CBOs, women leaders, and youth champions of change (COC) should incorporate periodic refresher training for effective knowledge and skilling. One-off training is largely not effective in the long run.
2. **Develop Gender Action Plan (GAP) for R-NDS:** LoP should consider helping local CSOs/CBOs to develop GAP from the R-NDS as a way of localization of the WPS agenda, particularly women inclusion leadership committees at all levels.
3. **Media and Advocacy:** Encourage media campaigns and advocacy efforts that challenge gender stereotypes and promote women's leadership and participation. Media advocacy is quite underutilized in LoP advocacy design, yet it has a significant impact on sensitization, awareness creation, and shaping behaviour and attitudes towards women in leadership.
4. **Integrate Intergenerational Dialogues into programme initiatives:** Intergenerational dialogues are an important tool for engaging younger and older generations to share experiences on harmful gender norms and practices, and how to overcome them. Community-based programs can help shift attitudes towards gender equality.
5. **Localization and capacity strengthening of partners should be substantive:** meaning, by the end of the LoP programme, local partners should have some level of technical skills, competency and capacity, including financial resource or resource mobilization capability. This is a very good localization practice and standard.
6. **Seed Funding partnership:** The seed funding provided of \$1,380 is extremely limiting and inadequate to address the LoP programme initiatives that local partners are tasked with. Consider fewer CSO/CBOs/ local groups support that can have substantive effect.
7. **Strengthen Monitoring and Reporting component:** Post training /capacity building monitoring is required over and above the normal reporting of outputs and immediate effect of these initiatives- to data (that can extract trends) to inform evidence-based initiatives customized to each state or implementation region.
8. **Framework for Tracking Behavior Change:** The LoP programme needs to develop a standard-

ized framework for measuring social change (abandonment of harmful behaviour, adoption of new behaviour, retention of new behaviour) beyond anecdotal impact stories that can change from time to time.

9. **Contingency Plan for 2024 National/State Elections:** There is a need to have a contingency plan and funds for the LoP programme. 2024 planned national elections. The Contingency fund should be able to deal with election or post-election conflict /violence, GBV, displacements, and the need for evacuation of field mission staff should the risk arise.
10. **Enhance Dignity Kits, Sexual and Reproductive Health Services:** The need for hygiene dignity kits for girls, and GBV response kits for caseworkers /PFPs should be enhanced subject to the availability of budget resources.
11. **Mentoring of Women Political Leaders:** Beyond capacity training on WPS, there is a need for mentoring, and providing resources (direct or indirectly) or support resource mobilization for aspiring women political leaders- This will significantly enhance the probability of women's election and inclusion in governance, and policy formulation on UNSCR 1325 agenda.
12. **Scale up initiatives that are producing results:** Initiatives such as Champions of Change that incorporate men and boys should be scaled.
13. **Peace Task Forces:** AMA's success with peace task force committees in Unity and Lakes should be adopted to the other LoP regions.

Recommendations for Policy Makers /Government

1. **Full Enforcement of NAP 2:** The NAP2 provided mechanisms for enhancing the enforcement of the components of UNSCR 1325 (such as anti-GBV initiatives, legal framework, and resource mobilization for enhancing enforcement of peace agreements
2. **Review Political Parties Framework inclusion of women** in political leadership positions at partly levels (national and state)
3. **Enforce Rights to Girls Education:** This should include banning child marriage, and enforcement of the Child Act of 2011.
4. **Security and Stability:** Enhance security in communities through adequate policing to ensure the safety and protection of women and girls.
5. **Conducive Humanitarian Environment:** Create a conducive environment that enhances mutual support, dialogue, accountability and transparency over development partners' humanitarian resources.

Recommendations to the Donor, INGOs, UN Agencies, and UNSCR 1325 Gatekeepers

1. **Phase LoP Programme Funding:** Social Change programs like LoP should be implemented in phases. Behaviour, attitudes, and engrained harmful cultural norms and practises are hardly changed in a transformative manner in a single funding phase.
2. **High-Level Advocacy:** Continue providing high-level advocacy at the international level, and in change conferences by enabling women leaders and champions of change at the national, state and grassroots levels to engage and learn – this could be realised through the funding or direct facilitation of these components.
3. **Technical Skills Secondment:** Secondment of high-level technical skill technicians could also mitigate the challenge of capacity limitation and resource gaps.

Part B: Partnership and Collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Mid Term Review of Leaders of Peace, an assessment was conducted of the collaboration within the Leaders of Peace partnership. An online survey by a team at Plan International in the Netherlands between February and July 2023 identified [enabling and disabling dimensions for collaboration within the partnership](#) and assessed [decision-making power dynamics](#). In August 2023, the Leaders of Peace Programme Committee reflected on the survey outcomes. This chapter captures the outcomes of the partnership assessment as derived from the survey and participatory reflection meetings.

1.1 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework for the assessment of enabling and disabling partnership dimensions was developed building on extensive (action and empirical) research and organisational network theory that indicates that successful partnerships across sectors and (cultural) contexts have key characteristics in common. In the Brokering Better Partnerships Handbook, these critical success factors are grouped into four partnership dimensions: efficiency & effectiveness; approach; attitudes & competencies; and results & productivity. The research team added a fifth one to do justice to the essential role of resources & funding in partnerships, as underlined by a study by branch organisation Partos in 2022.

To assess power relations within the partnership, elements of the Partos Power Awareness Tool were integrated in the survey. This tool focuses on decision-making as the gauge of power dynamics. The survey asks respondents to assess the level of participation of their organisation in decision-making throughout the partnership cycle. It provides insight in the distribution and dynamics of power and enables comparison of decision-making power of global North and global South partners, INGOs and local NGOs - where She Leads aspires to shift power in accordance with its shared principle of Leading from the South.

More information on the partnership dimensions and cycles is included in Annex I of this report.

1.2 Survey design, sampling and analysis

The survey recorded key attributes of respondents and their organisations; their agreement with statements capturing the indicators of the partnership dimensions; and their perception of their organisation's participation in specified decision-making items. It also included open questions and questions on interactions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in South Sudan. Out of 38 individuals representing organisations involved at the global (consortium), national (country) and sub-national (district, province or community) levels of the consortium, 20 (53%) successfully completed the survey. Only employees and organisations with a contractual relationship were targeted. The survey was administered using Kobo Toolbox. SPSS and Stata were used for descriptive analysis, and Atlas.ti for the analysis of qualitative information.

2. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

2.1 Assumptions

Although the conceptual framework is grounded in research, it has not (yet) been scientifically tested. In fact, current literature on organisational networks does not provide for a comprehensive model for the evaluation of partnerships. The assumption is nevertheless that the conceptual framework is relevant for Leaders of Peace, and that it will feed new insights, reflection and actionable recommendations. Secondly, an implicit assumption is that respondents are willing and able to provide valid information even though some questions presuppose insight in organisational matters. It is assumed that they feel free to respond without reticence, in the survey as well as during reflection.

With regards to the power analysis, it is assumed that relationships between Northern based (I)NGOs and Southern based (I)NGOs in the partnership are characterised by power imbalances, and that the North – South divide is more decisive than organisational size or accountability relations. Finally, it is assumed that if partners have a better understanding of power dynamics, they will work towards shifting power in line with their shared principles. In some cases, institutional level power dimensions are at play that are beyond the direct influence of the respondents or their organisations.

2.2 Limitations

The limited relative (53%) and absolute (20) size of the survey sample calls for caution in the interpretation of findings and the drawing of conclusions, especially on subsets of the sample, including respondents with specific roles and positions in the partnership. Limited sample size also made it all the more important to ensure anonymity and avoid traceability to individual persons. As a result, not all potentially relevant relationships could be explored.

The survey moreover captures respondents' perceptions and experiences; not factual information or formal positions. Misinterpretation of concepts, statements or scores may occur, especially for the dimension of resources & funding, where statements were posed negatively (as opposed to the other dimensions). A final limitation is formed by the fact that the perspectives of girls-led and young women-led groups are not included.

3. KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Description of respondents and their organisations

The majority of respondents (60%, N=12) identifies as female. The modal age group is 35-44 years (35%, N=7), with one young respondent in the 18-24 age group. A good deal (40%, N=8) is active in more than one position in the partnership. Considering their primary roles (the role in which most of the time working for the partnership is spent), 35% (N=7) form part of the programme committee or steering committee/board of directors of the partnership, representing organisations signatory to the partnership agreement. Furthermore, 20% (N=4) form part of the network of implementing organisations; 15% (N=3) are engaged with coordination of the partnership; and 10% (N=2) are member of a technical working group, focusing on PME, finance or (external) communications. Among the respondents were moreover 3 (15%) representatives of strategic partners (the MFA and/or Embassy).

The vast majority of respondents (70%, N=14) has been involved in Leaders of Peace for more than one and a half year (70%, N=14). The rest joined later after the start of the programme in 2021. Leaders of Peace is a (near) full-time job for two (20%) respondents; 40% (N=8) spends more than half of their working time on the partnership. For another 40% (N=8), work for Leaders of Peace fills less than half of their days; two of them (20%) are only occasionally involved.

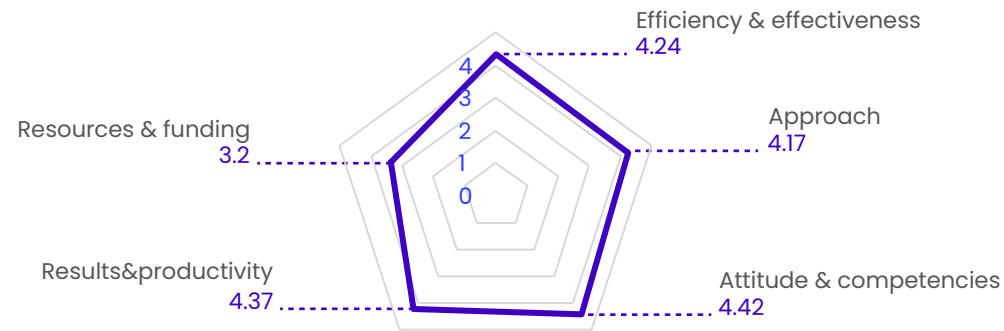
By far most respondents (80%, N=16) work for an organisation based in South Sudan. The largest group of these (40%, N=8) works for an organisation that form part of an umbrella organisation with a head office in the Global North (i.e. Plan International or Healthnet TPO). Overall, 3 respondents (15%) work for an NGO that does not form part of a larger international organisation (i.e. AMA, EVE or Pax). This may indicate underrepresentation of respondents associated with three out of five member organisations of the partnership in the survey.

3.2 Results and discussion per partnership dimension

The survey outcomes indicate that all dimensions of the partnership as outlined above have an enabling influence on collaboration within She Leads. Highest enabling dimension is [Attitudes & competencies](#) (4.47 on a constructed scale from 1 to 5). Least enabling dimension is [Resources & funding](#) (3.37).

With an average score of 4.35, the dimension of [Efficiency and effectiveness](#) can be considered as highly enabling for collaboration. Respondents have a clear vision of what Leaders of Peace stands for and aims to achieve, and they are well aware of their roles and of what is expected from them. Senior management of the organisations involved is seen to appreciate She Leads as an important partnership, and to support their staff in their work for it.

Dimension scores



Responses are less pronouncedly positive about processes for decision-making and conflict resolution. There is some need for more information on progress of the programme, but joint annual planning workshops, joint development of tools, reflection exercises, webinars, regular network and working group meetings are overall mentioned as helpful practices. Still, bureaucracy is more than once mentioned as an obstacle to effective collaboration. This is especially true for internal bureaucracy, which has affected transfer of funding from consortium organisations to their implementing partners – with due consequences for program implementation and organisational processes.

Coordination and communication are generally considered as effective. There is nevertheless a balance to strike, as some have experienced too many meetings as an unhelpful practice, especially where organisations felt they had to invest time beyond what they had budgeted for through the programme. This seems to be related to the start-up phase of the program notably, whereas others have flagged a lack of communication in later phases of the program. Effectiveness of joint meetings could be enhanced further with due participation of all partners – which is sometimes hampered by connectivity issues.

Decision-making, conflict resolution and other collaborative mechanisms are important preconditions for transparency and mutual accountability. Nor surprisingly, respondents are slightly reticent when it comes to mutual feedback on performance within Leaders of Peace. Mutual accountability is not perceived as self-evident in the partnership.

The approach to collaboration within the partnership was scored slightly lower (4.26) but is still considered as highly enabling. Respondents' inputs and opinions are respected and taken into consideration. This is at the same time identified as an important need for collaboration. Respondents generally feel that others understand what their organisation brings to the partnership. There's slightly less confidence that the way organisations work is fully understood by others, and that the strengths and expertise of organisations are well utilised in the partnership. More insight in each other's' expertise would help getting more out of the collaboration. This is especially true for grassroots and smaller organisations in their collaboration with INGOs within Leaders of Peace, who sometimes feel that they are met with unrealistically high expectations. Nevertheless, the structure of the partnership is appreciated for promoting local ownership, as most coordination is done at the country level (rather than at the level of the headquarters or Northern offices of the organisations involved). Although this structure is also seen as 'heavy' and resource intensive (in combination with the coordination tasks assigned in the Netherlands), multiple comments argue in its favour.

The highest enabling effects (4.47) come from **Attitudes and competencies** of the people involved. There are strong indications of engagement, commitment and contribution. Goals and vision of the partnership align well with those of the participating organisations and also resonate, inspire and motivate at individual level. Respondents generally experience a sense of belonging and they enjoy discussing Leaders of Peace with outsiders. They are readily prepared to share new and relevant information with others in the partnership, yet full and visible recognition of the work put in to Leaders of Peace is also considered important – which is consistent with observations that the precedence of organisational interests is sometimes hampering collaborative efforts. Some respondents indicate that a stronger 'partnership mindset' would further boost collaboration.

The survey moreover suggests that the people engaged in Leaders of Peace are generally well placed for working in partnerships. Most respondents feel that they have the right skills and knowledge to perform their role(s) in the partnership, although some express a desire for more support, e.g. on report writing skills. Some respondents also see challenges at the level of organisational capacities. A good deal of respondents prefers settings that are more typically associated with working in single organisations contexts, with strict adherence to set roles and responsibilities, but a majority prefers working in environments that foster creativity and flexibility, which is typically considered an advantage for working in partnerships.

Within Leaders of Peace, a basic level of trust is experienced. Respondents report that they generally know what to expect from the other organisations. There is however some reservation as to whether organisations are open and transparent about their participation and investments in the partnership. Sharing information about budgets and mechanisms for budget allocation could support transparency and mutual understanding, make reservations about unequal division of budgets subject to dialogue and discussion, and moderate unrealistic expectations.

With a slightly lower score (4.26), the **Results and productivity** dimension can also still be considered as a highly enabling influence on collaboration. Respondents agree that through joint advocacy and a common voice, Leaders of Peace helps organisations to realise wider impact and influence than they would on their own. They also feel that Leaders of Peace helps their organisations to achieve their organisational level goals, and that it brings their organisations new opportunities and benefits. The survey reflects an overall feeling that Leaders of Peace is likely to succeed in achieving its objectives.

The survey moreover indicates that Leaders of Peace is also seen as bringing benefits and opportunities for those who work in the partnership, which is in line with the finding that the vast majority (95%, N=19) feels that Leaders of Peace makes their work more satisfying or pleasant. Still, working in partnerships can also make work more complicated and/or troublesome add to stress, as testified by 1 respondent (5%). The quantitative data shows that work in Leaders of Peace often demands more time than people have available. This seems to be especially true for colleagues from smaller organisations. Even with optimal coordination and highly effective collaborative mechanisms, working in partnerships requires an investment in time and (human and financial) resources. Transparency about these and other expectations can help organisations to plan and budget accordingly and at the same time foster mutual accountability.

The least enabling elements are related to **Resources and funding**. With an average score of 3.37, this dimension is still considered a moderately enabling influence on collaboration, but positive effects are clearly weaker. Respondents are most outspoken about the activity budget and the overhead costs

available for their organisations. The budgets that organisations receive through the partnership are often seen as insufficient for the activities they are expected to implement, as reflected in multiple comments. Budgets are also seen as inadequate to cover the costs of maintaining the organisational (infra)structure or the actual hours that staff spend on the partnership. Reference is repeatedly made to differences in budgets between organisations within the partnership.

Funding arrangements within Leaders of Peace (including monitoring and reporting requirements, and processes and procedures around transfers and receipt of funding) are generally clear. Even though the survey indicates that these do not particularly strain or restrict organisations' business operations, internal bureaucracy is repeatedly mentioned as an unhelpful practice. Overall, respondents do not perceive participation in Leaders of Peace as a particularly heavy burden on their organisation's available (human) resources. However, relaxation of reporting requirements – especially IATI – would be welcomed as this would free up time and other resources for implementation and collaboration.

Comparing scores for personal and organisational attributes

Given the small sample size of the survey for the Leaders of Peace partnership, it is not possible to make substantiated statements about the role of individual and organisational attributes. Some interesting observations can be made however. First of all, respondents representing organisations based in South Sudan (N=16) score higher on all dimensions including Finances & resources. The geographical distance of the respondents based in the Netherlands may negatively affect their perceptions of the partnership. The assumption that Southern partners experience heavier burdens from funding terms and lack of funding for program activities and ICR deserves further investigation.

Secondly, respondents who spend only a small portion of their working time on the partnership score consistently lower on all dimensions. They experience fewer enabling effects across all dimensions than those who are (timewise) more involved in the partnership. These respondents are also by nature of their positions in the partnership more intensively involved in collaboration and dynamics between different organisations. This seems to reinforce arguments by respondents that interaction and the practice of actually spending time working together fosters collaborative mindsets, results and productivity.

3.3. Results and discussion on decision-making power

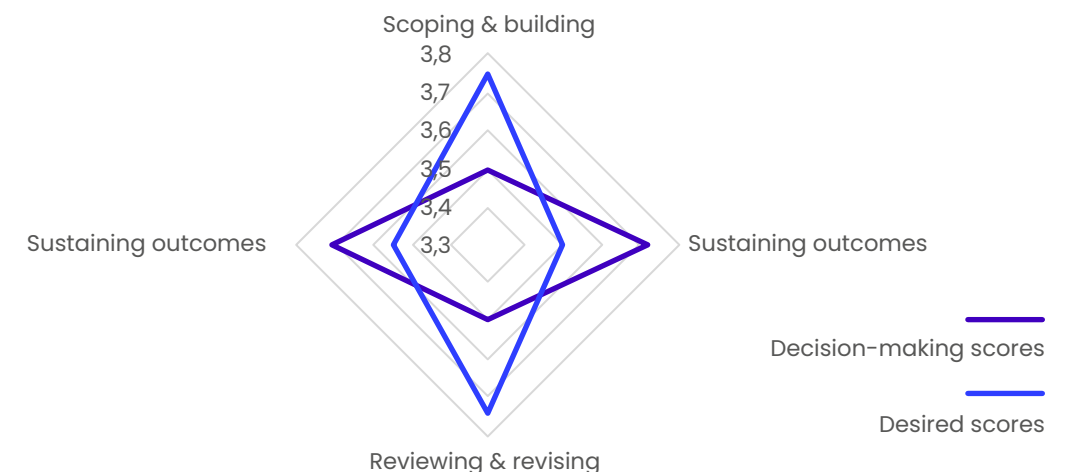
Differences in decision-making power are most pronounced for the scoping & building phase, where potential partners are identified, mapping and planning takes place and (formal) partnership agreements are concluded. The largest group of respondents (15%, N=3) reports that their organisation was consulted before a decision was made. Others were only informed afterwards, whereas only one respondent (5%) felt that their organisation actually decided on these matters. Overall, perceived participation in decision-making was relatively low during this stage, just as during the stage of reviewing and revising, when decisions are made about measuring results and partners revisit and revise their partnership. Decision-making appears more balanced in the stages of managing & maintaining the partnership, when decisions on governance and structures are made, and in the stage of sustaining outcomes. More respondents indicated that their organisations are actively involved in decision-making during these stages.

Decision-making power per partnership stage



Apart from the actual level of participation in decision-making, the survey also assessed the desired level of participation in decision-making. Overall, respondents desire greater involvement in decision-making for their organisations when it comes to scoping and building the partnership, and with regards to reviewing and revising the partnership. Participation in decision-making is deemed less relevant for organisations when it comes to managing and maintaining the partnership, and to reviewing and revising. It should be noted however that the differences between the actual perceived and desired decision-making power are small in all stages, with scores varying between 3,4 and 3,8.

Decision-making power throughout the partnering cycle



Comparing scores for personal and organisational attributes

Respondents representing partners from the Global North (60%, N=12) – in this case The Netherlands – consistently assess their organisations' participation in decision-making higher than respondents representing partners from the Global South (40%, N=8) – in this case South Sudan. This holds for all respondents who are based in South Sudan, whether they work for a local NGO or for an (Northern-based) INGO. The difference is most notable for the managing & maintaining and sustaining outcomes stages, but the

overall lowest level of decision-making power is experienced by partners from South Sudan concerning matters around the scoping and building of the partnership. This is consistent with findings from other strategic partnerships under the strengthening civil society framework with a structure similar to Leaders of Peace that implementing organisations have not been involved in the selection of organisations with which they are expected to collaborate.

Respondents involved in diplomacy experience lower levels of participation in decision-making than respondents involved in research, coordination, lobby and advocacy, and strengthening CSOs, except for the scoping and building phase. In all stages of the partnership cycle, respondents representing external or strategic partners experience lower decision-making power than respondents with other roles or positions in the partnership. This is probably an indication that representatives of the MFA and embassy operate at a relative distance of program implementation and are not directly involved in daily operations.

3.4 Reflections on interactions with the MFA and embassies

One quarter of the respondents (N=5) had, at the time of the survey, never been in contact with the MFA or embassy in South Sudan. Another quarter (N=5) had interacted only once or twice. A small number of respondents (15%, N=3) interacts with the MFA or embassy on a regular basis (once per month or more often). The interactions were appreciated with an average 7,5 on a scale from 1 (highly unsatisfactory) to 10 (highly satisfactory). However, 10% (N=5) rate their contacts with the MFA or embassies as unsatisfactory (5 or lower).

In terms of content of the interactions, most respondents' contacts with the MFA and/or RNE are mainly about exchange of information (47%, N=6) and receiving information (also 47%, N=6). These are followed by coordination with other partnerships (39%, N=5), providing information (31%, N=4) and strategic discussions (31%, N=4).

3.5 Conclusions

Based on the survey findings, it can be concluded that the Leaders of Peace consortium is experienced as a valuable partnership. The work in Leaders of Peace contributes not only to the joint goals and vision, but also to those of the organisations and individuals involved. Being part of the partnership generally contributes to a higher satisfaction and pleasant experience in people's work, although the amount of meetings has been experienced as burdensome by some, especially in the beginning of the partnership. Roles and responsibilities are generally clear, but more clarity about what is expected of organisations in terms of participation and contribution in joint planning, coordination and alignment could further strengthen the collaboration.

Country-level coordination and communication within Leaders of Peace is well appreciated, and there is an overall feeling that the quality of collaboration has grown over time. Regular meetings, joint planning and joint activities are key elements that contribute to the collaboration in Leaders of Peace. Appreciation of personal opinions and values is also identified as important for collaboration. Generally, people's opinions are valued and taken into account, and one feels appreciated as being part of Leaders of Peace.

However, further fostering of these aspects could bring additional strength to the partnership. More exchange of information could support the functioning of collaborative mechanisms and contribute to greater transparency, mutual accountability and realistic expectations of what organisations can and cannot bring to the partnership. This includes exchange on specific expertise of partner organisations, openness on budgets and other resources, and insight in mechanisms for budget allocation throughout the partnership. Internal bureaucracy has been experienced as cumbersome, to the point that it has affected transfer of funding within the partnership at one or more occasions. The division and availability of budget and other resources does not have a very strong positive effect on the collaboration. According to the survey, budgets are insufficient to cover the costs of planned activities or overhead – even activity planning is done at the level of each organisation. The significant differences in budgets that organisations receive through the partnership provide a basis for feelings of inequality and unfairness. Finally, there is also some desire to have more equal decision-making power and involvement throughout the partnership cycle, especially on scoping and building the partnership, and on reviewing and revising it.

Below, we will answer the key questions the partnership assessment set out to address:

1. Which partnership dimensions have an enabling effect on the partnership?

All dimensions seem to have an enabling effect. The most enabling dimension is Attitude & competencies. People involved in the partnership have the necessary knowledge and skills and there is evidence of personal and organisational commitment, engagement and contribution. There is a basic level of trust, that could be further strengthened. Goals and vision of Leaders of Peace are well aligned with those of the organisations involved.

2. Which partnership dimensions have a disabling effect on the partnership?

No dimensions seem to have a disabling effect. However, the least enabling dimension is Resources & funding. Although funding arrangements are generally clear, there are concerns that budgets are insufficient to cover the costs of implementation of activities and of overhead.

3. How do enabling dimensions differ for people and organisations in the partnership?

Although substantiated statements are difficult to make due to the small sample size, respondents who are less directly involved in daily management and implementation of the partnership – because of their geographical location, the nature of their role and position in the partnership and/or the time they spend working on the partnership – score consistently lower for all partnership dimensions than respondents who are more directly involved.

4. How does decision-making power differ during different stages of the partnering cycle?

Partners feel like they are at least consulted throughout the entire partnering cycle. Overall, the biggest differences in decision-making power occur in the scoping and building phase and the reviewing and revising phase. Desire for more equal decision-making is most outspoken for these phases. Most equal decision-making is experienced with regards to managing and maintaining the partnership.

5. How does decision-making power differ for people organisations in the partnership?

Decisions about starting the partnership, partner selection and terms of the programme implementation are more led by the Dutch partners. Respondents based in South Sudan consistently assess their organisations' participation in decision-making lower than respondents representing partners from the Netherlands.

6. Interactions with the MFA and embassies

Across the partnership, there is not much interaction with the MFA or the embassy in South Sudan. Most probably, the consortium coordinator and/or compliance officer in the Netherlands are the only ones with regular contact with the MFA, with the coordinator in South Sudan interacting somewhat regularly with the embassy in the context of the partnership.

Most interactions focus on exchanging and receiving information and on coordination with other partnerships. Interaction with the embassy is generally seen as an opportunity, but due to the lack of interaction, partners find it difficult to substantiate and deepen this engagement. There is a general desire for more (effective) contact, which could also enhance the flexibility and quality of the interactions.

4. (ACTIONABLE) RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on analysis of the survey outcomes and respondents' qualitative comments, a number of tentative recommendations and areas for further discussion can be identified to further strengthen partnership collaboration in 2024 - 2025:

- Strengthen channels for internal communication and mechanisms for exchange of information and reflection, including on processes of budget allocation and challenges in program implementation and resourcing. A climate of openness and transparency will foster mutual accountability, realistic expectations and joint solutions to common challenges and divergent interests.
- Continued support and attention for equal participation and mutual respect, acknowledgement of every person's and organisation's added value. It is essential that roles and responsibilities and the expectations of each organisation's participation in coordination and other joint activities are clear.
- Invest in expanding possibilities to plan and implement joint activities. This capitalises on existing engagement and commitment, and will further strengthen these.
- Minimise internal bureaucracy to avoid delays in transfer of funding in the partnership, foster flexibility and facilitate integration of resources for the implementation of activities towards joint objectives.
- More frequent interactions with the MFA and embassy to bring more clarity in the role of these strategic partners. It would also strengthen their engagement and encourage more dialogue and exchange of information. Nevertheless, there is a balance to keep, and a need to develop clear agendas and guidelines for meetings.

ANNEX I: A REVIEW OF BASELINE RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

The following is the review of baseline recommendations and the extent to which LoP partners have implemented the recommendations.

S/N	Baseline Recommendations	Status	Comments
1	Support and Capacity Building for ABC Courts particularly training on legal provisions for GBV and gender crimes	Implemented	More than 150 ABC court chiefs have been trained on the UNDP GBV pocket guide, Human rights, Gender Equality, GBV case handling and management. However, if the project resources allow, this needs to be scaled since the 5 States have more ABC Courts not yet capacitated. Since the effectiveness of capacity strengthening is not determined by one-off training, more refresher training should be provided to help measure the effect of the training and attitude and behavior change on the same
2	Conduct capacity strengthening and training CBOs/ CSOs profiled under this baseline assessment on WPS, UNSCR 1325, GBV as a way of enhancing grassroots level interventions	Implemented to a large extent	The LoP partners have onboarded 16 CSOs/CBOs from each state (as highlighted in section 4.6.1). Most of these CSOs/CBOs have undergone onboarding capacity assessment, including training in financial reporting, GBV case management and referral, resource mobilization, safeguarding, GBV and MHPSS. There is a need for annual refreshers for these local CSOs/CBOs to take stock of the level of capacity 2 years after being onboarded. There is still a vast need for other CSOs/CBOs. Community groups working the GBV, UNSCR 1325 WPS agenda space, who have limited capacity (staff, space, financial resources) to effectively advocate for the WPS agenda beyond this project.
3	Build institutional capacity of the formal legal system by training local leaders, prosecutors, judges, and security services on statutory law, and training women police and judges.	Partially implemented	This has been mainly implemented in Lakes and Unity where AMA is implementing. For the other regions, training of police officers, local traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders Champions of Change has been conducted.
4	Prioritize psychosocial support programs for survivors of GBV and conflict-related gender crimes	Implemented to a Moderate Extent	Some of the GBV survivors who have been identified for PSS have received dignity kits, protection money food and shelter. However, this component is still very limited within the LoP support initiatives under PSS. For the remaining LoP programme implementation period, if the available funds permit budget adjustment, it is important to have PSS enhanced, particularly dignity kits, shelter and protection services.
5	Invest in specific programs targeting the unique needs of adolescent girls, including sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and the distribution of dignity kits, which provide feminine hygiene products and other necessary materials to women and girls of reproductive age.	Implemented to a limited extent	sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and the distribution of dignity kits to adolescent girls in need was not the main focus of the LoP programme, however, to enhance the dignity of women and girls, and to promote confidence and desire for girls poor and vulnerable communities to continue with school, it is important that LoP programme relooks at this component. Access to better education for girls in conflict, displacement, and vulnerable communities are better realized with sexual and reproductive health (SRH), Menstrual hygiene kits, and training
6	Conduct public forums and awareness on negative effects of GBV, and gender equality including various forms of GBV, early/forced marriage, girl child education, women's health, and women's leadership as well as GBV mitigation and protection issues and response mechanisms.	Implemented to a large extent	All 5 project states have conducted Conduct public forums and awareness on negative effects of GBV, and gender equality including various forms of GBV, early/forced marriage, girl child education, women's health, and women's leadership as well as GBV mitigation and protection issues and response mechanisms. But since the regions are vast, remote areas have not benefited much from this awareness- which requires targeted scaling to reach these places.
7	There is a need to conduct capacity building for state actors, CSOs/CBOs, women and youth associations on GBV data collection, management, and sharing.	Implemented to a large extent	Various youth groups including COC groups have been onboarded and trained on GBV interventions, protection, prevention, Human rights, and being champions of change for their community, and leading advocacy efforts to eliminate the harmful practice. However, a lot more targeting of youth and local CSOs for enhanced capacity in needed. Probably this could be considered in future phases of LoP due to limited budgeted funds under the current programme. There is also limited financial resources available to CSOs/CBOs causing high employee turnover, which could in the long run erodes
8	There is a need to enhance support for both state and non-state actors in promoting awareness of existing laws, legal rights, and remedies.	Implemented to a limited extent	PFP, Community based MHPSS have little facilitation that follow after they have received capacity building and PSS kits. Due to vast coverage (in KMs) it limits the effectiveness of PFP, Community based MHPSS, and other state actors to respond to all emerging case of GBV and violence
9	Provide support and mentorship support programmes and training to women parliamentarian forums.	Implemented to a moderate extent	Lop Partners have been implementing "takeover "and mentorship programmes for girls, including internship training programmes, placement, leadership training and induction, international conferences, children parliament debates etc. But this has been done in Yambio, Magwi, Terekeka (Mostly) with few girls and schools benefiting. The need is vast, and any efforts to scale these initiatives will go a long way in enhancing LoP programme outcomes.
10	Support the training of paralegals, community health workers, GBV community-based support mechanisms, and counselors on psychosocial support services.	Implemented to a moderate extent	Training of community health workers, GBV community-based support mechanisms, and counselors on psychosocial support services has been done in all regions, but very limited focus has been done to reach and train more paralegals. This can be looked into by all partners to scale paralegal training efforts
11	Provide training to community leaders and elders, and fathers/ husbands on the importance of girls/women's rights and safety, and access to education.	Implemented to a large extent	LoP partners have incorporated training and awareness targeting community leaders and elders, and fathers/husbands on the importance of girls/women's rights and safety, and access to education. Couple, youth, men and boys, have also been incorporated and targeted. However, as indicated, patriarchal attitudes and behaviors take long to break. Sensitization and awareness creation in the first phase that requires follow up to document whether there are any changes in this behaviors and attitudes. More so, many communities, fathers, leaders have not yet been reached dur to the vast need and geographical scale of South Sudan communities.
12	Build the capacity of women groups, activists, and leaders to effectively advocate and champion for GE and inclusion of women and girls in decision-making processes, and socioeconomic development	Implemented to a moderate extent	The programme has targeted women leaders, women led organizations and provided capacity building to effectively advocate and champion for GE and inclusion of women and girls in decision-making processes, and socioeconomic development. This is a good start. There is need to incorporate periodic mentorship initiatives that brings together experienced women leaders to mentor upcoming leaders. Mentorship and training for political leadership is still limited
13	There is a need to establish gender desks in all police stations and units to support and encourage GBV survivors to report violence cases and incidences.	Implemented to little extent	Gender desks have been established in few but not all police stations in LoP implementation regions. Partly due to financial constraints. However, training of some police on gender and GBV case handling has been implemented, but still limited compared to number of police and police stations that would require this capacity support.

ANNEX II: DIMENSIONS OF PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

Partnership Dimensions and Distribution of power throughout the partnership cycle

A. Partnership Dimensions

1. **Efficiency & Effectiveness:** organisations and their representatives in successful partnerships have a clear and shared vision of the partnership's objectives and values. They are also clear about their roles. A feeling of mutual accountability, mechanisms for regular performance review, and appropriate communication channels and mechanisms for information exchange ensure that partners hold each other to account. Buy-in of senior management enables the mobilisation of resources for the partnership. Systems for collaboration (decision-making, reflection, conflict resolution, accountability) ensure that these resources are integrated towards (joint) outputs that contribute to the partnership outcomes.
2. **Approach:** in successful partnerships, partners understand and acknowledge what each partner brings to the collaboration and appreciate that each organisation works in its own unique way. Good use is being made of individual and organisational expertise, and there is conscious and deliberate incorporation of specific strengths that organisations bring. Partners have a genuine voice at the table and their contributions, views and opinions are respected.
3. **Attitude & competencies:** partnerships are more successful if there is tangible evidence of each individual's and each organisation's engagement, commitment and contribution. A basic level of trust is presupposed for collaboration mindsets to come out and for commitment and contribution to evolve. Partnership success is moreover more likely if the individuals in the partnership have the (technical and strategic) knowledge and skill sets that enable them to perform in the partnership.
4. **Results & productivity:** successful partnerships help the constituent organisations to achieve their own (organizational level) goals and add value to each organisation and individual involved. They moreover have the '1 + 1 = 3' effect; through joint advocacy and a common voice, the partnership is achieving wider impact and influence than each individual organization on its own. In successful partnerships, those involved consider it very likely that the partnership will realize its shared objectives.
5. **Resources & funding:** the availability of sufficient (financial) resources for each partner to participate in the partnership is a precondition for success of the partnership. A lack of (access to) financial resources sabotages the mobilisation of resources for (joint) outputs and outcomes, it undermines the necessary mutual understanding, appreciation and respect, and it inhibits organisational commitment, engagement and contribution. This dimension includes coverage of overhead costs, terms of and access to funding.

B. Assessing distribution of power throughout the partnership cycle.

In line with the Partos Power Awareness Tool, the partnership assessment distinguishes four main stages of the partnership cycle. In the (1) [Scoping & building stage](#), the needs and options of the partnership are determined, and potential partners are identified. Relationships with and between partners are built, and initial mapping and planning takes place. This phase usually ends in a (formal) partnership agreement. During (2) [Managing & maintaining](#), partners decide on governance and structures, and deepen key engagements. Also in this phase, the organisations that form the partnership start the delivery of projects and (joint) activities. The phase of (3) [Reviewing & revising](#) is all about measuring results and reviewing efficiency and value. In this phase, partners revisit and revise their partnership. In the phase of (4) [Sustaining](#) outcomes, important decisions are made on the sharing of knowledge and experience, on scaling and increasing impact, and on the future of the partnership.

ANNEX III: OTHER TABLES AND FIGURES

This Tables and Figures could not be placed in the main report for purposes of avoiding a bulky report. The Tables and Figures have been annexed here for LoP partners to analyze further and extract any relevant data or information.

Table 14: Marriage Status by Age

Marital Status	Age of Participant	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Lakes	Unity	Western Equatoria	Grand total
Widow(er)	20 - 25	2 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.5%)	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.9%)	7 (1.4%)
	> 25 (Adults)	1 (0.9%)	5 (4.6%)	5 (5.8%)	4 (3.7%)	5 (4.6%)	20 (3.9%)
Young unmarried	11 - 15	10 (9.3%)	15 (13.8%)	5 (5.8%)	11 (10.3%)	10 (9.3%)	51 (9.8%)
	16 - 20	4 (3.7%)	27 (24.8%)	10 (11.6%)	10 (9.3%)	24 (22.2%)	75 (14.5%)
	20 - 25	9 (8.3%)	1 (0.9%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (1.9%)	9 (8.3%)	22 (4.2%)
Single adult	11 - 15	2 (1.9%)	1 (0.9%)	9 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (2.3%)
	16 - 20	5 (4.6%)	7 (6.4%)	5 (5.8%)	6 (5.6%)	4 (3.7%)	27 (5.2%)
	20 - 25	11 (10.2%)	4 (3.7%)	5 (5.8%)	4 (3.7%)	5 (4.6%)	29 (5.6%)
	> 25 (Adults)	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.9%)	2 (2.3%)	3 (2.8%)	5 (4.6%)	12 (2.3%)
Married	11 - 15	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.3%)	1 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.6%)
	16 - 20	10 (9.3%)	10 (9.2%)	10 (11.6%)	1 (0.9%)	7 (6.5%)	38 (7.3%)
	20 - 25	32 (29.6%)	12 (11.0%)	12 (14.0%)	25 (23.4%)	18 (16.7%)	99 (19.1%)
	> 25 (Adults)	17 (15.7%)	22 (20.2%)	16 (18.6%)	31 (29.0%)	11 (10.2%)	97 (18.7%)
Divorced	16 - 20	2 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.4%)
	20 - 25	2 (1.9%)	2 (1.8%)	1 (1.2%)	5 (4.7%)	1 (0.9%)	11 (2.1%)
	> 25 (Adults)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.8%)	8 (7.4%)	13 (2.5%)
Grand total		108 (100.0%)	109 (100.0%)	86 (100.0%)	107 (100.0%)	108 (100.0%)	518 (100.0%)

Table 15: Type of Violence By Survivors Age

Age of Participant	Type of Abuse	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Lakes	Unity	Western Equatoria	Grand Total
11 - 15	Insults and Verbal Abuses	9 (24%)	9 (24.3%)	11 (30%)	2 (5.4%)	6 (16.2%)	37
16 - 20		18 (25%)	27 (37.5%)	11 (15%)	2 (2.8%)	14 (19.4%)	72
20 - 25		54 (52.9%)	7 (6.9%)	11 (11%)	8 (8%)	22 (22%)	102
> 25 (Adults)		18 (31.6%)	18 (31.6%)	7 (12.3%)	5 (8.8%)	9 (15.8%)	57

Age of Participant	Type of Abuse	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Lakes	Unity	Western Equatoria	Grand Total
11 - 15	Physical Beating by family members	9 (22.0%)	12 (29.3%)	10 (24%)	3 (7.3%)	7 (17.1%)	4
16 - 20		17 (23.3%)	25 (34.2%)	13 (17.8%)	6 (8.2%)	12 (16.4%)	73
20 - 25		44 (56%)	6 (7.6%)	7 (8.9%)	9 (11%)	13 (16.5%)	79
> 25 (Adults)		13 (27.1%)	13 (27.1%)	2 (4.2%)	11 (23%)	9 (18.8%)	48
11 - 15	Physical Beating by Husband/ boyfriend	11 (64.7%)	2 (11.8%)	1 (5.9%)	1 (5.9%)	2 (11.8%)	17
16 - 20		17 (39.5%)	8 (18.6%)	7 (16.3%)	1 (2.3%)	10 (23.3%)	43
20 - 25		38 (52.8%)	3 (4.2%)	6 (8.3%)	8 (12%)	17 (23.6%)	72
> 25 (Adults)		14 (21.2%)	17 (25.8%)	9 (13.6%)	11 (17%)	15 (22.7%)	66
11 - 15	Slapping	8 (34.8%)	6 (26.1%)	2 (8.7%)	2 (9%)	5 (21.7%)	23
16 - 20		20 (39.2%)	14 (27.5%)	2 (3.9%)	6 (19%)	9 (17.6%)	51
20 - 25		49 (66.2%)	2 (2.7%)	5 (6.8%)	7 (9.5%)	11 (14.9%)	74
> 25 (Adults)		15 (31.3%)	10 (20.8%)	10 (21%)	5 (10%)	8 (17%)	48
11 - 15	Being hit with a fist	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (17%)	1 (16.7%)	6
16 - 20		9 (45.0%)	6 (30.0%)	2 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (15.0%)	20
20 - 25		12 (66.7%)	1 (5.6%)	2 (11.1%)	1 (5.6%)	2 (11.1%)	18
> 25 (Adults)		4 (33.3%)	7 (58.3%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12
11 - 15	Rape	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (29%)	2 (28.6%)	7
16 - 20		9 (45.0%)	6 (30.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (25.0%)	20
20 - 25		37 (86.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.3%)	1 (2.3%)	4 (9.3%)	43
> 25 (Adults)		11 (40.7%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	7 (26%)	5 (18.5%)	27
11 - 15	Kicked out of home with nowhere to go	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (42.9%)	7
16 - 20		8 (34.8%)	5 (21.7%)	4 (17.4%)	1 (4.3%)	5 (21.7%)	23
20 - 25		23 (71.9%)	3 (9.4%)	1 (3.1%)	1 (3.1%)	4 (12.5%)	32
> 25 (Adults)		4 (15.4%)	9 (34.6%)	3 (11.5%)	1 (3.8%)	9 (34.6%)	26
11 - 15	Deprived of Food/ shelter/clothing	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	6
16 - 20		3 (27.3%)	5 (45.5%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (18.2%)	11
20 - 25		12 (63.2%)	3 (15.8%)	2 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (10.5%)	19
> 25 (Adults)		2 (8.7%)	12 (52.2%)	6 (26.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (13.0%)	23
11-15	Others specify	1 (50%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0.0%)	2
16 -20		0 (0.)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (25.%)	2 (50.0%)	4
20 - 25		1 (20%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40%)	2 (40.0%)	5
> 25 (Adults)		1 (25.%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	4
Total		498 (40%)	244 (20%)	142 (12%)	107 (9%)	227 (19%)	1218

The Table Below presents the main perpetrators on violence.

Table 16: Main Perpetrators of GBV /Violence

Name of the State	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Lakes	Unity	Western Equatoria	Grand Total
Father	84 (18%)	41 (26%)	14 (16%)	37 (34%)	37 (18%)	213 (21%)
Husband	86 (18.6%)	40 (25.0%)	26 (29.5%)	37 (34%)	46 (23%)	235 (23%)
Brother	97 (21.0%)	28 (17.5%)	25 (28.4%)	17 (16%)	30 (15%)	197 (19%)
Close relative (Uncle, cousin)	62 (13.4%)	16 (10.0%)	10 (11.4%)	9 (8.3%)	24 (12%)	121 (12%)
Family Friend	63 (13.6%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (2.3%)	1 (0.9%)	18 (8.9%)	85 (8.3%)
Teachers from School	23 (5.0%)	13 (8.1%)	5 (5.7%)	1 (0.9%)	9 (4.5%)	51 (5.0%)
Local Authorities (Chief, Police, Military)	27 (5.8%)	2 (1.3%)	1 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (7.9%)	46 (4.5%)
Faither/Brother in-laws	19 (4.1%)	17 (10.6%)	4 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (8.4%)	57 (5.6%)
Other (Specify)	2 (0.4%)	2 (1.3%)	1 (1.1%)	6 (5.6%)	5 (2.5%)	16 (1.6%)
Total	463	160	88	108	202	1021

The Table Below presents the main causes of violence.

Table 17: Main Perpetrators of GBV /Violence

Name of the State	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Lakes	Unity	Western Equatoria	Total
Punishment for Mistake I made	18%	26%	31%	22%	30%	24%
Alcoholism by the abuser	22%	22%	11%	29%	15%	20%
Forced Marriage	17%	6%	12%	31%	8%	14%
I talked back /questioned the abuser	7%	7%	18%	2%	14%	9%
Being hit with a fist	5%	2%	6%	0%	2%	4%
I refused /rejected sexual advances	9%	6%	7%	6%	7%	8%
Abuser was on drugs	10%	11%	0%	4%	8%	8%
Abuser has a habit of anger and violence	7%	14%	9%	1%	7%	8%
No apparent reason	4%	5%	4%	0%	5%	4%
Other (Specify)	0%	0%	2%	5%	4%	1%

ANNEX IV: UPDATED RESULT FRAMEWORK (AT MTE)

LoP Result Area	Baseline	Midline	Qualitative Findings	Adaptations	
Result Area 1: Improved implementation of policies and regulations on GBV and protection of W/G including psychosocial support and self-care.					
1.0 Long term outcome	% W/G reporting improved feeling of safety and protection in targeted locations.	0 Not measured at baseline	35.5%	While there are pockets of areas where women and girls feel safe, such as regions with a strong security presence (like Juba), there are also significant concerns in Unity and Upper Nile prone to conflict and flood which exacerbates GBV and violence	More LoP projects focus of GBV prevention and conflict and peace training in these areas
1.1 Outcomes	# and description of advocacy initiatives carried out by user-groups, CBO's and CSOs, for, by or with their membership/constituency on the protection of women and girls' rights	0	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lakes State (Yirol East); CSOs: TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA).Central Equatoria (Terekeka); Engaged CSOs: Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment).Unity State (Panyijiar); Engaged CSOs: Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group.Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi & Nimule); Engaged CSOs: Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision WomenWestern Equatoria State (Yambio); Engaged CSOs: Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO).	There are common challenges such as limited funding and resource constraints. Adaptations: Training should include Resource Mobilization, Capacity Building, Documentation and Reporting
	# formal/traditional authorities (except government bodies) at all levels adhering to UNSCR 1325 and the provision of 35% women representation in RPA	0	28	28 groups had been engaged out of which 25 were gender aware (Lakes 6 groups, Central Equatoria 5 groups, Unity 6 group, Eastern Equatoria 11 groups)	
	Extent to which authorities take action to address GBV and protect the rights of survivors	Limited Extent	Limited extent but improving due to training by LoP. # of cases not documented	Formal and traditional authorities have a clear understanding of anti-GBV laws and legal frameworks, with all trained ABC court chiefs demonstrating a clear grasp of their mandates. There has been a discernible shift in the understanding and handling of GBV cases. There has been an improvement in the way the police are handling GBV cases, especially on confidentiality, and showing empathy and respect to survivors	Infrastructure deficits, notably the lack of shelters and proper sitting facilities, impede the handling of GBV cases, often necessitating hurried resolutions. This should be considered
	# of W/G using MHPSS services, including case management	0	57% (240) have access compared 38% (159) without access. 50 MHPSS service focal persons; 21 Survivor user groups; 38 W/G and handled a total of 76 cases out of which 15 cases were referred for further MHPSS attention, while 61 cases were solved.	In our findings, access, and use of MHPSS services is average (Moderate) in urban areas and very low in rural remote areas. The most sought-after medical service is treatment for physical injuries, while reproductive health care is the least sought-after medical	More data collection should be done during activity M&E to document exact number of women and girls who are benefiting from these services from each location. This data is currently not comprehensively documented.
	# of laws, policies and strategies implemented to promote women's meaningful participation and leadership in conflict prevention, peace- and state-building and protect women's and girls' rights in crisis and (post-) conflict situations.	Not measured at this stage	6	The transitional Constitution of 2011, the Penal Code of 2008 provide mechanisms for enforcing protections from GBV. However, the provisions within the legal frameworks are hardly implemented. The National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2015-2020), the Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) on Ending Child Marriages in South Sudan (2017-2030) an Child Act 2008	More focus should be placed on The National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2015-2020) to help each LoP state develop localized versions that can be tracked
1.2 Outputs	# community groups capacitated, resourced, and coached on PSS, legal protection services and lobby & advocacy on these topics	0	150 ABC court chiefs; 3 chiefs. 75 traditional authorities	Overall, access, and use of legal services are moderate (in urban settings) to very low (in rural settings), with the use of ABC courts being the most utilized, and the use of government court services least utilized.	
	# of members of community groups capacitated	0	453 - 98 (Legal advice from a lawyer/paralegal); 50 (Filling the case in Government Court); 51 (Representation in government Court); 170 (Representation ABC Courts); 61 (Out-of-Court Settlement); 23 (other legal services)	Overall, access, and use of legal services are moderate (in urban settings) to very low (in rural settings), with the use of ABC courts being the most utilized, and the use of government court services least utilized.	Focus on refresher training, following on local community groups, paralegals and community local action groups to enhance awareness and continues support to the local communities.
	# case workers provide trained in age (children / adult), gender-appropriate PSS, GBV, legal protection information and are suitable to cultural context	0	50 MHPSS service focal persons;	In Nimule, caseworkers had established referral pathways for GBV, rape, and domestic abuse, with linkages to medical assessments and transport for survivors. In Yambio, more than 20 MHPSS cases had been referred to AMREF	Enhance Dignity Kits, Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: The need for hygiene dignity kits for girls, and GBV response kits for caseworkers / PFPs should be enhanced subject to the availability of budget resources.

LoP Result Area		Baseline	Midline	Qualitative Findings	Adaptations
	# number of persons who are provided with age and gender appropriate PSS and GBV services	0	422 (Access to MHPSS services); 645(Access to Medical Services); 564 (access to Counselling services)' 453 (access to legal services)	In our findings, access, and use of MHPSS services is average (Moderate) in urban areas and very low in rural remote areas. The most sought-after medical service is treatment for physical injuries, while reproductive health care is the least sought-after medical service.	Conduct Stigma Awareness campaigns; Strengthen local partner resource mobilization; Provide specialized interventions for Alcohol related GBV
	# of traditional authorities with strengthened capacities to develop/adjust/ implement regulations related to protection of W/G	0	150 ABC court chiefs; 3 chiefs. 75 traditional authorities	150 ABC court chiefs (147 male, 3 female) have been trained on the UNDP GBV pocket guide and also a national level ABC forum which was attended by 3 chiefs (female); 96 (64% of target) 75 traditional authorities reached with learning and advocacy on the importance of legal protection for women and girls, mentorship focused on case filling and referral from A to B Court and C court in case the requires higher courts attention	More areas and local authorities need to be trained to reach more groups and communities.
	# of trained formal authorities e.g., police and prison staff on GBV legislation, human rights and GE	0	150 ABC court chiefs; 3 chiefs. 75 traditional authorities	As above	As above
Result area 2: Changed attitudes and beliefs of civil society to facilitate inclusion of W/G and promote gender equality					
2.0 Long term outcome	Number of advocacy sessions by W/Y groups, men and boys on Gender equality, equal participation through W/Y-led platforms	0	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes State (Yirol East); CSOs: TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA). Central Equatoria (Terekeka); Engaged CSOs: Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment). Unity State (Panyijiar); Engaged CSOs: Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group. Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi & Nimule); Engaged CSOs: Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women Western Equatoria State (Yambio); Engaged CSOs: Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). 	<p>There are common challenges such as limited funding and resource constraints.</p> <p>Adaptations: Training should include Resource Mobilization, Capacity Building, Documentation and Reporting</p>
2.1 Outcomes	# youth-led or women-led platforms established by communities	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes State: Champions of Change and Male Engagement Group. Central Equatoria: Champions of Change (COC) and Couple Groups (composed of 80 members, 40% female). Unity State: Tenekel Youth Group; MAT Women Group; The Male Engagement Group. Eastern Equatoria: School-based youth-led platforms that are being used to nurture youth leadership skills. The Student Parliament; Forum Theatre team 	In our findings, the initiatives across all regions demonstrate commendable efforts in empowering women, youth, and men as agents of change. However, it's vital to conduct rigorous monitoring and evaluations to measure the actual impact of these groups and programs on gender equality, community attitudes, and behaviours. The lack of this data is partly due to the challenge posed by Social Change programmes that take a long time for behaviour and attitudes to change and data on the same to be recorded	youth-led or women-led platforms established at community levels need to be scaled. Current numbers are still low compared to intended outcome
	# of advocacy initiatives conducted by W/Y groups, Men, boys and vulnerable groups on gender equality and equal participation with decision makers in the targeted locations	0	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes State (Yirol East); CSOs: TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA). Central Equatoria (Terekeka); Engaged CSOs: Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment). Unity State (Panyijiar); Engaged CSOs: Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group. Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi & Nimule); Engaged CSOs: Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women Western Equatoria State (Yambio); Engaged CSOs: Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). 	<p>There are common challenges such as limited funding and resource constraints.</p> <p>Adaptations: Training should include Resource Mobilization, Capacity Building, Documentation and Reporting</p>
	# and description of advocacy initiatives/ actions initiated by formal CSOs and informal CSOs (men and boys/(religious & community) leaders and W/Y-led platforms) promoting the inclusion of W/G and GE	0	5	Gender Equality Girls Education Campaign against Early Girls Marriage Campaigns against GBV Inclusion in local decision-making processes.	<p>There are common challenges such as limited funding and resource constraints.</p> <p>Adaptations: Training should include Resource Mobilization, Capacity Building, Documentation and Reporting</p>

LoP Result Area		Baseline	Midline	Qualitative Findings	Adaptations
2.2 Outputs	# of community groups capacities on gender equality, protection, W/Gs meaningful participation and lobby & advocacy on these topics	0	Overall, 28 groups had been engaged out of which 25 were gender aware (Lakes 6 groups, Central Equatoria 5 groups, Unity 6 group, Eastern Equatoria 11 groups)	Actively participating in international events, notably the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day. Humaes also focuses on raising awareness about UNSCR 1325 and advocating for the WPS agenda;	
	# of individuals with strengthened competencies to advance women's rights and gender equality (disaggregated by type, age and gender)	0	6745 (measured yearly by the consortium) Healthnet TPO actively engaged and empowered women, youth, and men through Champions of Change (COC) and Couple Groups (composed of 80 members, 40% female).	In our findings, the initiatives across all regions demonstrate commendable efforts in empowering women, youth, and men as agents of change. However, it's vital to conduct rigorous monitoring and evaluations to measure the actual impact of these groups and programs on gender equality, community attitudes, and behaviours. The lack of this data is partly due to the challenge posed by Social Change programmes that take a long time for behaviour and attitudes to change and data on the same to be recorded.	
	# of action plans of community groups on male engagement and intersectionality developed and implemented	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes State: Champions of Change and Male Engagement Group. Central Equatoria: Champions of Change (COC) and Couple Groups (composed of 80 members, 40% female). Unity State: Tenekel Youth Group; MAT Women Group; The Male Engagement Group. Eastern Equatoria: School-based youth-led platforms that are being used to nurture youth leadership skills. The Student Parliament; Forum Theatre team 	In our findings, the initiatives across all regions demonstrate commendable efforts in empowering women, youth, and men as agents of change. However, it's vital to conduct rigorous monitoring and evaluations to measure the actual impact of these groups and programs on gender equality, community attitudes, and behaviours. The lack of this data is partly due to the challenge posed by Social Change programmes that take a long time for behaviour and attitudes to change and data on the same to be recorded	youth-led or women-led platforms established at community levels need to be scaled. Current numbers are still low compared to intended outcome
Result area 3: Increased, effective participation of women and youth (W/Y) in leadership and peacebuilding					
3.1 Outcomes	# W/G in leadership positions at various levels influencing the WPS agenda jointly with male counterparts	South Sudan has 550 lawmakers appointed by presidential decree, out of which 116 (28%)	South Sudan has 550 lawmakers appointed by presidential decree, out of which 116 (28%)	The 35% women representation in the R-ARCSS not yet achieved or adhered to	Continuous advocacy initiatives targeting political class and high level UNSCR 1325 partners
	# government bodies at all levels promote UNSCR1325 and/or adhering to the provision of 35% women representation in RPA.	550 (28%) female law makers. 35 Ministers, 10 (28%)	550 (28%) female law makers. 35 Ministers, 10 (28%) 10 (10% female) governors	South Sudan has 550 lawmakers appointed by presidential decree, out of which 116 (28%) are women. The appointments violated the 35% women representation from a different gender. Out of the cabinet of 35 Ministers, 10 (28%) were women, while out of 10 current State governors, 1(10%) was a woman.	Continuous advocacy initiatives targeting political class and high level UNSCR 1325 partners
	# peace building initiatives led by W/Y groups	0	6	Actively participating in international events, notably the 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day, raising awareness about UNSCR 1325 and advocating for the WPS agenda; GBV advocacy; Gender Equality in peacebuilding decision making processes	

LoP Result Area		Baseline	Midline	Qualitative Findings	Adaptations
	# of CSOs that use evidence for their lobby and advocacy interventions	0	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes State (Yirol East); CSOs: TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA). Central Equatoria (Terekeka); Engaged CSOs: Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment). Unity State (Panyijiar); Engaged CSOs: Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group. Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi & Nimule); Engaged CSOs: Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women Western Equatoria State (Yambio); Engaged CSOs: Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). 	There are common challenges such as limited funding and resource constraints. Adaptations: Training should include Resource Mobilization, Capacity Building, Documentation and Reporting
	# of actors at international governmental level promoting and protecting civic space	0	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Women, UNDP, Plan International, UNICEF, UNMISS, UNHCR <i>This is to mention a few</i>	
	# of media actors promoting and protecting civic space				
	# of CSOs, and CBOs in collaboration with the local and national actors that have developed their own multi-annual WPS-related strategies	0	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes State (Yirol East); CSOs: TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA). Central Equatoria (Terekeka); Engaged CSOs: Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment). Unity State (Panyijiar); Engaged CSOs: Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group. Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi & Nimule); Engaged CSOs: Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women Western Equatoria State (Yambio); Engaged CSOs: Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). 	
3.2 Outputs	# of gatekeepers incl policy makers coached, capacitated, and resourced to lobby & advocate on the WPS agenda incl female participation in leadership positions.	0	220	Measured by consortium on an yearly basis	
	# of CBOs/CSOs with increased capacity to lobby on HR, GE, UNSCR 1325.	0	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakes State (Yirol East); CSOs: TOCH, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Yirol East Protection Team, and Community (CINA). Central Equatoria (Terekeka); Engaged CSOs: Trust Action Youth Association, Surname for Community Development, Wate Na Kita Women Groups, and County Women's Association (government establishment). Unity State (Panyijiar); Engaged CSOs: Tenekel Peace Committee (TPC), Greater Dor Youth Association, Kondial Youth Group, and Matgoi Women's Group. Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi & Nimule); Engaged CSOs: Humaes, Harmony Disability, and Vision Women Western Equatoria State (Yambio); Engaged CSOs: Arise Social Cultural Foundation and Self-Help Women Development Organization (SHWO). 	



Development Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands