

**Evaluation of the Community Action for Peaceful  
Resolution of Housing Land and Property Disputes and  
Conflicts Project Funded by the Peacebuilding Fund**



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# Glossary of Acronyms

AfDB: African Development Bank

ADR: Alternative Dispute Resolution

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

DAC: Development Assistance Committee

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

GEF: Global Environment Facility

GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)

HLP: Housing, Land, and Property

IOM: International Organization for Migration

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

KII: Key Informant Interview

NAP: National Action Plan

NRMC: Natural Resource Management Committee

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PBF: Peacebuilding Fund

POC: Protection of Civilians (site)

R-ARCSS: Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan

RAG: Red Amber Green (analysis)

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

TNLA: Transitional National Legislative Assembly

ToC: Theory of Change

ToR: Terms of Reference

UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

WPS: Women, Peace, and Security

YPS: Youth, Peace, and Security



## Executive Summary

This report examines the *Community Action for Peaceful Resolution of Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) Disputes and Conflicts* Project challenges in South Sudan, focusing on the ongoing impact of displacement, conflict, and environmental factors and evaluating the efforts made to address these issues through a multi-agency project led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the advisory support from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The evaluation reviews the project's outcomes across three counties, Rubkona, Wau, and Juba, considering its effectiveness, sustainability, and contributions to peacebuilding, livelihoods, land governance, and HLP rights.

HLP issues in South Sudan have deep historical roots, with many challenges persisting since the previous civil war (1983–2005). Returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) face difficulties securing land due to ambiguity about their land rights, informal settlements, and land grabbing. The project addressed these issues by building local capacity for dispute resolution, raising awareness about land rights, and supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable populations through agricultural initiatives.

The evaluation used the OECD-DAC criteria, relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, and focused on how the project aligned with broader peacebuilding objectives. The report identifies several key findings:

**Relevance:** The project contributed to peacebuilding by addressing land disputes, strengthening governance systems, and empowering vulnerable groups through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) training. It also promoted women's leadership in line with the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) quota and advanced youth participation in governance, supporting the Women Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth Peace and Security (YPS) agendas.

**Coherence:** The project aligned with the UN's peacebuilding mandate and national policies, the initiative promoted equitable land governance and women's and youth participation. However, challenges in coordination and communication with national and local actors affected overall collaboration.

**Efficiency:** Despite challenges like limited water access and local currency fluctuations, the project met most objectives under challenging circumstances. However, issues with coordination and timely asset delivery affected the project's efficiency.

**Effective:** The project improved HLP legal literacy, strengthened land governance, built capacities of traditional and government authorities, and supported land dispute resolution. It also mainstreamed gender by empowering women through leadership, economic activities, and HLP rights, notably regarding inheritance. The project improved HLP legal literacy, strengthened land governance, built the capacities of traditional and government

authorities, and supported land dispute resolution. These efforts contributed to peacebuilding by reducing tensions over land. Still, efforts to mainstream youth and persons with disabilities fell short, as inclusion often lacked the necessary adaptations to address their specific needs, experiences, and barriers to participation.

**Sustainability:** The sustainability plan had gaps and would have benefited from an explicit exit strategy. Several participants reported not being clear about how to sustain project achievements pass the project time line. Government commitment to the project’s sustainability is weak due to resource constraints and political instability. Overall, long-term sustainability is uncertain without more external support.

**Localization:** National and local stakeholders were consistently engaged throughout the project. While the project strengthened the capacities of local leaders and authorities, it fell short of achieving a meaningful shift in decision-making power. The deeper, transformative aspects of localization, such as transferring power and resources to local actors, were not fully realized. This was largely due to sustainability challenges, limited resources, and the absence of an exit strategy that addressed long-term local ownership.

**Conflict Sensitivity:** The project maintained conflict sensitivity through conflict mapping, analysis, and HLP awareness. No unintended negative impacts occurred, as the team successfully managed risks and avoided adverse consequences.

**Catalytic Potential:** The project attracted over USD 5 million in additional funding from key partners, demonstrating its catalytic potential. PBF funding also expanded peacebuilding efforts, contributing to broader initiatives like the Borderlands Community Security and Conflict Resolution Initiative and securing further investments for HLP, resilience and peacebuilding projects.

**Innovation:** The project introduced meaningful innovations in a historically neglected sector. FAO’s Natural Resource Management Committees (NRMCS) offered a locally rooted approach to managing resource-based conflicts strengthening community-level governance. Additionally, IOM supported the development of a case management and referral system for HLP issues, embedding support within the Land Ministry. This streamlined access to land documentation and dispute resolution, representing a significant step toward more accessible and accountable land rights management in South Sudan.

## **Key Recommendations**

### **1. Expand Awareness Campaigns**

Strengthen community outreach through peer education and local sessions; provide resources to reinforce HLP messaging and land documentation.

### **2. Address Structural Power Imbalances**

Maintain awareness efforts, engage actors like the Military, and strengthen governance systems to confront land grabbing and elite capture.

### **3. Advance Inclusive Participation**

Apply an accessibility lens to ensure persons with disabilities, IDPs, women, and youth can fully engage in land governance processes.

4. **Support Youth-Specific Strategies**  
Conduct intersectional analysis of youth barriers to land rights and promote inter vivos<sup>1</sup> transfers to improve youth economic stability.
5. **Invest in Local Institutions**  
Allocate funding to local organizations to ensure continuity and local ownership of project outcomes.
6. **Integrate Climate Risk Planning**  
Incorporate climate sensitivity in program design to support land-based livelihoods and prevent conflict exacerbated by environmental stress.
7. **Scale Up Case Management Systems**  
Institutionalize case management through embedded staff and digital tools to improve service access and accountability.
8. **Strengthen ADR Mechanisms**  
Formalize and resource state-level dispute resolution committees and traditional authorities through long-term training and logistical support.

The evaluation findings indicate that the project made significant progress in addressing HLP challenges and contributed to reducing violence and building peace. However, greater impact could have been achieved through stronger empowerment of local stakeholders, enhanced government capacity, and more deliberate attention to the economic and environmental barriers limiting land access and security in South Sudan.

## 1. Introduction

The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the HLP program against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. It focused on how well the project's objectives were met, the effect of its interventions, and the lessons learned, particularly regarding peacebuilding efforts. The evaluation describes the project's contribution to reducing conflict in South Sudan, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 16, and its coherence with national policies like the Revitalized Agreement on the R-ARCSS. It also evaluates the project's role in advancing the WPS and YPS agendas, promoting gender equality and youth participation in peacebuilding.

Considering the broad scope of HLP issues in the South Sudanese context, including matters relating to law and policy, destruction of housing, HLP issues in displacement camps, processing of land documents, dispute resolution, women's land rights, forced evictions, and inter-communal conflict, the evaluation assesses how the project responded to these issues in advancing its peacebuilding objectives. The findings will inform future strategies for IOM and FAO. The key objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Evaluate the project's relevance in addressing conflict drivers and aligning with national priorities and UN roles.

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<sup>1</sup> inter vivos refers to a transfer or gift made during the giver's lifetime, as opposed to after death (e.g., through a will).

- Measure the project's impact on reducing conflict factors and advancing the SDGs, particularly SDGs 16 and 1.
- Assess the conflict-sensitive approach and the project's efficiency in terms of strategy, management, and value for money.
- Determine if the project supported WPS and YPS agendas, focusing on gender equality and youth participation.
- Identify good practices, innovations, and lessons learned.

The report is structured in six sections. Section 2 provides information on the background context, including an overview of HLP in South Sudan and a description of the HLP program. Section 3 describes the evaluation methodology. Section 4 discusses key findings across the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. Section 5 provides key recommendations and Section 6 summarizes lessons learned.

## 1.1. HLP in South Sudan

The HLP challenges South Sudan faces today are remarkably similar to those it faced after the previous war (1983-2005). At the end of the civil war, public authorities involved with the return process hoped that returnees would go back to their places of origin, where the process of their resettlement would be handled by traditional institutions. However, many returnees spent their entire lives in Khartoum and other cities in Sudan and were unwilling to return to ancestral homelands that they may not have seen since childhood. Insecurity and lack of social services also discouraged returnees from settling in rural areas. As a result, many people chose to settle in urban and peri-urban areas where they lived in informal settlements or illegally occupied the land of others.

The resettlement of returnees and IDPs in urban and peri-urban areas did not go smoothly. Ambiguities in the distribution of power and authority among traditional institutions, community leaders, and government institutions at various levels undermined the effectiveness of government responses. Protracted conflict had also blurred HLP rights in both territorial and production unit terms. When returnees sought to assert their prior rights, it resulted in disputes and exacerbated conflict. Other intractable issues included land grabbing by military personnel, secondary occupation, transactions involving the land of displaced populations, forced evictions, and widespread destruction of HLP. These issues continue to disrupt livelihoods and undermine stabilization efforts in the current context.

The Government of South Sudan and its development partners are increasingly recognizing the importance of addressing challenges of HLP both in the context of the humanitarian response and as an integral component of post-conflict recovery efforts.<sup>2</sup> Various efforts are underway to reinforce HLP rights, including a renewed push to revise and adopt a National Land Policy that

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<sup>2</sup> Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights have their basis in international human rights and humanitarian law as it relates to the property rights of displaced persons and host communities in emergency situations.

has been under development for many years. More needs to be done to mount a response that is commensurate with the scale of the problem, but these developments suggest a certain acknowledgment of the importance of HLP in the current context.

### Impacts of Displacement on HLP

The challenges of HLP in South Sudan have been exacerbated by the length and recurrence of conflict. Outbreaks of conflict and acute food insecurity trigger displacement and entire populations are routinely displaced multiple times and for extended periods of time. This has major impacts in terms of livelihoods, governance and development. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) 2025 Situation Overview, 2 million South Sudanese citizens are internally displaced<sup>3</sup>, and there are 2.4 million refugees and asylum seekers mostly from Sudan.

The outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023 triggered a mass movement of people from Sudan into South Sudan. Since April 2023, over 541,888 people have fled to South Sudan, including mostly South Sudanese returning after having fled South Sudan during the country's liberation struggle.<sup>4</sup> In mid-2024 alone, 100,533 individuals—an average of 1,400 per day—crossed into Upper Nile, representing 85 percent of all new arrivals to South Sudan during that period.<sup>5</sup>

Flooding is another major cause of displacement in South Sudan. South Sudan has experienced record-breaking floods for the past five years due to climate change. The flooding has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, destroyed farms and killed livestock across the country. Pastoralist communities are forced to venture further afield in search of water and pasture, where they often come into conflict with other cattle-keeping communities or with farmers. Flood-induced displacement is also giving rise to HLP disputes as displaced populations often have no option but to settle on land that does not belong to them.

Seasonal forecasts indicated that South Sudan would likely face another challenging year in 2024. Lake Victoria has experienced record water levels this year, and the government of Uganda has announced that it will release 2,400 cubic meters per second into the Nile, which will reach South Sudan by September. Humanitarian partners are planning for a worst-case scenario, with projections indicating that up to three million people could be affected.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *South Sudan Situation Overview*. Geneva: UNHCR, 2025. <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/south-sudan-situation>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/2/8/photos-inside-south-sudans-worsening-refugee-crisis-renk-and-maban>

<sup>5</sup> Relief International, Sudan, South Sudan, Chad: Regional Situation Report (April - June 2024), available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-south-sudan-chad-regional-situation-report-april-june-2024>.

<sup>6</sup> *South Sudan Situation Report #323*, World Food Program (WFP) (31 May 2024), available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/wfp-south-sudan-situation-report-323-31-may-2024#:~:text=Major%20flooding%20is%20expected%20in,is%20expected%20from%20June%20onwards.>

## HLP and Durable Solutions

Access to HLP is a gateway “to socio-economic inclusion and an essential steppingstone for refugees and IDPs to rebuild their lives.”<sup>7</sup> In this sense, HLP rights are essential to resilience, recovery and durable solutions to problems of displacement. In South Sudan, land is among the few assets that almost all citizens can access. Unlike other African countries where land ownership has been concentrated in the hands of a small portion of the population, in the South Sudanese context, most people can still access landholdings in their ancestral homelands through customary land tenure regimes.<sup>8</sup> While this right is highly gendered, and women typically derive their rights through their husbands or male relatives, customary norms around land nonetheless provide essential protection against landlessness.<sup>9</sup> Land value as both a social safety net and productive asset is therefore critically important to people’s ability to mitigate and recover from natural disasters and conflict and to deal with the impacts of the climate crisis. As Nyathon Hoth Mai *et al.* observe:

“Land tenure security, provided through both informal and formal arrangements, is a significant tool for climate change resilience as it is widely accepted as being crucial for enabling people to make longer-term and forward-looking decisions in the face of uncertainty, such as changing farming practices, farming systems, or even transforming livelihoods altogether [internal references omitted].”<sup>10</sup>

While supporting people’s ability to make productive use of their land offers significant advantages, aid interventions in the land sector can also be politically sensitive, particularly in South Sudan.<sup>11</sup> Large-scale displacement in successive civil wars has created complex and

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<sup>7</sup> Ringelé, Katrien. "Access to Housing, Land & Property in Forced Displacement Contexts." Norwegian Refugee Council.

<sup>8</sup> *Land Governance in South Sudan: Policies for Peace and Development*, World Bank (May 2014), p. 20, ¶32, available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/421901468336313987/pdf/869580WP0P14370nance0in0South0Sudan.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Stone, *Nowhere to Go: Displaced and Returnee Women Seeking Housing, Land and Property Rights in South Sudan*, NRC (20 Mar. 2014), available at [https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/nowhere-to-go/nowhere-to-go\\_displaced-women-seeking-hlp-rights-in-south-sudan.pdf](https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/nowhere-to-go/nowhere-to-go_displaced-women-seeking-hlp-rights-in-south-sudan.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Nyathon Hoth Mai, Nhial Tiitmamer, Augustino Ting Mayai, *Land Tenure in South Sudan: Does it Promote Climate Change Resilience?*, Sudd Institute (3 Feb. 2017), available at <https://www.suddinstitute.org/publications/show/58b66aacb8b3b>.

<sup>11</sup> A baseline study conducted for the *Strengthening the Livelihoods Resilience of Pastoral and Agropastoral Communities in South Sudan’s Cross-Border Areas with Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda* project found that host communities were more resilient than IDPs and refugees in part because of their ability to access productive assets such as land. According to the study: “Of all assets, productive assets (including land) have the largest impact on resilience (for both host communities and refugee and IDP households), while access to credit is the most significant variable within the social safety pillar.” *Resilience Analysis of Pastoral and Agropastoral Communities in South Sudan’s Cross-Border Areas with Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda*, Resilience Analysis Report No. 17, FAO (2019).

overlapping disputes over land and natural resources.<sup>12</sup> Economic hardship has driven competition for land, particularly in urban areas, and land administration processes offer a source of income to state and local governments that are otherwise starved for revenue. Programming in the land sector is further constrained by a lack of donor funding, as land programs often require a substantial state-building component, which donors have shied away from since December 2013.

With a few exceptions, these factors have contributed to an underinvestment in land-related programs in South Sudan. However, there are signs that opportunities for more substantial engagements may be opening. The Government of South Sudan's Durable Solutions Strategy and its National Action Plan for Returns acknowledges the importance of HLP to the safe, dignified and voluntary return of displaced populations.<sup>13</sup> The transitioning of the UNMISS-administered protection of civilian (POC) sites to IDP settlements under the responsibility of the government, coupled with the influx of returnees from Sudan and refugee camps in Uganda and DRC, is causing aid actors to begin devoting more attention to issues of HLP.<sup>14</sup> More needs to be done to mount a response that is commensurate with the scale of the problem. Still, efforts such as these represent an essential first step.

## 1.2. Overview of the HLP Program

The HLP program focused on three locations, Rubkona County, Wau County, and Juba County, each facing distinct HLP challenges. Rubkona, vital to the oil economy, suffers from large-scale displacement due to ongoing conflict and flooding, exacerbated by local violence and border

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<sup>12</sup> David K. Deng, *Land, Conflict and Displacement in South Sudan*, CSRF (2021), available at <https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/repository/land-conflict-and-displacement-in-south-sudan-a-conflict-sensitive-approach-to-land-governance/>.

<sup>13</sup> In 2019, UNHCR took an unequivocal position against facilitated returns, stating: "Under the current circumstances, UNHCR cannot facilitate, promote or otherwise organize returns to South Sudan." *UNHCR Position on Returns to South Sudan, Update II*, UNHCR (Apr. 2019), available at <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5cb4607c4.pdf>. The organization moderated this position somewhat in 2021, stating: "While political, security, human rights and rule of law changes are underway in South Sudan, the impact of these changes on the ground are not uniformly witnessed across the country and may compromise the feasibility of return under conditions of safety and dignity in some locations." *UNHCR Position on Returns to South Sudan, Update III*, UNHCR (Oct. 2021), available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/617676f04.html>. See also *HLP Technical Working Group Note: HLP Challenges in South Sudan*, Shelter Cluster (5. Feb. 2021) (stating that "South Sudan is not yet conducive for mass scale returns, however with the signing of R-TGoNU [sic] in February 2020, an increase in spontaneous returns has been recorded, alongside a corresponding increase in HLP issues"), available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/84682>.

<sup>14</sup> *IGAD Convenes Ministerial Follow-up Meeting on the Solutions Initiative for the Displacement Situation in Sudan and South Sudan*, IGAD (5 Apr. 2021), available at <https://igad.int/divisions/health-and-social-development/2016-05-24-03-16-37/2652-igad-convenes-ministerial-follow-up-meeting-on-the-solutions-initiative-for-the-displacement-situation-in-sudan-and-south-sudan>. HLP issues are a critical component of such discussions. A 2019 survey on HLP issues in Nimule, Torit, Wau and Yei indicated that 86% of HLP disputes involved IDPs or returnees. David K. Deng, *Housing, Land and Property Disputes in South Sudan*, South Sudan Law Society (SSLS) (Mar. 2019), available at [https://docs.southsudanngoforum.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/SSLS\\_HLP-report\\_final-003.pdf](https://docs.southsudanngoforum.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/SSLS_HLP-report_final-003.pdf).

disputes. Wau County deals with severe food insecurity and infrastructure problems amid ethnic tensions and an influx of returnees and refugees despite having one of the more developed land administration systems in South Sudan. Juba, the capital, is experiencing rapid urban expansion and complex HLP issues, including land grabbing and secondary occupancy. Institutions of land administration in Juba, including Ministries of Housing and Land, Survey Departments, local authorities, statutory courts, and customary courts, struggle to manage these challenges of HLP among its diverse and growing population.

IOM led the project, focusing on building community-based dispute resolution mechanisms through capacity building for customary governance systems. This involved training local leaders, traditional courts, and community stakeholders to address HLP disputes. IOM also raised awareness of HLP rights, trained media, and researched to help monitor and mitigate HLP-related conflicts. FAO supported community livelihoods by promoting agricultural services and natural resource management while advocating for HLP policy with the government. UNMISS provided an advisory role, offering technical guidance.

The project aimed to achieve three main objectives:

- **Strengthened Land Governance Mechanisms for Dispute Resolution:** Enhancing both statutory and customary governance mechanisms, such as community structures and customary authorities, to better understand HLP rights, improve technical skills, and build knowledge of international norms to resolve disputes and prevent conflict escalation effectively.
- **Consensus on Institutional Approach to HLP Dispute Resolution:** Building consensus among stakeholders on an institutional approach to resolving HLP disputes peacefully and in line with international standards, ensuring the protection of vulnerable populations.
- **Reduced Risk of Conflict and Violence from HLP Disputes:** Preventing HLP-related conflicts and violence, particularly those associated with returnees, IDPs, and host communities, by addressing tensions arising from competition over scarce resources.

The HLP program was funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), the United Nations' leading instrument to invest in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, in partnership with the broader UN system, national and subnational authorities, civil society organizations, regional organizations, and multilateral banks. A feature of the PBF is its interagency approach, which aims to work across pillars and support integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps. In that sense, the principles associated with the 'HDP Nexus,' 'New Ways of Working,' and 'One UN,' which seek to overcome the siloed approach to programming that characterizes most UN interventions in conflict-affected countries, are central to the PBF's core value proposition.<sup>15</sup> Since 2011, the

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<sup>15</sup> The HDP or triple nexus refers to the interlinkages between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. This approach calls for a New Way of Working (NWOW) that transcends the humanitarian-development-peace divide, reinforces national and local systems, and anticipates crises by working toward (i) collective outcomes (ii) over multi- year timeframes (iii) based on leveraging comparative advantage. The UN, national governments and

PBF has committed \$64.7 million to peacebuilding projects in South Sudan focusing on issues relating to security sector reform, national reconciliation, preventing violent extremism, conflict prevention, social cohesion, and women and youth empowerment.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Methodology

The evaluation used a qualitative approach, which involved a review of project documents and related materials triangulated with data from FGDs and KIIs to assess the project's implementation and outcomes. Document analysis was guided by the evaluation questions and aimed to extract relevant insights. The results framework and progress reports were also examined to evaluate the achievements and methods used. The approach also included an assessment of the strategies employed to achieve project outcomes, focusing on conflict sensitivity, inclusivity, gender sensitivity, sustainability, and localization, among other criteria.

### 2.1. Evaluation Approach and Research Questions

The evaluation follows the OECD-DAC criteria, relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Additionally, it aligns with PBF-specific criteria tailored to peacebuilding initiatives. The primary focus is on evaluating the project's impact on peacebuilding by analyzing progress within the HLP thematic areas and determining how this progress has mitigated key conflict drivers. The evaluation also examines the project's theory of change, assessing its alignment with the objectives, assumptions, and operational context, and its effectiveness in guiding the project's implementation and outcomes. The central evaluation question is:

*To what extent has the Community Action for Peaceful Resolution of Housing, Land, and Property project in South Sudan effectively addressed conflict drivers, advanced peacebuilding and inclusivity, met its strategic goals, and ensured sustainability and alignment with national and international frameworks?*

The following subsections outline key questions for each OECD-DAC criterion, incorporating cross-cutting issues such as conflict sensitivity, localization, innovation, and the program's

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donors first agreed to the HDP nexus and NWOW at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. See Gloria Nguya and Nadia Siddiqui, *The Triple (H-D-P) Nexus and Implications for Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement*, Global Challenges Research Fund (GCF), IDRP Refugee Law Initiative, School of Advanced Study University of London (Aug. 2020), available at [https://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/sites/www.un.org.internal-displacement-panel/files/idrp\\_hlp\\_submission\\_ws3\\_triple\\_nexus.pdf](https://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/sites/www.un.org.internal-displacement-panel/files/idrp_hlp_submission_ws3_triple_nexus.pdf);

Jan Pospisil et al., *The HDP Nexus in the Context of Peace Operations in Sub-Saharan Africa*, GIZ and ASPR (Jun. 2021), available at [https://www.aspr.ac.at/fileadmin/Downloads/Publikationen/Publikationen\\_ab\\_2015/HDP\\_Nexus\\_in\\_Africa\\_Study\\_GI\\_Z\\_2021.pdf](https://www.aspr.ac.at/fileadmin/Downloads/Publikationen/Publikationen_ab_2015/HDP_Nexus_in_Africa_Study_GI_Z_2021.pdf).

<sup>16</sup>

[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/country\\_brief\\_south\\_sudan\\_2023-09-20.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/country_brief_south_sudan_2023-09-20.pdf)

catalytic potential. Questions related to effectiveness, efficiency, and risks overlap across the different evaluation categories. These questions guided the development of questionnaires for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and document and data analysis.

**Table: Research Questions**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the project relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace?</li> <li>• How was the project relevant to Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS)?</li> </ul>
<b>Coherence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the project relevant to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16? To what extent did the project contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas, and policies?</li> <li>• To what extent did the HLP project align with the efforts of various entities, including local, and national institutions?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives and strategic vision?</li> <li>• To what extent did the project substantively mainstream gender, support gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding, and address the inclusion of people with disabilities?</li> <li>• How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How efficient was planning and coordination within the project (including between the implementing agencies and with stakeholders)?</li> <li>• How well did the project team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders and project beneficiaries on its progress?</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy?</li> <li>• How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity?</li> </ul>
<b>Localization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were national and local stakeholders sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the project strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders, including governments and civil society organizations?</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict Sensitivity and Risk Tolerance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?</li> <li>• Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How novel or innovative was the project approach?</li> </ul>
<b>Catalytic Potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the project successfully attract and leverage additional funding?</li> <li>• Has PBF funding contributed to the expansion of HLP and other peacebuilding efforts or supported the development of broader peacebuilding platforms?</li> </ul>

## 2.2. Gender Analysis

The evaluation concentrated on the effects of systematic and structural discrimination against women in South Sudan, particularly concerning their HLP rights. It assessed how the project's interventions tackled gender-specific issues, such as cultural norms that restrict women from inheriting property, biases in both statutory and customary court systems, and legal obstacles that women face in securing land rights.

The evaluation also examined the differences in access, participation, and leadership between men and women in the project's activities, evaluating the integration of gender inclusivity and how both genders' specific needs and priorities were addressed. It also examined the project's positive and negative impacts on gender inclusivity, highlighting good practices, gaps, and areas for improvement. Additionally, the project's alignment with gender equality frameworks, including CEDAW and the WPS Agenda, was reviewed.

## 2.3. RAG Analysis

The evaluation employs a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) analysis to represent the project's performance visually. We also review secondary sources on HLP issues to place the project's impact within the broader socio-political and economic context of South Sudan. This includes analyzing specific HLP cases, incidents, or interventions to identify lessons learned and best practices. By examining the nature of these cases and disputes, as well as the main challenges, the case studies provide detailed examples of how the project has addressed HLP disputes, supported fundamental human rights, and contributed to peacebuilding efforts.

The RAG analysis uses a simple color-coded system to indicate the status of different project components based on the OECD-DAC criteria:

- **Red** indicates significant issues or deviations from the plan, showing which aspects of the project were notably off track and required urgent corrective actions.
- **Amber** represents moderate concerns or minor issues that required close monitoring and attention, suggesting potential risks or minor delays that could have affected future performance despite overall progress.
- **Green** signifies that the project was on track, meeting or exceeding expectations, with no immediate concerns, indicating relatively smooth progress and achieving planned targets.

The RAG analysis assesses the project's performance based on findings from KIIs, FGDs and the document review. The process involves:

- Assigning a Red, Amber, or Green status for each evaluation criterion, such as Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Conflict Sensitivity, Sustainability, and Localization.
- The status is determined based on data analysis that is aligned with these criteria using the evaluation questions provided above.
- Each indicator receives a RAG status, accompanied by a brief justification for the color assigned, detailing specific achievements, identified concerns, and any necessary actions.
- The RAG status of each indicator in the results framework is visually represented using tables or tools that communicate the performance status.

The benefit of using a RAG qualitative analysis when assessing responses through OECD-DAC criteria is its ability to visually represent data at a glance. It helps to quickly identify areas of strength (green), moderate progress (amber), and significant challenges (red). The visual representation highlights trends and patterns across different themes, helping to guide analysis about areas needing attention or improvement. However, the color does not imply an overall quantitative score but rather illustrates specific thematic responses based on qualitative assessments.

## 2.4. Data Collection Methods

Data collection was conducted in August 2024 by two experienced South Sudanese researchers trained by the lead evaluator and provided with a data collection manual. The manual included an overview of the project, evaluation objectives, questionnaires for FGDs and KIIs, and ethical guidelines on research with human subjects.

The evaluation team collected Wau, Rubkona, and Juba Counties data through FGDs and KIIs. KIIs were conducted with key stakeholders, including government officials, traditional authorities and staff, community leaders, and project staff from IOM, FAO, and implementing partners. FGDs were organized with host community members and IDPs to gather insights from

project beneficiaries. Representation of women, youth, and people with disabilities was a priority.

**Table: Research Methods**

Method	Description
KIIs	KIIs were conducted with IOM, FAO, and project staff, including management, and field staff. Local partners, traditional authorities, government officials, and other stakeholders were also interviewed. These interviews gathered insights into the project's implementation and local conflict dynamics and assess the project's effectiveness.
FGDs	FGDs were organized with the support of IOM and FAO staff Wau, Rubkona and Juba. These discussions assembled participants' perspectives regarding the project's interventions. FGDs were conducted separately for women and men when possible as part of a gender sensitive approach. This was beneficial because women tend to be passive when men are present, and it provided a safer space for women to express their views freely.

## 2.5. Ethical Considerations

To meet the highest ethical research standards, the following measures were adopted:

- All respondents were asked to give oral consent, with an oral consent script included in the KIIs and FGDs.
- Respondents' names were kept confidential.
- All audio recordings were deleted after transcripts were prepared.
- Notes taken during KIIs and FGDs referred to research participants not speaking in an official capacity (e.g., government officials, NGO, or UN agency representatives) by numbers, not by names.
- Handwritten notes were transcribed into digital files, and the original handwritten notes were destroyed.

These measures were designed to protect the integrity of the evaluation process and the privacy of all participants. However, this was considered a low-risk evaluation, as the questions were not highly sensitive and did not pose significant risks to respondents.

## 2.6. Sampling

A list of key informants was compiled in collaboration with IOM and FAO project staff to identify individuals directly involved in the project. As noted above, the key informants included traditional authorities, government officials, community leaders, land administration officials,

and media journalists. Efforts were made to include women, youth, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities whenever possible, although their representation among leaders is often limited.

A representative sampling method was used to select participants for FGDs to ensure they reflected the broader scope of project participants and maintained proportional representation. The strength of qualitative methods lies in the representativeness of the groups interviewed, which helped gather diverse perspectives and insights that accurately represent the experiences and views of the entire beneficiary group.

Sixteen FGDs were conducted with IOM participants for men and women community members across Wau, Juba, and Rubkona. Four FGDs of FAO participants were conducted in Wau and Rubkona as FAO did not engage community members in Juba. Each FGD was designed to consist of 8 to 10 participants, which resulted in 151 FGD participants across all locations (78 women and 73 men). This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact from different community perspectives, including those of vulnerable groups and people with disabilities. Furthermore, the researchers met with IOM and FAO management in Juba, Wau, and Rubkona, and a PBF Secretariat representative in Juba was also interviewed.

The sample population, including KIIs, comprised 173 individuals (86 women and 87 men), as summarized in the table below. IOM had 5,943 project participants, while FAO engaged with XXXX participants throughout the project.

*Table 1 Sample Distribution by Location and Demographics*

Location	KIIs		FGDs		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Juba	4	6	19	19	23	25
Rubkona	2	3	22	17	24	20
Wau	2	5	37	37	39	42
Total	8	14	78	73	86	87
	22		151		173	

## 2.7. Limitations

The limitations of this evaluation stem from several factors related to data collection and the project context. First, the evaluation faced considerable time constraints, which required the consultant team to proceed quickly through the inception and data collection phases. It did not allow for a survey, which would have been beneficial. Fortunately, the lead consultant could rely on her expertise in peacebuilding in South Sudan and the knowledge base of the researchers to quickly carry out a solid implementation plan. Second, the evaluation was limited by the availability and participation of key informants and focus group participants. Researchers had one week in each field location to collect data, and it was sometimes difficult to identify and schedule meetings with key stakeholders. Third, ongoing security concerns and environmental issues, including flooding and displacement, created significant challenges for conducting fieldwork. These factors affected the evaluators' ability to access certain areas and engage with all intended participants, which may have limited the comprehensiveness of the evaluation findings. Fourth, the short duration of the project presented limitations in assessing long-term outcomes. The project's short-term impact was more easily measured, but the ability to evaluate its sustainability and long-term contributions to peacebuilding, land governance, and conflict resolution was constrained.

These limitations should be considered when interpreting the evaluation findings and recommendations. While the evaluation provides valuable insights into the project's impact, these constraints highlight areas where future assessments could be more robust.

### 3. Findings

The FGD and KII findings are presented by location (Wau, Juba, and Rubkona) and categorized according to the OECD-DAC criteria. The subsections below provide the responses of KII and FGD participants, analyzed using the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) framework. This approach allows for a detailed understanding of how the project performed across different regions and criteria, highlighting areas of success and those requiring improvement. Please note that the quotes cited in this report are paraphrased. Responses from KIIs and FGDs were written down and then translated into English. The quotes are not verbatim but have been rephrased to capture the respondents' intended meaning.

#### 3.1. Theory of Change

The project's Theory of Change (ToC) was assessed for clarity, logic, and alignment with local peacebuilding needs. The review focuses on the extent and definition of the assumptions, the clarity of causal pathways linking interventions to outcomes, and how well the ToC reflects the local context and target population's needs. The analysis also considers the logical sequencing of interventions and their connection to desired outcomes while checking whether these pathways

made sense regarding the necessary activities to achieve each result. Lastly, the ToC will be evaluated against the findings to determine how well the underlying assumptions held up through the project.

## **Strengths of the ToC**

**Explicit Assumptions:** The ToC outlines the assumptions that were to underpin the success of the project, including:

1. Effective customary land administration and HLP dispute resolution mechanisms will enhance accountability for actors seeking power over land.
2. Community-prioritized assets, infrastructure, and services will meet the needs for access to natural resources in the target areas.
3. Alternative solutions for achieving HLP objectives will benefit powerbrokers.

These assumptions support how the project's activities would lead to intended outcomes.

- **Alignment with Local Peacebuilding Needs:** The ToC connects its thematic areas, strengthening land administration, enhancing HLP dispute resolution mechanisms, and reducing competition over natural resources to South Sudan's peacebuilding needs. By addressing local grievances over land access, administrative control, and ethno-political dynamics, the ToC aligns well with the broader efforts for peacebuilding in the country.
- **Logical Causal Pathway:** The ToC maps a causal pathway between the interventions and the desired outcomes. Strengthening land administration and HLP dispute resolution mechanisms is expected to reduce grievances and tensions, ultimately lowering the risk of violent conflict. This apparent link between the activities and outcomes reveals the logic of the project's design.

## **Areas for Improvement**

1. **Sequencing and Visual Representation of Activities:** The Theory of Change (ToC) presents a logical progression from interventions to outcomes. However, the sequencing and flow between steps could be made more apparent. A clearer visual representation—such as a flowchart, logic model, or pathway map—would improve understanding of how specific activities lead to immediate outputs and contribute to long-term impacts. This would also make the relationships between activities, outputs, outcomes, and underlying assumptions easier to follow and interpret.
2. **Impact Statement:** The ToC would benefit from a more explicit impact statement that defines the long-term change the project seeks to achieve. Clearly articulating the project's ultimate goal and vision would strengthen the ToC by emphasizing the anticipated benefits for target communities and stakeholders.
3. **Iterative Development and Localization:** The ToC should be treated as a living document that evolves over time. Incorporating stakeholder feedback during implementation allows for iterative improvements and ensures the ToC remains relevant and context-specific. Findings from this project suggest that a more localized approach could have enhanced the ToC's responsiveness and effectiveness.

## The ToC and Findings from the Evaluation

The findings in this evaluation show that the ToC assumptions only partially held. According to respondents, more must be done to hold powerbrokers, who utilize their authority to obtain property, accountable. There are significant challenges in managing these actors, which could create risks depending on how the issues are addressed. Findings from respondents indicate that tackling issues such as corruption and abuse of power is critical to resolving land disputes. However, bringing influential individuals to justice remains challenging, though it is seen as more achievable with more robust governance systems and greater public awareness of land rights.

Additionally, the needs within the communities were more complex than initially understood. For example, despite these factors, no explicit assumptions addressed climate change and agriculture. Difficulties in accessing natural resources affected project outcomes, and the depth of community needs meant that the project could not provide all the necessary materials to meet those needs. The original assumptions that effective land administration would enhance accountability (1), that community infrastructure would meet resource needs (2), and that alternative solutions would benefit powerbrokers (3) faced challenges in practice, limiting their full realization.

### 3.2. Relevance

*“Being a single mother and a vulnerable woman, the program has been incredibly beneficial to me. It empowered me with knowledge and resources, such as the South Sudan Land Act of 2009, which was instrumental in clarifying inheritance matters within my family. As a result, and with the support of my father, all members of my family, especially my brothers, now acknowledge and respect my inheritance rights.”*  
(Woman, IOM participant in Wau)

According to the OECD, relevance is determined by how well the objectives and design of an intervention align with and address the needs and priorities of its beneficiaries.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the relevance analysis will focus on how well the project responds to the needs and priorities of communities, institutions, and other critical actors involved with HLP. It will assess whether the intervention effectively addresses the needs of vulnerable groups, including women and youth.

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<sup>17</sup> OECD. *Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021.  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en>.

Furthermore, it will explore potential trade-offs and tensions between different stakeholder priorities and examine the quality of the project's design in addressing these factors.

The project demonstrated strong relevance in addressing key conflict drivers by focusing on HLP as a peacebuilding entry point. It prioritized practical concerns, such as providing materials for governance systems and training on HLP laws. By strengthening HLP governance, the project supported formal dispute resolution mechanisms, helping reduce the risk of violence. However, while the project design was relevant to the broader conflict context, certain sensitive drivers, such as corruption and land grabbing by powerful actors, were beyond the project's feasible scope due to risks. These limitations reflect the challenging environment rather than a lack of relevance. Even so, the project's focus on legal awareness and governance strengthening laid essential groundwork for future efforts to address these deeper issues.

<b>The Project's Relevance to Peacebuilding, Governance, and Strategic Agendas</b>	
<b>Was the project relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace?</b>	The project addressed conflict drivers and peacebuilding by focusing on land disputes and vulnerable groups. While it didn't tackle corruption by powerful actors directly, it made progress by strengthening land governance and dispute resolution systems. Training on ADR mechanisms and land governance empowered women, youth, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups.
<b>How was the project relevant to Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS)?</b>	The project upheld the WPS and YPS agendas by promoting women's inclusion in leadership and dispute resolution, in alignment with the R-ARCSS 35% quota for women in decision-making roles.. It also aligned with the YPS agenda by involving youth in critical governance structures, such as Natural Resource Management Committees, empowering them in resource management and leadership.

### 3.2.1. Relevance in Wau

The project's relevance in Wau was evident through its targeted efforts to address critical issues related to inheritance rights and land disputes. Participants highlighted the importance of raising awareness about inheritance, traditionally favoring men over women, which had contributed to social inequality. This shift in perception empowered women to assert their rights, significantly contributing to gender equality. Additionally, government officials and FAO participants noted the project's focus on strengthening customary governance and resolving land disputes for returnees, ensuring that displaced individuals could reclaim their properties through dialogue and mediation. As a Wau government official remarked, "The trainings we participated in involved traditional court members and covered topics such as conflict resolution, dispute management, and the South Sudan land acts, specifically designed to enhance the customary governance system."

#### **Project's Relevance to Conflict Drivers, Peacebuilding, and HLP Needs in Wau**

The project's relevance in Wau was shown by its focus on addressing key conflict drivers related to land disputes and supporting vulnerable groups, particularly women, youth, and people with disabilities. The project's emphasis on HLP rights aligned with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda by promoting women's land ownership rights. Through an awareness campaign, women were empowered to reclaim their property, with 564 of the 1,146 cases addressed being women's land cases. The establishment of the Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC), with female and youth participation, also supported both the WPS and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas by encouraging greater involvement of these groups in local governance.

Traditional leaders and courts received training on land dispute resolution, which strengthened local governance structures and improved their ability to manage conflicts. A participant from the Wau Traditional Court remarked, "The trainings involved traditional court members and covered topics such as conflict resolution and dispute management," highlighting the role of the project in building capacity for conflict resolution.

Media participants were trained to raise awareness on HLP issues, providing platforms for vulnerable groups to express their concerns and contribute to addressing long-standing land ownership and inheritance tensions. Additionally, the project supported IDPs and returnees by helping them reclaim properties lost during the conflict through mediation. One IDP participant noted, "We have addressed several issues related to returnees' land disputes," indicating the project's success in mitigating land-related conflicts.

### 3.2.2. Relevance in Rubkona

Findings from Rubkona show that the project was relevant to participants' needs. The project made advances, but not all conflict drivers were addressed. The ToC stated, “The project’s alternative solutions for powerbrokers to achieve their HLP objectives will be identified, reducing their incentive to unfairly exert power and influence over disadvantaged groups and communities.” However, respondents felt that powerful actors remained beyond accountability, highlighting a gap between the project’s design and the deeper systemic challenges participants face, particularly around corruption and land grabbing. While the project indirectly addressed these issues by promoting transparency, legal awareness, and stronger institutions, it did not make these connections explicit. Given that many participants raised concerns about elite impunity, the project’s relevance could be further strengthened by more intentionally linking its work to entrenched power dynamics and the structural conditions that enable abuse.

#### **Project’s Relevance to Conflict Drivers, Peacebuilding, and HLP Needs in Rubkona**

The project's relevance in Rubkona was evident in its focus on addressing land disputes for vulnerable groups. One of the primary issues in Rubkona was the double allocation of land, a major source of tension and conflict. A male IOM participant noted, “We have faced a challenge of double allocation of land in this community. From the trainings, we are at least in position to negotiate with the government to reclaim our lands.” This highlights the project’s efforts to strengthen land governance and equip community members with the skills to resolve disputes legally and non-violently.

The project addressed land grabbing, a significant conflict driver in urban areas. One female IOM participant noted, “One of the key drivers of conflict in South Sudan, especially in urban settings, is the issue of land grabbing. The training provided [pathways to] accountability, and those involved in such practices should be prosecuted.” The emphasis on legal training and advocacy played a role in ensuring the peaceful resolution of land-related disputes while enhancing governance and accountability mechanisms. The focus on legal training and advocacy helped the probability that land-related conflicts would be addressed peacefully, according to respondents.

Vulnerable groups’ interests were represented in activities. A woman IOM participant shared, “The trainings also created awareness for the protection of vulnerable groups such as widows, people with disabilities, and the elderly people.” This helped empower marginalized populations to claim their property rights.

The project's relevance extended to supporting sustainable livelihoods. A woman FAO participant explained, “Our participation provided us with an opportunity to learn new skills needed for our sustenance, including floating farms and crop rotation, mix farming, and introduction to seed varieties that are resilient to drought and pests.” Several respondents noted challenges with water access, especially during the dry season. Considering the increasing frequency of extreme weather events in regions like Rubkona, integrating climate considerations into project planning should be standard practice. Climate sensitivity was a gap in the project’s relevance.

### 3.2.3. Relevance in Juba

Participants emphasized the severe land challenges Juba faces, including land grabbing, secondary occupations, and loss of land documentation during violent conflicts. The project helped communities register and renew land documentation, addressing disputes between farmers and pastoralists. Given the displacement and land conflicts since 2013, this intervention was essential. Journalists acknowledged the project's relevance but noted risks in covering sensitive issues like land grabbing, underscoring the dangers and importance of advocacy for justice within the HLP sector. The project was relevant to Juba's needs by addressing environmental and social conflict drivers, improving land governance, and empowering vulnerable populations to claim their rights.

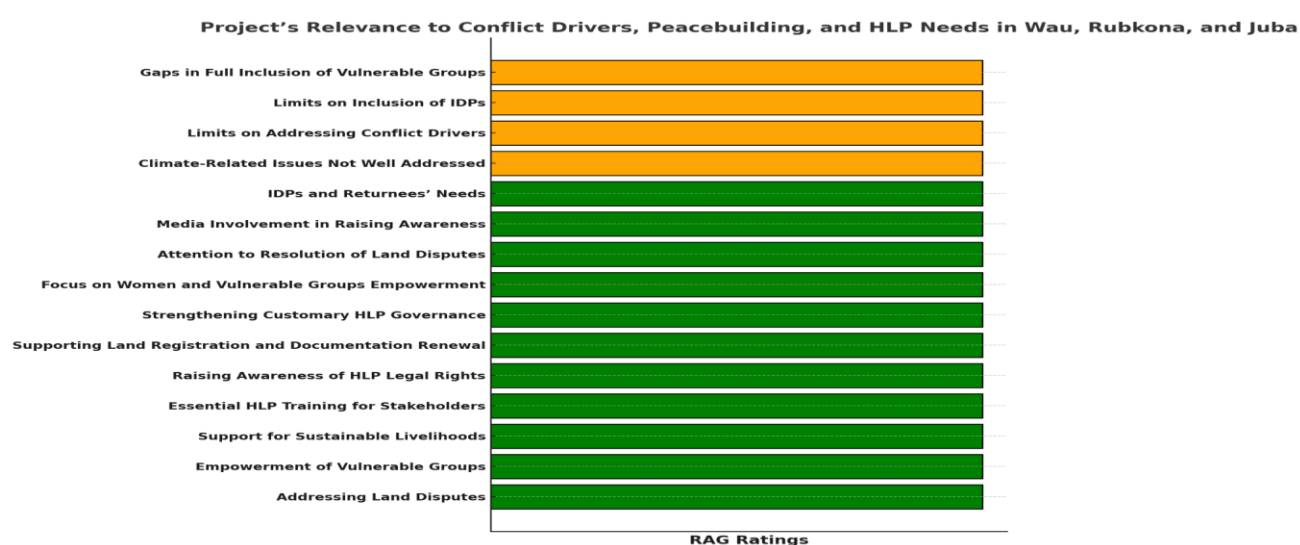
#### **Project’s Relevance to Conflict Drivers, Peacebuilding, and HLP Needs in Juba**

Juba struggles with land grabbing, displacement, and loss of land documentation following the 2013 conflict. Respondents positively reported the support received for getting their land documentation. Also, according to respondents, the project is linked to broader conflict drivers, including environmental factors. A government official remarked, “HLP issues can be classified into natural conflicts, such as climate change, and man-made challenges, like civil wars.” He emphasized that climate issues were central to land conflicts, explaining that disputes often arose over water points, farmlands, and grazing spaces.

The project strengthened customary governance systems by training local chiefs and leaders in HLP training. One male chief FAO participant emphasized, “The awareness sessions, especially on the classification of land into public, private, and customary land, were very important.” By mapping out and understanding these distinctions, people can more clearly define their interests and claims on land. This process helps organize land ownership and resolve disputes, as individuals and groups can better understand where their rights and interests lie. It supports transparency in land management and helps prevent conflicts over land ownership.

The project addressed the needs of vulnerable populations, particularly women and people with disabilities, by providing them with knowledge about their HLP rights. As one woman chief noted, “Women are now able to claim their HLP rights because they are well informed about their rights under the law.” This quote reflects the relevance of the project’s legal awareness activities in contexts shaped by patriarchal norms, where access to information is often limited. However, the project revealed gaps in IDP inclusion, with one IOM participant stating, “There was a largely absent representation of IDPs in HLP matters,” highlighting the need for more inclusive approaches that reflect the priorities of displaced populations in peacebuilding processes.’

Figure 1 RAG Analysis of Project Relevance



### 3.3. Coherence

According to the OECD-DAC, coherence ensures that different policies and actors operate harmoniously and work together without conflict.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, coherence is assessed in two main areas: internal coherence, which examines how well an intervention aligns with an organization’s policy framework, in this case, UN frameworks, and external coherence, which refers to the alignment with national frameworks and national and local actors.

The project aligned with several UN frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda (SDGs), WPS, YPS, and national policies like the 2009 Land Law. However, coherence challenges arose, particularly in aligning with local and national actors. Coordination with the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA) was lacking despite its relevance to key project areas like HLP

<sup>18</sup> OECD. *Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en>.

and gender equality. Furthermore, communication gaps, especially around the project's closure, highlighted broader issues in collaboration, with some stakeholders unaware of key developments.

<b>The Project's Coherence</b>	
<b>Was the project aligned to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16? To what the project aligned with nationally owned, legislative agendas, and actors?</b>	The project was aligned with UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, such as SDG 16 , SDG 5, and SDG 1 . It promoted fair land governance and strengthened institutions by supporting HLP dispute resolution, legal literacy, and women's and youth's participation in decision-making. thus aligning with WPS and YPS agendas, and the 2009 Land Law, the project contributed to broader national stability.
<b>To what extent did the HLP project align with the efforts of various entities, including local, and national institutions?</b>	The project aligned well with PBF and UN priorities, supporting critical local and national actors. However, it encountered challenges in coordinating with local and national entities. Gaps in coordination, especially concerning communication and project closure timelines, highlighted difficulties in collaborating with local stakeholders and national institutions, despite its strong alignment with broader frameworks.

## **Alignment with Policy Frameworks and Systems**

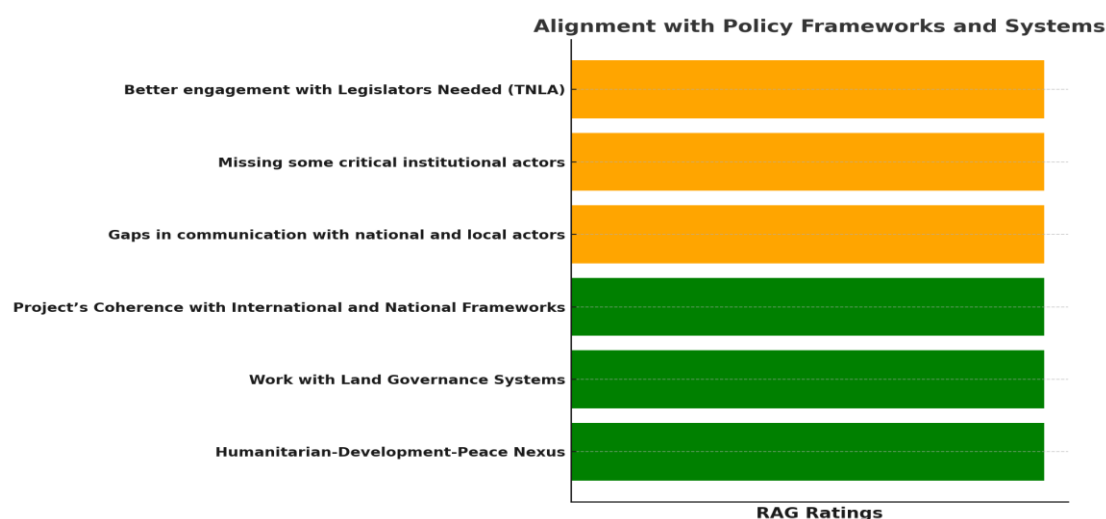
**Project's Coherence with International and National Frameworks:** The project aligned with national frameworks such as South Sudan's 2009 Land Law, R-ARCSS, and NAP 1325 (supporting the Women, Peace, and Security agenda) by reinforcing land governance systems and supporting vulnerable groups like IDPs, returnees, women, and people with disabilities. For example, in Rubkona, a participant noted that training empowered communities to negotiate land reclamation under the 2009 Land Law. The project also adhered to international goals such as SDG 16 (peacebuilding), SDG 5 (gender equality), and CEDAW by promoting women's inheritance rights and strengthening local governance systems. The project transformed perspectives on women's land ownership in all 3 regions, reinforcing SDG 5. Additionally, it contributed to SDG 1 (No Poverty) by providing agricultural training and livelihood support to vulnerable populations, boosting their economic resilience. By including youth in structures like the Natural Resource Management Committee, the project also supported the YPS agenda, promoting youth participation in peacebuilding. Women's leadership in peace processes was enhanced, particularly aligning with the goals of NAP 1325 and the WPS framework, promoting women's participation in decision-making processes across governance structures.

**Land Governance Systems:** Land governance systems, especially customary systems, which are more accessible to communities, were a central focus of the project and demonstrated strong alignment. Strengthening these systems and training local leaders and traditional courts was a positive step towards better mediation of land disputes. However, despite its alignment with South Sudan’s legal structures, including the 2009 Land Law, there was limited coordination with the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA). FAO’s work promoting land policy addressed some legislative concerns. Still, broader engagement with the TNLA, particularly around HLP issues, gender equality, and IDPs, could have improved coherence through knowledge sharing and coordination at the national level.

**Institutional Systems:** There was a level of governmental coordination, though more cross-government collaboration was needed. While the project worked with local leaders and government officials, coordination across national, state, and local levels of governance could have been enhanced. The military, a significant actor in land conflicts, was not actively included in the project framework. However, awareness-raising and capacity-building within the military would have helped address key conflict drivers in ways that are not threatening. As one respondent highlighted, the involvement of security forces in land conflicts remains an issue, and engaging them more directly could have provided a more comprehensive approach to addressing conflict.

**Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus:** The project also touched upon the broader humanitarian-development-peace nexus, addressing immediate humanitarian needs, such as resolving land disputes for displaced populations, while contributing to longer-term economic resilience and land security goals. The project’s focus on vulnerable groups, including IDPs and returnees, aligns well with the humanitarian goal.

*Figure 2 RAG Analysis of Project Coherence.*



### 3.4. Efficiency and Timeliness

The OECD defines efficiency as the extent to which an intervention delivers results in an economical and timely manner. Efficiency also evaluates how well resources are managed during implementation and within set timeframes. In complex and challenging environments, the project met most of its deliverables with some gaps, which is a significant achievement. Some of the challenges encountered in the project should be understood within the broader context of the depth of the populations' needs and the challenging conditions. The efficiency analysis focuses on three main criteria: economic efficiency, operational efficiency, and timeliness. The findings show that the project delivered results but encountered efficiency-related challenges, such as resource allocation issues, currency volatility, and delays in distributing assets and conducting the evaluation.

The Project's Efficiency	
<b>How efficiently were resources allocated and utilized?</b>	Resources were not always allocated efficiently. Agricultural tools and seeds were provided, but a lack of nearby water sources limited their effective use, showing gaps in planning. Additionally, currency fluctuations increased costs, posing a structural challenge.
<b>How efficient and successful was the project's implementation?</b>	The project carried out its activities and deliverables under challenging circumstances. Despite these hurdles, the project successfully met most of its objectives, but there were some problems with coordination and timely asset delivery.

#### Economic Efficiency:

**Resource allocation and planning issues:** There was an issue in resource allocation. A woman participant in Wau shared, "...we received the agricultural tools and dry season seeds which we planted, but we faced a challenge because of lack of nearby water sources." This reflects a lack of planning to ensure that resources like seeds and tools could be fully utilized. The project provided agricultural tools and seeds, but the lack of nearby water sources limited their effective use.

**Fluctuating Currency:** Currency fluctuations resulted in additional costs. Currency volatility posed a systemic and structural challenge that impacted the project.

#### Operational Efficiency:

**Coordination and communication issues:** Communication gaps impacted coordination, particularly around the project timeline. This will be discussed in the Localization and Sustainability chapters. Furthermore, there were coordination challenges among partners,

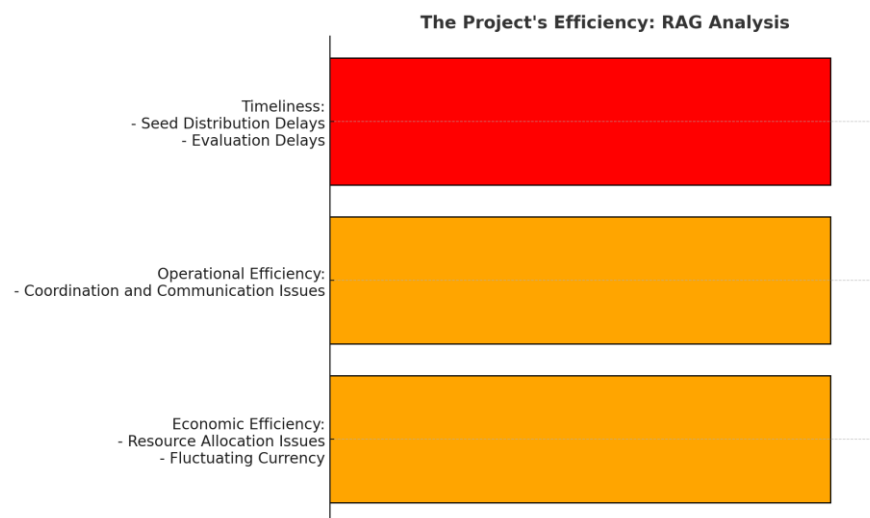
particularly at the Juba level, though forming the Technical Working Group helped address some of these issues.

**Timeliness:**

**Seed distribution delays:** Participants noted delays in receiving seeds, with one FAO participant highlighting that seeds "take long to be brought to us," sometimes arriving too late in the farming season. This impacted the timeliness and effectiveness of the agricultural assistance.

**Evaluation delays:** Evaluation delays impacted the implementation, limiting what could be accomplished within the short timeline.

*Figure 3 RAG Analysis of Project Efficiency*



### 3.5. Effectiveness

In this section, the analysis will evaluate the effectiveness of the HLP project, particularly how well it achieved its stated objectives, which included supporting vulnerable groups and advancing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas. The project's performance will be assessed based on the extent to which it enhanced land governance mechanisms, strengthened dispute resolution systems, and fostered collaboration between statutory and customary authorities.

Key focus areas include improvements in the legal processes surrounding land documentation and dispute resolution, community relations, and social inclusion. Specific attention will be given to the project's impact on vulnerable groups who benefitted from awareness campaigns on land rights. Additionally, the evaluation will cover economic and social outcomes, particularly in livelihood support through initiatives such as vegetable gardens, land documentation, and cooperative efforts.

<b>The Project's Effectiveness</b>	
<b>To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives and strategic vision?</b>	The findings indicate that the project effectively achieved key objectives, such as <i>improving legal literacy for conflict prevention</i> , strengthening collaboration between traditional courts and land authorities, and enhancing leadership capacity for land dispute resolution. These outcomes demonstrate progress toward the strategic vision of reducing conflict through improved land governance and dispute resolution mechanisms. The project's support for agricultural activities also contributed to economic stability and reduced competition over resources, furthering the objective of mitigating conflict.
<b>To what extent did the project substantively mainstream gender, support gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding, and address the inclusion of people with disabilities?</b>	Several findings highlight the project's success in mainstreaming gender, such as the enhanced leadership capacity among community leaders and the economic emancipation of women through agricultural cooperatives. The inclusion of women and youth in both decision-making and income-generating activities indicates a gender-responsive approach. It was also well noted by respondents that people with disabilities were prioritized in project activities. However, there were some areas where specific targeted efforts for people with disabilities were less visible. Furthermore, while gender was mainstreamed more could have been done to mainstream youth considerations.
<b>How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?</b>	The project's targeting of traditional courts, land authorities, and local leaders for capacity-building aligns well with the objective of strengthening local governance for land dispute resolution. The geographic targeting, such as in Wau, seems appropriate given the region's vulnerability to land disputes. However, challenges in sustaining agricultural initiatives due to water scarcity highlight the need for better geographic planning in terms of resource availability. This suggests that the project's targeting could have been refined to ensure that geographic and beneficiary selection matched the available resources and the environmental context.

### 3.5.1. Effectiveness in Wau

The findings from Wau highlight the project's effectiveness in addressing key challenges related to land governance, conflict resolution, and gender inclusion. While the project made progress in empowering vulnerable groups and reducing land-related tensions, implementation fell short in other areas, particularly in terms of resource management and institutional engagement.

#### **Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) in Wau**

**Women's HLP and Economic Empowerment:** The project improved women's land governance and dispute resolution participation. Women felt more confident securing land rights due to training. One participant noted the project "enhanced the community's land governance mechanisms," increasing the capacity of the traditional courts they depend on. It also raised awareness of women's inheritance rights and helped process long-pending land documents, reducing vulnerability to land grabbing. One participant, who had not processed her land documents in 18 years, successfully organized her paperwork with support from IOM. Additionally, FAO's vegetable farming initiatives empowered women, with one saying, "I rarely buy vegetables from the market because of the support I got," improving food security and income for vulnerable groups such as IDPs, returnees, and people with disabilities.

**Gaps in YPS:** HLP rights are central to youth's social and economic empowerment. Inheritance is the leading way youth obtain land, but orphans and those without inheritance face risks of landlessness. Additionally, land subdivision among multiple heirs can hinder agricultural productivity.<sup>19</sup> As life expectancy rises, younger individuals face longer waiting periods to inherit family land, which delays their access to essential resources for livelihood. This postponement reduces their opportunities for critical experiences in managing land and resources, limiting their chances for economic growth and investment.<sup>20</sup> Despite some focus on youth in certain activities and studies, the project largely underexplored the link between HLP rights and the YPS agenda. The project succeeded in engaging youth but did not fully address HLP issues with an intersectional approach, and youth mainstreaming was limited.

#### **Effectiveness of the project's targeting strategy in Wau**

**Vulnerable Groups Land Governance and Economic Empowerment:** Overall, the project's strategy focused on vulnerable groups, which is evident in the responses from the FGDs and KIIs. The project improved land documentation processes for vulnerable groups, returnees, IDPs, women, youth, and people with disabilities by enhancing legal literacy and empowering land

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<sup>19</sup> David Deng, Samuel Maliamungu, and Polit Gok Waar. *Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Referral Pathways in South Sudan*. International Organization for Migration (IOM), August 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

governance systems. The project strengthened conflict resolution through formal alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods and supported traditional courts. One respondent noted that traditional leaders were more accessible and efficient, making dispute resolution more inclusive. In addition, it helped IDPs recover land rights and documentation, which is critical for their reintegration. Introducing vegetable farming and efficient land use helped participants boost their household incomes, secure food supplies, and build financial resilience. However, as previously shared, there were challenges regarding accessing water. One government official stated, “The project aimed to enhance economic resilience by providing agricultural support and cooperatives. Unfortunately, similar to many of the ten locations, it encountered failure primarily due to water scarcity and severe heat waves.” This was a common critique from respondents.

**Gaps in Media:** According to respondents, there was individual-level improvement from the media training but limitations at the institutional level. One respondent noted, “The training we underwent did not encompass the management of our institutions,” highlighting a gap in comprehensive institutional capacity building. Another identified the lack of engagement from the land department, stating, “The coverage tends to be one-sided as there is no representative from the land department.” This suggests missed opportunities for broader stakeholder perhaps encouraging communication between government and media. This highlights the need for points stronger cross-sector collaboration to ensure the project's media impact is more holistic.

## **Results Framework Achievements Wau**

This analysis synthesizes responses from KIIs and FGDs, aligning them with the results framework to evaluate achievements through participants' perspectives. From the respondents' point of view, the project improved legal literacy among vulnerable populations, specifically regarding land governance and documentation. Respondents noted that knowledge gained from the project empowered individuals, especially women, IDPs, and people with disabilities, to secure their land rights through legal processes, preventing conflicts over land ownership. This aligns with **Output 1.4** (Support inclusive community awareness and inter-communal dialogues on housing, land, and property rights) and **Output 1.1** (Capacity of community structures for functional alternative dispute resolution mechanisms built), contributing to **Outcome 1** by building more informed communities capable of resolving land disputes.

### **List of Achievements:**

**Improved Legal Literacy for Conflict Prevention:** The project successfully addressed land documentation issues by raising awareness of legal processes and reducing land disputes among vulnerable populations. This reflects the project's alignment with SDG 16 and directly supports the aim of **Outcome 1**: peaceful resolution of housing, land, and property disputes.

**Enhanced Food Security and Income Generation:** Through agricultural interventions such as providing seeds and tools, the project boosted food security and income generation despite environmental challenges like water scarcity. This supports **Output 3.1** (Community-driven prioritization of recovery, resilience, and self-sustenance), contributing to **Outcome 3** by reducing competition over scarce resources, even though water scarcity remains a limitation.

**Strengthening Collaboration Between Traditional Courts and Land Authorities:**

According to respondents in Wau, the project effectively bridged gaps between traditional and statutory governance systems, improving land dispute resolution mechanisms. This aligns with **Output 1.2** (Customary Authorities trained on management of housing, land, and property rights) and **Outcome 1**, fostering an integrated governance structure for land disputes. Respondents noted better cooperation between traditional authorities and land offices.

**Building Conflict Resolution Skills Among Traditional Leaders:** Trainings provided to chiefs and traditional courts equipped local leaders with skills to manage complex land disputes, contributing to **Output 1.3** (Capacities and skills of County or sub-county Land Authorities) and **Outcome 2** by building consensus around sustainable HLP dispute resolution. This promoted local governance improvement and peacebuilding efforts.

**Output 1.5: Material, operational, and technical support to existing land dispute resolution mechanisms provided.** Office space for the HLP help desk in Wau was constructed to serve as a channel for land document requests and HLP dispute resolution within the Ministry of Housing. Unfortunately, a government official appropriated the newly equipped help desk office for personal use, undermining the intended purpose of the intervention and reflecting a misuse of resources meant to strengthen public service delivery. This reflects a broader pattern of misappropriation and highlights potential shortcomings in stakeholder engagement. Nonetheless, the problem was addressed, and the minister later dedicated alternative office space for the HLP help desk. This new space continues to operate and support beneficiaries in accessing land documentation services. Although the resolution was not ideal, it enabled the help desk to fulfill its intended function. IOM's support for the construction and renovation of HLP offices was part of a broader strategy that also included its work to establish an office within the newly created Land Reform Unit under the national ministry, tasked with operationalizing South Sudan's National Land Policy. Together, these efforts complemented FAO's national policy work, strengthening the link between local implementation and national reform. This dual approach helped strengthen institutional capacity at both local and national levels.

**Shortcomings:**

**Challenges in Sustaining Agricultural Initiatives Amid Water Scarcity:** While initial agricultural interventions were successful, water scarcity and extreme heat affected long-

term sustainability. This impacted the success of **Output 3.2** (Community prioritized assets, infrastructure, and services) and hindered **Outcome 3** by limiting the project's ability to support resilient, sustainable livelihoods in affected areas.

**Media Training Impacted by Lack of Institutional Representation:** Although the project improved individual capacities in media reporting on land issues, a lack of institutional representation (particularly from land departments) limited the comprehensiveness of media coverage. This affected **Output 1.4**, which aimed to raise awareness through media, and partially hindered **Outcome 2** by providing a narrow view of land issues and lacking a broader institutional perspective.

### 3.5.2. Effectiveness in Rubkona

This section presents the findings from the KIIs and FGDs conducted in Rubkona. The results reveal that the project faced more significant challenges in Rubkona than in Wau, largely due to the more complex environment. Rubkona's institutions and local authorities exhibit lower capacity, and the vulnerabilities and needs of the population are more pronounced. The combination of these factors created a challenging landscape for the project, making it more difficult to achieve sustainable outcomes.

#### **Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) in Rubkona**

**Women's HLP and Economic Empowerment:** The project significantly improved women's understanding of HLP rights, empowering them to assert their rights and actively participate in land governance. Through training on land ownership, inheritance, and international frameworks like the Maputo Protocol and CEDAW, women, including those with disabilities, gained confidence in navigating HLP legalities. A key achievement of the project was its support for women-led cooperatives and sustainable livelihoods, such as vegetable farming, which enhanced food security and household income generation. This economic empowerment contributed to community resilience and stability, in line with the WPS agenda. Furthermore, the support received on acquiring land ownership documentation had an economic impact. An IOM woman participant stated, "...poverty levels have decreased as vulnerable people now own land titles, and they can reside in their reclaimed or legally owned lands without the burden of paying rent."

**Reduction in Land-Related Violence:** HLP legal awareness training, according to respondents, reduced violent land disputes, enabling women and marginalized groups to assert their rights with less threat. This contributed to greater community cohesion and stability. One participant mentioned, "The training gave us the confidence to handle disputes peacefully." A woman participant stated, "I believe that if someone comes and grabbed my land today, I can confidently say, I will be able to reclaim my land back without fear." The inclusive participation of women and youth in HLP processes reinforced peacebuilding efforts and supported the objectives of the WPS and YPS agenda

**YPS: Youth Engagement in Dispute Resolution and Leadership:** Youth were actively engaged in dispute resolution and community leadership, particularly in Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites. They managed local conflicts and enhanced community stability, further embedding youth participation in peace and security efforts consistent with the YPS agenda. Youth and women were trained in culturally relevant dispute resolution mechanisms like the Nuer mat system. They were also trained in conflict management, with some addressing local disputes related to crop theft. These capacity-building efforts promoted peaceful conflict resolution, aligning with the WPS and YPS agendas.

### **Effectiveness of the Project's Targeting Strategy in Rubkona**

**Representation of Vulnerable Groups Challenge in Perceptions:** Some respondents in Rubkona raised concerns about the insufficient inclusion of marginalized groups, such as individuals with disabilities, IDPs, and those experiencing extreme poverty. While these populations were prioritized, some participants felt underrepresented in decision-making processes and did not directly benefit from HLP awareness initiatives. Accordingly, IDPs, many of whom are women and youth, were underrepresented in forums. As the project prioritized these groups, the perception may stem from the extensive needs within the communities, which exceeded what the project could address in this cycle. Nevertheless, most respondents noted that the project made significant efforts to include vulnerable groups.

**Challenges in Geographic Targeting:** There were challenges in some areas due to flooding, which affects farming zones and contributes to land scarcity. Solutions like floating farms were proposed to grow vegetables in flooded conditions, though they require more advanced technical training. A woman FAO participant reflected, "There is limited land for farming because most of the land has been submerged into water, creating competition over land. The use of floating farms would stop such conflicts." The need for better planning in flood-prone regions to mitigate land conflicts and ensure farming viability was emphasized.

**Support for Government Officials and Chiefs:** The project strengthened the capacity of both government authorities and traditional chiefs. The chiefs, elders, and other stakeholders attending the workshops in Rubkona were trained on managing traditional justice systems and addressing HLP issues in both Rubkona and Bentiu towns.<sup>21</sup> **Insufficient Support for Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.** While the project effectively supported traditional mechanisms, some respondents noted that the HLP dispute resolution processes were not significantly strengthened, especially in the absence of a well-established statutory court system in Rubkona.

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<sup>21</sup> Mijak, Deng Biong. *Rubkona County Customary Law Ascertainment, Review and Training of Traditional Chiefs Workshop Report*. Juba, South Sudan: IOM, June 5, 2023.

**Need for Extending Training to Military:** Participants suggested that HLP training should be extended to the military, especially in cases where military personnel had occupied community lands. Accordingly, involving these actors in the project would reduce land-related conflicts and promote conflict prevention, advancing R-ARCSS and SDG goals 1 and 16 by securing land rights for vulnerable groups. The project proposal lists the military as one of the key stakeholders, but the project did not plan a military-focused intervention.

## **Results Framework Achievements in Rubkona**

The findings from the KIIs and FGDs regarding the project's effectiveness in Rubkona reflect achievements in enhancing legal awareness, promoting conflict resolution, improving women's participation, and supporting economic resilience. However, respondents reported shortcomings, particularly regarding inclusivity, local adaptation, and the need for better representation of vulnerable groups. Below is a summary of the effectiveness achieved and the challenges identified, including the specific outcomes and outputs supported or hindered according to respondents.

### **Achievement of Outputs and Outcomes:**

#### **Outcome 1: Land Governance Mechanisms for Dispute Resolution Strengthened**

- **Capacity building:** While training sessions were conducted, some respondents mentioned uncertainty about the effectiveness of HLP dispute resolution mechanisms. This indicates gaps in either implementation or follow-up on the capacity built, which could be done through a monitoring system. To support functionality, a dedicated office space for the HLP help desk within the state Ministry of Housing, Land, and Public Utilities (HLPU) was also renovated and officially handed over.
- **Inclusivity:** Vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and IDPs were underrepresented in some activities in the view of some respondents.
- **Resource gaps:** The lack of resources for major infrastructure (e.g., dykes, flood mitigation) hindered efforts to resolve disputes over land and property fully. Respondents speak of needs that are not part of the project design; however, the response points to needs that may be addressed through other means.

#### **Output 1.1: Capacity of Community Structures for Functional Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms Built**

- **Underdeveloped dispute resolution mechanisms:** Despite efforts to build capacity, participants highlighted ongoing challenges, such as the absence of effective customary or statutory mechanisms, leading to unresolved disputes. Rubkona's HLP governance system is the weakest of the three project target areas.

#### **Output 1.2: Customary Authorities Trained on Management of Housing, Land, and Property Rights**

- **Lack of statutory court functionality:** Several participants noted the absence of functional statutory courts. Accordingly, this also contributed to delays in resolving high-value land disputes, but this is a structural issue rather than a project shortcoming.

#### **Output 1.4: Support for Inclusive Community Awareness**

- **Awareness not fully achieved:** Although progress was made in awareness-raising, respondents indicated that certain groups (IDPs, women, and people with disabilities) did not fully benefit from the training. Barriers to their participation, such as problems with accessibility, prevented their participation. Still, respondents noted the project's focus on including vulnerable groups.

### Shortcomings

- **Insufficient Support for Vulnerable Groups:** Some participants felt that vulnerable groups, mainly persons with disabilities and IDPs, were underrepresented in the project. The lack of accessibility resources (e.g., wheelchairs and eyeglasses) hindered the participation of people with disabilities, and the challenges faced by IDPs were not listed but should be reviewed. **Impact on Outputs:** This gap reflects shortcomings in **Output 1.4**, limiting the project's capacity to empower marginalized groups fully.
- **Ineffective Agricultural Production and Prioritization:** The focus on vegetable farming was critiqued for not aligning with local needs for staple crops like sorghum and maize. This limited the long-term food security and the communities' economic resilience. This reflects shortcomings in *Output 3.2: Community prioritized assets, infrastructure, and services provided*.

### 3.5.3. Effectiveness in Juba

The findings from Juba KIIs and FGDs reflect the complex environment of the capital, where the national political agenda, including preparations for elections, plays a significant role in shaping priorities. While the project successfully addressed many HLP issues, including women's land rights and economic empowerment, it faced challenges due to the broader focus on national concerns such as the constitution-making process and transitional governance. The project made progress in supporting vulnerable populations, including IDPs and women, yet the political dynamics in Juba often diverted attention from these critical issues. Despite these hurdles, the project contributed to raising awareness of land rights and building more inclusive land governance mechanisms, albeit with some gaps in addressing the needs of marginalized groups.

### Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Mainstreaming.

**Women's HLP Empowerment:** According to respondents in Juba, the project advanced women's understanding of HLP issues, equipping them with tools to address conflicts such as land grabbing and inheritance disputes. Traditional leaders, including women, were trained to balance gender rights over land, building an environment where women could assert their rights and actively contribute to peaceful conflict resolution. This initiative aligned with Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) principles by empowering women to participate in decision-making processes. **Mediation and Conflict Resolution:** Training on mediation and conflict resolution helped communities settle disputes over resources such as water points and land. Women were

central to these efforts, learning to mediate and manage conflicts using win-win approaches. By positioning women as mediators, the project aligned with WPS objectives by ensuring women's leadership in peacebuilding at the community level. Additionally, training on international legal frameworks, such as CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol, further supported women's capacity to engage in peace and governance processes.

**Youth Inclusivity:** There was little to no mention of issues pertaining to youth but the project data shows they were well included in activities. As stated before, more could be done to support the mainstreaming of youth-centered approaches to HLP.

### **Project's Targeting strategy in Juba**

**Vulnerable Groups, IDPs, and People with Disabilities:** Vulnerable groups such as IDPs, returnees, and people with disabilities were supported through awareness-raising initiatives about their HLP rights and assistance in obtaining documentation for their property. Although respondents in Juba did not explicitly mention the inclusion of people with disabilities, project reports confirm that they were included in these efforts, ensuring that their HLP rights were addressed along with those of other marginalized populations. Additionally, efforts were directed toward supporting IDPs and returnees, particularly by providing seeds and tools to help them rebuild their livelihoods through agricultural activities. These interventions helped restore economic stability for displaced populations and provided vulnerable groups with the means to recover from conflict and displacement.

**Traditional Authorities and Government Officials:** The project effectively supported chiefs in Juba, who reported facing challenges due to their "dwindling authority."<sup>22</sup> Chiefs highlighted the absence of harmonized and documented customary laws, emphasizing the need to be written and translated into indigenous languages. Additionally, they expressed frustration with the lack of government intervention to address insecurity and provide the legal support necessary for their courts. The project also strengthened collaboration between customary and statutory systems, an important element in building more effective dispute-resolution mechanisms.

**Support for Media:** Supporting journalists to report on HLP issues proved an effective element of the project's targeting strategy, as the need for awareness and reporting on HLP is extensive. As part of the awareness-raising strategy, media personnel were trained to cover HLP-related stories, particularly those affecting vulnerable groups. One journalist highlighted the severity of the need for HLP reporting by stating, "he reported a case about a widow who was strangled to death by her in-laws simply because she refused to leave her matrimonial home to her in-laws who wanted the same property. This is one of the most grievous examples of HLP violations that

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<sup>22</sup> Mijak, Deng Biong. *Assessment of CL and Traditional Systems of Justice Status in Juba County*. Prepared for IOM, November 2022, 9.

have been committed and continue to be committed against women in South Sudan." He further noted that journalists often have limited information on such cases because many occur in remote village areas that are hard to reach. This underscores the importance of empowering journalists to report on HLP issues and amplifying the voices of those affected by these injustices.

**Vulnerable Groups Not Fully Included:** Despite efforts, some respondents said the project did not fully include IDPs, persons with disabilities, and younger women in key decision-making processes and land governance training. The underrepresentation of these vulnerable groups limited their involvement in peacebuilding and economic empowerment efforts.

**Corruption and Abuse by Powerful Actors:** Some respondents reported that IDPs, particularly those in Juba, felt they did not receive sufficient support in securing their HLP rights. The project did not fully address the restitution of land taken by powerful actors, leaving IDPs vulnerable to land-related conflicts. The project prioritized helping people acquire land documentation and strengthening land governance systems. The project operates under the assumption that improving land governance systems will influence powerful actors. While some respondents agree with this assumption and others do not, a common sentiment was that having proper documentation significantly empowered landowners against land grabbing.

**Military Actors Not Included:** Some chiefs expressed concerns that the project did not comprehensively address conflict drivers, particularly politically motivated land disputes. The lack of engagement with political and military actors involved in land grabbing limited the project's impact on land governance.

**Geographic Targeting Gaps:** According to some respondents, targeting was not comprehensive, with certain high-conflict and displacement areas left without adequate support for securing land rights. This limitation reduced the project's ability to reach vulnerable groups, particularly IDPs. However, this is a common challenge in South Sudan, where projects often face constraints in covering all areas of need due to the vast scope of vulnerabilities and limited resources.

### **Results Framework Achievements in Juba**

The project in Juba achieved progress in helping communities register land, renew land documents, and resolve disputes. These efforts contributed to the reduction of conflict risks associated with HLP disputes. However, shortcomings were reported regarding the underrepresentation of IDPs in land governance discussions and challenges with addressing land controlled by military and political elites.

- The training offered communities the chance to register their land, renew land documents, and resolve disputes between farmers and pastoralists. Additionally, land registration

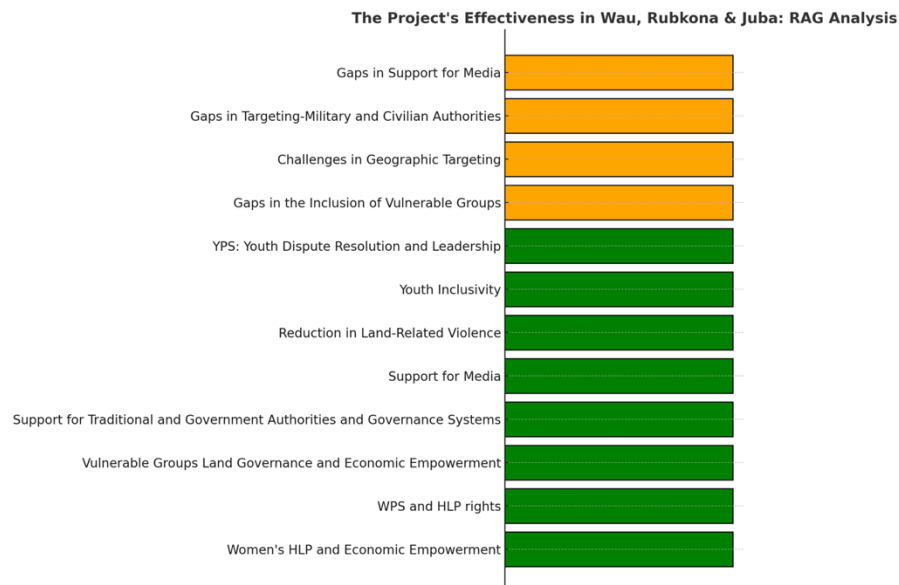
enables the government to generate revenue through taxes. Thus respondents highlighted how the project made progress toward the following: **Output 1.1, Output 1.2, Output 1.3 and Outcome 3: Reduced risk of conflict and violence due to HLP disputes because of competition over scarce resources.**

- Training for journalists supported them on their HLP reporting, which they find to be an extremely sensitive issue that can pose risks when it involves land grabbing and forced evictions by those in power. **Output 1.4 Support inclusive community awareness.**
- Traditional authorities reported being better equipped to perform their duties and more informed about women's inheritance rights. **Output 1.3 Capacities and skills of County or sub-county Land Authorities strengthened.**

#### Shortcomings:

- Some respondents noted that the project did not sufficiently address the HLP issues faced by IDPs. They also highlighted that IDPs were underrepresented in land governance discussions, limiting their ability to benefit from the project. **Output 2.3 Returnee and host inter-communal engagements and dialogues supported.; Output 1.4 Support inclusive community awareness.**
- Military personnel and political elites maintained control over land that rightfully belonged to displaced persons. Respondents reported not having mechanisms for land restitution hindered when dealing with the elite. The project's ability to address land-related conflicts and ensure equitable access for vulnerable populations was limited. **Output 2.2 Diagnosis of HLP disputes and development of tools for their resolution; Outcome 3: Reduced risk of conflict and violence due to HLP disputes because of competition over scarce resources.**

Figure 4 RAG Analysis of Project Effectiveness.



## Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation process was extensive, with several assessments, such as conflict mapping, baseline and end-line reporting, conflict analysis, and gender analysis of HLP, conducted in the target areas. These reports were instrumental in the project implementation, providing valuable insights to management and staff. The project was informed by substantive research on HLP in South Sudan, which provided insights into the regional challenges.

However, an issue during the evaluation was the method for monitoring progress. The staff who were interviewed did not know the method for measuring the reduction of conflict risks and violence. Peace metrics are difficult to measure, and project staff did not clearly explain how such conflict outcome reduction was calculated. Effective monitoring requires coordinated efforts across staff, management, and partners, all needing to track these changes over time.

For example, IOM supported 1,459 cases from Wau, Rubkona, and Juba. However, limited information is available on the types of cases, which is necessary for assessing the project's impact on peacebuilding goals. Unfortunately, M&E staff from IOM and FAO were unavailable for interviews, limiting insights into this aspect.

Additionally, the evaluation process had several limitations. The timeline was short, and the project implementing partners were unprepared. They would have benefitted from better coordination and collaboration before the evaluation began. A preliminary meeting to discuss the evaluation criteria and prepare documents, stakeholder lists, and a facilitation team could have improved the process. This coordination process could have occurred in the Technical Working Group, involving the Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat to brief on PBF evaluation standards. Furthermore, this would have been an opportunity to empower local stakeholders to provide some input into the process other than just as respondents.

Some of the challenges encountered during the evaluation are systemic. A report on PBF evaluations noted similar shortcomings, with difficulties accessing essential reports, varying evaluation quality, and short timelines limiting the depth of analysis.<sup>23</sup> Research requires adequate time. Furthermore, this evaluation highlighted the importance of stakeholder participation for sustainability and localization, suggesting that validating evaluation instruments and stakeholder input on data analysis would be beneficial, though participatory processes require sufficient time.

### **M&E Recommendations:**

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<sup>23</sup> United Nations. *Evaluation of the United Nations Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund 2020 GYPI Cohort*. Evaluation Report, Final, January 24, 2024.

- **Improve Peace Metrics Monitoring:** Establish methods to measure peace-related outcomes, such as reduced conflict risk and violence. Ensure that staff, management, and partners collaborate on tracking progress over time.
- **Strengthen Coordination:** Conduct pre-evaluation meetings to align on evaluation criteria and prepare necessary documents, stakeholder lists, and teams. This can improve readiness for evaluations.
- **Include Local Stakeholders:** Create an inclusive evaluation committee that would support coordination and validate research tools, data and drafts of the report.
- **Engage M&E Specialists:** Ensure that M&E staff from all key organizations, such as FAO and IOM, are available for consultation to provide insights into the monitoring process.
- **Allocate More Time for Evaluations:** Address systemic challenges by allocating sufficient time for thorough evaluations, allowing for in-depth analysis, stakeholder participation, and validation of evaluation instruments.
- **Conduct an evaluation sometime after the project's completion:** Immediate assessments may not fully capture a project's sustainability, or its impact is not possible to discern.

### 3.6. Sustainability

***"The communities cannot sustain the initiative because of the country's economic meltdown. Civil servants have not been paid for the last ten months and this makes it hard for the communities to mobilize funds to continue with the HLP project."*—**

Woman Chief, FAO Participant, Juba

According to the OECD, sustainability is "The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue."<sup>24</sup> It emphasizes that projects must be environmentally and financially sustainable, focusing on whether positive outcomes endure beyond the project's end. This also includes the ability of local institutions, stakeholders, or systems to maintain these outcomes without relying on continued external assistance.

<sup>24</sup> OECD. *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management for Sustainable Development*. 2nd ed. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1787/632da462-en-fr-es>.

In South Sudan, achieving sustainability is exceptionally hard. The nation's economic and political instability, lack of resources, underdeveloped governance systems, and complex conflict environment make sustaining interventions difficult. The population's limited awareness of fundamental rights, particularly regarding HLP, further complicates efforts to maintain positive outcomes without external support.

In the KIIs and FGDs, many respondents expressed doubts about the project's sustainability, pointing to the absence of an exit strategy and the lack of resources needed to maintain its achievements. While the project successfully built the skills and knowledge of traditional authorities and government officials and raised awareness about land documentation, much of the progress remains dependent on external support. Nonetheless, participants reported increased efforts to secure land documentation independently, demonstrating a degree of sustainability from raising awareness.

However, given the limited availability of resources, a realistic assessment of what can be achieved without additional external assistance is necessary. Important steps were taken to build long-term benefits, but more was required in terms of planning and support to ensure the project's outcomes could persist in South Sudan's challenging environment. This highlights the need for careful consideration of sustainability in such contexts, especially when essential resources for maintaining progress are scarce.

That said, the complexities and challenges in South Sudan should not dissuade donors, as the need for support could not be more evident. Sustainability in such a context requires a clear strategy and dedicated funding. A project is just one part of the sustainability process, and the planning must account for the post-project timeline. Having a clear-eyed approach to what happens after a project ends is critical to ensuring that the positive outcomes can endure and that the progress made during the intervention is not lost. This is particularly important in environments like South Sudan, where ongoing support is essential to bridge the gaps left by fragile systems and limited resources.

Based on the sustainability plan provided in the project proposal, here is an assessment of how well it meets sustainability criteria, focusing on local ownership, capacity building, institutional support, and risks related to continuation without external assistance:

### **Sustainability Plan Exit Strategy**

#### **Indicators of an Exit Strategy:**

- **Local Ownership and Capacity Building:** The plan aimed to transfer skills to local actors so they could independently continue HLP dispute resolution and violence reduction.
- **Coordination with Government Institutions:** The project saw collaboration with the government as a means of ensuring continuity through local institutions.

- **Community Consensus Building:** Involving community members in decision-making was a means to create self-sustaining solutions that would reduce reliance on external support.

#### **Gaps in the Exit Strategy:**

- **No Clear Timeline:** The proposal lacked specific timelines for phasing out external support or handing over responsibilities.
- **Unclear Stakeholder Readiness:** The plan did not propose indicators for local actors' readiness to sustain project achievements.

There was no clear plan for a phase-out, and the KIIs and FGDs reflect a lack of knowledge of the project's end.

#### **Acknowledged Risks in the Sustainability Plan**

The proposal acknowledged several risks, such as deficiencies in the land registry systems and the broader issues caused by overlapping, duplicate, or non-compliant land title systems. By recognizing these risks, the project responsibly addressed the potential challenges to sustainability. However, the fact that these risks could not be fully addressed within the project's timeline underscored the need for a strategy that would prepare the community and local institutions to confront these challenges after the intervention concluded.

#### **Overall Assessment**

The project proposal demonstrated a commitment to sustainability through local ownership, capacity building, and coordination with government institutions. However, the reliance on donor support for follow-up funding and the risks posed by weak institutional systems suggested that the project's sustainability would be vulnerable without continued external assistance. Respondents and IOM and FAO project management echoed this concern. A more explicit exit strategy, focused on ensuring financial and organizational self-reliance at the community and state levels, would arguably have strengthened the sustainability of the project's outcomes.

<b>The Project's Sustainability</b>	
<b>Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy?</b>	The sustainability plan had gaps, particularly in its reliance on external funding and lack of clear strategies for local resource mobilization. While some efforts were made to promote local ownership, these were insufficiently supported by concrete, long-term plans.

<b>How strong is the commitment of the government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives?</b>	Government commitment is limited due to a lack of resources, political instability, and competing priorities. Stakeholders at the community level demonstrated some commitment, but without strong institutional backing, sustainability remains uncertain.
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### 3.6.1. Sustainability in Wau

The findings reveal concerns about the project's sustainability, with many participants unaware of the project's conclusion or exit strategy. One chief noted, "The project's conclusion was not effectively communicated to stakeholders, including myself," highlighting a communication gap that may have hindered efforts to ensure continuity.

Participants emphasized the importance of applying the skills and knowledge gained, but challenges such as limited resources and high turnover among chiefs and officials were seen as obstacles. An IOM community mobilizer mentioned that turnover could jeopardize progress, leading to a loss of institutional memory.

Financial constraints were also a concern. A government official pointed out that "financial constraints and inadequate planning have hindered the effective utilization of trained personnel." To address these risks, IOM project officer Aia Khadem suggested involving academic institutions in future training. Despite these challenges, there were positive efforts, such as the Rizq al Marra Cooperative's work to sustain operations and a participant's proposal to appoint HLP ambassadors to promote awareness after the project's end.

### Stakeholder Commitment

The KII and FGD responses reveal gaps in the project's exit strategy and communication. Many participants, including a chief, were unaware that the project had concluded, suggesting a need for better coordination and feedback mechanisms in future projects.

While some participants expressed a willingness to take ownership of activities like HLP advocacy, doubts were raised about the broader community's commitment. Concerns about institutional turnover, resource demands, and a lack of financial strategies also highlighted challenges in ensuring long-term sustainability.

The government's and stakeholders' commitment to sustaining the project's results is mixed. Courts remain committed to upholding the project's initiatives, but financial constraints, resource limitations, and leadership challenges raise concerns about maintaining the project's momentum, especially at the institutional level.

### 3.6.2. Sustainability in Rubkona

In Rubkona, the project's sustainability faces major challenges due to underdevelopment, displacement from conflict and climate change, and the influx of returnees. The community and government lack the resources and capacity to continue independently, resulting in a heavy reliance on external support, particularly from donors.

Participants stressed this dependence, with one woman stating, "the community members cannot possibly sustain this work on their own without the input of the donors," and a male participant noting, "there is a shortage of resources," reflecting the limited local support. The government's ability to sustain the project was also questioned, with a woman chief highlighting systemic barriers such as lack of resources, technical capacity, political instability, and an absence of supportive policies.

Despite these obstacles, the community aspires to take ownership of the project, but securing independent funding remains uncertain. While there is hope for resource mobilization, external support, especially from donors, is seen as critical for the project's long-term sustainability in Rubkona.

#### **Exit Strategy and Stakeholder Commitment in Rubkona**

The project's exit strategy was unclear, with participants noting the community's lack of technical knowledge and preparedness to sustain the project independently. One respondent mentioned the community's limited involvement in the project's design, affecting their ability to take ownership.

This lack of early involvement and insufficient resources raised doubts about continuing without donor support, especially for technical guidance from FAO. The government's limited commitment, lack of resources, and political instability further hindered sustainability, while displacement from wars and floods added additional challenges.

Despite these issues, some suggestions were offered, such as promoting women's land ownership and community innovation. However, participants remained doubtful about sustaining the project without external support and questioned the government's capacity to contribute to its continuity.

### 3.6.3. Sustainability in Juba

In Juba, a government official stressed that "sustainability can only be realized when there are trained and qualified HLP cadres," highlighting the need for more trainers and financial support. This reveals a gap in capacity-building, as training needs to extend beyond elites to include diverse community members. A lawyer involved in the project noted, "HLP is a very sensitive issue in the country," referencing political tensions, including land disputes and the imprisonment of those who speak out, which adds to the difficulty of achieving sustainable outcomes.

Authorities acknowledged the need for external support, with a chief stating, "I do not think the government is ready to adopt the HLP issues on its own... but with continued support from development partners such as FAO." Another official echoed this, stating that the national government is preoccupied with broader issues like elections and constitution-making, and thus not focused on HLP. This dependency on external actors highlights the need for continued collaboration to sustain progress.

Despite these challenges, some stakeholders remain engaged, like a male chief from FAO, who mentioned plans to "analyze the manual that was presented by FAO and IOM" to adapt it for local governance. However, such efforts appear fragmented, with minimal involvement of local media, who, as one participant noted, were only included in trainings and missed the opportunity to raise awareness and engage the community more effectively.

### **Exit Strategy and Stakeholder Commitment in Juba**

The findings reveal that the project needed a clearer, well-coordinated exit strategy, particularly in its early design and implementation stages. Similar to Wau and Rubkona, some stakeholders were not consulted. As an IOM participant pointed out, there was an issue of non-involvement during the initial stages, leading to a lack of local ownership and investment in the project's success. This may have hindered the development of a strong exit strategy that could support long-term sustainability.

Some stakeholders expressed a willingness to engage more proactively with the project, though they highlighted that resources would be a challenge moving forward. While there is a clear desire for continuity, the challenges remain extensive.

### **3.7. Localization**

***"We were actively involved in both the design and implementation phases of the project...the community and all stakeholders played a crucial role in the implementation phase, participating in activities such as mobilization, participant selection, and the identification of vulnerable and marginalized groups including individuals with disabilities."*** —

Chief IOM Participant, Juba.

As defined by global standards and OECD-DAC criteria, localization focuses on shifting decision-making, resources, power, and capacity to local actors.<sup>25</sup> Thus, localization is a form of transformation characterized by a shift in power and resources. The HLP project empowered

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<sup>25</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Framing DAC Member Approaches to Enabling Locally Led Development*. DCD(2023)47. Development Co-operation Directorate. Unclassified. Paris: OECD, November 13, 2023

local actors, community members, leaders, and government officials to take ownership of critical decisions, manage resources, and guide project outcomes. While responses from KIIs and FGDs were generally positive, the project fell short of achieving a transformative vision of localization.

Most responses indicated that national and local stakeholders were involved throughout the project cycle. A few amber-rated responses emerged from individuals not directly involved in the design, implementation, or assessment stages. Most involvement in the design phase came from government officials and traditional authorities, though some expressed a desire for greater participation. A standard critique was that many respondents were unaware the project was ending, indicating communication gaps.

One shortcoming was the limited transfer of power to local actors. Although local actors were engaged in assessments and certain design aspects, the project did not fully empower them as decision-makers. Instead, local actors were often treated as contributors rather than given control over decisions. Without this authority, the project risked reinforcing existing power dynamics, leaving local actors involved without meaningful influence.

The project also lacked clearly defined localization goals.<sup>26</sup> Had the project been more localized, local actors would have been involved in planning its sustainability and closure. Their limited role in these areas highlights a gap in achieving true localization.

Moreover, while local actors were involved in assessments, their participation remained mostly at the level of providing input, without involvement in co-design or evaluation processes. To achieve deeper localization, local actors should have been more engaged in evaluating the project’s success. Empowering local actors would involve including them in interpreting data and shaping outcomes, possibly through sense-making opportunities. A collaborative review of data would also address misunderstandings, such as concerns that not enough women were involved despite data showing that most participants were women.

The Project’s Localization	
<b>Were national and local stakeholders sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle?</b>	Overall, national and local stakeholders were engaged throughout the project cycle, with consistent input from community members, media representatives, and local authorities during assessments, implementation, and dialogue on HLP issues. However, despite this engagement, the deeper shift of decision-making power and control to local actors, central to the concept of localization, did not occur.

<sup>26</sup> Parry, Jacqueline, and Birte Vogel. 2023. “An Illusion of Empowerment? A Twenty-Year Review of United Nations Reports on Localization in Iraq.” *International Peacekeeping* 30 (5): 611–41. doi:10.1080/13533312.2023.2265293

<p><b>Did the project strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders, including governments and civil society organizations?</b></p>	<p>The project strengthened capacities, of stakeholders, including local chiefs, community leaders and community members. Local authorities were involved in various stages, and the project's ongoing discussions and assessments helped build local expertise on HLP issues. However, there were some challenges in long-term capacity building and the achievements made toward this end.</p>
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### 3.7.1. Localization in Wau

The initial assessment by IOM in Naivasha and Masana demonstrated a commitment to understanding the community's HLP needs, ensuring the project design aligned with the local context. Ongoing updates and media engagement kept HLP issues visible and inclusive, particularly by involving individuals with disabilities. In Wau, the project focused on local agricultural needs by assessing the required seeds for vegetable gardening and addressing health concerns, which helped ensure its relevance and sustainability. Consultations with local stakeholders, including authorities and chiefs, were key to the project's inclusivity, especially in facilitating land allocation for IDPs and building local capacity through training. While there were some communication gaps during the design phase, with participants expressing uncertainty about their involvement, the overall approach to localization—through collaboration with local authorities and media—positively contributed to the project's impact and sustainability.

#### **Wau National and Local Stakeholders Consultations**

The stakeholder consultation and involvement throughout the project can be summarized into three key themes: early consultation through assessments, active involvement in implementation, and some inconsistencies in engagement.

Firstly, several stakeholders highlighted the initial assessments to gather community input during the early design phase. For instance, one respondent mentioned, "IOM conducted an assessment in Naivasha and Masana areas to comprehensively grasp HLP needs and gather community input before the start of the project." This demonstrates an effort to engage with local stakeholders in shaping the project. Similarly, another respondent noted, "...prior to the implementation of the project, consultations were conducted concerning the approach and the potential engagement of local stakeholders," reflecting that local actors were involved in discussions around the project's planning.

During the implementation phase, responses indicate that national and local stakeholders continued to play an active role. For example, a media representative confirmed their involvement, stating, "Following each training session, we provide updates during our editorial

meetings... We consistently prioritize coverage of the most critical community issues." This suggests ongoing participation from media outlets, contributing to project visibility and community outreach. Similarly, a local chief emphasized community involvement in various operational activities, such as mobilization and participant selection, which indicates that local stakeholders played crucial roles in carrying out the project on the ground.

However, there were also indications that consultation and involvement were not uniformly experienced across all stakeholder groups. One participant mentioned, "NO assessment done in which we were involved in relation to the project," highlighting that not everyone felt included during the planning phase. Another media representative stated, "I may not have detailed information regarding the design aspect... we collaborated closely in the implementation process," which reflects that while involvement in implementation was strong, knowledge about the initial design may have been limited for some stakeholders.

Overall, the responses reveal that while the project made efforts to consult stakeholders and involve them in key phases, the level of involvement was not consistent across all groups. There were clear attempts to gather input during assessments and mobilize participation during implementation. However, gaps in communication and consultation, particularly during the design phase, suggest that some stakeholders may have felt less included in shaping the project throughout its lifecycle.

### **Wau Capacities of National and Local Stakeholders**

The project made notable efforts to strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders, including governments and civil society organizations. Early assessments in Naivasha and Masana by IOM aimed to gather community input and address HLP needs, reflecting an initial step toward engaging local actors in project planning. Additionally, consistent media involvement ensured regular coverage of HLP issues, while an inclusive approach invited individuals with disabilities to share their perspectives. This suggests the project fostered participation, particularly through assessments and raising awareness at the community level.

However, as noted in the sustainability section regarding Wau, capacity-building efforts were more effective in some regions than others. For example, significant strides were made in Wau through training chiefs and traditional authorities in HLP rights and ADR. These efforts empowered local leaders to manage land conflicts, contributing to long-term sustainability by embedding these skills in local leadership structures. Yet, responses also indicated gaps, with some stakeholders feeling they were not adequately consulted or involved, particularly in the design phase.

The project successfully enhanced capacity in certain areas, particularly in raising awareness and training local authorities, but it fell short of fully empowering stakeholders. Further efforts to ensure comprehensive consultation and direct involvement in decision-making would have strengthened the project's impact on building national and local capacities.

### 3.7.2. Localization in Rubkona

The project in Rubkona, a region with a severely underdeveloped HLP system, faced significant challenges, particularly due to flooding and migration. A Woman Chief FAO participant described the project as "manna to the early Christians," recognizing its role in economic resilience but noting gaps in addressing the local context and needs. She emphasized that local stakeholders should have been involved from the start, stating, "We know better what works for us," as their knowledge of the economic context would have better informed the project's approach to economic recovery.

Localization was demonstrated through community involvement and the technical advice of local actors, especially chiefs who provided expertise on pathways and security. One chief highlighted his role in advising on security issues related to agricultural recovery, particularly regarding land scarcity caused by flooding and migration. While the project engaged stakeholders, gaps remained in early design phases, making some participants feel excluded. Overall, local knowledge helped shape the project, but deeper integration of local economic needs could have ensured stronger sustainability and ownership.

#### **Rubkona National and Local Stakeholders Consultations**

The responses from Rubkona reflect a varied degree of consultation and involvement of national and local stakeholders throughout the project cycle. Several participants mentioned their involvement in assessments, with the Man FAO Participant stating, "We were involved in various assessments," and a Male Chief confirming his role in assessments, adding that he provided critical security context advice, particularly in areas impacted by flooding and migration. This demonstrates that local stakeholders were consulted, at least during specific phases of the project, such as assessments and gathering input for agricultural recovery efforts.

However, some responses reveal gaps in the project's engagement process. For example, the Woman Chief FAO Participant noted that "The local stakeholders were not involved in the design of the project. We were only involved in trainings," indicating that while stakeholders were engaged in later phases of the project, such as trainings and evaluations, they were not sufficiently included during the crucial design phase. Another respondent, M, highlighted that while he provided "technical advice in the local context for the IOM HLP team," this contribution appears to have been specific to certain areas rather than a comprehensive consultation across all project phases.

In summary, while local stakeholders were notable in their involvement in assessments, and some individuals provided critical context and technical advice, the responses indicate that stakeholder involvement was not uniform throughout the entire project cycle, particularly in the design phase, where some key local actors felt excluded.

## **Rubkona Capacities of National and Local Stakeholders**

The project demonstrated significant efforts in strengthening the capacities of national and local stakeholders, including governments and civil society organizations, particularly in Rubkona. Participants highlighted how the project increased awareness of HLP rights and built capacity among local leaders and community members. A participant noted that the project boosted his understanding of HLP issues, despite language barriers, and emphasized the role of traditional leaders in balancing land rights, particularly for women and persons with disabilities. This capacity-building is a high priority, as it helps local leaders address gender inequalities and manage land rights more effectively.

Training on mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms was another area where the project strengthened capacities. Several participants noted that these training sessions helped resolve community conflicts. For example, the Woman FAO Participant mentioned that mediation training addressed disputes over access to water points. At the same time, the Chief Male FAO emphasized that mediation became the preferred method for resolving conflicts, especially given the absence of functional statutory courts in the area. These examples show how the project empowered local leaders to manage disputes, enhancing their capacity to address issues independently.

However, some challenges remained. A Woman Chief FAO Participant noted that while the project ensured some economic resilience, it did not fully consider local economic needs or engage local stakeholders in the design phase. She emphasized the importance of involving local stakeholders to ensure that the project aligns with the community's economic context and needs.

The project strengthened capacities through mediation and customary law training, economic empowerment, and increased awareness of HLP rights. However, missed opportunities to involve local stakeholders more fully in the design process could have further enhanced their ability to sustain and influence the project outcomes independently.

### **3.7.3. Localization in Juba**

The project's localization efforts in Juba presented a mix of successes and challenges. On the positive side, several participants indicated significant involvement in key phases, particularly in assessments and decision-making processes by local authorities. Local leaders were involved in shaping how the project's materials, such as training manuals, would influence governance strategies, reflecting a meaningful level of engagement. This indicates that, in some areas, the project successfully empowered local stakeholders to contribute to important decisions that could impact governance and HLP-related issues.

However, despite these positive outcomes, there were notable gaps in the project's localization approach. Some participants felt that the project did not sufficiently reflect local realities and failed to include communities in critical design stages. This lack of engagement, particularly during the development of training materials, left certain local concerns unaddressed, which

reduced the overall effectiveness of the project. For example, local voices were sought only after key decisions had already been made, resulting in missed opportunities to tailor the project to the specific cultural and contextual needs of Juba's communities.

While efforts were made to engage local authorities and other stakeholders, the top-down approach in the early phases of the project limited its impact on localization. Deeper involvement of local communities throughout the entire project cycle, especially in the design phase, could have strengthened the project for the long term.

### **Juba National and Local Stakeholders Consultations**

Based on the KII and FGD responses, the degree to which national and local stakeholders were sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle shows mixed results. On the one hand, some participants indicated active involvement, particularly during the assessment and implementation phases. For example, a woman chief mentioned her previous involvement in HLP workshops and assessments, suggesting that there was some consultation at different stages of the project. Another respondent mentioned his involvement in assessments during the early stages of the training sessions, reflecting a level of engagement during the implementation phase.

However, gaps were evident in other areas, particularly during the design phase. Multiple respondents expressed concern that local stakeholders were not involved early enough or at critical decision-making junctures. For instance, a woman chief, FAO participant pointed out that communities were not consulted on the content of the training manuals, and local input was not sought before key decisions were made. This sentiment was echoed by an IOM participant who noted that KIIs were not included during the initial stages and that fundamental interests were left out of the training manual, highlighting a missed opportunity to integrate local needs and knowledge into the project's foundational aspects.

Moreover, a male FAO participant emphasized that future HLP projects should be designed with the involvement of local communities and stakeholders from the outset, reinforcing the perception that the consultation process was insufficient. This perspective underscores the importance of including local stakeholders in every project phase to ensure alignment with local realities.

While national and local stakeholders were involved in certain aspects of the project, such as assessments and workshops, the consultation process was not uniformly experienced across the project cycle. The lack of involvement in the design phase represents a missed opportunity to more fully localize the project and ensure its long-term sustainability and relevance to the communities it aimed to serve.

### **Juba Capacities of National and Local Stakeholders**

The project made efforts to strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders, including both governments and civil society organizations, but there were limitations in its approach. Training and workshops served as the primary mechanisms for capacity-building, particularly around dispute resolution and the HLP rights framework. Stakeholders such as chiefs and local authorities were involved in needs assessments, as reflected in the Woman Chief's comment that she had participated in previous HLP workshops and assessments. This involvement at the grassroots level contributed to capacity-building, exposing local leaders to concepts around HLP rights and governance.

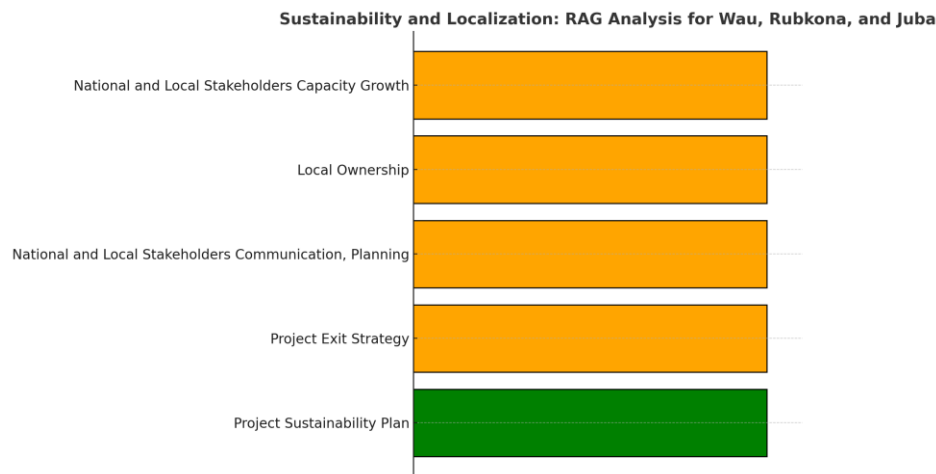
However, despite these efforts, the lack of comprehensive inclusion during the development and design phases limited the potential for sustained capacity-building. Several participants highlighted that they were not involved in the initial stages of project planning. It would have been essential for local stakeholders to align the project with the realities on the ground. For example, a Male FAO Participant noted that communities should be involved from the start to reflect the local context, a sentiment echoed by the Woman Chief, who pointed out that the project manuals could have benefited from community input. This feedback underscores that while training was provided, the opportunity to build capacity more meaningfully and long-termly was not fully realized because key actors did not take part in earlier decision-making stages.

Additionally, as mentioned previously in the discussion on effectiveness, the project did succeed in some areas of governance capacity-building. Local leaders, for example, were preparing to analyze the project materials and manuals to integrate them into their governance systems. The Male Chief FAO's comment about using the teachings to influence future governance approaches indicates that some level of capacity-building occurred, with local leaders beginning to take ownership of the knowledge provided through the project.

Despite these advances, challenges in inclusivity were noted, particularly regarding marginalized groups like IDPs. Several respondents indicated that IDPs were underrepresented in the processes, reflecting a missed opportunity to engage a broader spectrum of local actors. The Woman Chief's observation that the project did not address deeper systemic issues like land grabbing also highlights that critical conflict drivers persist while capacity was strengthened in some areas.

The project made efforts to strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders through training, workshops, and dispute resolution. Still, its impact was limited by the lack of early-stage involvement and the exclusion of certain groups as was found in the other regions.

Figure 5 RAG Analysis of the Project's Sustainability and Localization



### 3.8. Conflict sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity involves understanding the context and the impact of interventions on that context and acting to avoid harm while maximizing positive impacts on conflict. International assistance should, at a minimum, "do no harm" and ideally contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. OECD principles guided this approach from 2001 and 2007.<sup>27</sup> The project successfully avoided unintended negative consequences, which is significant given the sensitivity surrounding HLP issues in South Sudan.

The project team employed several strategies to ensure conflict sensitivity. Conflict mapping, conflict analysis<sup>28</sup>, and in-depth reports on HLP examined the interests and challenges of different actors, including through a gender-sensitive<sup>29</sup> lens. Furthermore, project management reported making a strategic decision to prioritize HLP awareness raising, a less intimidating approach to addressing HLP issues yet a consequential one that empowered individuals, especially vulnerable groups, with knowledge of their rights and the steps required to access them.

A challenge in Wau involved managing middlemen who exploit land and inheritance disputes for personal gain and expressed discomfort regarding the HLP awareness raising. Instead of excluding them and risking the middlemen becoming spoilers, the project engaged these

<sup>27</sup> OECD. "Addressing Challenges of Evaluation in Situations of Conflict and Fragility." In *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results*, OECD Publishing, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264106802-6-en>.

<sup>28</sup> Gai, Thudan James. *Conflict Analysis for Housing, Land, and Property: Rubkona County, Unity State – 13-24 March 2023*. Program Assistant-Peacebuilding, Transition and Recovery Unit, International Organization for Migration, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Deng, David K. *Gender and Age Disaggregated Data on Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) Issues in South Sudan*. International Organization for Migration, May 2023.

individuals directly during awareness campaigns, providing targeted education on the South Sudan Land Act of 2009. However, feedback suggests that more sustained engagement is needed to fully integrate middlemen, to secure their fair cooperation in HLP disputes, and mitigate future risks of exploitation.

Although the project lacked a defined conflict sensitivity methodology, combining methods, strategies, and resources helped maintain conflict sensitivity. KII and FGD feedback and minimal adverse outcomes demonstrate that risks were managed overall.

<b>The Project's Conflict Sensitivity</b>	
<b>Did the project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?</b>	The project employed various strategies to maintain conflict sensitivity. While lacking a formal conflict-sensitivity methodology, it used conflict mapping, analysis, and in-depth HLP reports, including a gender-sensitive approach. Prioritizing HLP awareness raised public understanding of land rights, particularly among vulnerable groups, without escalating tensions. The combination of these strategies, resources, and methods helped manage risks effectively.
<b>Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?</b>	The project did not result in any unintended negative impacts, successfully avoiding adverse consequences by employing conflict-sensitive strategies. The team demonstrated sensitivity to the complex context and care to do no harm.

### 3.9. Catalytic Potential

Catalytic potential refers to a project's ability to create far-reaching impacts beyond its immediate objectives by triggering further developments or investments. A project with catalytic potential can act as a model for replication, encourage policy reforms, or draw new partners and investments, thereby amplifying its impact. While not explicitly defined by organizations like DAC or OECD, catalytic potential is closely related to concepts like scalability, sustainability, and multiplier effects, which are used to assess a project's ability to generate broad, lasting change. Catalytic potential also refers to the ability of a project to stimulate or mobilize additional financial resources or support beyond its initial funding. It often involves leveraging the initial investment to attract further resources, partnerships, and commitments that contribute to long-term sustainability and scaling of the project's impact.

In the context of FAO's project in South Sudan, the project met OECD-DAC's expectations for catalytic potential by successfully mobilizing USD 5,073,000 from various sources to continue its Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) work. The funds were secured from multiple key projects and partnerships, including:

1. Norway: USD 160,000.
2. EU: USD 1,023,000 for a land tenure component under the Regional Programme in Livestock and Pastoralism for Climate Change Adaptation.
3. Global GEF Project: USD 240,000 for tenure governance and gender equality in land rights.
4. AfDB: USD 450,000.
5. PBF 2025 (Joint UNDP, FAO, and OHCHR): USD 3.2 million for the Borderlands Community Security and Conflict Resolution Initiative.

Additionally, pipeline funding for 2025 involves potential contributions from partners such as the AfDB, World Bank, Germany (GIZ), and Japan. This demonstrates how the initial funding facilitated immediate project activities and attracted significant follow-up investments and interest from various international donors. This ability to extend the project's lifespan and enhance its sustainability is a key marker of its catalytic potential.

### **HLP Awareness Campaign Catalytic Potential**

IOM's awareness-raising campaign on HLP rights across all three locations notably impacted the local communities. Many respondents acknowledged that the campaign was pivotal in motivating them to secure their land by obtaining the necessary legal documentation. This achievement marks a significant step toward ensuring land tenure security, vital for long-term stability and economic resilience in these areas.

The campaign also holds catalytic potential, as the knowledge shared is not confined to the individuals who participated. As participants become more informed about their rights, they are likely to share this information within their networks, spreading awareness further and encouraging others to seek out their own land documentation. This ripple effect can stimulate broader community-level action toward securing land rights, amplifying the campaign's initial impact.

However, despite the positive outcomes, challenges persist. Obtaining land documents often involves financial costs that many community members cannot bear. This financial barrier could hinder the full realization of the campaign's potential, limiting access for those who need it most. To ensure that the campaign's benefits extend to a broader audience, additional support, particularly in addressing these financial constraints, may be required to sustain its generated momentum.

The Project's Catalytic Potential	
<b>Did the project successfully attract and leverage additional funding?</b>	The project successfully attracted additional funding to continue its HLP (Housing, Land, and Property) work. FAO mobilized USD 5,073,000 for 2023–2024. This funding was raised through key partnerships with Norway, the EU, Global GEF, AfDB, and the PBF 2025 initiative (a joint effort between UNDP, FAO, and OHCHR). This demonstrates the project's ability to leverage its initial success to attract substantial additional financial support.
<b>Has PBF funding contributed to the expansion of HLP and other peacebuilding efforts or supported the development of broader peacebuilding platforms?</b>	The PBF funding contributed significantly to expanding peacebuilding efforts, particularly through the USD 3.2 million joint project with UNDP and OHCHR under the Borderlands Community Security and Conflict Resolution Initiative. This initiative reflects an effort to strengthen broader peacebuilding platforms in South Sudan by integrating community security and conflict resolution mechanisms into the HLP agenda.

### 3.10. Innovation

Innovation refers to the implementation of new or significantly improved products (goods or services), processes, or organizational methods in business practices or external relations. In the context of HLP in South Sudan, innovation involves finding new or improved ways to address HLP challenges, including more effective approaches to governance systems. Innovation is not necessarily about technological advancements but rather about adapting and improving processes, policies, and systems to achieve better outcomes and impact in a given context.

The Project's Innovation	
<b>How novel or innovative was the project approach?</b>	The project's approach did not introduce substantial innovations but included some features worth mentioning. The Natural Resource Management Committees (NRMCs), a long-standing FAO initiative, were used in South Sudan for the first time to manage conflicts over natural resources, focusing on participation from community members, including women and youth. Additionally, introducing a case management lens for HLP issues was relatively innovative in this context, with a help desk stationed at the Ministry to assist individuals with land documentation and dispute resolution. This initiative, given the underfunded nature of HLP programming in South Sudan, could be considered innovative for its focus on addressing overlooked land rights challenges.

FAO's introduction of the Natural Resource Management Committees (NRMCS) could be considered innovative. These NRMCS manage conflicts over natural resources such as land, forests, and water. Ten committees composed of 30 members were established, trained, and supported on HLP, land dispute prevention, resolution mechanisms, and livelihood activities.

The committees, comprised of community members with representation from women and youth, resolve disputes by engaging traditional leaders and other stakeholders to build equitable and sustainable management practices. While the NRMCS have been part of FAO's broader global initiatives, this is the first introduction in South Sudan. Still, concerns about their long-term sustainability will depend on resources not readily available to the communities.

HLP programming in South Sudan is inherently innovative, given that the sector has historically been underfunded and overlooked. In a country where land rights and property issues are crucial for stability and development, the lack of attention to this sector has left significant gaps. Introducing HLP programming in this environment represents a bold and necessary shift toward addressing these challenges.

A key innovation within this effort was incorporating a case management model for HLP issues. Supported by IOM, this approach involved stationing a dedicated staff member at a help desk within the Land Ministry to assist individuals with land documentation and dispute resolution. Initially proposed by a government representative, the model offers a more structured and accessible pathway to address land-related challenges. In a setting where bureaucratic processes can be difficult to navigate, this system has improved responsiveness and trust, marking a significant step forward in South Sudan's land rights management.

## 4. Recommendations

The recommendations from the KIIs and FGDs emphasize the need for sustained engagement with communities and institutions to ensure long-term success in addressing HLP issues. Key focus areas include strengthening local security, promoting inter-communal dialogues, and improving government support for IDP reintegration. Additionally, the recommendations call for enhanced capacity-building efforts, including technical training through Demo-Farms and the need to translate documents into local languages to increase accessibility. Finally, there is a strong emphasis on economic empowerment, small grants, and resilient agricultural practices to promote sustainability.

### **1. Strengthening Local Security & Dialogue:**

- Focus on creating solutions for inter-communal dialogues to promote peaceful living and land management and ensure continued engagement on HLP issues.

### **2. Government Support and Reintegration Efforts:**

- IOM and the government should assist in relocating IDPs to higher, more suitable land areas, including support for land demarcation to ease reintegration efforts.

### **3. Continued Program Support:**

- Given the complexities of HLP issues, IOM should continue supporting these programs, ensuring the involvement of military and civilian dialogues and offering legal aid for HLP cases.
- 4. Community Involvement:**
  - Ensure communities are engaged in the project design from the beginning. This includes mapping their HLP needs and involving them in every stage of planning and implementation.
- 5. Capacity Building:**
  - Provide training for government agencies, especially at state and local levels, as well as community-based experts. Future projects should also focus on local expertise to enhance food security and promote long-term solutions through technical schools.
- 6. Translation and Accessibility:**
  - Translate key documents into local languages, such as Nuer, to ensure better comprehension and digitize land transactions to improve transparency and access.
- 7. Engagement of Key Stakeholders:**
  - Line ministries and parliamentarians should be involved in designing and validating training materials and promoting continuous legal support.
- 8. Demo-Farm Establishment:**
  - Establish Demo-Farms as technical and scientific agricultural training centers, including livestock management, crop production, and income generation initiatives.
- 9. Sustainability & Economic Empowerment:**
  - Implement small grants to support business initiatives, provide resilient seeds to withstand environmental challenges, and enhance infrastructure, such as access to water, to support the agricultural economy.
- 10. Institutional Support for Longevity:**
  - Strengthen the institutional framework by involving government departments, land authorities, and community leaders to ensure the sustainability and long-term success of the project

## 5. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The Community Action for Peaceful Resolution of Housing, Land, and Property project in South Sudan made meaningful progress in addressing conflict drivers by raising awareness of HLP rights and engaging communities in land governance. While the project achieved strategic goals in legal literacy, dispute resolution, and leadership training, sustainability challenges arose due to limited financial and technical resources. The project aligned with national frameworks like South Sudan's 2009 Land Act and international commitments such as SDG 16, 1, and 5. Overall, the project significantly contributed to upholding HLP rights, addressing a high-priority and challenging sector that has historically been under-supported.

## Observation on HLP Awareness

Many respondents described their experience as transformative, highlighting the significant impact of the awareness-raising efforts. They learned about women's inheritance rights and how to secure their land documentation. Though challenges persist, such as accessing resources for land registration, respondents expressed that they now have clearer pathways to securing their rights.

**Lesson Learned:** Awareness campaigns are a low-risk, high-impact strategy for promoting understanding of HLP rights and reducing disputes.

**Recommendation:** To grow the long-term impact of the HLP awareness campaign, establish formal knowledge-sharing mechanisms, such as peer-education groups or community-based sessions, and provide resources to reinforce key messages on HLP rights and secure land documentation.

## Observation on Addressing Conflict Drivers

The project addressed several conflict drivers related to land disputes by strengthening HLP governance systems, raising awareness about land rights, and improving dispute resolution mechanisms. However, deeper systemic issues, such as corruption and land grabbing by powerful actors, remain challenging within the project's scope. Nonetheless, project participants reported feeling more secure once having land ownership documentation while asserting that the present efforts alone would not stop the land grabbing.

**Lesson Learned:** Legal literacy and governance improvements are necessary foundations, but their impact on peacebuilding remains limited without addressing underlying power imbalances.

**Recommendation:** Continue raising awareness as it has proven effective, include actors that play central roles in land grabbing, such as the Military, and continue support for land governance to sustain progress.

## Observation on Inclusivity

The project strengthened collaboration between statutory and customary authorities and promoted the inclusion of women and youth in land governance. Mechanisms like FAO's National Resource Management Committees supported community-based resolution. However, persons with disabilities and IDPs faced persistent barriers to full participation.

**Lesson Learned:** When not identified and addressed early in project design, structural barriers faced by persons with disabilities and displaced populations can limit the inclusivity and impact of peacebuilding efforts.

**Recommendation:** Review interventions through an accessibility lens, identifying and addressing barriers limiting participation for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and displaced persons.

## Observation on Meeting Strategic Goals

The project effectively advanced legal literacy and women's leadership in dispute resolution. However, support for youth was limited. Youth respondents cited delays in inheritance as a barrier to land access and economic opportunities, underscoring the need for more support to the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda to address structural barriers affecting young people's participation.

**Lesson Learned:** The project showed that the mere inclusion of youth in governance is insufficient to address the structural barriers they face in accessing HLP rights and land ownership.

**Recommendation:** An intersectional analysis is needed to understand youth barriers to HLP rights, particularly around inheritance. Delays in inheritance can limit youth's economic opportunities and spark disputes among heirs. Promoting *inter vivos* transfers<sup>30</sup>, where property is transferred during the owner's lifetime, would help youth achieve economic stability.

## Observation on Sustainability

Despite improvements in local capacity and awareness, sustainability remains fragile. Chronic underfunding and leadership turnover in South Sudan's institutions jeopardize long-term progress. Participants voiced concern about continued access to services after project closure.

**Lesson Learned:** Without continued support, the gains in local capacity and land governance may erode over time, jeopardizing long-term peacebuilding outcomes.

**Recommendation:** Empowering local organizations would enable them to seek funds and sustain efforts over time. Therefore, to promote sustainability and advance the localization agenda, PBF should require local implementing partners in all projects and guarantee that a percentage of the funds will go to them.

## Observation on Climate Change

South Sudan is one of the world's worst-affected countries regarding climate change. Water scarcity and extreme heat disrupted agricultural components and limited the viability of land-based livelihoods. These climate stressors aggravated land competition and slowed the project's economic resilience objectives. The project's farming component faced setbacks due to water scarcity and extreme heat, which were common challenges across many project locations.

**Lesson Learned:** Resilience-building efforts that do not adequately account for climate risks, such as water scarcity and extreme heat, are less effective, as demonstrated by the challenges faced in the project's farming and cooperative components.

**Recommendation:** Integrate climate risk analysis into project design. Align activities with SDG 13: Climate Action and prioritize adaptation strategies that build local resilience and reduce environmental drivers of conflict.

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<sup>30</sup> **Inter vivos transfers** refer to gifts or transfers of property made during a person's lifetime, as opposed to transfers that occur upon death such as through a will or inheritance.

## Observation on Case Management and Systematized Support

Structured case management models were introduced to support individuals in navigating HLP processes. Embedding dedicated staff in ministries and planned digital tools like Kobo offers a scalable way to improve coordination, accountability, and service delivery.

**Lesson Learned:** Structured case management approaches enhance peacebuilding efforts by offering clear pathways for resolving disputes nonviolently, reducing frustration via transparent systems, and mitigating land-related tensions that can fuel conflict.

**Recommendation:** Expand case management systems by embedding trained staff in key ministries and operationalizing digital tools for intake and tracking. This will improve responsiveness and support institutional transparency.

## Observation on Alternative Dispute Resolution

State-level dispute resolution committees, typically located in Ministries of Housing, play an essential role in resolving land disputes outside the court system. These mechanisms are more accessible and locally trusted, especially in unregistered land cases. However, they remain under-resourced and rely on sporadic training. Traditional authorities also contribute meaningfully and require structured capacity support.

**Lesson Learned:** ADR mechanisms are essential to peaceful land dispute resolution but require consistent investment in training, staffing, and logistical support to operate effectively.

**Recommendation:** Support the formalization and resourcing of ADR structures by providing sustained training curricula for mediators, logistical tools, and support to traditional authorities. These mechanisms should be recognized as core components of HLP peacebuilding infrastructure.

## Conclusion

The Community Action for Peaceful Resolution of Housing, Land, and Property project contributed meaningfully to peacebuilding by addressing a historically neglected conflict driver in South Sudan: land and property rights. Through legal literacy, strengthened governance, and locally rooted dispute resolution mechanisms, the project helped reduce tensions and created more inclusive access to land rights, especially for women.

The project demonstrated catalytic potential, attracting further investment and informing broader peacebuilding and resilience efforts. It aligned with key frameworks, including the R-ARCSS peace agreement and the WPS and YPS agendas. It promoted alternatives to litigation through community-based dispute resolution and case management embedded within government institutions.

However, the evaluation also highlights critical gaps. Sustainability remains uncertain without further support, especially given persistent resource constraints. Structural barriers inhibit the inclusion of people with disabilities, and climate stressors undermine agricultural resilience, exposing the need for integrated planning. Moreover, while national and local stakeholders were engaged, the project fell short of transferring real decision-making power, revealing that meaningful localization demands more than participation.

As South Sudan continues to navigate a challenging conflict landscape, the lessons from this initiative offer grounded direction for future investments. They highlight where meaningful progress was made, where structural barriers remain, and how targeted support can help strengthen land governance and inclusive peace outcomes.

## Annex 1

<b>Evaluation Matrix</b>			
<b>To what extent has the Community Action for Peaceful Resolution of Housing, Land, and Property Disputes and Conflicts project in South Sudan effectively addressed conflict drivers, advanced peacebuilding and gender inclusivity, met its strategic goals, and ensured sustainability and alignment with national and international frameworks?</b>			
<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Sub-Question</b>	<b>Method of Data Collection</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
<b>Relevance</b>			
Was the project relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace?	To what extent do community participants perceive the project as effectively addressing the underlying causes of conflict in their community?, To what extent did the HLP project align with the efforts of various entities, including local, national, and international, particularly other UN agencies	FGDs, KII, project documents	Project staff, Traditional authorities, government authorities, community members

How was the project relevant to Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS)?	Was the project relevant to national policy frameworks such as the NAP 1325 and the R-ARCSS?	Project document, KIIs	Project staff, Traditional authorities, government authorities
<b>Coherence</b>			
Was the project aligned to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16? To what the project aligned with nationally owned, legislative agendas, and actors?	How does the project contribute to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16)? Was the project designed in alignment with national peacebuilding strategies or legislative frameworks?	Project documents, KIIs	Project staff, implementing partners, government authorities, traditional authorities
To what extent did the HLP project align with the efforts of various entities, including local, and national institutions?	How well did the HLP project coordinate its activities with the goals and strategies of local, national, and other UN agencies?	Project documents, KIIs	Project staff, implementing partners, government authorities, traditional authorities
<b>Efficiency and Time Sensitivity</b>			
How efficiently were resources allocated and utilized?	Were funds transferred to implementing partners in a timely manner? Were activities implemented in a timely manner?	Project documents, KIIs	Project staff, Implementing Partners, Traditional Authorities, Government Authorities

How efficient and successful was the project's implementation?	How well did the project team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders and project beneficiaries on its progress?	Project documents, KIIs, FGDs	Project staff, Implementing Partners,
<b>Effectiveness</b>			
To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives and strategic vision?	What percentage of the project targets were successfully met? What were the achievement gaps identified during the project?	Project documents, KIIs	Project staff, Implementing Partners, Government authorities
To what extent did the project substantively mainstream gender, support gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding, and address the inclusion of people with disabilities?	What impact did the project have on promoting gender equality within the targeted communities? How were gender, youth, and disability considerations integrated into the project's design and implementation phases?	Project documents, KIIs, FGDs	Project staff, Implementing Partners, Project participants, Traditional Authorities, Government Authorities, Community Members
How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?	Were there any entities, groups, populations, or individuals that should have been included in the project but were not? What locations should be prioritized in the future?	Project documents, KIIs	Project staff, Implementing Partners, Traditional Authorities, Government Authorities,
<b>Sustainability</b>			

Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy?	To what extent were local stakeholders (e.g., community leaders, government actors, or civil society) equipped and prepared to continue project activities after external support ends? How did the project prepare partners and beneficiaries for the transition or handover of responsibilities?	Project documents, FGDs, KIIs	Project staff, Implementing Partners, Project participants, Traditional Authorities, Government Authorities, Community Members
How strong is the commitment of the government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives?	Have government actors or institutions integrated the project's approaches or results into their own policies, plans, or programs? What steps have stakeholders taken to assume leadership or ownership over the continuation of initiatives?	Project documents, FGDs, KIIs	Project staff, Implementing Partners, Project participants, Traditional Authorities, Government Authorities, Community Members
<b>Localization</b>			
Were national and local stakeholders sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle?	Were national and local stakeholders meaningfully involved in shaping the project's objectives, strategies, and implementation plans?	Project documents, KIIs, surveys	Project staff, implementing partners

Did the project strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders, including governments and civil society organizations?	What types of capacity-building support were provided to national and local stakeholders (e.g., training, technical assistance, resources)? To what extent are stakeholders now able to independently carry out project-related activities or sustain outcomes?	Project documents, KIIs, surveys	implementin g partners, government authorities, traditional authorities,
<b>Conflict Sensitivity and Risk Tolerance</b>			
Did the project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?	Were local conflict dynamics, power relations, or potential unintended consequences explicitly considered? Was the project adapted in response to emerging conflict-related risks or changes in context?	Project documents, KIIs	Project Staff, implementin g partners, government authorities, traditional authorities
Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?	Were there any reported or observed negative effects of the project on individuals, groups, or the broader community? How did project staff or partners respond to any harmful or disruptive outcomes?	Project documents, KIIs	Implementi ng partners, government authorities, traditional authorities,
<b>Catalytic Potential</b>			

Did the project successfully attract and leverage additional funding?	How much additional funding was obtained?	KIIs, project documents	Project Staff, Government Authorities, Traditional Authorities,
Has PBF funding contributed to the expansion of HLP and other peacebuilding efforts, or supported the development of broader peacebuilding platforms?	What other initiatives have emerged as a result of the HLP project?	KIIs, project documents	Project Staff, Government Authorities, Traditional Authorities,
<b>Innovation</b>			
How novel or innovative was the project approach?	Did the project introduce new methods, tools, or partnerships that were not commonly used in similar contexts? To what extent did the innovative approaches improve the efficiency of HLP management and dispute resolution processes compared to previous methods?	KIIs, FGDs	Government Authorities, Traditional Authorities, Community members, Implementing partners, project staff