

Strengthening conflict and gender-sensitive community resilience in protracted crisis in Northern Uganda and Central Equatoria – SCCR

Final Project Review, Mai 2024

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1. Executive Summary

The SCCR project (12/2021 – 05/2024) is managed by a consortium of the Austrian Red Cross (Lead), CARE Austria, and the Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP), and implemented locally by the Uganda Red Cross Society, CARE International in Uganda, Palm Corps Uganda, as well as the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) in South Sudan. It is funded by the Austrian Development Agency.

The project aims to strengthen conflict-sensitive community resilience in protracted crises Northern Uganda and Central Equatoria, particularly for women and girls, and to address and mitigate the impact of forced displacement. It was designed to pilot a coordinated (HDP Nexus) approach between peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development organisations and to generate lessons learnt accordingly. The SCCR project has all the core features which should be part of a humanitarian–development –peace (HDP) nexus approach:

- a *long-term focus on reducing overall vulnerability* and unmet needs
- sustained efforts to support country leadership and *local capacities*
- a priority *focus on those most at risk or left behind* and *gender equality*
- active management of risks including *conflict sensitivity* and *do no harm*
- an operational set-up that helps *navigate short-term realities* and the evolving context *without losing sight of long-term development perspectives*

- awareness of the interventions of other HDP actors and *joint efforts to prioritise, focus on comparative advantages and enhance coherence*.

This limited final project review report focusses on the OECD DAC criterion 'coherence'. *Internal coherence* addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the project and other interventions carried out by the same organisations, as well as the consistency of the project with the relevant international norms and standards to which those organizations adhere. *External coherence* considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. When applying a *Human Rights and Gender Equality Lens to the OECD Evaluation Criterion Coherence* (OECD 2023), the project shows that *human rights-based approaches* have been incorporated into project design and implementation with a *special focus on women's rights* (e.g. countering SGBV).

The SCCR project's *rights-based*, bottom-up, *community-based approach* (CBA) and *community engagement and accountability approach* (CEA) towards the HDP nexus appear as particularly relevant and the outcomes confirm the added value of the HDP nexus approach as 'the whole being more than the sum of its parts'.

The lessons learnt from the SCCR project would form a valuable basis for the high-quality implementation of a follow-up phase, which can also serve as a model for other (HDP) actors in Uganda, Southern Sudan and beyond.

Acronyms

ACP	Austrian Centre for Peace
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
AFARD	Agency for Accelerated Rural Development
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
AutRC	Austrian Red Cross
CBA	Community Based Approach
CDM	Critical Detail Mapping (cf. DNH approach)
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
CPMs	Community Peace Monitors
CO	Collective Outcomes
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Uganda
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CRSGBV	Conflict Related Sexual and Gender Based Violence
CUGA	Care International in Uganda
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DNH	Do No Harm
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ERI	Enabling Rural Innovation
FDPs	Food Distribution Points
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMNR	Famer managed Natural Regeneration
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HDPN	Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus
HRBA	Human Rights Based approach
KII	Key Informant Interviews
OCI	Outcome indicator
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development- Development Assistance Committee
OPI	Output indicator
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister (Uganda)
PM	Project Manager
PO	Project Officer
PC	Project Coordinator
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RAFT	Respect, Accountability, Fairness, and Transparency (cf. DNH approach)
REF	Refugee Engagement Forum

SCCR	Strengthening conflict and gender-sensitive community resilience in protracted crisis in Northern Uganda and Central Equatoria
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sex and Gender Based Violence
SOGIESC	people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics
SPEDP	Support for Peace and Education Development Programme in South Sudan
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToR	Terms of Reference
Triple Nexus	see HDP Nexus
URCS	Uganda Red Cross Society
VSLA	Village Saving and Loans Association
WPS	Women Peace Security



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I would like to extend my gratitude to the implementing organisation's staff, and especially the ACP as commissioning organisation, for their trust and continuous availability to support the review process. I would also like to thank all evaluation participants for their time and openness to share. While *trans:verse* takes full responsibility of the final product, I hope it also captures the diversity of perspectives.

Vienna, 24.05.2024, Birgit Anna Mayerhofer for *trans:verse* OG

2. Introduction

The final project review was commissioned by the Austrian Centre for Peace (ACP) as member of the consortium led by the Austrian Red Cross which is the ADA contract holder. It was conducted by *trans:verse* OG.

PURPOSE, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FINAL REVIEW

The purpose of the final review is to determine the projects *overall performance against its objectives and intended results* (cf. log frame), to assess the mainstreaming of *cross-cutting issues* such as gender responsiveness and conflict sensitivity, to detect 'blind spots' or possible unintended negative impacts, and to describe positive changes that are causally related. The review shall enable the implementing partners to draw lessons and recommendations for future operations and projects of the same thematic area. (cf. ToR)

In order to ensure that as much of the budget as possible goes directly to the project beneficiaries, it was agreed to carry out a *limited final review* rather than a full evaluation (see Section 6.3 *Assessment and Evaluations* of the Approved Project Document).

QUALITY STANDARDS AND CRITERIA APPLIED

All six of the OECD DAC's evaluation criteria have been considered briefly, but a particular focus was placed on the criterion of *coherence*.

To ensure that participation, inclusiveness, and confidentiality are respected throughout the review process, the review consultant

- shared all relevant information about data collection, recording, and processing, including data protection and ensuring confidentiality with participants, so that they could take an informed decision
- refrained from quoting any participants unless they have given their permission to do so
- prompted review participants to adhere to "Chatham House Rules" (e.g. during FGD and the review workshop)
- ensured that data collection tools and evaluation products are free from language that is or may be perceived as discriminatory.

Data was collected and processed in Austria and Uganda. *trans:verse* OG takes all necessary steps to ensure data protection - as required by the applicable EU regulations - irrespective of where data was collected and processed.

For limitations, risks and mitigation measures, please refer to 4.3. on page nine. Due to the timeframe of the review and the corresponding data collection opportunities (notably the focus group discussions with Community Peace Monitors), more information is available on the cross-cutting peace dimension of the project, although this is by no means a statement on the relevance of other key implementation areas.

3. Background and Context Analysis

The SCCR project runs from December 2021 until end of May 2024 and is funded by the Austrian Development Agency. It's managed by an Austrian consortium - Austrian Red Cross (Lead), CARE Austria, ACP – and implemented locally by the Uganda Red Cross Society, CARE International in Uganda, Palm Corps Uganda, as well as the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) in South Sudan, who collaborated with the respective local authorities (e.g. the Office of the Prime Minister in Uganda, county representatives and police in South Sudan, etc.)

The project aims to contribute to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 and 16. The main objectives include strengthening conflict-sensitive community resilience in protracted crises, particularly for women and girls, and addressing and mitigating the impact of forced displacement. Project outputs focus on enhancing conflict and gender sensitivity in humanitarian and development assistance, promoting female leadership and empowerment, improving conflict resolution capacity, and protecting women's rights while preventing gender-based violence.

The project was designed to pilot a coordinated (HDP Nexus) approach between peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development organisations and to generate lessons learned accordingly.

It aims to achieve 1) strengthened conflict and gender sensitivity in humanitarian and development assistance through joint programming, 2) increased female leadership and empowerment of women and girls, 3) improved conflict resolution capacity & community mediation processes and 4) protecting women's rights and preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

The main conflicts in the project area in Uganda, the refugee settlements of Bidi-Bidi zone II and Imvepi are *conflicts between refugee and host community* over access to land, resources (like firewood, construction poles, grass for thatching, water points), and conflicts over stray animals which have been exacerbated by food ration reduction, tribal conflicts and a perceived unequal distribution of social services to refugees and host communities. At household level conflict over resources lead to *domestic and gender-based violence*.

In Kaju-Keji County, the project area in Southern Sudan, *conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (CRSGBV)* is prevalent and often dealt with through the customary law system, which can focus more on easing tensions between communities, primarily through the payment of compensation or the return of stolen property, than on providing justice for an individual. This creates a culture of impunity for perpetrators and can leave the grievances of an SGBV survivor and her family unaddressed. Social expectations and economic opportunities for both women and men encourage women to prioritise caregiving roles, while men are expected to provide for and defend their families and communities. There are also *cross-border conflict dynamics*. (see Conflict Analysis 09/2022 South Sudan and Conflict Analysis 08/2022 Uganda)

The baseline study (07/2022) focused on the causes of food insecurity (drought, pest infestations, livestock migration, high prices, security and border issues, illegal logging with acts of violence against the community including cutting down of fruit and oil trees belonging to households, etc.) and its impact on men and women, partly considering an intersectional approach (e.g. cross-referencing by age, group membership, disability).

Section 6.3 “Assessment and Evaluations” of the approved project document outlines that the consortium will conduct a limited final project review instead of a final external evaluation due to budget constraints and to ensure that as much budget as possible goes directly to the project beneficiaries. The document further outlines that the review must be commissioned by the ACP and conducted by an independent international consultant based on OECD evaluation criteria, to ensure the quality of the results.

4. Review Design and Approach

4.1. Methodological Approach

The methodological approach has been designed using i.a. the Guide for evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria (ALNAP 2006), the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide (ALNAP 2016), the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations Process Guidelines (IASC 2018), the ADA (2021) Strategic Evaluation of the Human Rights-Based Approach within Austrian Development Cooperation, and the knowledge platform betterevaluation.org.

Review design and methodology

Social norms are deeply ingrained in cultural systems, traditions, practices, and values. Gender norms tend to be reinforced in times of crises and conflict. It can be challenging to measure the impact of isolated changes in social or behavioural norms, notably over relatively short project periods. In this *ex-post review*, qualitative methodologies have been used to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the SCCR project. A simplified version of *outcome harvesting* has been employed to help track the changes in the behaviour of social actors influenced by the project, as well as an adapted *theory-based approach* which used the log frame in lieu of a theory of change to assess the causal links between the activities and their specific effects. Qualitative data collection tools (cf. 4.2) have been used to help to explore the underlying reasons and contexts that contribute to the project outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

A *Human Rights and Gender Equality lens* has been continuously applied, particularly to the OECD evaluation criterion *coherence*. “Applying a human rights and gender equality lens entails assessing the consistency of an intervention with international, regional, and national human rights and gender equality treaties and commitments of stakeholders (primarily beneficiary communities, and funding and implementing partners). For targeted interventions, an evaluator should consider the

complementarity and co-ordination of an intervention with those of other human rights and gender equality actors." (OECD 2023:9)

CONSULTATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Rooted in a Human Rights Based Approach, the review process was based on the principles of *participation, inclusiveness, respect, and confidentiality*. The review consultant aimed at facilitating a process that involved a high degree of *participation* of and *ownership* by the institutions directly involved in the project implementation. At the same time, the review process was designed to ensure that the voices of diverse stakeholders are captured and represented appropriately. (cf. OECD 2023, ADA 2021)

The *Most Significant Change approach* focuses on the experiences of community stakeholders by capturing what they perceive to be the most significant changes in their lives and their understanding of whether/how the project may have contributed to this. This methodological approach allows interviewees to guide the conversation, helping to avoid an unintended focus on re-traumatising issues.

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis Tools

The data collection¹ comprised (1) semi-structured interviews, (2) a focus group discussion, (3) a review workshop, strategic level exchange, (4) CPM training observation, and (5) review of documents.

- (1) *Twelve key informant interviews (KIs)* were conducted with key stakeholders² as proposed by the implementing partners. Semi-structured interviews were used to ensure that key review questions were covered, while allowing sufficient flexibility to capture information relevant to each stakeholder as well as unintended findings. KIs were conducted face-to-face and through online calls. Additional questions that arose in the course of the various data collection processes were clarified through individual enquiries.
- (2) *Four focus group discussions (FGD)*³ have been facilitated. (10.05.2024, 12.05.2024)
- (3) The consultant facilitated the *SCCR project review and evaluation workshop* in Arua (09.05.2024) and participated in the *strategic level exchange at the ADA coordination office* in Kampala (08.05.2024) to gain a broader view on the overall project achievements.

¹ The structured online survey originally planned to collect data from a wider range of stakeholders was deemed too difficult and not necessary. Due to time constraints, the consultant was not able to collect data through structured observations during field visits but received detailed field visit reports from project staff.

² The review focuses on the coherence of the HDP nexus project. Due to the limited scope and timeframe of the review, only Community Peace Monitors (CPMs) were interviewed as project participants, and no project participants, such as farmers' groups or VSLAs, were interviewed, so the data is not representative of the project as a whole. No government authorities were interviewed.

³ Three focus group discussions with CPM from the Bidi-Bidi and Imvepi settlement in Uganda and from Kaju-Keji in South Sudan, one FGD with project staff.

- (4) The consultant took an *observer role in the CPM training* in Yumbe (13./14.05.2024) to capture additional relevant data concerning the implementation of the HDP nexus approach, mainly from a participants perspective.
- (5) To complement primary data, the review consultant has used *theory-based content analysis* to extract information from relevant documents, such as project progress -and MEAL reports, etc.

To test the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments (methodological triangulation), *data triangulation* was used to validate data through cross verification from more than two sources and minimise biases (measurement bias, sampling bias, procedural bias).

Further information on the data collection tools, review participants and general interview questions can be found in the annex 2, page 30f.

4.3. Limitations, Risks and Mitigations Measures

LIMITATIONS

The overall time-resources (14 consultancy days of which 10 in Uganda) required a narrowed focus. While project staff of different hierarchical levels and project participants (Community Peace Monitors) have directly informed the review, the scope did not allow to directly involve representatives from all of the projects target groups⁴ and government officials. However, the KIs, FGDs, literature review and CPM training observations produced sufficient data for triangulation and capturing a rich picture. Upon submission of the first version of the review report not all monitoring data from the third project period was available, thus the verification of the log frame has been mainly done based on data from the first and second progress report, as well as data collected in the framework of this review.

RISKS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The main risk identified is related to leakage or misuse of personal and/or sensitive data. To mitigate this risk, the review consultant developed a set of appropriate actions, in application of the relevant EU regulations. Review participants were duly informed about the processing and storage of their personal data and their corresponding rights, and informed consent was obtained. A specific data protection information and consent form was designed for the review (see annex, page 31).

Quotations which allow to identify the speaker have been authorised.

⁴ The *Most Significant Change approach* focuses on the experiences of community stakeholders by capturing what they perceive to be the most significant changes in their lives. In the framework of this review the consultant spoke to Community Peace Monitors (CPM) of the Imvepi and Bidi-Bidi settlements in Uganda, and Kaju-Keji in South Sudan. The perspectives of participants of farmer's groups, VSLAs and other activities are not directly represented.

The review consultant also ensured that data collection tools and evaluation products are free from language that is or may be perceived as discriminatory. The current report is screen-reader friendly and thus facilitates accessibility for people with difficulties in reading and seeing.

Recognising that the term 'beneficiaries' can lead to the (potentially false) assumption that the recipient of aid is passive and that the aid provided was beneficial, the terms 'community partners' or 'participants' and, in the human rights context, 'rights holders' are used in this review.

5. Findings

At its best, the HDP Nexus represents the culmination of a thirty-year evolutionary process in the humanitarian, development, peace building and peacekeeping fields. It is driven by the reality that we are facing increasingly protracted crises and scarce development interventions in many contexts where vulnerability is highest (cf. ASPR 2020, OCHA 2017:3).

Three commitments guide the HDP Nexus, namely

- *joint multi-year SDG-based programming* with a clear roadmap to contribute to the long-term resilience and development of affected communities.
- tangible *collective results* in reducing needs, vulnerability, and risks; and
- *collaboration based on comparative advantages* in the different areas of intervention (UNDP DRC Office 2018, 40).

Relevance

Is the intervention doing the right things? Do objectives and design respond to stakeholders' needs, policies, and priorities?

- (1) The SCCR project outcomes are *overall in-line with the respective national HDP frameworks of South Sudan and Uganda*⁵. In South Sudan the HDP nexus has first emerged as a top-down approach, driven by the UN system in collaboration with the transitional government of South Sudan⁶ and, as Birgit Kemmerling (2024) points out, the 'localisation efforts' of the HDP nexus remained limited. The local partner organisation CEPO is well rooted in the communities and has at the same time become a trusted advocacy voice for civil society in the political processes. CEPO is an active member of coordination mechanisms on local level as well as in the IOM led coordination of the national HDP nexus process. CEPO is involved in and connected to other HDP nexus interventions in the region. A CEPO

⁵ Cf. the OPM Uganda CRRF Strategic Direction 2021-2025 and the EU Action Plan Response to forced displacement in the framework of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Uganda 2018-2020 and POST 2020, UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) office (2021), SCCR project document and log frame.

⁶ Some humanitarian actors have raised concerns about the cooperation with the government.

representative points out that “the SCCR project contributes to the localisation agenda”.⁷

In Uganda, the SCCR project is collaborating closely with the local governmental offices and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)⁸ and is actively involved in several coordination and networking groups.⁹ In this light, the SCCR projects bottom-up, community-based approach (CBA)¹⁰ and community engagement and accountability approach (CEA)¹¹ toward the HDP nexus appear as *particularly relevant*.

- (2) The SCCR project has largely followed the IASC (2020) recommendations for working with an HDP nexus approach, including the *establishment of a working group* to adapt the log frame indicators (which can be seen as ‘*collective outcomes*’ for the consortium members and are aligned with higher-level frameworks such as the Agenda 2030)¹².
- (3) While the adaptation of the log frame indicators was done by a working group, the subsequent *monitoring and analysis of the monitoring data* was left to the individual implementing organisations¹³, which is a missed opportunity to use M&E data for overall project management and shared learning, although results have been discussed in the quarterly project meetings *and during the midterm review meeting*. The joint analyses served as baseline against which performance was measured. An initial challenge was to align the definition and measuring methods to collect comparable data.¹⁴
Ideally, a designated person/position/organisation coordinates a (jointly developed) M&E mechanism¹⁵ (prioritising what should be monitored and evaluated), disseminates MEAL results to the managers and monitors the adjustments the HDP community and consortium partners make to their programming.
- (4) Given the requirements and regulations of the funding organisation, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the options for *flexible financing* are limited. However, ADA approved a budget adjustment that became necessary due to the high level of inflation and the consortium partners ‘cross-financed’ activities.¹⁶

⁷ cf. <https://uncaccoalition.org/anti-corruption-platforms/africa/south-sudan/community-empowerment-for-progress-organization/>, <https://cepo-southsudan.org/>, first and second SCCR project progress report, FGD 09.05.2024.

⁸ which leads (supported by UNHCR) the Ugandan HDP nexus approach in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The ADA Coordination office takes part in the CRRF meetings, While it is seen very positive, that the OPM takes on the government's responsibility to coordinate (international) aid interventions in Uganda, there have also been cases of corruption.

⁹ Cf. FGD 09.05.2024 and KII with AutRC, URCS Care and Care international in Uganda, ADA coordination office.

¹⁰ cf. UNHCR

¹¹ cf. IFRC

¹² cf. Project document and reports, logframe, KII Austrian project managers.

¹³ Care, Palm Corps, URCS, ACP, AutRC and CEPO

¹⁴ cf. KII project managers, FGD project staff 10.05.2024

¹⁵ which for practical reasons should be aligned with the respective organisation's MEAL systems

¹⁶ cf. first project progress report, 30.11.2022, FGD 10.05.2024, KII Austrian project managers

- (5) *Joint analyses* have informed the project implementation. In addition to the baseline study, rapid gender analyses (RGA) and conflict analyses, the community-based approach (CBA) and ongoing needs-assessment efforts (e.g. during peace dialogues, women farmers' trainings, etc.) made sure that the *practical needs of different groups of rights holders, particularly women and girls, were targeted* and project activities were adapted if needed^{17,18}
- (6) The Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) asked the SCCR project to extend the peace work to all four zones of the Imvepi settlement because zone II has become significantly more peaceful. Apart from the intended project's achievements, the SCCR staff and Community Peace Monitors (CPM) reported that several positive behaviour changes, skills-development, and changes in mindsets can be observed in the target communities. The high commitment of the target groups to participate in project activities and achievements beyond planning suggest that *the right priorities have been set*.¹⁹

Quotes from the Focus Group Discussion with project implementation staff, 10.05.2024:

"The coexistence of the refugee and host community is better now. Refugees have started to negotiate with locals to acquire land for agriculture and block farms." ... "In South Sudan the way of handling things changed through the community dialogues. And the Community Peace Monitors. Before, when a goat entered someone's garden there was violence. Now people arrest the goat and take it to the CPM to ask whose goat it is and to find a solution" ... "The financial literacy and awareness for the importance of saving money has increased." ... "A farmer's group [in South Sudan] asked for a money box to start a savings group." ... "People in the refugee camp can now sustain themselves for a little while when the OPM cuts rations. At least food is there." ... "Livelihood is taken more seriously now. Farmers are active to search for other and more resilient crops on their own to complement to what we have given them" ... "Some refugee families planted fruit trees in their backyards. They didn't before because they thought it is of no use when they are going to leave soon."

"The demand for SCCR in the communities is high because, unlike many other donors or projects, the project does what people need."

CEPO described the training for the Community Peace Monitors (CPM) and the installation of an office in Kaju-Keji as a milestone in the project implementation because it allowed better organised follow-up. *"The early warning mechanism in Kaju-Keji has prevented violence. On one occasion, CPM have alerted CEPO that cattle herders were on their way towards a farming community. The military then went out to deter their way from the fields. Overall, killing went down. SCCR has changed lives."*

- (7) All FGD participants (project staff and CPMs) confirm that a lot of positive behaviour change – including concerning gender relations – in the communities

¹⁷ For example, Ugandan community stakeholders did not agree to the distribution of wonderbags which subsequently has been cancelled.
¹⁸ cf. Baseline study, conflict analyses for Uganda and South Sudan, gender analysis for the refugee settlements in West Nile, FGD 10.05.2024, KII project staff)
¹⁹ FGD 10.05.2024, FGD Bidi-Bidi, FGD Kaju-Keji, FGD Imvepi

is observable, which is somewhat surprising given the project duration and it remains to be seen if the effects are sustainable. However, the joint efforts, gender marker two and deep anchorage of conflict sensitivity in all activities might explain this extraordinary effect. CPMs reported unanimously that the communities are stabilising, and violence is declining. *"This project has changed our lives. As we talk now, we are seeing peace."*

The FGD participants reported that they joined forces with churches and formed clubs for youths to reduce alcohol abuse and child neglect, *"Their hearts are slowly returning to their huts."* More focus to keep youths busy through leisure activities and skill-development/vocational training have been recommended, as poverty is seen as the root cause of conflict and violence. *"One source of peace is when you are peaceful in your stomach."*

The football tournaments²⁰ have i.a. significantly contributed to better relations between the host and refugee communities.

(8) During the FGDs the participants from the Ugandan refugee settlements Bidi-Bidi and Imvepi, and participants from Kaju-Keji, South Sudan, have been asked what they would recommend/need for future support:

- Further training to better serve as Community Peace Monitor (CMP), namely refresher trainings for topics which have been addressed, trainings of trainers to learn techniques for community mobilisation and sensitisation and trainings on MHPSS, trauma healing (especially for children), integrity and anti-corruption work,
- A handbook or manual to look-up information from trainings
- A letter of recommendation and/or certificate that details all the training the CPMs received
- A shed to sit or gather with people. *"We move from home to home, this is sometimes difficult for confidential conversations."* (FGD participant)
- Rain gear (gum boots, raincoats)²¹ and bags to protect documents.
- Financial support for communication and travel.
- Make the (hierarchical) structure of the project partners more transparent and provide contact details of the project lead in case of complaints about the intervention of an implementing partner.
- Access to livelihood programmes /farmer's activities to have the means to serve as voluntary CPMs²²

²⁰ Girls have their own teams but also play in mixed teams.

²¹ During the final discussion with the project managers, it became apparent, that most of the FGD participants received some sort of rain wear, nevertheless, all three groups mentioned that they would need rain wear.

²² In Bidi Bidi CPMs participated in livelihood activities.

Coherence

How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution.

Coherence assesses the extent to which the intervention is supported or undermined by other interventions (particularly policies), and vice versa.

Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the project and other interventions carried out by the same organisations, as well as the consistency of the project with the relevant international norms and standards to which those organizations adhere. (cf. OECD 2021)

- (9) The SCCR project design, its objectives, purpose, and expected results are articulated in a coherent way. On an international policy level, the SCCR project document refers to the *Agenda 2030* (particularly SDG targets 5.2, 5.5, 16.1 and 16.7) and *UN/SCR 1325 (2000)*. Also, “international norms and standards (such as policies by UN actors in-country) in conflict resolution and mediation, sustainable livelihoods and community and women’s empowerment” (ibid. p. 4) are mentioned. On national levels, the project adheres to the *Regional strategy of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) in Sub Sharan Africa 2020-2023* and *ADCs Uganda Country Strategy 2019-2025*, the *National Development Plan Uganda 2020/21 to 2024/25* (particularly 1.6 Increase the proportion of households that are food secure, 5.4 Increase land area covered by forests, 9.7 Increase the share of clean energy used for cooking, 14.3 Improve percentage of vulnerable and marginalized persons empowered and 17.2 Improve proportion of households reporting better living conditions), the *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Uganda* and the *Uganda National Action Plan to implement the Global Compact on Refugees and its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework 2018 – 2020* and several relevant Ugandan gender policies (e.g. the *National Gender Policy 2007*, the *Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2010*, the *Domestic Violence Act 2010* and the *Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009*), as well as the *South Sudan National Development strategy 2018 – 2021* (particularly to equality for all, dialogue and reconciliation, resolving communal conflicts, empowerment of women, infrastructural services). While the *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (often referred to as “Maputo Protocol”) and the *EU Gender Action Plan III* are not explicitly mentioned, the implementation activities clearly are aligned and contributing to those policies.²³
- (10) After more frequent meetings during the inception phase, the implementing partners met online on a quarterly basis. A communication plan was discussed but not formalised and systematically implemented. In addition, two meetings

²³ cf. project document and reports, interviews with PM Care

of the Ugandan and South Sudanese partners and a two-day mid-term review meeting, including field visits, were held to *share challenges and lessons learned*, and to *plan and coordinate activities*. All implementing partners were invited to participate in the project trainings and assisted the consultants with the various analyses. During the Focus Group Discussion with the implementing organisations (10.05.2024), the (initially not planned) cross-border exchanges have been pointed out as particularly beneficial experience for all participants. CEPO staff frequently attended trainings and workshops in Uganda. In reverse two staff members of Care International in Uganda and three staff members of the ACP participated in a field visit in South Sudan²⁴. This fostered deeper understanding of the respective project contexts, peer-learning²⁵, and the adoption of good-practices²⁶. *Also, the cross-border activities and exchanges between project participants in Uganda and South Sudan have had an unintended positive outcome in breaking down mutual stereotypes (e.g. of what 'South Sudanese men' are like) and people from South Sudan were recognised not only as refugees but also as professionals and colleagues.*

Additionally, using the *comparative advantage* of the different organisations for the project implementation but also for the capacity development in the partner organisations has been emphasised as particularly beneficial. All partners confirm to have gained a deeper understanding of conflict sensitivity, gender responsive approaches, the humanitarian principles, and the HDP nexus approach.²⁷

(11) *External coherence* considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort. (cf. OECD 2021) Regular *coordination and networking* with local actors and where applicable other HDP nexus stakeholders have been established since the beginning of the project. The respective implementing partners in Uganda²⁸ participate in sectoral working groups which feed into zonal working groups, as well as other interorganisational coordination. *Of all the working groups, the CRRF's Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) is the most active in discussing peace issues, while in other groups the issue is of little or no importance.* The implementing partners in Uganda used the network relations to find organisations which helped to cover needs identified throughout the SCCR implementation which were outside the project range (e.g. SRHR activities and psychosocial support for women's

²⁴ A staff member of the URCS was intended to participate but could not, due to an injury.
²⁵ Examples from participants of the FGD (09.05.2024): "We learnt a lot from Palm Corps, how to approach communities for farming groups." ; "Claire's [project manager of Care Austria] close coaching was important to improve the quality of our reporting."
²⁶ For example: the Ugandan Red Cross Society installed a national focal person for peace and conflict management. The training of trainers on HDP nexus in Gulu allowed Care project staff to cascade the nexus approach to other projects and led the Care in Uganda Senior Management Team to install a nexus focal point.
²⁷ cf. project document and reports, FGD 9.5.2024 and KII)
²⁸ Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), Care and Palm Corps

groups). URCS and Care noted that peace is often missing or very underrepresented in sector coordination groups (e.g. on livelihoods) and mostly brought to the table **through their interventions in the framework** of the SCCR project. *“The protection sector is more into case identification and case management and less into peace building. Formally, peace structures should be in place in Imvepi, but we only found one person who didn't even receive training but was only appointed the mandate.”*

(12) In South Sudan, CEPO coordinates with the County Department of Peace and other local authorities (including police). Few international organisations are present and CEPO engages with all of them, specifically trying to generate synergies with a GIZ project which is not directly linked to HDP nexus. However, CEPO pointed out that coordination/collaboration with ‘outside organisations’ was not sufficiently reflected in the project design and adds: *“In terms of complementarity a lot has been achieved but in a broader view the justice-peace-development link should be considered more.”* SCCR complements international efforts of comprehensive HDP programming, as, for instance, pursued by the UN-managed Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF). The project’s support to the rights of women in Sudan is based on the South Sudan National Transitional Constitution 2011, and international norms and standards the SCCR project support the rights of women. Furthermore, the general impact of the project supports the fragile transitional process the country is undergoing since the signing for the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS).²⁹ CEPO holds very strong relations to diverse community groups and local grassroots initiatives which should be strengthened in order to support the formation of a strong civil society movement for peace.

(13) When applying a **Human Rights and Gender Equality Lens to the OECD Evaluation Criterion Coherence** (OECD 2023), the project shows that **human rights-based approaches** have been incorporated into project design and implementation³⁰. The baseline study, conflict analyses and gender analyses confirmed the assumptions that the **Human Rights of women are most at risk** in the area of the SCCR interventions. This has been confirmed in KIII and FGD. Addressing Human Rights with a **special focus on women’s rights** (e.g. countering SGBV) is central for output 2.2., specifically through the activities undertaken under 2.2.3 (Raise awareness on human rights, women peace & security and SGBV) and 2.2.4 (Carry out advocacy activities on human rights, women peace & security, and SGBV prevention).³¹ The SCCR project is **consistent with the human rights-based and gender equality**

²⁹ cf. FGD project staff 10.05.2024

³⁰ For example, already during the first year of implementation CEPO documented five cases of human rights violation committed by state and non-state actors and CARE trained 120 participants in zone one of Bidi Bidi refugee settlement on GBV prevention and response.

³¹ The *Human Rights Policy Briefs* which are mentioned in the project document have not been developed.

policies, strategies, of the ADA (i.a. Engaging men and boys in gender equality work, WPS, gender-climate nexus) and international organisations. All consortium partners respect the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) through their mandate. Also, as contractors of ADA they must adhere to *Austria's Human Rights Policy* which is aligned with the *European Union Human Rights Framework*. The project uses a *rights-based approach* and specifically contributes to the *human rights of women* (cf. 3.3.2 of the Human Rights Guidelines for Implementing a Human Rights Based Approach in ADC 2010:41, ADA 2013 and ADA 2017). Also, The Baseline Study Report for South Sudan has looked into the Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (A/HRC/37/71).³² The SCCR project partners used a *Community Based Approach (CBA)*³³ and actively *engaged with national and local authorities to foster collaboration and sustainability*. This highlights the advantage of working in a consortium with organisations that already have established strong relationships in the country through their (previous) work. Positive examples are:

- In South Sudan, CEPO is part of the Kajo-Keji Area Reference Group (ARF) led by the UN Multi-Donor Trust Fund (RSRTF) through IOM, which is leading the national HDP nexus process, and thus participated in the coordination meetings. CEPO also works with SPEDP³⁴ and the Diocese.
- URCS coordinated with the Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and other actors conducting activities in the same zone to understand the community's routine schedules/events, to ensure that all rights holders could participate, and to avoid collusion during different activities.
- CARE and Palm Corps held reflection sessions with women and girl's leadership groups in Bidi-Bidi settlement.³⁵

The SCCR project has worked in a complementary manner with other HDP Nexus processes, projects, and actors in the target regions, based on coordination measures as described under points 11 and 12. Wherever possible, synergies with existing interventions - e.g. CARE's Women and Youth Resilience Project (WAYREP) or URCS's WASH programme Skybird - have been exploited. Collaboration with other HDP nexus actors have been assured i.a. through various networks, (sector)coordination groups and governmental coordination mechanisms. For example, URCS and AutRC have coordinated activities with IFRC and ICRC, Care and Palm Corps participated in the sector working groups on protection and on livelihoods.³⁶ While the coordination with the Office of the

³² Baseline Study Report South Sudan, project progress reports, project document, FGD project staff 10.05.'24

³³ URCS is using the IFRC's Community engagement and accountability (CEA) approach

³⁴ Support for Peace and Education Development Programme

³⁵ Project progress reports, KII with project managers, FGD project staff 10.05.2024

³⁶ Project progress reports, FGD project staff 10.05.2024

Prime Minister (OPM) in Uganda was good³⁷, more effort could have been taken to align the SCCR activities with pillar 2 of the *EU Nexus Action Plan Contributing to Uganda's five-year Integrated Refugee Response Plan (CRRF)*, led by DG ECHO with the key partners DFID, Sweden and DEVCO, or with other organisations who work with a HDP nexus approach in Uganda (e.g. SOS Children's Villages, GIZ or JICA). The ADA coordination office in Kampala could support these additional bi- and multilateral coordination efforts.

(14) Overall, the participants of all four Focus Group Discussions agree that *the project addresses the right challenges*. Alike, all participants point out the *beneficial impact that the addition of the peace dimension had on other project focus areas as livelihoods and women's empowerment*³⁸. During the review workshop and FGD of the project staff (10.05.2024) all implementing partners agreed, that the initial project goals and timeframe were almost too ambitious, and the planning of a consecutive phase should include time for coordination and communication processes (internally and externally) and buffer time for reporting at the end. Most of the recommendations for improved project implementation of the participants of the project staff FGD (10.05.2024) revolved around better management of the time frame (planning):

- a. start with a joint needs assessment
- b. sequential continuing training modules must start early on
- c. facilitate field visits early on
- d. plan exchange visits around the mid-term report
- e. leave a longer reporting period towards the end of the project

Additionally, different possibilities for more flexible management of the project funds have been discussed.

(15) An OECD DAC Gender Marker 2 has been attributed to the project as “to contribute to achieving gender equality and to empower all women and girls and to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies in Uganda and South Sudan” is the impact objective of the project and gender equality is fundamental in its design and expected results. The minimum criteria are met. A *Rapid Gender Analysis* (RGA) has been conducted and findings from this analysis³⁹ and a second RGA to identify changes have informed the project implementation, also a *do no harm approach* has been adopted. The results framework⁴⁰ and monitoring frameworks measure and report progress towards the projects gender equality objectives through *gender-specific indicators*⁴¹

³⁷ Similar to the Austrian “3 C approach/process” that follows a “Whole of Government” Model and in which the ACP is actively involved, the CRRF in Uganda follows a “Whole of Society” Model all actors in refugee response must adhere to.

³⁸ The peace component strengthens social transformation processes. At the same time, it is reinforced by interventions that aim, for example, at gender equality through the promotion of peaceful masculinities. The training of project staff (and target groups) enables them to apply conflict transformation and mediation skills and techniques in their respective fields of work.

³⁹ Instead of a separate gender analysis, the conflict analysis for the project area in South Sudan had a strong gender component integrated.

⁴⁰ Updated on October 3, 2022

⁴¹ OCI 2.2 & 2.3, OPI 1.1.1, 1.2.1 & 2.2.1

and indicators which provide *sex-disaggregated data*. The gender competency of all implementing partners has increase not least because of the knowledge-sharing of Care.⁴²

- (16) The project did achieve its objectives and overachieve in some areas. While capacity building in the area of conflict sensitivity, Do No Harm, and conflict resolution was a project goal, the implementing parties agree that *the outcome and impact largely surpasses the expectations*.⁴³

Efficiency

How well are resources being used?

- (17) Adjustments to the implementation plan, timeframe, and budget are evidence-based, well-reasoned and documented. For example, URCS has decided not to distribute wonderbags due to the feedback provided by the communities, CEPO focussed on Kajo-Keji because the security situation in Yei County did not allow to travel safely between the two counties^{44,45} *Three budget reallocations have been agreed among the consortium partners and with ADA to respond to specific needs identified during implementation, demonstrating the importance of financial flexibility in working with an HDP nexus approach.*
- (18) The timeframe for the implementation of some livelihood activities had to be adapted because of challenges related to resources (delays in the release of funds, number of project staff in relation to number of target communities). In addition, the livelihood capacity development programme requires consecutive activities which build on one-another and depend on the season, which made time management even more challenging.⁴⁶
- (19) A lesson learnt is that beyond the implementation of activities *all stakeholders needed to figure out what 'nexusing' in the specific context means* and too little time was planned for cross-organisation coordination on different levels.

⁴² cf. OECD-DAC 2016, project progress reports, review workshop

⁴³ cf. review workshop and FGD project staff 10.05.2024

⁴⁴ This is because only one project officer was planned and would have needed to cover both areas. If two project officers were available both areas could be covered.

⁴⁵ cf. first project progress report and KIIs.

⁴⁶ cf. second project progress report, FGD project staff 10.05.2024 and KIIs.

Impact⁴⁷

- (20) The SCCR project has generated some higher-level effects in Uganda by raising the awareness of actors represented in sector/cluster groups and of the OPM for conflict sensitivity and peace building.⁴⁸
- (21) In South Sudan, CEPO uses project results and lessons learnt to leverage good practices to other areas and for advocacy efforts on the national level.⁴⁹

Sustainability

- (22) The SCCR has contributed to address nutrition needs, for example in Imvepi zone II where “most families now have access to greens from their kitchen gardens in addition to the beans that are given.” Eggplant has led to an unexpected success, as households learnt how to dry them and make them available when they are out of season which allowed some families to sell part of their crop and earn enough to send their children to school or buy a piglet. For even more sustainability, the provision of cereal seeds which can be preserved for several years (e.g. maize) has been recommended.⁵⁰
- (23) Diverse interventions like Cares Women Lead in Emergencies (WLiE) initiative, the creation of a savings-group (VSLA) for men, etc. *strengthened the resilience of communities to better deal with additional minor shocks*. Women from the WLiE group who have no, or very little formal education enrolled in adult education classes to learn how to write and read, five of which have entered primary education. In one community a water hole has been drilled to provide clean drinking water. This was also not planned for in the project but is a consequence of the HDP nexus approach which is based on thorough (needs) assessment and analysis and allows to react more flexibly to emerging needs.⁵¹
- (24) *Community Peace Monitors (CPM)* have been trained in the target areas in Kaju-Keji, South Sudan, and in Uganda (Imvepi and Bidi-Bidi refugee settlements) and peace dialogues across the border took place. They have strengthened relationships between communities and led to a decrease of violent conflicts in the communities. The success of the Community Peace Monitors has somewhat turned into a challenge because “the CPMs [in Kaju-Keji] have become the ‘go-to’ persons for conflict resolution and other groups have asked to be included to become CPMs.” In all three intervention areas the demand is higher than the current capacities.⁵² *“It is rare, that we get issues from the ground level because*

⁴⁷ Impact refers to the “overall impact of the intervention beyond its immediate outcomes” and can usually not be measured “immediately after an intervention, since the socio-economic and political changes take time to manifest. So impact evaluation requires a longitudinal approach where sufficient data for long term analysis is available [...]” An evaluation of the overall impact could be part of the evaluation of a second phase of the SCCR project and would make it possible to track longer-term changes and longer-term adaptation strategies for sustainable development as a result of livelihood interventions such as income generating activities or skills training. (cf. Mana/Abbasi, 14 May 2024)

⁴⁸ cf. strategic level exchange at the ADA coordination office 08.05.2024, FGD project staff 10.05.2024 and Kils.

⁴⁹ cf. FGD project staff 10.05.2024 and Kils.

⁵⁰ cf. review workshop and FGD project staff 10.05.2024

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² cf. FGD 10.05.2024 & CPM FGD 12./13.05.2024, KII PM ACP and PM CEPO, first project progress report

the CPMs deal with it. We should empower them more." Says the Project Manager of a Ugandan implementing organisation.

- (25) During the three FGDs with the Community Peace Monitors, the CPMs highlighted the importance of recreational activities⁵³ (football tournaments and fun games etc.) which bring together a wide range of people and through the positive shared experience creates trust and relationships which help to prevent conflict in the communities. However, they also emphasised that a major cause of violence is poverty and lack of purpose and suggested vocational training/skills development (e.g. sewing groups) and income generative/small business support activities in addition to recreational activities.⁵⁴
- (26) While some of the target groups (e.g. farmers' groups) can rely on their new knowledge and will receive some support from other projects, it will be more difficult to continue the work of the CPMs. Despite their strong commitment and desire to continue as groups, all Community Peace Monitors are aware of the need for further and specialised training and mentoring. In addition to the high demand for CPM services in the communities, 'drop-outs'⁵⁵ cannot be replaced.⁵⁶

Mainstreaming of crosscutting issues

- (27) As an OECD DAC gender marker 2 is applied, gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment are the main objective of the project to which all outputs and the definition of target groups (60% women and 40% men) contribute. The findings and recommendations of the Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) and the conflict analysis of South Sudan have been used for the project implementation and have achieved positive impact.⁵⁷ The SCCR project is *fully gender mainstreamed*, mainly working using gender responsive and gender transformative approaches also within the humanitarian part of the intervention⁵⁸ which addresses a mostly protracted crisis. In addition, specific activities for example to support women and girls through *leadership groups* and men and boys through *positive masculinities groups* or providing psychosocial support and *access to protection and legal services to survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)* have been implemented.⁵⁹

⁵³ The churches/religious groups also play a major role in giving people purpose and help to reduce harmful behaviour like drug abuse.

⁵⁴ cf. CPM FGD 12./13.05.2024, KII PM CEPO, PM CUGA

⁵⁵ For example when women are less available in a period after giving birth, CPM who move to a different place, etc.

⁵⁶ FGD with CPMs, KII with PMs.

⁵⁷ cf. project document, first and second RGA, second project progress report, KII

⁵⁸ In current humanitarian crises, gender-sensitive rather than gender-transformative approaches are usually used. On the one hand, crises often lead to the "re-traditionalisation" of gender roles; on the other hand, changing gender norms can temporarily trigger insecurity among people, which is not desirable in an already volatile situation and could even violate the Do No Harm approach.

⁵⁹ cf. activities under 1.2.1 and 2.2.2 in the project progress reports; FGD with project staff 10.05.2024 and KII with PMs;

(28) *Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm* are mainstreamed as cross-cutting issue and directly addressed through project output 2.1 (*Improved conflict resolution capacity and community mediation processes*) and the corresponding activities.⁶⁰

(29) *People with disabilities* were taken into account in the project design and implementation but are not a priority target group. *Coordination with specialised stakeholders in the coordination groups ensures that specific needs are met and that the effects of multiple discrimination (e.g. for women with disabilities) are mitigated.*⁶¹

(30) *Environmental concerns, energy efficiency and climate change adaption* have been considered as cross-cutting topics, as well as through specific activities⁶². The conflict analyses of South Sudan and Uganda provide in depth information on climate related vulnerabilities (especially for women and girls) and risks for the exacerbation of conflicts caused by the effects of climate change.

(31) The SCCR projects applies a *comprehensive resilience approach* which combines humanitarian and development activities with peacebuilding initiatives to promote peaceful coexistence and thus contributed to the *mainstreaming of the 'collective outcomes'*.

For *Human Rights as cross cutting issue* refer to point thirteen.

6. Conclusions

Much information on the *Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus* can be found online. A key aspect is always that implementing an HDP Nexus approach needs to be *adapted to a specific context*. While there are lessons learnt from others, there is a lot to be 'invented' by the project in order to address the different needs and preferences of the people in a holistic way. The partners in the *Strengthening Conflict and Gender-sensitive Community Resilience in Protracted Crisis in Northern Uganda and Central Equatoria (SCCR)* project have *learned a lot about 'nexusing'* in the implementation of a comprehensive and salutary project (see point 5, findings).

This final project review focuses on the *coherence* of the SCCR project and examines how it fits into the context and to what extent it is compatible with international policies and other interventions in Bidi-Bidi, Imvepi, and Kaju-Keji. It shows that working with the HDP nexus seems to be the right approach.

In terms of *internal coherence*, the project has created considerable synergies by linking with other interventions carried out by the same organisations and by linking activities with the respective expertise (e.g. on conflict sensitivity, gender equality) of other implementing partners. Output 1.1 *Strengthened conflict and gender sensitivity*

⁶⁰ cf. project progress reports, specifically activities 2.1.1 – 2.1.5; FGD with project staff 10.05.2024 and KII;

⁶¹ cf. FGD with project staff 10.05.2024, KII

⁶² For example, establishing community farming groups and promote climate smart agriculture and entrepreneurship, tree nurseries, and kitchen gardens, and provide trainings in tree growing and environmental and Natural Resources Management (NRM) (cf. activities under 1.2.2)

in humanitarian and development assistance through joint programming has been achieved, and the *capacity development of the implementing partners* through learning from each other's comparative advantages is much greater than expected. The project also shows how national implementing partners can be strengthened in the spirit of '*localisation*' and demonstrates the added value that international partners can still bring. Furthermore, the *benefits of working in a consortium and exploiting the comparative advantages* of the different organisations largely outweigh the increased coordination efforts. In the case of the SCCR project, this effect is reinforced by the *extraordinary commitment of the project management, the implementing staff, and the participants* (e.g. CPMs).

As described under point 11 of the findings, the SCCR project *is in line with the relevant international norms and standards* to which all implementing organisations adhere. Outputs 1.2 *Increased women's leadership and empowerment of women and girls through promotion of climate resilience and economic self-reliance*, 2.1 *Enhanced conflict resolution capacity and community mediation processes*, and 2.2 *Protection of women's rights and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)* are deeply rooted in relevant international and national policies, as well as in internal organisational quality standards. The *basic principles and guidelines of the Austrian Development Agency* (e.g. *mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, application of a human rights-based approach and Do No Harm, etc.*) are well implemented in practice. While the *Do No Harm approach* has been around for a long time and most projects refer to 'conflict sensitivity', SCCR shows that working with a *professional peacebuilding component* and adding conflict transformation⁶³ and mediation makes a significant difference to the quality of implementation of these concepts.

In terms of *external coherence*, the SCCR project is aligned with the respective national HDP nexus processes (see findings point 1) and interacts with other actors in the same context through participation in various coordination groups, which helps to work complementarily and avoid duplication. Furthermore, the SCCR staff constantly brings the topic of conflict sensitivity, which would otherwise be neglected, to these coordination groups.

The cross-border activities and exchanges between project participants in Uganda and South Sudan are unique and have had several positive outcomes (see point 10) *The Strengthening Conflict and Gender-sensitive Community Resilience in Protracted Crisis in Northern Uganda and Central Equatoria (SCCR) project confirms the added value of the HDP nexus approach as 'the whole being more than the sum of its parts'*.

⁶³ Conflict transformation is about reorganising or reshaping (= transforming) the behaviour and attitudes of conflict parties towards the conflict in order to create a new 'narrative of reality'. In this sense, it goes beyond conflict management or conflict resolution. (cf. Shaw 2020)
The guiding question in conflict resolution is: "How do we end something that is not desired?" while in conflict transformation the guiding question is: "How do we end something not desired and build something we do desire?" Transformation thus goes beyond resolution.

7. Recommendations

Recommendations related to the main review object: coherence

- I. All six project organisations point out the good collaboration among the consortium partners⁶⁴, among the implementing partners in the target countries⁶⁵, and between the Austrian and Ugandan/South Sudanese organisations and emphasize the value of mutual learning through the comparative advantages (= internal coherence). *“Most other consortia are fighting all the time. This one is blessed”* (participant of the FGD 09.05.2024) However, in light of the *localisation agenda* and given that all partners have proven their management capacities, some review participants felt that a second phase of the SCCR project should be carried out by a consortium of all (seven) implementing partners on equal terms and avoid the hierarchical layers *which derive from the fact that only the Austrian organisations are contractual consortium partners and thus have more decision taking power.* (cf. finding 1) *The OECD (2024) toolkit Shifting Power with Partners can provide inspiration and guidance for the planning of a second phase.*
- II. Establish partnership agreements between implementing partners and with project participants who are actively involved in project implementation (e.g. Community Peace Monitors - CPMs), detailing the nature of cooperation, rights and obligations.
- III. Establish an internal complaint mechanism with a clear chain of reaction to deal with inter-organisational difficulties.
- IV. Develop and implement a coordination and communication strategy on different levels across all project partner organisations (e.g. finance persons, PMs, monitoring officers). (cf. finding 10)
- V. Align the project objectives (and indicators) to the national Collective Outcomes and share monitoring data with the respective authorities.
- VI. Ensure the alignment of monitoring systems (e.g. definitions and measuring methods to collect comparable data) and carry out joint analyses of the monitoring data for project management and shared learning, although results have been discussed in the quarterly project meetings. (cf. findings 2, 3, 19)
- VII. Ideally, a designated person/position/organisation coordinates a (jointly developed) M&E mechanism⁶⁶ (prioritising what should be monitored and evaluated), disseminates MEAL results to the managers and monitors the adjustments the HDP community and consortium partners make to their programming.
- VIII. Most of the recommendations for improved project implementation of the participants of the project staff FGD (09.05.2024) revolved around better management of the time frame (planning):
 - a. start with joint a needs assessment
 - b. activities which build on one another must start early on
 - c. facilitate field visits early on

⁶⁴ Austrian Red Cross (lead), Care Austria, Austrian Centre for Peace

⁶⁵ Care International in Uganda, Palm Corps, CEPO, Uganda Red Cross Society

⁶⁶ which for practical reasons should be aligned with the respective organisation's MEAL systems

- d. plan exchange visits around the mid-term report
- e. leave a longer reporting period towards the end of the project (cf. finding 14, 17, 18, 19, 23)
- IX. While all implementing partners have a sufficient level of 'gender competence', further capacity building could be beneficial to help project staff decide which (gender) approach is most appropriate for which activity/objective. This would enable project partners to incorporate aspects of an intersectional approach to gender equality and social justice. (cf. findings 15, 27, and 29)
- X. Hold a planning workshop involving all project partners to draw on lessons learned and incorporate the latest data from the contexts for a follow-up project.
- XI. Conduct a mid-term review process, including focus group discussions with rights-holders of all intervention themes, to complement monitoring data and improve project management, and include **an end-of-project review** to map out the added value of the HDP nexus approach.

Recommendations on project realisation/content for a follow-up project

- XII. Ensure that the same conditions for participation (e.g. in terms of benefits) apply to all participatory project activities regardless of which implementing partner organises them.
Specifically: Implement the good practice of Care International in Uganda's childcare provisions for nursing training participants⁶⁷ throughout all capacity development activities to ascertain equal access to trainings.
- XIII. Link the capacity development activities to form a comprehensive training programme with certification (recommendation of CPMs).
- XIV. The ADA Coordination Office could further support HDP nexus efforts and coordination among projects funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation, as well as with other stakeholders in the respective sectors.
- XV. Flexible funding is one of the corner stones of the HDP nexus approach. Different possibilities to manage funds among the project partners have been discussed during the review reflection workshop in Arua (09.05.2024) and should be further discussed with funding partners e.g. the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). (cf. finding 4)
- XVI. *"As the climate sector rises as a potential fourth pillar for more joined up planning, funding and implementation, humanitarian actors need to quickly advance their understanding and engagement with risk aware approaches."* (ALNAP EXplain 06/2023) Gender responsive climate risk management and adaptation could be a central objective of a second project phase. **All three** Austrian project partners have invested in their respective knowledge⁶⁸ and capacities which could be shared with the Ugandan partners. (cf. finding 30)
- XVII. Scale the SCCR peace and cross-border activities to other areas and share lessons learnt in coordination groups (cf. finding 21)

⁶⁷ Care takes on the accommodation costs for an accompanying adult person (older than 18 years) who can take care of the small child during training hours.

⁶⁸ e.g. environmental peacebuilding, anticipatory action to climate related hazards, etc.

- XVIII. Systematically engage with local human rights movements and/or organisations (cf. finding 13) and involve them in project activities as appropriate.

Specific recommendations for the peace building component

- XIX. To strengthen the Community Peace Monitors
- f. provide follow-up and further training and mentoring for the Community Peace Monitors to enable them to become mediators
 - g. use the experience of the Red Cross to learn how to engage volunteers and train additional CPMs
 - h. establish a system of community mediation centres
 - i. evaluate the CPMs individual competencies (e.g. through an assessment centre) and map their previous capacity development / trainings to identify capacities for specific tasks and support their employability through the certification of competence. (cf. findings 8, 26, 27)
- XX. While mediation is one useful approach towards more peaceful communities, not every case is suitable for mediation⁶⁹. The cases that have been handled by the Community Peace Monitors and partner organisations should be carefully assessed and feed into a guidance on when and how to use mediation and which cases should be treated by the judicial systems. In a second phase the SCCR project could greatly benefit from synergies with the ADA Coordination Office which supports Uganda's justice, law and order sector, specifically for SGBV cases⁷⁰. However, SGBV cases should always be referred to experts and not be handled by CPMs.
- XXI. Develop a handbook and/or wiki for the Community Peace Monitors and provide easy-to-use illustrated charts with key concepts for the CPMs and sensitisation efforts in communities. (recommendation from the FGD with CPMs)
- XXII. Provide CPMs with digital tools (e.g. an app for early warning, case management, etc.) on smart phones and provide monthly airtime and/or mobile money.
- It is important to accompany the use of digital tools with thorough and continuous training on how to secure evidence (e.g. of domestic violence), confidentiality, do no harm, personality rights and data safety. Furthermore, sensitisation for the evaluation of information on social media is needed to avoid political radicalisation and false information through internet access.
- XXIII. A small research component to learn from local peace and conflict resolution concepts (if applicable in cooperation with local universities) could help to better tailor peace building efforts to the needs of communities (e.g. dealing with taboo topics in high context cultures, using indirect communication, etc.)

⁶⁹ For example, even the police sometimes try to “mediate” cases of domestic and/or sexual violence within families or communities instead of following the legal protocol to deal with a complaint.

⁷⁰ For SGBV prevention and a stronger emphasis on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) ‘the rainworkers’ in Uganda could be valuable partners.

8. Annexe

- Results Assessment
- Instruments of Data Collection
- Review questions
- Information on data protection for review participants
- Bibliography
- ToR for the SCCR project review

RESULTS ASSESSMENT FORM

As only a limited project review was commissioned, rather than a full project evaluation, the review consultant can only make a limited assessment of the SCCR project's achievements against the logframe using data available up to 15 May 2024.

Consultancy firm for the review: trans:verse OG

Timing of review: 4.3.2024 – 31.05.2024, 14 consultancy days (of which 10 in Uganda)

Completion date of the SCCR project review: 30.05.2024

Assessment of results - key aspects	Score	Justification
1. The extent to which the planned outputs (as defined in the project document/logframe) have been achieved taking into account the causal link between inputs and outputs: <i>“Project outputs are strengthened conflict and gender sensitivity in humanitarian and development assistance through joint programming, increased female leadership and empowerment of women and girls, improved conflict resolution capacity and community mediation processes and protecting women`s rights and preventing SGBV.”</i>		
1.1 Strengthened conflict and gender sensitivity in humanitarian and development assistance through joint programming	F	All activities as detailed in the project document (knowledge sharing meetings, studies and analyses, trainings) have been implemented (cf. project document 1.1.1 - 1.1.7, 1 st and 2 nd project report). Review participants explicitly referred to the usefulness of the specific activities (cf. FGDs and KIIs, review report findings 2, p.11; 3, p. 11; 10, p. 14f; 11, p. 15; 12, p.16)
1.2 Increased female leadership and empowerment of women and girls by fostering climate resilience and economic self-reliance	NAP	Although anecdotal evidence on the achievement of outputs through the originally planned activities (e.g. community farming groups, tree nurseries, kitchen gardens, VSLAs, positive masculinities group) was gathered during the FGDs and KIIs and confirms the content of the project progress reports, data was not systematically collected. Therefore, a final evaluation of the outputs cannot be made. (cf. review report findings 6 and 7, p. 12; 12, p. 19)
2.1 Improved conflict resolution capacity and community mediation processes	F	The Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) asked the SCCR project to extend the peace work to all four zones of the Imvepi settlement because zone II has become significantly more peaceful. (cf. review report finding 6, page 12) cf. project progress reports, specifically activities 2.1.1 – 2.1.5; review report finding 28, page 21 based on FGD with project staff 10.05.2024 and KII;

2.2 Protecting women's rights and preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)	NAP	The review focussed on the OECD DAC criterion 'coherence'. Relevant policies have been considered for the project implementation (cf. review report findings 5, p. 11; 7, p. 12; 9, p. 14; 13, p. 16). The result has partly been assessed (e.g. through findings of FGD and progress reports). However, the available data does not allow thorough triangulation and thus no comprehensive assessment can be provided.
<p>2. The extent to which the planned outcomes (as defined in the project document/logframe/Theory of Change) have been achieved taking into account the causal link between outputs and outcomes.</p> <p><i>"Project outcomes are strengthened conflict sensitive community resilience in protracted crisis, in particular of women and girls and on root causes addressed and mitigated impact of forced displacement."</i></p>		
1. Strengthened conflict sensitive community resilience in protracted crisis in Northern Uganda (Bidi Bidi, Imvepi) and Central Equatoria (Yei River County, Kajo Keji County), in particular of women and girls	F	Already during the first reporting period the ADA was informed that the project could not be implemented in Yei River County due to security concerns for the project staff. However, all planned project activities have been implemented in the remaining project zones and contributed to the outcome (cf. review report findings 5, p. 11f; 6, p. 13; 22, p. 19 and 23, p. 19). A particularly successful model is the training of Community Peace Monitors (CPMs), who were only planned in South Sudan. Based on the demand of the local population, CPMs have also been trained in the target areas in Uganda (Imvepi and Bidi-Bidi refugee settlements) and peace dialogues across the border took place. They have strengthened relationships between communities and led to a decrease of violent conflicts in the communities. (cf. review report finding 24, p. 20).
2. Root causes addressed and mitigated impact of forced displacement in Northern Uganda (Bidi Bidi, Imvepi) and Central Equatoria (Yei River County, Kajo Keji County)		Already during the first reporting period the ADA was informed that the project could not be implemented in Yei River County due to security concerns for the project staff. However, all planned project activities have been implemented in the remaining project zones and contributed to the outcome (cf. review report findings 6, p.12; 12, p. 16; 16, p. 18; 25, p.20). The alignment of the SCCR project outcomes with the respective national HDP frameworks of South Sudan and Uganda and close collaboration in coordination and networking groups have greatly supported the achievement of the outcome. (cf. review report finding 1, p. 10).
<p>3. The extent to which the project contributed to the objective at impact level (as defined in the project document/logframe).</p> <p><i>"The project impact is to contribute to gender equality, to empower women and girls, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 5, SDG 16)."</i></p>		

To contribute to achieving gender equality and to empower all women and girls and to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies in Uganda and South Sudan	NAP	<p>The limited scope of the final project review does not provide sufficient data to assess the evaluation topic.</p> <p>The SCCR project has generated some higher-level effects in Uganda by raising the awareness of actors represented in sector/cluster groups and of the OPM for conflict sensitivity and peace building. (cf. review report finding 20, p. 19)</p> <p>In South Sudan, CEPO uses project results and lessons learnt to leverage good practices to other areas and for advocacy efforts on the national level. (cf. review report finding 21, p. 19)</p>
4. The extent to which the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved contributed to results related to the relevant cross-cutting issues. Please add a justification for each relevant cross-cutting issue.		
Gender Mainstreaming	F	The SCCR project has implemented an OECD DAC Gender Marker 2 and is fully gender mainstreamed. (cf. review report finding 27, page 21; 2 ^{cd} progress report, p. 6f)
Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm	F	Conflict sensitivity and DNH are mainstreamed as cross-cutting issues (cf. review report finding 28, page 21)
Inclusion of people with disabilities	F	People with disabilities were taken into account in the project design (cf. project document p. 7, 15, 16) and implementation (cf. 2 ^{cd} progress report i.a. p. 8) but are not a priority target group. Coordination with specialised stakeholders in the coordination groups ensures that specific needs are met. (cf. review report finding 29, page 21)
Environment	F	<i>Environmental concerns, energy efficiency and climate change adaption</i> have been considered as cross-cutting topics, as well as through specific activities. (cf. conflict analyses of South Sudan and Uganda, 2 ^{cd} progress report i.a. p. 31, review report finding 30, page 21)
5. Have the right approaches - with a view to implementing ADA's overarching principles - been adopted to ensure results achievement?	F	The SCCR project's rights-based <i>and</i> bottom-up approach, specifically the community-based approach (CBA) and community engagement and accountability approach (CEA) and the comprehensive resilience approach (cf. review report findings 13, p. 16 and 31, p. 21) towards the HDP nexus, as well as the human rights approach with special attention to women's rights, support the overarching principles, strategies, and policies of the Austrian Development Agency.

INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION⁷¹

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED⁷²

1. Project Manager of Palm Corps, 13.05.2024 (M-S)
2. Project officer URCS, 13.05.2024 (M-S)
3. Project Manager of CEPO, 12.05.2024 (M-S)
4. Project officer of CEPO, 12.05.2024 (M-S)
5. Co-trainer of the CPM training in Yumbe, 12.05.2024 (F-S)
6. Trainer of the CPM training in Yumbe, 12.05.2024 (F-N)
7. Project Manager of Care International in Uganda, 10.05.2024 (F-S)
8. Delegate of the Austrian Red Cross to Uganda, 10.05.2024 (M-S)
9. Project Manager of the Austrian Centre for Peace, 06.05.2024 (F-N)
10. Project Manager of Care Austria, 15.04.2024 (F-N)
11. Project Manager of the Austrian Red Cross, 08.04.2024 (F-N)
12. Trainer of the CPM training in South Sudan, 14.03.2024 (M-N)

LIST OF FGD PARTICIPANTS FROM SCCR PROJECT ORGANISATIONS IN ARUA, 10.05.2024

- 3 CARE in Uganda (3F-S)
- 2 CEPO (2M-S)
- 1 Palm Corps (1F-S)
- 2 URCS (1F/1M-S)
- 2 AutRC (1F-N/1M-S)
- 1 ACP (1F-N)

FGD WITH PEACE MONITORS FROM KAJU-KEJI, 12.05.2024

- 2 female participants
- 5 male participants

FGD WITH PEACE MONITORS FROM IMVEPI, 12.05.2024

- X female participants
- Y male participants

FGD WITH PEACE MONITORS FROM BIDI-BIDI, 12.05.2024

- x female participants
- y male participants

⁷¹ All review participants have been anonymised in the following lists.

Letter code: M – person presented as male, F – person presented a female, S – originally from a country in the Global South, N – originally from a country in the Global North; One participant had a visible disability.

⁷² The length of the interviews and the set of questions asked have been adapted to the respective interview partners.

SCCR STRATEGIC LEVEL EXCHANGE AT THE ADA COORDINATION OFFICE IN KAMPALA,
08.05.2024

- Head of the ADA Coordination office (F-N)
- ADA project officer (M-S)
- President of Palm Corps (M-S)
- Delegate of the Austrian Red Cross to Uganda (M-S)
- Vice-Director of the Austrian Centre for Peace (F-N)
- Programme Director of Care International in Uganda (M-S)
- SCCR Project Manager of the Uganda Red Cross Society (M-N)
- Review Consultant, trans:verse OG (F-N)

General review questions

OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

Is the intervention doing the right things? Do objectives and design respond to stakeholders' needs, policies and priorities?

- Have the project outcomes been aligned with the national (HDPN) frameworks, EU GAP III, SDG targets?
- Has joint analysis been undertaken? How?
- Is the project targeted to the practical needs of different groups of rights holders?

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Coherence

How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution.

- How did the project engage with local stakeholders, including communities, government entities, and non-governmental organisations, to foster collaboration and sustainability?
- Is the project design, its objectives, purpose, and expected results articulated in a coherent way?
- What are the lessons learnt and best practices regarding the design, planning, implementation, and management of the project?
- To what extent is the project complementary to or does collaborate/coordinate with other HDP Nexus processes/projects/actors in the region? Are there synergies?
- How is the project linked to other HDPN actors in the project regions (and nationally in Uganda and South Sudan)?
- Which coordination mechanisms are in place?
- What challenges have you encountered in implementing an HDPN approach?
- How does the project monitoring work? How do the consortium partners share and combine monitoring data? How is it used for project management?

Effectiveness

Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

- Log frame data
- Are the Gender marker requirements fulfilled? (justification)

Efficiency

How well are resources being used?

- Have adjustments to the timeframe been necessary? If yes, why?
- Have project adaptations been necessary due to changes in the context? How has this been managed? Did it require changes in the finance attribution? I (or would it have)? How did you manage?

Impact

“The project impact is to contribute to gender equality, to empower women and girls, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 5, SDG 16), with the project outcomes strengthened conflict sensitive community resilience in protracted crisis, in particular of women and girls and on root causes addressed and mitigated impact of forced displacement.” (project document, p. 3)

- Has SCCR generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

Sustainability

- How did the project contribute to building resilience and sustainable development in the target communities?
- What did the stakeholders and beneficiaries consider as the most necessary approaches/areas of future projects?
- In case of a possible follow-up project, what interventions should the consortium focus on?

Human Rights Based Approach, Gender Equality and Coherence

- *Internal coherence* : Which Human Rights are (and whose) are most at risk in the area of the SCCR interventions?
- *External coherence*: Does the SCCR project support and co-operate with civil society actors, such as human rights organisations, disabled people's organisations, women's rights or feminist organisations?
Does the intervention co-ordinate and co-operate with other interventions supporting human rights and gender equality, and does it strive for synergies?

Mainstreaming of crosscutting issues

- How have findings and recommendations of the Gender Analysis been implemented?
- What are the strengths/weaknesses of the project regarding gender equality?
- Which gender approaches have been applied?
- What are the strengths/weaknesses of the project regarding inclusion of people with disabilities?
- What has the project undertaken to mainstream climate responsibility into implementation?
- (How) Have Collective Outcomes been mainstreamed?
- How has a DNH approach / conflict sensitivity been implemented? What were the main steps? What went well? What was missing?

INFORMATION ON DATA PROTECTION FOR REVIEW PARTICIPANTS

trans:verse OG collects and processes the following information:

- Gender, age, and if applicable/disclosed disability
- Interviews only: name, employer, job title, and contact details; voice recordings and interview transcripts

trans:verse uses the information that you have given to us for the sole purpose of the review of the SCCR project.

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Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union, the lawful basis we rely on for processing this information is your consent. You are able to remove your consent at any time. You can do this by contacting office@transverse.at

How we store your personal information

Your information is securely stored in Austria.

We keep your name, gender, age, and disability until 30th December 2024. We will then dispose your information by deleting all electronic data. Any voice recordings produced will be deleted within 30 days of recording.

Your data protection rights

Under data protection law, you have rights including:

- Right of access - You have the right to ask us for copies of your personal information.
- Right to erasure - You have the right to ask us to erase your personal information.
- Right to restriction of processing - You have the right to ask us to restrict the processing of your personal information.
- Right to object to processing - You have the right to object to the processing of your personal information.

You are not required to pay any charge for exercising your rights. If you make a request, we have one month to respond to you.

Please contact us at if you wish to make a request.

How to complain

If you have any concerns about our use of your personal information, you can make a complaint to us at office@transverse.at.

trans:verse OG is a consulting company, registered in the Austrian Commercial Register with the number FN 593172 m; Austrian Trade Regulation: www.ris.bka.gv.at

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EVALUATION TOR

Terms of Reference – Final review SCCR project

Project/Programme Title: SCCR - Strengthening conflict and gender-sensitive community resilience in protracted crisis in Northern Uganda and Central Equatoria

Country: Eastern Africa – Uganda, South Sudan

Project/Programme Number: 2626/00-2021

Consortium Partners/ Local Project Partners: AutRC (Austrian Red Cross), ACP (Austrian Centre for Peace); CARE Austria; CARE Uganda; URCS (Ugandan Red Cross Society); Palm Corps; CEPO (Community Empowerment for Progress Organization)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACP	Austrian Centre for Peace	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
AFARD	Agency for Accelerated Rural Development	OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
AutRC	Austrian Red Cross	PDM	Parish Development Model
CBA	Community Based Approach	PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organization	PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
CPMs	Community Peace Monitors	RGA	Rapid Gender Analysis
CRS	Catholic Relief Services	RMM	Role Model Men
DCDO	District Community Development Officer	RWCs	Refugee Welfare Council
ERI	Enabling Rural Innovation	SCCR	Strengthening conflict and gender sensitive community resilience
FDPs	Food Distribution Points	UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
FMNR	Famer managed Natural Regeneration	URCS	Uganda Red Cross Society
GBV	Gender Based Violence	VSLA	Village Saving and Loans Association
GED	Gender Equity Diversity	WLiE	Women Lead in Emergency
IRC	International Rescue Committee		



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1) **Background:**

The SCCR project runs from December 2021 until May 2024 and is funded by the Austrian Development Agency. It's managed by an Austrian consortium - Austrian Red Cross (Lead), CARE Austria, ACP – and implemented locally by the Ugandan Red Cross Society, CARE Uganda, Palm Corps, as well as the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) in South Sudan.

The project aims to contribute to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 and 16. The main objectives include strengthening conflict-sensitive community resilience in protracted crises, particularly for women and girls, and addressing and mitigating the impact of forced displacement. Project outputs focus on enhancing conflict and gender sensitivity in humanitarian and development assistance, promoting female leadership and empowerment, improving conflict resolution capacity, and protecting women's rights while preventing gender-based violence.

The project was designed to pilot a coordinated (HDP Nexus) approach between peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development organizations and to generate lessons learned accordingly.

It is expected to achieve 1) strengthened conflict and gender sensitivity in humanitarian and development assistance through joint programming, 2) increased female leadership and empowerment of women and girls, 3) improved conflict resolution capacity & community mediation processes and 4) protecting women's rights and preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Section 6.3 "Assessment and Evaluations" of the approved project document outlines that the consortium will conduct a final project review instead of a final external evaluation due to budget constraints and to ensure that as much budget as possible goes directly to the project beneficiaries. The document further outlines that the review must be commissioned by the ACP and conducted by an independent international consultant based on OECD evaluation criteria, to ensure the quality of the results.

2) **Purpose of the End Review:**

The purpose of the end review is to derive lessons learned, capture valuable background information and recommendations regarding the Nexus HDP project, identify the overall performance of the project per the project objective and intended results and inform future operations and projects of the same thematic area.

3) **Scope:**

The approved project document does not outline the scope of the final review; however, the consortium considers that three key elements need to be covered:

- Review of project implementation according to the log frame indicators
- Review the integration of HDP nexus and conflict sensitivity elements within the project.
- Evaluate the incorporation of gender equality and gender sensitivity elements in the project.

Out of the OECD evaluation criteria catalogue, all six elements shall be considered but one element, Coherence shall be assessed in depth through the review:



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3) End Review Questions:

Coherence:

- In what ways did the project contribute to building resilience and sustainable development in the target communities?
- How did the project engage with local stakeholders, including communities, government entities, and non-governmental organisations, to foster collaboration and sustainability? Is the project targeted to the practical needs of different groups of “beneficiaries”?
- Is the project design, its objectives, purpose, and expected results articulated in a coherent way? What are the lessons learnt and best practices regarding the design, planning, implementation, and management of the project?
- To what extent is the project complementary to other “HDP Nexus activities” in the region? Are there synergies?

Forward-looking insights:

- In case of a possible follow-up project, what interventions should the consortium focus on?
- What did the stakeholders and beneficiaries consider as the most necessary approaches/areas of future projects?
- The final set of evaluation questions will be agreed in the inception report.

4) Design and Approach:

The consultant will integrate both desk and field study to examine information for the SCCR project. This will involve field travels to the project region, facilitating the collection of data in collaboration with project partners, and ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to fulfilling the requirements outlined in the Terms of Reference.

The review shall consist of several phases:

Inception meeting: Upon signing the contract, a comprehensive discussion of the assignment will follow. The ACP as well as local project partners and consortium members will provide the consultant with initial documents, including available data.

Desk study: The consultant studies all related project documents; analyses the project log frame and theory of change and its assumptions.

Inception phase: In the inception outline the consultant will describe the design and structure of the review and will elaborate on how data will be obtained and analysed. The use of a data collection planning worksheet or a similar tool is required. Initial interviews may take place.

Data triangulation and quality control are very important and need to be discussed in the inception outline.

A field visit will only take place upon approval of the inception outline by ACP.

Field phase: Data needs to be gathered, analysed, and interpreted. It is expected that the review will include onsite data collection disaggregated by age and gender. The appropriate project consortium member and partners will provide access and facilitate the meetings, including



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organization of those meetings, between the consultant and the individuals to be interviewed (beneficiaries, local partners, any other relevant party).

Presentation: Presentation of key findings to the ACP upon completion of the field visit.

Draft review report: Submission and presentation of draft review report to the consortium, inclusion of comments from partners.

Final review report: Submission of final review report, see reporting requirements under point 11.

For the different phases it is expected that data and information will be obtained through different methods such as: analysis of documents, key informant interviews conducted face-to face or remote, focus group discussions, others.

All data collected needs to be disaggregated by age and gender.

It is expected that the review will produce lessons learned and recommendations for ADA and the project consortium.

5) Logistics/ Work plan

At the beginning of the assignment, ACP will provide the consultant with a dossier containing the relevant documents, including the project document, budgets (original and revised), log frame matrix, operational planning, project progress reports, etc.

The consultant is expected to spend several days in the project locations in the field, where road access and communication are limited/difficult. Consortium and Local partners will provide logistical support (transport in situ and coordinating and organizing interviews). The period for the review is foreseen to be March- May 2024.

Action		Days
Inception meeting	Week of 1.-7.4.2024	0,5 day
Desk review/ off-site data collection	Before and after Inception meeting	3 days
Submission of Inception outline	Max. 1 week after Inception meeting (Fr. 12.04.)	0,5
Receipt of feedback by AutRC, URCS, ACP to inception outline	2 weeks after submission of outline (26.04.)	
Field Visit/ Data collection Participation in Uganda and Austria Final Project meeting	After review and revision of inception report outline (29.4.-12.5)	5
Submission Draft project review Report (1. Version)	Max. 2 weeks after field visit (27.5.)	4
Receipt of comments by AutRC, URCS, ACP & meeting	Max. 1 week after submission of report	
Submission of Final report with incorporated comments	Max. 1 week after receiving comments	0,5
Consultation meeting with URCS and AutRC	Together with submission of final report	0,5



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6) Quality Assurance and Ethical Considerations

The consultant will adhere to the Declaration of honour with respect to the exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest (see annex 1), as well as the Code of Conduct for Project Reviews managed by the ACP (see annex 2).

Quality Assurance will be upheld through rigorous protocols ensuring data accuracy, reliability, and consistency in adherence to established standards. Ethical considerations will be prioritized, with the consultant implementing robust measures such as obtaining informed consent from participants and safeguarding the anonymity of respondents, fostering a principled and responsible approach to data collection.

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7) Data ownership and data disclosure

Data ownership for the project review will be vested in the ACP, and strict adherence to international data protection legal frameworks will govern the storage and disclosure of collected data, ensuring both confidentiality and compliance throughout the process.

8) Final Review Report:

- See annex 3.
- A first comprehensive version (draft) should be submitted within 2 weeks after the completion of fieldwork.
- The result assessment form is mandatory and to be submitted as part of the Annexes.
- Methodological limitations, assumptions, concerns, and any constraints encountered to be acknowledged and their impact to the findings assessed.
 - Constructive analysis of the findings to be included, findings and recommendations to be clearly linked in the report.
 - Comprehensive answering of the main evaluation questions and focusing on desired deliverables
- Report to be coherently structured with a logical flow.
- Sources of information to be clearly stated.
- max. 30 pages excl. Annexes.

9) Responsibilities of consultant and ACP/ other partners:

Consultant's Responsibilities:

- Conduct a thorough evaluation/review based on the provided scope.
- Analyse relevant documents and data.
- Present findings clearly and concisely.

ACP/Other Partners' Responsibilities:

- Provide necessary documents and data to the consultant.
- Collaborate with the consultant during the review process.
- Participate in discussions and feedback sessions.
- Organize the travel to the field locations from Austria, including flights and local accommodation.
- Facilitate local travel, providing necessary vehicle and driver.
- Facilitate and organize all necessary meetings for the field visit.
- Review and provide feedback on draft and final reports.
- Timely approval of key deliverables.



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With regards to communication, both parties shall:

- Maintain regular communication to ensure project alignment.
- Agree upon communication channels and reporting frequency.
- Address any issues promptly through established channels.

10) Payment and practical arrangements:

The estimated cost is EUR 9.100,- gross for consultant fees (14 days x EUR 650,-) plus the consultant's travel budget (flight to Uganda or South Sudan, flight between Uganda and South Sudan, insurance, accommodation, visa, airport transfer, etc.). Transport in field coordinated with URCS and CARE UG for Uganda.

11) Requirement for consultant:

Essential:

- Evaluations and review of similar initiatives and projects
- Transition from humanitarian assistance to development
- Evaluation of development interventions using participatory methods
- No previous involvement in the projects to be evaluated
- Conflict management topics
- Gender and disability topics
- Strong spoken and written command of English as contractual and working language.
- Well established contact to federal stakeholders is an asset.
- Previous work/assignments incorporating federal stakeholders is an asset.
- working knowledge and experience of Uganda and South Sudan, ideally of the refugee context in Northern Uganda is an asset.
- Experience with evaluations of ADA funded projects is an asset.
- Experience through work in the region and context is an asset.
- Presence in the region through work or otherwise is an asset.
- Female applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

12) Specifications of the submission of offers:

In adherence to the Terms of Reference (ToRs), interested consultants are required to submit the following documentation by the specified deadline:

- **Cover Letter (maximum 1 page):** Expressing interest, highlighting key qualifications, and providing a summary of relevant experience.
- **Curriculum Vitae (not exceeding 4 pages):** Detailing professional background, skills, relevant experience, and 2 references.
- **Outline of Review Approach and Methodology (maximum 2 pages):** Articulating the proposed approach and methodology for conducting the review.
- **Overview of Relevant Evaluation-Related Work:** A brief description of previous assignments in the subject areas covered by the contract, including the type of evaluation, summary of activities, date, recipient, and client.



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- **Financial Proposal:** The financial proposal should adhere to the indicative schedule outlined in the Terms of Reference and present a detailed breakdown of costs in Euros. The Austrian Centre for Peace appreciates the collaboration of consultants in ensuring the successful execution of the final project review.

The deadline for submission is [insert specific date and time]. Consultants must ensure the provision of the following: CV, financial proposal, references, cover letter, outline of evaluation approach and methodology. Submissions should be complete and submitted in accordance with the outlined requirements to be considered for evaluation.

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13) ACP Contact details

Eva Huber and Mercedes Corrales will be the contact person for this review.

Contact Details:

Austrian Centre for Peace

Rochusplatz 1

Schlaining

Huber@ac4p.at ; corrales@ac4p.at

Annexes:

1. Declaration of honour
2. Code of conduct for consultants
3. RGAs