

# Curriculum, Life Skills and Peacebuilding Education – Promoting Equity and Peacebuilding in South Sudan

Results and Lessons Learned



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Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy Programme

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Cover photo: © UNICEF / A student talks about peace at a Peace Club meeting at the Nile Model Secondary School, Juba, South Sudan

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# Acronyms

ALPs	Accelerated/Alternative Learning Programmes
CO	Country Office
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
ESL	English as a Second Language
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GoN	Government of the Netherlands
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDPs	Internally Displaced Populations
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LS	Life Skills
LS + PE	Life Skills and Peace Education
LSaZoP	Learning Spaces as Zones of Peace
MoCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PB	Peacebuilding
PBEA	Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy
PE	Peace Education
PoC	Protection of Civilian sites
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SIL	SIL International (formerly Summer Institute of Linguistics)
SPLM/A	Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army
SSCF	South Sudan Curriculum Framework
TCF	The Curriculum Foundation
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
VAC	Violence Against Children

# Document Overview

The challenges facing South Sudan have become acute since the outbreak of civil war in mid-December 2013, which has compounded existing patterns of pressures for violence in the country. The study will look at the challenges to peacebuilding through education, and how in this context resilient communities can be forged through PBEA pilot interventions. When possible, the study gives a voice to the individual actors involved, including the children and adolescents of South Sudan.

This document is intended to be used by UNICEF staff, implementing partner organizations and other interested practitioners in the education and peacebuilding fields. It is hoped that the study will contribute to discussion and planning to strengthen peacebuilding through education initiatives designed during the post-conflict post-independence period and prior to the current crisis in order to help prepare for the necessary transition from conflict induced

crisis to peace and sustainable development. It will explore how education advances conflict resolution, peacebuilding and community resilience in conflict affected and post-conflict contexts—notably through UNICEF-supported curriculum reform, life skills and peace education, and peace clubs—how it might do so even more effectively, and the challenges facing programme efforts.

This report examines the PBEA's support to Life Skills and Peacebuilding Education, curriculum development, the extent to which the programme is promoting equity for traditionally marginalized pastoral communities and girls, as well as engaging youth in peacebuilding processes. The report identifies strong results being achieved across several programme Outcomes, and very encouraging signs of increasing levels of social cohesion and resilience among conflict affected and vulnerable communities.

# Executive Summary

Of the fourteen countries implementing the Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy (PBEA) Programme, South Sudan was until recently among the most fragile. Since the explosion of violence on 15 December 2013 in Juba, capital of South Sudan, and the beginning of another civil war with opposing sides, now being led by the two principal post-Independence leaders, civilians (especially children and adolescents) have paid the highest price, as they did during in the two civil wars with Khartoum in the united Sudan (1955-1972 and 1983-2005). Fifty to one hundred thousand South Sudanese have paid for this latest war with their lives. South Sudan was, however, already dealing with deep rooted challenges for consolidating peace following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and formal independence in 2011.

In response to the outbreak of civil war, UNICEF has been employing a multi-pronged strategy to adapt PBEA—originally developed as a post-conflict programme for consolidating peace—to the new realities of South Sudan’s intrastate conflict. Thus, UNICEF continues its long-term support for the curriculum development process and minimum standards for education quality, as well as training to implement the frameworks it helped develop for life skills education from pre-primary to secondary levels and out of school individuals. Reflecting the peacebuilding turn in UNICEF’s programming, among the initiatives UNICEF is supporting and that are considered in this case study are primary/secondary/adult education, life skills and peace building education, sports and livelihood opportunities in cattle camps (temporary pastoral settlements), and the extent to which those interventions are improving issues of equity, inclusion, achieving programme outcomes, and supporting peacebuilding in South Sudan.

## Methodology

This case study examines progress made by the PBEA programme to strengthen government institutional capacities for peacebuilding through education in South Sudan and the

extent to which peacebuilding approaches have been integrated into education sector plan and policies. The study further explores the extent to which conflict sensitive education service delivery aimed at improving equity has led to increased capacities for peaceful conflict resolution and increasing access to conflict sensitive education services for traditionally marginalized communities.

This case study is based on direct interviews in July 2014 with representatives of international agencies in Juba, government officials and international consultants working on the curriculum development process, UNICEF implementing partners, school authorities, teachers and students. Information on conditions outside of Juba is second-hand, due to travel restrictions that prevented movement outside of the capital, but is presented for the bright light it sheds on UNICEF and government peacebuilding activities. **In total some 88 people provided direct information for this specific case study** (including school level respondents, curriculum reviewers, trainers, as well as UNICEF and government staff). Substantial amounts of data were subsequently provided by UNICEF’s Regional Office and the South Sudan PBEA team remotely, together with substantial writing support provided by UNICEF ESARO’s Education and Peacebuilding Specialist for completing this case study report.

Insofar as possible, local voices are collected and analysed for what they can reveal of conflict dynamics and programming responses. The curriculum development process writing workshops attended as part of the fieldwork provided an opportunity to interview key players who explain in depth how peacebuilding education and life skills are built into the new curriculum as cross-cutting elements, to appreciate the priority given to making curriculum relevant to South Sudan’s economic context, cultures, and values, and to understand the sea-change that is represented by the refocus from rote knowledge acquisition to skills development and competencies. Livelihoods and gender issues often at the root of conflict are discussed at length, particularly

with relation to pastoral communities. Visits to two local schools provide valuable insights on how peacebuilding is progressing on the ground in community-based schools and through the institution of Peace Clubs, while revealing hurdles that remain to be cleared. Additional data drawn from internal reports made available for this study provide further insights to progress in areas outside of Juba.

Both accomplishments made and challenges remaining for peacebuilding through education are discussed and suggestions are advanced for improving the programme or taking it forward.

A companion study looks at UNICEF's action through PBEA in the humanitarian context, the conflict drivers that contributed to a relapse to civil war and the weaknesses of traditional development programming to support a transition to sustainable peace and development.

## Key Findings

The case study has identified several PBEA-supported initiatives that show progress toward achieving Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4. Moreover, this case study provides evidence of increasing levels of social cohesion and resilience among ethnically divided communities with long histories of tribal conflict and among youth populations, as well as for girls through the targeting of cultural and social barriers to equity in education.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) integrated Life Skills and Peacebuilding (LS+PE) components in the national curriculum. Forty-eight schools in four intervention areas in at least six counties received the LS+PE curriculum, reaching a total of 13,109 students at primary and secondary school level. PBEA facilitated 28 participatory workshops during the review and revision of the LS+PE curriculum guidelines, the formation of and technical support to an inter-ministerial (MoEST and MoCYS) group and facilitated the participation of education personnel in national peacebuilding fora and processes. LS+PE together with support for the national curriculum development process **has established conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding as cross-cutting themes across all levels and subjects (gains with PBEA Outcomes 1 and 2)**. Working with the

Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has helped to mainstream conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into the entire national curriculum and the overall ethos of the MoEST. These efforts have also led to a growing recognition among government duty-bearers that peacebuilding through education is strongly related to issues of equity and inclusion, and together with relevant and quality curriculum they support social cohesion, resilience and improved livelihood opportunities for young people.

Both the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MoCYS) officials have **assimilated the language of conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm**, and are using its key concepts to explain their actions, genuinely convinced that PBEA is positive and necessary. In this regard, the case study has generated strong evidence that the understanding and knowledge among government duty-bearers within key ministries have increased due to support provided by the PBEA programme (i.e., **gains with Outcome 2** for strengthening institutional capacity for delivery of conflict sensitive education services).

For **Outcome 3**, cattle camp initiatives and conflict sensitive school construction programmes have produced clear changes in behaviour among ethnically divided communities who have been able to resolve disputes peacefully using school construction supported by GPE. At the same time, **Outcome 4 results** have been demonstrated through school construction, the use of interactive life skills and peacebuilding support materials in classrooms, and adaptive services for pastoral communities, all of which have increased provision of conflict sensitive education to children and young people. While pilot initiatives for strengthening livelihoods and income generation among pastoral communities are in their early stages, positive progress was recorded with these initiatives which also contributes to **Outcome 3 and 4 level results** through documented changes in behaviour and potentially addresses economic incentives driving conflict among adolescents and youth, thus providing them with **access to education as a transformative peace dividend**. **Additional progress with Outcome 3** is also found with peace and sport club activities that have shown progress with changing attitudes

and behaviours leading to increased levels of gender inclusion, promoting girl's rights as well as overcoming cultural and social barriers to female participation in education. These models have given girls and young women a safe space to voice their opinions and concerns. While this latter transformation could only be identified in relation to PBEA-supported peacebuilding activities, it nevertheless suggests that useful models have been identified for promoting equity and inclusion for girls.

Significant and encouraging progress at achieving outcomes was identified through observations on improved levels of tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution among communities, suggesting that the PBEA Theory of Change (ToC) is making valid assumptions regarding the effective means for encouraging positive behavioural changes among children and building social cohesion and community resilience in South Sudan (for a summary of ToC impacts see Annex B). The case study documents several examples in which PBEA interventions directly helped to mitigate conflicts between groups and, based on qualitative data, have increased levels of tolerance and inclusion (i.e., **achieving higher level programme objectives related to strengthening social cohesion and resilience**). All case study interlocutors underlined very positive and necessary contributions the programme is having.

## Lessons Learned

### Better understanding the history of conflict and culture of peace

- A history of inequities. Defined by inequities for virtually all of its known history, enduring either slavery and exploitation or neglect, South Sudan's present challenge is to convince people that governance of an independent country can be any different from its past;
- Conventional histories from the colonial period, with serious inaccuracies, have too often been drawn on as unassailable public record by academic researchers;
- A strong cultural history of peace exists (see Annex C) but it has been distorted through the history of occupation and challenges with building a functioning independent state.

### Strengthening Curriculum

- For education to participate fully in the economic and social development of South Sudan, it must be based on the values and principles set out in the South Sudan Curriculum Framework and aimed at achieving the goals of the General Education Act of 2012;
- Although the general values and principles of the Curriculum Framework and goals spelled out in the General Education Act are national in scope, local knowledge, examples and interpretations are essential components of teaching;
- Communities need to "own" the education dispensed in their locality, and ensure it remains culturally and economically relevant to local needs and constraints.

### Promoting Equity and Inclusion

- Pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities that engage in seasonal migration will present special challenges requiring tailored solutions to ensure universal and equal access to quality education;
- Education should be constantly adapted to remain relevant with evolving economic and social needs and quality maintained if gains with access are to be sustained;
- Improved livelihoods are one way to enable pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities to become more resilient and better able to educate their children;
- Girls require additional support to overcome sociocultural and economic barriers to their full participation in education and community affairs.

### Key Challenges for promoting conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding through education

- Serious bottlenecks in training, supervision, monitoring, teacher recruitment and supply of materials can be traced to austerity measures caused by 'overspending' on the civil war;
- In some areas, promoting these concepts is seen as "extra work" requiring monetary incentives, especially among inspectors and teachers;
- Insufficient school infrastructure, supplies, qualified teachers, and incentives undermine

access to quality education and fuel regional inequities that contribute to identity based cleavages;

- Insufficient oversight and accountability mechanisms undermine the quality of services. Limited evidence was identified that the government is applying conflict sensitive monitoring systems to support conflict sensitive education services;
- While significant enthusiasm exists among ministry partners about conflict sensitive education, there remains a conceptual blurring between conflict sensitive education, peacebuilding education and peace education, thus creating risk that government efforts to promote peace will become narrowly focussed on traditional peace education models and thus diminish the transformative potential of education services (i.e., redressing issues of inequity, strengthening education sector planning, oversight, transparency and accountability, quality, relevance, and so on).

## Recommendations

### Government and Donors - Correcting historical narratives in curriculum

- South Sudan's education curriculum needs to reflect recent historical findings on the origin of ethnic conflict and the role of traditional peacebuilding;
- Curriculum needs to inject more local content on life-ways, culture, folk literature, poetry and performing arts into the curriculum as a way of assisting teachers and trainers in their required task of giving local relevancy to key concepts such as justice, solidarity and conflict sensitivity;
- Ensure that LS + PE training is locally relevant by ensuring that inclusivity is encouraged for design and input so that lesson and message resonate with local culture;
- Provide discussion ideas, scenarios, and other materials to assist teachers and students in charge of Peace Clubs;
- Complete the critical transition from rote knowledge acquisition to skills development and competencies.

### Government - Management of Education Services

- Results from evaluation and monitoring should always be provided to teachers so they can make adjustments and improvements to their teaching;
- National and state budgets for education must be commensurate with the requirements to provide equal access to quality education, to reduce and eventually eliminate inequities in service delivery, ensure adequate training and support for teachers including living wages paid on time, and carry out regular performance monitoring;
- Demonstrate political will to effect institutional change to create more inclusive, participatory, transparent, accountable and just forms of governance that serve all South Sudan's people in an equitable manner;
- Anticipate bottlenecks in teaching, training and monitoring needs by hiring sufficient staff and providing for transportation to maximise coverage of sites;
- Provide enough printed materials and enable their distribution to support teachers, trainers;
- Stimulate interest among students through participatory and inquiry teaching and learning methodologies to become critical thinkers and change agents that can impact their schools and local communities.

### Government and Donors – Empowering Children and Youth as Constructive Citizens

- Give recognition and visibility to leaders of youth peacebuilding activities, including members of Peace Clubs, trainers of LS + PE, and those making key investments in PBEA programmes;
- Find ways to encourage transfer of LS+PE from children to parents and their communities, support traditional conflict resolution structures and engage religious and secular leaders around using their existing structures as avenues for transformational change anchored on common goals such as conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

### **Government and Donors – Promoting Equity through Education**

- Encourage inter-ethnic engagement through early childhood, primary and secondary education by attracting learners from all communities, particularly minority, isolated, and vulnerable sectors of the population;
- Strengthen education sector planning processes to promote conflict sensitive education services that will increase equity, inclusion, and improve social cohesion and resilience;
- Complete the critical transition from rote knowledge acquisition to skills development and competencies, but monitor the outcomes, particularly the transition to higher education; mitigate unintended consequences;
- Enlist their aid in resolving any continued occupation of schools;
- Continue engagement with pastoral communities using livelihoods as entry points to build household resilience, encourage education among girls and boys, and build on UNICEF's successes in brokering peace deals;
- Institute gender quotas or other means of ensuring that women are equitably represented in all programme activities and at all levels of responsibility.



# 1. Programming Context in South Sudan

## 1.1 PBEA Background

The Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme is a four-year, \$150 million initiative established in 2012. Funded by the Government of the Netherlands (GoN), the programme aims to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security in conflict-affected contexts by improving policies and practices for education and peacebuilding.<sup>1</sup>

PBEA represents a continuation of the work of UNICEF and the GoN to implement education programming in conflict contexts. Specifically, PBEA followed the \$201 million Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme, carried out from 2006 to 2011 in 44 countries.<sup>2</sup> The programme emerged

during a period of increased focus by UNICEF on sustainable development for children in fragile and conflict affected settings. Under the broader chapeaux of resilience, conflict sensitive programming and peacebuilding are seen as critical approaches for ensuring that UNICEF addresses the complex challenges facing children in such settings. However, the specific focus of PBEA on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding through social services makes the programme unique. PBEA is perhaps the first UNICEF initiative that systematically aims to work on factors giving rise to violent intrastate conflict in order to ensure sustainable results for children are achieved.

Figure 1. UNICEF PBEA Implementing Countries

PBEA TARGET COUNTRIES				
West and Central Africa	Eastern and Southern Africa <sup>3</sup>	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia	East Asia and Pacific
Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone	Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda	Palestine, Yemen	Pakistan	Myanmar

**PBEA in South Sudan.** In South Sudan, programming was tailored to the need to support sustainable development outcomes for children by working on factors giving rise to conflict and in order to accompany peaceful transition to independence for a new state following decades of conflict. No small challenge considering that between 23%-40% of countries ending violent conflict through a peace accord slip back into conflict with 5 years.<sup>4</sup>

Hopes were high on Independence Day in 2011 that the page had been turned in South Sudan and that the new government could set about building a unified nation out of region that had

been all but neglected by its Egyptian, Ottoman, British and Sudanese overseers, left with little infrastructure and massive challenges, such as the highest illiteracy rates, especially among females, and maternal mortality rates in the world. According to UNHCR data, in South Sudan it is more likely for a woman to die in childbirth than for her to learn to read and write<sup>5</sup>. UNICEF soon realized, however, that development of resilient communities would only be possible through programming capable of dealing with ongoing conflict and addressing conflict legacies that complicated efforts to build national unity and effectively deliver services in an equitable fashion.

1 UNICEF (2014a) "About." *Learning for Peace*. Available: <http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/about/learning-for-peace/>.

2 The goal of EEPCT was to support countries experiencing emergencies and post-crisis transitions in the process of sustainable progress towards provision of basic education for all.

3 Kenya is also included via support to the Dadaab refugee camp to address cross border conflict risks associated with Somali refugees.

4 Call, C. T. and E. M. Cousens (2007, March). Ending wars and building peace. Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series. New York: International Peace Academy, p. 4.

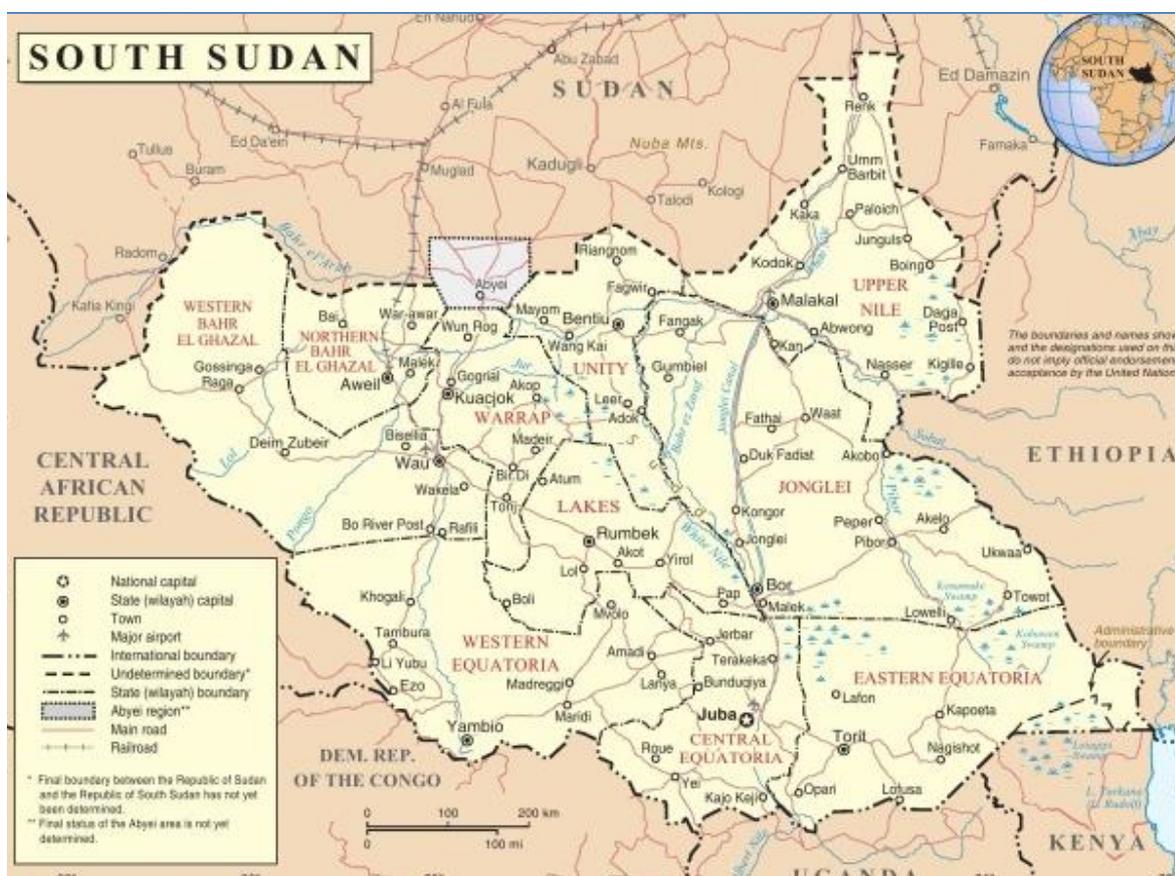
5 UNICEF, South Sudan, 2014 Crisis Response Plan.

Education has long been the most important peace dividend in the eyes of South Sudanese, as evidenced by the success of the “Go to School” Initiative launched by the government in 2006, an initiative that brought enrolment up to 1.6 million. This represented a major increase from the estimated 343,000 in school before the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. Nevertheless, available data for South Sudan shows that participation rates for primary aged children still hovered close to 50%.<sup>6</sup> Discussion with government and development partners indicated that this education priority was also shared by the country’s elites.<sup>7</sup> Though the

value of education is recognized by all South Sudanese today, the fact remains that 70% of children aged 6-17 years have never set foot in a classroom.

Using education as a key social service entry point, PBEA was launched in 2012 as a pilot programme, with innovations and lessons learned to be documented in order to inform broader sectoral approaches such as WASH, Child Protection, Health, and so on. Following the onset of civil war in December 2013, the South Sudan CO made adjustments to the management and country teams in order to leverage UNICEF’s unique capacities

Figure 2. Map of South Sudan



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

- 6 For example, the World Bank shows that in 2009 the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was 48%, while the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) was 72% for primary school level. Some 37% of the population above the age of 6 years old had never attended any form of school. See: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRICA/Resources/257994-1337357494718/Key-Indicators-SS.pdf>. GER is based on dividing the total number of primary school pupils by the total population aged 6-13. NER only counts pupils between the ages of 6-13, thus does not count overage pupils.
- 7 Education is seen as by far the number one development priority in the World Bank’s South Sudan Country Opinion Survey Report (Country Opinion Surveys 2014), where respondents were drawn from among the World Bank’s South Sudan government and development partners, including the executive, ministries, NGOs, CBOs, consultants and others familiar with World Bank activities. 47% of the respondents put education as a priority (respondents were allowed to choose up to three priorities, with results combined), before transportation (32%), security/stabilization/reconstruction (24%), health (21%), and food security (19%). In response to the question “What would contribute most to generating economic growth?” respondents put education in third position (19%), after agricultural development (34%) and energy (23%).

for humanitarian action as part of the L3 conflict-induced crisis. While much of this early work focussed on ‘life saving activity’ and traditional humanitarian response, PBEA retained a strong focus on conflict sensitive education and informing broader humanitarian response with a ‘conflict sensitive lens’. This report will look at some of the challenges faced with building capacity of partners and introducing conflict sensitive approaches to education sector response and programming and the progress so far made to addressing them, while suggesting some ways that the programme might address historical, structural and cultural impediments to peace through education.

## 1.2 Context

On July 23rd, 2014, John Ging, Operations Director for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) declared South Sudan to be the most rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the world. After a period of hope and celebration following South Sudan’s 2011 Independence, simmering disputes largely between the two top politicians in the country came to a head, resulting in the outbreak of civil war on 15 December 2013.

As this research was beginning in Juba, South Sudan, the President had just set new conditions for the withdrawal of Ugandan troops, and rebel troupes were set to invade the town of Nassir, in Upper Nile state, which they did on 21 July contravening the cease-fire agreement of 9 May 2014. An earlier cessation of hostilities agreement signed between the government and rebel movement in January 2014 had already been violated numerous times. Other fighting was then reported in Bunj (3 August 2014), followed by Malakal town and Renk county in late September. One day after the two sides signed an agreement for a cease fire and constitution of a unity government after 45 days, a rebel faction leader (likely Peter Gadet, rogue rebel commander who since July 2014 has been facing EU sanctions for allegedly perpetrating the 15 April Bentiu massacre of some 400 civilians<sup>8</sup>) threatened and then on

26 August ordered a rocket-propelled grenade attack on an Mi-8 cargo helicopter on a UN humanitarian relief mission near Bentiu, killing three UN airmen. As October came to a close, government and rebels both claimed to be in control of Bentiu town.

The current situation in South Sudan is dire: the country is mired in a civil war with a credible end in sight neither at the time of the field study in July 2014, nor as the final draft is being concluded in June 2015. As this document goes to press, the war is responsible for more than 40% of South Sudan’s 11 million people needing food aid, the highest levels the new country has ever recorded (Migiro 2015).

Whatever the outcome, this period of armed insurrection, which many have not hesitated to call civil war, provides a unique lens for examining the interface between conflict and education as it sharply highlights the challenges facing governance institutions and INGOs keen to assist humanitarian and development efforts.

Against a backdrop of immense human suffering, many are coming to the conclusion that only through concerted support of education—the primary “peace dividend” in the eyes of the South Sudanese—can cycles of violence be put to an end and development begin by adopting a transformative approach to education service delivery that addresses both vulnerability and conflict drivers.

## 1.3 Methodology

This case study examines progress made by the PBEA programme to strengthen government institutional capacities for peacebuilding through education in South Sudan and the extent to which peacebuilding approaches have been integrated into education sector plan and policies. The study further explores the extent to which conflict sensitive education service delivery aimed at improving equity has led to increased capacities for peaceful conflict resolution and increasing access to conflict sensitive education services for traditionally marginalized communities.

8 The Human Rights Division of UNMISS has released a new report that shows at least 353 civilians were murdered and another 250 wounded in the attacks carried out in the capitals of Unity and Jonglei states between 15 and 17 April 2014 (UN News Centre 2015 [9 January]).

**Lines of Inquiry.** A five-point overarching Theory of Change (ToC)<sup>9</sup> predicts how programme interventions will cause this desired change in dynamics. The goal is to increase the probability that two desirable states will emerge, states which cannot be currently said to exist in most parts of South Sudan, let alone characterize the nation: 1) social cohesion<sup>10</sup> and 2) community resilience.<sup>11</sup> The assumption is that if education policies, plans, strategies and programmes can integrate life skills, peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity education approach, communities can begin to become more resilient to shocks and perturbations—be they social, political, economic or environmental—and to take on the behaviors and characteristics of social cohesion, pressures for continued conflict will decrease. The ToC informs key PBEA programme outcomes and makes explicit the links between education and peacebuilding.<sup>12</sup>

The present study contributes to PBEA Programme Outcome No. 5: Knowledge, Evidence and Advocacy. Adequate generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming on linkages between education, conflict and PB. Outcome 5 is addressed through a combination of desk reviews, human interest stories, surveys, field and case study research. The research presented in this study speaks, nonetheless, to the other four elements of the global PBEA ToC. Taking each one of them individually allows for testing, challenging or modifying each ToC on the basis of the evidence gathered on conflict drivers and PBEA outcomes in South Sudan (keeping in mind that the July 2014 fieldwork was restricted to the capital Juba).

Several points of the original ToC are still relevant to this study of curriculum, Life Skills and Peacebuilding Education and equity as they make explicit the links between education and peacebuilding and point the way towards adapting peacebuilding education programming to the particular context of South Sudan. Below are the most relevant parts of the PBEA ToC (parts a, b, c and d) informing and underlying programme outcomes in South Sudan, and questions (in italics) that might be answered to determine if the ToC is valid.

- a. If the national curriculum and target policies are revised to address unequal access to education, promote tolerance, self-awareness, self-confidence specifically in girls, and provide relevant and context specific skills and knowledge, then there will be an increased contribution by the formal and non-formal education system to the reduction of violence and the increase in social cohesion.
  - What has PBEA’s contribution been to revising national curriculum to address above issues, and provide context-specific skills and knowledge?
  - What evidence do we have of PBEA programme-driven reductions in violence or increase in social cohesion?
- b. If teachers and educational personnel are trained in the development, piloting and revision of materials, the institutional capacity to deliver PB and conflict sensitive education materials that are appropriate and relevant to the context will be increased. If teachers and educational personnel are furthermore trained in teaching and using

9 Though there is no single definition, *theory of change* has been defined as “the description of the sequence of events that is expected to lead to a particular desired outcome” (Davies 2012, cited in Vogel 2012:3-4). Patricia Rogers (cited in Vogel 2012:4) puts it this way: “Every programme is packed with beliefs, assumptions and hypotheses about how change happens—about the way humans work, or organisations, or political systems, or eco-systems. Theory of change is about articulating these many underlying assumptions about how change will happen in a programme.”

10 Social cohesion has been defined in various ways. A recent report by the OECD (2011:53) “calls a society ‘cohesive’ if it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.” The report cites the similar definition of the Club de Madrid (2009) “Socially cohesive or ‘shared’ societies are stable, safe and just, and are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.”

11 Resilience denotes “an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change” (Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). Programmes such as PBEA are aimed at improving social resilience, which has been aptly defined by Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013) as comprised of three dimensions: “1. Coping capacities – the ability of social actors to cope with and overcome all kinds of adversities; 2. Adaptive capacities – their ability to learn from past experiences and adjust themselves to future challenges in their everyday lives; 3. Transformative capacities – their ability to craft sets of institutions that foster individual welfare and sustainable societal robustness towards future crises.”

12 Mario Novelli and Alan Smith, in *Research Strategy for the UNICEF Education and Peacebuilding Programme 2012-15* (April 2013; p. 11).

the national curriculum and the LS+PE components therein, then targeted schools and educational sites will have an increased ability to provide educational services that promote conflict resolution, tolerance, appropriate management of interpersonal relations, and teambuilding.

- What progress has been made in training peacebuilding and life skills teachers?
  - What progress has been made in the revision of LS+PE learner and teacher support materials in targeted schools?
  - Have the pilot educational sites seen increased ability to promote conflict resolution, tolerance, appropriate interpersonal relations and teambuilding as a result of PBEA actions?
- c. If youth from different tribes and ethnicities, male and female, are provided with avenues where their voices and opinions can be heard and where they can compete, interact and demonstrate leadership and advocate for others in a peaceful manner, they will experience increased self-esteem and sense of belonging to a common identity.
- Have youth from diverse backgrounds been provided with avenues for peaceful interaction, leadership and advocacy in common?
  - Have these interactive experiences increased self-esteem and feelings of common identity?
- d. If marginalized children in medium to high risk areas<sup>13</sup> regularly attend relevant LS+PE, livelihood and literacy and numeracy classes, then they will have increased access to relevant quality education that contributes to their positive behavioral and intellectual development.
- Are marginalized children in risk-prone environments provided with and attending regular LS+PE, livelihood and literacy and numeracy classes?
  - To what extent does this access contribute to positive behavioural and intellectual development?

In helping governance institutions in South Sudan mainstream conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm into their decision-making, services delivery and training, UNICEF assumes improved service delivery will result through reduced vulnerability and increased resilience of children, families and communities, as education increasingly plays its role in transforming perceptions and behaviours that contribute to conflict and provides skill sets for managing both risks and contention to children, their teachers, and communities.

By attempting to answer the questions under each of the inter-rated TOCs above, this case study will explore:

- a. How government, with UNICEF assistance, is using education to advance conflict resolution, peacebuilding and community resilience in normal and post-conflict contexts,
- b. How it might do so even more effectively,
- c. The challenges facing programme efforts in South Sudan given that the country is currently at war, and
- d. The study also looks at how to capitalize upon opportunities that education provides to set the record straight regarding ‘questionable histories’ (see Annex C) which—replicated through countless colonial, government and academic histories of Sudan and South Sudan—reinforce perceptions that somehow conflict is inevitable, that one’s victimization in South Sudan is unique, and that violent retribution can often be justified

The study will explore the accomplishments PBEA has made so far (though it is relatively new), gauge the reactions from various stakeholders, and evaluate suggestions received for improvement. In order to do so, it will present the views of Ministry officials, informed observers from non-governmental organizations, as well as pupils, students, teachers and educators from two schools in the Juba area.

**Data Gathering Strategies.** Observations of the final stages of the curriculum development process and interviews with key actors explore

13 Reference should also be made to the emergency education UNICEF is supporting in the POC camps in the UN House, Juba, as these are among the “medium to high risk areas” covered in detail in the companion case study. The companion study explores in greater detail proximate conflict drivers and potential conflict triggers being addresses through conflict sensitive approaches to education service delivery. The present study will delve more into the root causes and longer term conflict drivers as related to governance and curriculum development issues.

the conceptual foundations of the curriculum framework, the work of the curriculum and syllabus writing teams that are transforming theory and principles into lesson plans, and how life skills and peace education will be integrated into teaching at the primary (P1-8) and secondary (S1-4) levels. Visits to school where peace education and life skills are already being taught shed light on the progress being made in terms of teacher training, preparedness, and motivation, student interest, and appropriateness and availability of materials.

The primary researcher's background largely partly determined the data-gathering strategy employed in this case study, thus it needs to be stated at the outset. Through experiences in researching rural and household economy, migration, and conflict over the years, two approaches or research strategies have emerged as particularly fruitful in identifying linkages between ideas and behaviour, between which there are causal linkages within a system.

First, **Ecological Anthropology**, which, although the strategy generally gives priority to the collection of verifiable qualitative and quantitative data on the systemic nature of society—organized according to the assumption that (to simplify) livelihoods and security (i.e., material) needs will probabilistically determine behaviour, thus must be central to the data-gathering and analysis—it also recognizes that, particularly in times of crisis and rapid change, behaviour may be highly affected by moral and ethical (i.e., ideological) factors.

Second, **critical transition theory**<sup>14</sup> is used as to identify tipping points in natural and cultural systems in flux and ways of aiding positive transitions while preventing negative transitions. Both the material and the ideological are affected by education or lack thereof. The relevance to education is precisely because education is widely credited with the potential to spur positive, as well as

negative, transitions in economy, society and environment, depending largely on issues of access, equity, content, language, cultural relevancy and teacher training and support. As material and ideological factors appear to be interacting in systemic fashion in the current situation in South Sudan, the critical transitions approach is a useful tool, capable of grasping such dynamics, perhaps predicting positive transitions that can be encouraged through education. Many would agree that South Sudan is in need of a radical transition, a sea change away from a violent and conflictual past and present. The framework will be employed insofar as it proves useful in generating evidence and knowledge, and addressing PBEA Programme Outcome No. 5.

#### **Literature Review and background materials.**

A limited review of the literature relevant to the current conflict and peacebuilding in South Sudan and the wider region, and on the contested historical roots of conflict, was subsequently conducted from France to inform the case study.

This case study was informed initially by interviews with and reviews of programme documents from key UNICEF PBEA staff members in the Country Office (CO) in South Sudan and the peacebuilding team at the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) in Nairobi, which included personnel involved in resilience programming (approximately fifteen staff informed this case study).

#### **Semi-structured and structured Interviews.**

The data gathering methods included semi-structured interviews and remote follow-up interviews with programme staff and implementing partners inside South Sudan (over 45 one-on-one interviews). Additional consultations were held with fifteen INGO and NGO staff and academic researchers active in education, protection, peacebuilding, development and gender in Juba. All participants were informed of the purpose of the research and consented to participate.

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14 Scheffer, Marten. 2009. *Critical Transitions in Nature and Society*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Sonia Kéfi (2012) "Des écosystèmes sur le fil: Comment certains écosystèmes basculent d'un état à un autre" (<http://www.sfecologie.org/regards/2012/10/19/r37-hysteresis-sonia-kefi/>). Scheffer, Marten, Frances Westley, William A. Brock & Milena Holmgren (2002) "Dynamic interaction of societies and ecosystems: Linking theories from ecology, economy, and sociology," pp. 195-239 in Gunderson, Lance H. & C. H. Holling, eds., *Panarchy: Understanding transformations in human and natural systems*, Washington, D. C.: Island Press.

Additionally, four staff members involved in activities coming under the PBEA programme were interviewed at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MoCYS) were interviewed at length. Questions were designed to explore the experiences of stakeholders involved in curriculum development. Follow-up structured interviews using guided questioning techniques were used for remote discussions with UNICEF staff and selected partners to fill information gaps that emerged during initial report writing phases and later report revisions, especially in relation to adjustments being made to strengthen conflict sensitive programming approaches following the onset of civil war in December 2013.

**Focus Group Discussions.** The study drew on information received in 5 focus-group discussions (FGD) in and near the capital city Juba. Groups of pupils, teachers and aid workers at Lologo primary school, Nile Model Secondary School.

In total some 88 people provided information for this case study (interviews and FGDs combined).

**Secondary data sources.** All available programme documents that outlined progress and challenges with different programming activities were provided for this study. These included monitoring and implementation reports of partners and PBEA Annual Reports and monitoring data. Substantial amounts of data were also provided by UNICEF's Regional Office and the South Sudan PBEA team. Internal UNICEF documentation in the form of trip reports were also accessed to draw

upon and identify results being achieved in geographic areas that were not accessible as part of the initial fieldwork phase of this study.

## 1.4 Research Limitations

The following limitations should be taken into consideration when reviewing this report:

- In terms of direct research fieldwork the scope of the study is limited geographically to Juba and its outskirts;
- Travel outside of Juba was not permitted by UNDSS due to the security situation at Level 3, and a special requirement that incoming consultants had to undergo a three-day SSAFE Training.<sup>15</sup> These were unfortunately booked far in advance. As a result, plans to visit Mingkawang IDP camp near Bor and the Wau and Tonj East areas had to be abandoned;
- To overcome these limitations, research concentrated on schools in the Juba area for this case study and interviews with specialists at UNICEF and in the INGO community, and was fortunate to participate directly in workshops for curriculum reviews, follow up data was also provided in the form of field trip reports and other secondary data sources deemed relevant for this study;<sup>16</sup>
- To mitigate the above constraints, extensive desk research and contacts were maintained by telephone and e-mail with programme participants to monitor the impacts PBEA was having. UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) also provided extensive support in reviewing and finalizing the writing of this report.

15 The requirement for Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) Training would appear unusual, given that at the same time in Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland although international staff were generally restricted to base, Safe Training was only mandatory for consultants if their visit exceeded thirty days. The numerous attacks on UN bases and the staff and IDPs sheltering within (UNMISS 2014) as well as the defensive UNMISS response aimed at limiting further casualties can justify the high level of security, but one might still argue that in such situations the urgent need for local information, for understanding conflict drivers, and for exploring peacebuilding and outreach solutions would call for a more flexible approach.

16 Despite very heavy workloads and high-level visits occurring simultaneously, all UNICEF and partner staff made themselves available to assist and provide testimonies.

## 2. Legacies of Violence and Conflict – Peacebuilding Entry Points through Education and Development

**Historical Legacies.** A number of historical factors have combined to produce the country's recurring conflicts, all of which are well-known, but bear repeating<sup>17</sup>: 1) Patterns of governance which developed in the Sudanic states before the nineteenth century based on exploitation of the hinterlands by a centralizing centre; 2) The introduction of a brand of militant Islam, which denied full legal rights to those not sharing the ideology; 3) Inequities in economic, educational and political development in the colonial period (1898-1956), building on earlier patterns; 4) Britain's politically expedient decision to grant independence to Sudan as a whole in 1956 without addressing development disparities and without obtaining adequate guarantees for the representation of the southern Sudanese; 5) A narrowly-based nationalist movement led by northern elites which aimed to build national identity on the basis of Arab culture and Islam, leading to the re-emergence of nineteenth-century ideas of governance<sup>18</sup>; 6) Failure to obtain a broad consensus on national unity, regional development, and the balance of power between central and regional governments; 7) An economically weakened Sudan in the 1970s, with Southern awareness of the extent of their own natural resources, hastening renewed conflict in the 1980s; 8) Sudan's place in the Cold War, which exacerbated internal war and led to the distribution of arms on an unprecedented scale; 9) The re-emergence of militant Islam; 10) The interests of foreign governments and investors in Sudan's resources, especially water and oil.

The story of South Sudan can be told as one of inequities in many domains stretching far

back in history, of which education is one aspect (see next section). The Greek historian Herodotus mentions biannual deliveries of 'Ethiopian' slaves to Persian Egypt, likely including Nubian, Nuba or other Sudanese. Slave trading continued through the Middle Ages, when Arabs settled the region, and increased during the Turco-Egyptian (Turkiyah era) rule (1820-1885). It was during this period that patterns of governance based on central exploitation by the North of Sudan of peripheral hinterlands in the South became the norm. These patterns continued under the Mahdiyya State (1883-1899), which plundered the South for food, slaves and military recruitment. The subsequent Anglo-Egyptian rule (1899-1956) did little to change this pattern of unequal development, giving validation to separatist policies and creating inaccurate legacies of interethnic cleavages; following Independence the legacies of inequity and continued political economic and religious domination on the part of the North pushed South Sudan to demand self-determination. Once independent, however, South Sudan has had to struggle hard to overcome the inherited regional inequities in terms of resources, education and health services, infrastructures, and employment opportunities, a struggle that has become increasingly desperate since December 2013.

### Education and inequity

Some of these political economy factors may appear at first sight less relevant in South Sudan today, but even a cursory examination shows that all have in some way left an imprint and a legacy that is difficult to overcome.

17 The historical factors are summarized from Douglas H. Johnson (2003) *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Oxford: James Currey), pp. xviii-xix.

18 These patterns of governance were based on exploitation by the centre of a vast periphery or hinterlands, "mainly through the institutions of slavery and slave raiding, creating groups of peoples with a lastingly ambiguous status in relation to the state" (Johnson 2003:xviii).

Moreover, these historical legacies have been critical factors contributing to the current humanitarian crisis. Focusing on education, for example, South Sudan is struggling to introduce English instruction, in order to undo the Khartoum government's earlier imposition of Arabic. South Sudan, in fact, is struggling with a much deeper colonial legacy: the British ambivalence during Anglo-Egyptian rule towards developing education anywhere in Sudan.<sup>19</sup> At first, junior administrators were drawn from the Egyptian army, composed of Egyptian and Sudanese officers, later replaced by educated northern Sudanese. Educational needs were considered much more limited in the South. "Prior to World War One, the government in Khartoum declared its policy to be that it needed only 'a few educated blacks' to fill minor clerical posts in the South."<sup>20</sup> Little was invested, and before long education was left in the hands of Muslim religious bodies and Christian missions. The policy of Native Administration adopted in the 1920s discouraged education in some areas, especially among pastoralist people.



Britain had decided to prepare the Sudan for independence, and in 1947 it firmly excluded any possibility of a different process towards self-administration for the three southern provinces. The combination of tribal administration, limited educational facilities, and restricted economic development provided the Southern Sudan with neither the resources nor the institutions to guarantee equitable incorporation into the new nation state. Only a small number of Southern

Sudanese had enough education to qualify as clerical staff or junior administrators. After 1947 almost all of these found themselves co-opted into the legislative and elective politics of Sudan; thus they were removed from daily contact with the peoples they were supposed to represent.<sup>21</sup>

Though few Southerners had education and experience in governance at Independence in 1956, self-government did spur the development of government schools. However, the schools that existed before and soon after Independence were not evenly distributed across the country. Pacified first, the Equatorians had the best access to education and were the most represented in the clerical and technical positions of the government, both in their province and in other provinces. The Catholic schools in Raga and Wau educated minority Fartit and Jur peoples for the low-level clerical positions available in the Bahr al-Ghazal Province administration, leaving the majority Dinka unrepresented by 1947. The CMS<sup>22</sup> School at Malek, south of Bor, the longest established school in the pastoralist region dating from 1905, ended up training most of the Dinka, even leading to the perception of "Bor Dinka domination" in the 1970s. The disparities born of decisions taken by British officials were explained with recourse to culture and "mentality." Nilotic Dinka and Nuer were conservative and backward, and the peoples of Western Equatoria (particularly the Azande and the peoples of Wei River District) progressive and advanced. "These stereotypes linger today and have resurfaced as part of an Equatorian grievance at the loss of political dominance in southern Sudanese politics."<sup>23</sup> Thus, long

19 "Looking to both Egypt and India they professed an aversion to creating a class of educated indigenous civil servants: an 'effendi' or (worse) a 'B.A. Bombay (Failed)' class. Education was to be reserved for 'the better class of native' (i.e., those merchants and notables with whom the British allied themselves), but it was also to serve limited administrative needs." (Johnson 2003:14-15)

20 Johnson 2003:15.

21 Johnson, Douglas H. (1994) *Nuer Prophets: A History of Prophecy from the Upper Nile in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon), p. 298 ("Out of an estimated population of nearly half a million, the Nuer had only one college-level graduate, no more than half a dozen secondary school-level graduates employed in local administration; almost no one in the police or the army; and only a handful of secondary school students approaching completion of their education. The 'Sudanization' of administration prior to independence meant the appointment of Northern Sudanese with no previous experience in the South, rather than the elevation of the Nuer to self-government. A colonial form of administration continued.") On educational policy, Johnson cites Sanderson, L.M. Passmore and G.N. Sanderson (1981) *Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan, 1899-1964* (London: Ithaca Press & Khartoum: Khartoum University Press), but elsewhere cautions of the authors' "willingness to repeat, and seemingly to accept highly prejudicial ethnic stereotypes without examining the value judgements implicit in them" (Douglas H. Johnson [1983] "Review of L. M. Passmore Sanderson and G. N. Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan 1899-1964*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 46: 204-205).

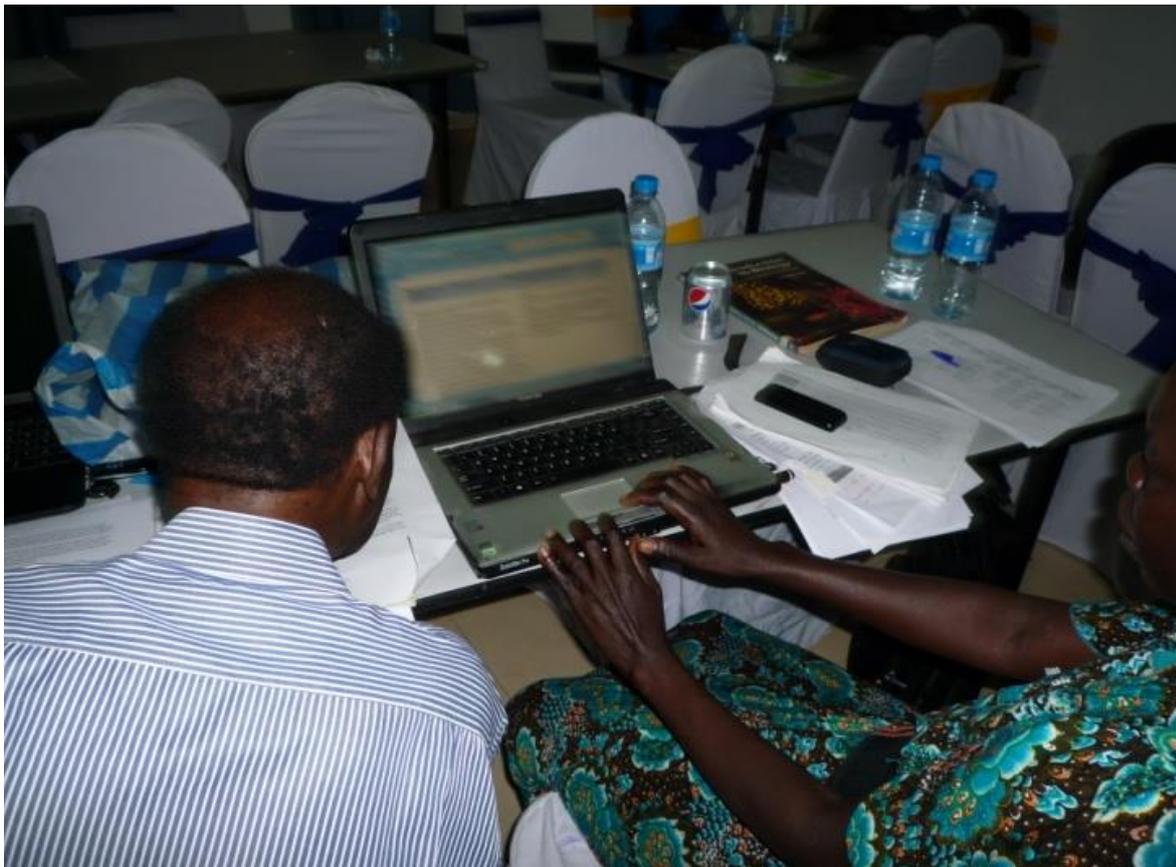
22 Anglican Church Missionary Society.

23 The paragraph draws on historical material from Johnson 2003, Chapter 2 (British Overrule: 1899-1947); quote is from p. 18.

**entrenched inequities in infrastructures and services, notably education, serve to divide communities today, eroding trust, and fuelling sentiments of injustice.**

Just before and soon after Independence, most senior positions in government and many positions in education were in the hands of Northerners, leading southern Sudanese leadership to call for autonomy through a federalist system. The August 1955 “Torit Mutiny” of Equatorian soldiers, concerned that they were to be sent north at independence from Britain six months later, was seen by Northerners as a sign (though no proof was found) that missionaries were teaching separatism. Failure to achieve a federal constitution after independence galvanized support for the Federal Party, which captured nearly all of the South’s seats in the 1957 elections. The momentum for federalism

was one of the reasons for the government’s handover to the military in 1958, which put an end to civilian rule. In line with an Islamization policy, the military government of General Ibrahim Abboud (1958-1964) transferred mission schools to government control, and progressively introduced Arabic as medium of instruction. The number of schools built had never been higher than during this period, and many of the educational infrastructures that endure to this day were built with funds from foreign countries solicited for the express purpose of uplifting south Sudan to the level of the north.<sup>24</sup> Introduction of Arabic and Islamization continued apace, and in 1964 all Christian missionaries in the South were expelled under the still unproven pretext that they were aiding the insurgency. In some areas, children had to drop their indigenous names and adopt Arab or Muslim names in order to enrol in school.



**Figure 3. Biology Subject Group drafting curriculum on clean environment**

24 Jok Madut Jok (2007) Sudan: *Race, Religion and Violence* (Oxford: Oneworld), p. 58.



In addition to the dismissal of the Christian missionaries, removal of education from the hands of missionary societies and changing schools into Islamic schools and the requirement that non-Arabic speaking children must learn Arabic, attempts were made to outlaw the expression of religious and cultural differences.<sup>25</sup>

It was hardly surprising that with few schools and even fewer Southerners with any experience in governance at the time of Independence in 1956, most positions in government in the South were held by Northerners, if indeed there was any government presence.<sup>26</sup> Southern Sudan was thus a land of continuity. One defined by inequities for virtually all of its known history, during the untold centuries when it served primarily as a source of slaves and endured either neglect or exploitation by successive Turkiyah, Mahdiyya, Anglo-Egyptian and Sudanese government central authorities situated to the north. Coercive methods and policies were justified in similar ways in both Anglo-Egyptian and Sudanese governmental discourses, using the notions of legalism and developmentalism.<sup>27</sup>

Why such emphasis on history? Because there is much in the historical legacy of South Sudan that explains current social, economic and governance crises and allows conflicts to endure and, as has occurred recently, result in a massive humanitarian crisis. Because there is much misunderstanding of the relations between South Sudan's peoples precisely due to the historical inaccuracies, stereotypes and outright misinformation<sup>28</sup> that has persisted as received wisdom over the years of civil war, feeding on conflict and feeding into it.

Education is the key, perhaps the only one, for moving on.<sup>29</sup>

Amauel M. Gebremedhin, Senior Peacebuilding Advisor Civil Affairs for UNMISS, who has been working in peacebuilding in Sudan and the region for several years and whose office is steps away from the PoC sites, is convinced that education is the key missing element in moving the country away from the current intractable crisis and that UNICEF is on the right track:



My belief is that without education, what can we do? There is a need to start the creation of an identity of one nation. It has to start with the young ones. There is a need to review their curriculum. When I saw their books, they were about Ahmad Pasha, of Egypt—that's not their history even! So the first thing is that they have to start appreciating the diversity [of their country] as young students. These are the people who twenty years down the road will create South Sudan.

An obvious realization that comes from looking at history in the context of the current quagmire is that this structural inequity between centre and periphery and between the elite and 'civil society' needs to be addressed before South Sudan can break free of its cycles of conflict. Social services reflect the broader political economy and thus tend to reproduce social, political and economic pressures leading to conflict. In this context, peace education can only go so far in providing the software, but the hardware will need to come from leaders uniting and committing to a concerted effort to reallocate resources equitably and transparently throughout the country.

25 Ibid, p. 58-59.

26 A late awakening occurred after the 1946 decision in London to grant independence to Sudan. Some government schools were built and chiefs were required to provide a quota of boys to be educated, particularly in pastoralist areas. This had some impact on the training of the first post-independence Southern leaders, but the decades of earlier neglect meant few Southerners had notions of modern administration and commerce when independence came in 1956 (Johnson 2003:15).

27 Øystein H. Rolandsen & Cherry Leonardi (2014) Discourses of violence in the transition from colonialism to independence in southern Sudan, 1955–1960, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8 (4): 609-625.

28 Examples of which will be given in Annex C of the companion case study on institutional capacity as they suggest a need for corrective curriculum additions that would be essential for peacebuilding to take hold.

29 In Annex C, another set of historical vignettes will be analysed for the light they shed on enduring inaccuracies in historical knowledge that could be set right in a robust programme of peacebuilding through education.

# 3. Peacebuilding through Life Skills and Curriculum

## 3.1 Life Skills and Peacebuilding Education

Key programme **results under Outcomes 1 and 4** were achieved during 2013 and 2014 when the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) integrated Life Skills and Peacebuilding (LS+PE) components in the national curriculum. Forty-eight schools in four intervention areas in at least six counties received the LS+PE curriculum, reaching a total of 13,109 students at ECD, primary and secondary school level as well young people in Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs) and Youth Centres. PBEA facilitated 28 participatory workshops during the review and revision of the LS+PE curriculum guidelines, the formation of and technical support to an inter-ministerial (MoEST and MoCYS) group and facilitated the participation of education personnel in national peacebuilding fora and processes.

On 16, 17 and 21 July 2014, the MoEST/ UNICEF Curriculum Writing Workshop at the Aron Hotel in Juba afforded the opportunity to have extensive meetings with curriculum development leaders from the MoEST and MoCYS, IGAD representatives<sup>30</sup>, curriculum developers organized into subject panels, and the team of consultants from The Curriculum Foundation (TCF)<sup>31</sup> advising the subject panels and supervising the overall national curriculum development process for primary levels (P1-P8) and secondary levels (S1-S4). Focusing on the curriculum workshop and broader curriculum development process and vision fits well with the PBEA research agenda (particularly 3.4: the contribution of formal education and schooling to peacebuilding)

envisaged by Mario Novelli and Alan Smith.<sup>32</sup>

UNICEF, through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), is involved with the MoEST in two key processes: to aid various peacebuilding initiatives on the national level and to mainstream life skills and peace education into the curriculum used by the country's primary and secondary schools.<sup>33</sup> In March, April and May 2014, UNICEF participated in a number of life skills, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding trainings with ministry officials, academics, community and civil society leaders, including a conflict sensitive education workshop led by the CO with the support of UNICEF's Regional Office Education and Peacebuilding advisor. These were only a prelude to a series of support activities UNICEF engaged with the MoEST and MoCYS as part of the wider curriculum development process. It is to this process and its penultimate stage, the Curriculum Writing Workshop that we now turn.

The MoEST's Director of Curriculum, Dr. Kenneth Adam Masunga, back in the country for the last four years after living much of his adult life in the United States, is convinced that UNICEF's engagement in curriculum development is important and necessary. According to Dr. Masunga, integrating life skills as a cross-cutting item in the curriculum is a way to create unity within the curriculum, and to carry it into the secondary schools. A September workshop was planned to extend the benefits achieved in curriculum reform at the primary and secondary levels on to the technical schools. A road map guides the process. An implementation plan is in the drafting stage, and will call for national

30 The IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan) have been sharing capacity building and best practices for the last two years. Grace Baguma (from the Uganda Ministry of Education) and Grace Maina (from the Kenya Ministry of Education) along with their counterpart Bullen Parowa at the MoEST South Sudan shared their experiences.

31 The United Kingdom based non-profit TCF ([curriculumfoundation.org](http://curriculumfoundation.org)) has been developing modern curriculum for 3-19 year olds in developing countries since 2008 and has extensive experience working with education ministries and schools to pursue their vision of what they call World Class Curriculum.

32 Novelli and Smith 2013.

33 Besides the State institutions, UNICEF is also engaging with faith-based organizations since traditionally much peacebuilding has been done by the Church. A peace process was to be organized by UNICEF in September 2014 with the South Sudan Council of Churches and other faith-based stakeholders.

rollout at the beginning of 2017, in a phased approach, the details of which need to be finalized.<sup>34</sup>

Following a review of the old curriculum, beginning in 2012, the MoEST brought representatives from all states together in November 2013 to develop the guiding principles behind the framework for the new curriculum. As civil war engulfed the country and threatened to derail these efforts, UNICEF came in with funding to complete the process after initial DFID funds were exhausted, and has been instrumental in getting life skills and conflict sensitivity integrated into the curriculum as cross-cutting issues for all levels. The fine-tuning, editing, quality control and typesetting will be done by TCF, a consultancy firm which provided a team of consultants to work with each of the subject panels.

During the final days of the writer's workshop, the curriculum was designed and put in writing by disciplinary teams (subject panels). The atmosphere was electric in the meeting rooms, with subject panels grouped around computers to tweak each subject curriculum so that it conformed to the overall Framework, the UK consultants moving between their two or three subjects groups to provide help and validate progress milestones.

For PBEA, the curriculum process is an important step for getting conflict sensitivity

and Do No Harm into the education system with an ultimate goal of supporting peacebuilding through education. But Life Skills and Peace Education (LS+PE) and its inclusion in the national curriculum review was not happenstance in South Sudan: LS+PE is a process that started in 2012 before the curriculum review process and this process offered UNICEF an entry point into the MoEST to build a robust peacebuilding programme. MoEST expressed the need for support in developing a comprehensive national curriculum guideline on LS+PE. This culminated in a comprehensive consultative process involving more than 500 stakeholders covering Warrap, Western Bar El Ghazal, Upper Nile, Lakes, Central Equatoria and Western Equatoria states. The consultative process enabled the defining of what constitutes life skills as well as what knowledge should be imparted in the six thematic content areas (or domains of human application) and four learning competencies given the context and needs of South Sudan.<sup>35</sup>

Life skills was defined by consensus as *“a set of essential knowledge, skills, attitudes and positive behaviours (psychosocial competencies) that are acquired formally or informally for successful and positive living (wellbeing) to cope with demands of life and managing risky environments (decrease risky behaviour) during growth and development.*

34 A website is planned to publicize the curriculum development work, but has been delayed due to financial considerations.

35 MoGEI & MoCYS 2012, MoEST & MoCYS 2013a, MoEST & MoCYS 2013b, MoEST & MoCYS 2013c.

Figure 4.

The thematic content areas	
Personal and psychological development	Self-awareness, value clarification, personal attributes, emotional and spiritual development
Social and citizenship development	Communication, interpersonal relationships, gender dynamics, disability issues, human rights, citizenship and leadership development
Vocational and entrepreneurship education	Purpose and value of education, career guidance, world of work, technological awareness, literacy and numeracy, functional English language)
Peacebuilding and conflict resolution	Peacebuilding, conflict resolution, negotiation, reconciliation, capacity building
Health Education	HIV, AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections [STIs], healthy hygiene and living practices
Environmental education	Environmental safety and sanitation, natural resources, conservation, landmines and Explosive Remnants of War [ERWs]
Learning competencies	
Intrapersonal / self-awareness skills	e.g., self-awareness, value clarification, personal goal setting
Interpersonal / social skills	e.g., communication, assertiveness, team building, etiquette and role modeling skills
Cognitive / thinking coping skills	e.g., critical thinking, decision-making, problem solving, creative thinking, time management, prevention skills
Stress / psychosocial coping skills	e.g., stress coping, emotion coping, self-management skills, survival skills

**Mainstreaming into the education sector via GPE.** The UNICEF management of the GPE programme in 2014 facilitated a fertile ground for the integration of LS + PE in the national curriculum. At the national consultative meeting, the MoEST management made a case that LS + PE should be fully integrated in the national curriculum and in the stakeholders meeting the PBEA manager presented the rationale for conflict sensitive curriculum where life skills and peace education are entry points to social cohesion, resilience and peacebuilding for South Sudan. The capacity building training in life skills and peace education conducted for the curriculum officers, teachers and youth officers offered a fertile ground for the cross-cutting themes to be integrated across the various subjects because they understood it from the training already received from the LS + PE capacity building processes.

This explains the need for LS and PE being introduced not as new subjects per se but inserted in all subjects as cross-cutting issues. In addition, there is a MoEST commitment to provide two periods per week for *School Programmes*, which will include LS + PB (see below, in the section on the curriculum framework). The twenty-three curriculum developers at the Ministry integrated these

elements (LS and PE, including citizenship) in the process of developing the curriculum, then in developing the Curriculum support materials, the Learner’s books, the Teacher’s guide and finally the training manual for the ToTs. Its first test was the training of national trainers. Then the trainers and curriculum team embarked on a series of trainings around the country to train the state and county trainers. The IGAD consultant from Kenya on the curriculum team commented on how it was in these trainings that she could perceive the transformative potential of the process:



In one of the activities we carried out in Wau, called “Community Participation,” where the participants went out and started cleaning the compound, the community joined in. We had a purpose: the community we were in was divided into two groups and there was some conflict. So we wanted to see if we could bring the two communities together. And actually, nobody invited them, they just came and started cleaning and working together. And after that, we started talking about issues of peace and all that.

Others present noted how powerful “dividers” and “connectors” (in the language of conflict sensitivity) can be found in simple acts such as cleaning up together (a connector).



In another instance, we were invited to Tonj, and we were invited into a workshop that was going on. So we went and started talking and then we gave them case studies. Apparently, it was during the floods season. So we realized that one of the drivers for conflict was the floods themselves. Because some people would put dykes and others would remove them to direct the water towards the other. So we analysed those case studies and they were very happy because *they realized that there was no cause for fighting.*

The Director for Curriculum at the MoEST, Dr. Kenneth Adam Masungu, explained how the curriculum workers had virtually no budget from the government, due to the austerity measures applied following the decline of oil revenues in 2012. Fortunately, first DFID and then UNICEF stepped up to support the process, with UNICEF-managed GPE covering all the workshops to bring this substantial curriculum investment in time and energy to fruition, leaving just the final editing to TCF. Other hurdles were cleared through exceptionally high levels of dedication; people gave from their own pockets to keep the process going. One staff member used his own motorcycle and petrol to distribute invitations to the workshop when it became clear that there was no money budgeted for stamps.<sup>36</sup> As GPE aid seemed to be ending for this initiative, Dr. Masungu is looking for funding to print the textbooks, distribute them and train the trainers and teachers. Many spoke of the difficulties of distributing books, even when funding is available, due to the poor infrastructure, and seasonal isolation of many parts of the country. Textbooks

and other learning materials and teacher’s aides are critically important and highly valued by communities, thus when delays or inequities affect their distribution this adds to dissatisfaction with the system.

One of the coordinating consultants from the UK working with the Ministry underlined the importance for peacebuilding education of pedagogy, and the link between teacher training, textbooks, and curriculum in safe, child-friendly schools. Arguing that assessments have to be developed that emphasize cooperation, not just competitive and individualistic prowess, she related the important debates ongoing in the US, UK and elsewhere on testing, with studies demonstrating, for example, that testing the entire class (or testing cohorts at the national level) is better than testing individuals: “When you succeed together, that has the power to bring people together as well.” From her experience, even a well-designed test question can produce marking errors of 30%, discouraging the pupil who receives the wrong mark, or even causing bitterness that could extend beyond the individual pupil. Furthermore, over-testing can actually undermine knowledge acquisition, and encourage shallow learning, concluding:



It has to be about deep learning, it has to be about engaging with high-level skills. And that is what South Sudan needs from its education. Let’s think about that: assessments should have an element of peace within them. You can make compulsory a sort of specification for peacebuilding built into the assessment. [...] That is something that you lobby for!

According to several of the consultants interviewed, future curriculum development should allow for curriculum developers to receive preliminary training in their own disciplines to make sure they are teaching their subjects using up-to-date pedagogy.

<sup>36</sup> Dr. Masungu’s own personal experience is a testimony to the sacrifice of many from the South Sudanese exile community who left successful livelihoods in the West behind to return help rebuild South Sudan.

Some of the subjects were being treated as they were decades ago by the curriculum panels. TCF consultants updated where they could, and in the UK will still be able to make edits for the final curriculum, but this highlights one weakness in the curriculum design process. Major subject matter updating will be needed, due in part to dependence of curriculum developers on earlier, now outdated, textbooks, and in part to the war which cut them off from advances in their respective fields and innovations in teaching methods and materials as well as journal subscriptions, trainings and refreshers that could have maintained that contact with their discipline. Subject conferences in the country could stimulate the rebuilding of networks of exchange for sharing teaching methodologies and simply keeping abreast of advances in each field. These could be a cost-effective way to improve the quality of education without requiring training abroad, provided international expertise can be brought in to enrich such conferences.

In this context, support for **peacebuilding education is about addressing conflict pressures created by low quality education.** Enough people have been abroad (or to Juba) or know those who have to have a good idea of the relative value and relevance of local education. The perception that people in some areas are being short-changed in terms of services, including education, is a sure recipe for conflict.

### 3.2 LS + PE Curriculum Development Challenges

The PBEA LS+PE trainings have provided an opportunity to understand a number of challenges facing PBEA LS+PE programming in particular, but it moreover sheds light on what can be expected for the roll out of the new curriculum framework, which will integrate LS+PE. The main challenges noted by research participants are seen as: 1) language of instruction, 2) means of assessment, 3) textbook development, 4) teacher training and salaries, and 4) availability of training materials and logistics, all to a large

extent impacted by government austerity and the civil war. Each of these points are explored in greater detail below.

**Language of Instruction.** The mother tongue issue is one that, according to many respondents, can make or break the new curriculum (though for PBEA LS+PE it has not been a major issue due to the large use of pictorial representations and discussion rather than text as the basis for instruction). South Sudan has almost no native (L1) speakers, yet English has been adopted as the national language.<sup>37</sup> South Sudan has decided to break with Arabic language teaching to move completely to English. Spoken Sudanese (Khartoum) Arabic has been used as a lingua franca in northern South Sudan and widely used by hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese arriving from the north following South Sudan's independence. Sudanese Creole Arabic is widespread in Juba and Central Equatoria, East Equatoria, and West Equatoria as lingua franca, and is spoken also in North Bahr al Ghazal, West Bahr al Ghazal and Upper Nile states.<sup>38</sup> Although the situation is fluid for Sudanese Arabic and number of speakers difficult to assess, Sudanese Creole Arabic is estimated to be the second language for 800,000 people in South Sudan, according to SIL. The reason why the change has been seen as necessary dates back to the installation of Arabic teachers in the south and the imposition by the north of Arabic as the official language to accompany an overt and heavy-handed Islamization campaign.

Most educators, including TCF believe that English is a necessary goal, as it corresponds with the turn away from the Arabic-based Sudan to the IGAD countries, where English is dominant. South Sudan wishes to trade more with the south and be less dependent on the north, which explains why a pipeline is being planned to export its oil towards the southern port of Mombasa to avoid the shorter, but politically more constraining route through Sudan to Port Sudan. This is happening too quickly, according to case study respondents, "too sharply," as many students and teachers do not yet have the required level of English. This has slowed the development of quality

37 Sixty-eight living languages have been identified in South Sudan (<http://www.ethnologue.com/country/SS>).

38 Consult the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) *Ethnologue* pages for data on South Sudan's languages, including their estimated numbers of L1 and L2 speakers on <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/ss/languages>

education in the country, as well as increased tensions among Arabic and English education personnel. Not only primary schools, but some secondary schools are demanding that people be taught in their local language. What matters is finding the best path to literacy and ensuring children find interest in continuing education. In fact, there is strong evidence that one learns English best when the mother tongue is mastered first; in other words, that those who read well in their first language tend to read well in their second language (Cummins 1981, Krashen 1996).<sup>39</sup>

There needs to be discussions and decisions taken at the government level on the language policy to answer questions still outstanding: How to avoid English becoming a form of shock therapy, however positive in the long run? Will it be possible to transition to English in phases in critical, isolated or conflict-prone areas? Will those with strong Arabic language skills feel short-changed? (It would seem essential to provide continuity for all L1 Arabic speakers.) And **how to ensure that mother tongue or local language instruction does not fuel inequity or undermine social cohesion by hardening ethnic divides based on language-based identities.** What provision is being made for teacher English training, given the many current teachers without sufficient English language competency?

An experienced MoCYS staff member who works on PBEA LS + PE spoke of the language issue in Wau, and how it could be resolved:



Wau is a state city that attracts people from other surrounding states. Its problem is street children; there are large numbers coming not necessarily from Wau but from the neighbouring states. So I think life skills will be helpful, especially because Wau has been settled by people who for the most part have Arabic background. So what we are doing is being done in

English, the curriculum, the materials, so those teachers who are working there sometimes they experience [language] difficulties. But for me, if they understand the concept of what they are teaching, they can give it to the people in their language. The policy is heading towards having English as the language of instruction. But in the line of benefitting these learners, they need to get it very well [in their own language].

He believes that having written texts in English while translating into Arabic for comprehension purposes is not a bad solution during this transition period. It is not necessary to have Arabic textbooks, as this will delay the transition to English.

Language challenges are also logistic challenges. Lemor William, Deputy Director at MoYCS, agreed that language is the most important hurdle to implementation. In many areas, trainers must use two languages, translating everything so that training takes twice as long. Another challenge is that teachers willing to go to the deeply isolated villages often lack capacity. Primary school teachers may be qualified themselves only at the Senior 1 or Primary 7 level, thus the life skills material can be difficult for them to understand. Many teachers have stated that the language/concepts are far too difficult for them to understand, let alone, to transmit to their students. But on the positive side, Director Lemor added, these teachers are invaluable because they are there, working under difficult conditions and in isolation, and they deserve all the support that can be given. His assessment was that in addition to providing LS + PE, which were highly appreciated, the *trainings around curriculum development and for teachers have also served as refresher courses on how to prepare lesson plans, how to establish authority, and how to take the leadership roles.* All trainees came away recharged and motivated.

<sup>39</sup> Though most ESL specialists agree (see for example <http://esl.fis.edu/parents/advice/intro.htm>), a debate continues. Alderson, who has extensively reviewed evidence for first language reading skill transference to second language reading acquisition (1984) has more recently concluded that “second-language knowledge is more important than first-language reading abilities, and that a linguistic threshold exists which must be crossed before first-language reading ability can transfer to the second-language reading context” (Alderson 2000:39). This finding would still be compatible with a strategy that emphasises early acquisition of both first and second language reading skills, so long as both languages are taught in sufficient depth.

**Means of Assessment.** How to assess pupil's achievement without contributing to stress, bitterness and conflict? This question was taken very seriously by consultants and ministry alike due to concerns that the emphasis on competitiveness and grading in the old curriculum was preventing many students from succeeding in school, or encouraging early school leaving. Recent trends in the UK were cited as justification for considering options that deemphasise or eliminate grades in primary level to allow children to enjoy school, avoid stress, and move from competing to collaborating with their peers. Becu Thomas (MoCYS) saw a need for more age-appropriate appraisal methods, as some students have trouble understanding the questions posed during assessments:



One of the problems with the [past] checklists for monitors, is that the checklists, those [questions they need to ask] are difficult [for pupils to understand]. I was happy to see that the latest version was made simpler. Maybe a primary 1 pupil, asking him or her about his "life skills", that is [not the way to ask]... but if we can frame those kind of questions in a simpler manner, maybe getting their understanding about "what is living together with your neighbour, what does that mean?" Or "are you always upset with your family members or your neighbours?" So I think those kinds of things will give an understanding of what it is that needs to be done.

Asked if the lessons are well explained in the materials available to teachers and students, he said he had seen them in Wau, but had not gone through the books themselves. His concern was that the evaluators find the way to ask the right questions to get responses from pupils who tend to be shy, and will tend to say they do not know when a question is not well framed.

**Textbook Development.** New textbooks will be required, books that are written in a different style and activity-based, to better engage students in new modes of learning that break with the former dependency on

rote memorisation. They must be conceived along with a teachers training program that is sustainable (see next paragraph), one that provides pedagogy and content. Teachers would still be encouraged to add locally relevant material, but would have training and materials support to make the transition in teaching methods. Some see a period of 10 years as needed to fully integrate the new curriculum and textbooks, and create a robust teacher training system.

**Teacher Training and Salaries.** Challenges facing teacher training were detailed by several master trainers informing this study who gave their impressions of the socialization process at the state and lower levels. Though they were all enthusiastic and underlined the important impact they see coming from peacebuilding education and life skills at the grass roots level, they noted the following difficulties: 1) security cannot always be assured; 2) logistics in most areas is complicated by poor infrastructure and roads being impassable during the rainy season; 3) lack of communication (no phone network reception); 4) not enough materials to leave with locals as reference after training, which compromises retention and sustainability; 5) language barriers; 6) weak teacher training systems, oversight and support of teachers; 7) assessments of trainers (and teachers) are not shared with them, inhibiting self-improvement; 8) weak teacher recruitment, particularly in pastoral or isolated areas, and irregular payment of salaries. According to the 2010 MoGEI EMIS data for the 3,349 primary schools in South Sudan, there were 1,401,871 pupils and 28,658 teachers, but 87% of those teachers were not qualified. The primary completion rate was only 4% (Education Development Center, Inc. 2012).

Timely payment of teacher salaries is not assured in some states in South Sudan, jeopardizing retention of trained and dedicated staff. In some states, it is not unusual for government teachers to be six months behind in pay. Salaries are already very low given the rising cost of food and transport in all areas of the country. The low and insecure salary also explains why few teachers are willing to accept posts in isolated areas, or in mobile schools serving the cattle camps, where need is greatest. Even in Juba, teaching salaries are not enough to live on. The teachers at one

school visited receive 500 South Sudanese pounds per month. For shelter, a teacher has to pay SS£ 200 for a one room one door house per month. Food for one month reaches SS£ 650 according to the headmaster. One dish of tilapia fish with rice is SS£ 30, but that is not what people can afford to eat. Assuming they are simply eating a dish of beans or something similar for 10 pounds, with water for 1 pound, two such meals a day will add up to SS£ 650 a month. Thus, teachers must have some other form of support to survive, their school salaries merely covering part of their household needs. As noted by one of UNCEF's more senior Education Specialists in South Sudan:



This is having effects on teachers leaving education to join non-governmental organizations for less professionally engaging jobs. For instance, teachers are now drivers and security officers because they are better paid by NGOs than in government. This 'brain drain' implies that the most critical roles for national capacity building and teaching children in schools is being done by volunteer teachers who have not received qualifications, or if one is qualified, then they are disgruntled education service providers.

One of the reasons for the salary woes are the austerity measures, which have been in place ever since South Sudan stopped pumping oil in February 2012, and the civil war, which has placed even more pressure for cuts in non-military spending. Although the research did not come across specific cases of corruption in the MoEST or MoCYS, and actually heard of the opposite (civil servants sometimes paying their own monitoring expenses without hope of reimbursement), corruption is known to permeate all sectors of the economy and state apparatus (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre n.d.), reducing still further the effective funds available for education and other social services.

**Training Materials and logistics.** Availability of training materials for peacebuilding and life skills in sufficient quantities was not systematically assured, meaning that materials could not always be left with trainers and teachers following the training exercises. Having a hard copy of the materials in life skills and peace education, conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm left behind ensures that reference materials for these topics are available to trainers and teachers at the local level. With trainings few and far between, expensive to organize and involving complex transport arrangements, provision of sufficient reference materials is a cost-effective way to empower teachers to self-refresh their knowledge of key principles and concepts, essential to carry out their responsibility to adapt conflict-sensitive pedagogy to local conditions. At the same time, a serious dilemma faced is that, when materials are left with teachers in schools, teachers have taken the materials from the school, thus limiting resources available to support training.

Distribution problems affect not only the PBEA materials, but are a general issue linked to the war, paucity of printing facilities, poor transport and infrastructure, and perhaps also corruption, i.e., a number of complex supply chain issues that could not be addressed in our limited research. One of the distribution challenges is caused by the fact that the pilot programme is becoming a victim of its own success. As communities become aware of the trainings nearby, they demand to be included, snowballing the requirements for trainings and materials:



Many students and pupils get interested in life skills and peacebuilding when they look at the materials and start going through it, and some schools take interest and ask why is it that such and such school are involved and ours is not. So the interest to join became a challenge so in that way it also requires more production of materials if that can be done.

Additionally, many students interviewed stated that the LS + PE class is the only one they can fully participate and express their opinions in. They also state that the methodology is much more appealing, through its creativity and participatory approach, than the usual one used in other subjects. This has also added to the popularity of the subject and the learners' interest in joining. These new challenges of meeting a growing popular interest in LS + PE are welcome and surmountable, as a senior inspector from Central Equatoria (state within which is located the capital city, Juba) explained:



The program was so nice and so acceptable to any learned individual, because we started from life skills and it goes up to peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity; our main challenge was access, communication, and number one: lack of peace and security.

He noted that although security was not an issue there, and trainings were generally held as planned, sometimes they were "corrupted," which he translated as planning hitches, last minute schedule changes, or inability to muster enough trainees. Another inspector noted the difficulty in Central Equatoria of getting transport for monitors to evaluate the quality of teaching, an indication of the challenges in other states, where transport infrastructures are far less developed. Thomas, a MoCYS staff member involved in the LS + PE training mentioned the effects of similar financial constraints:



Trainings are sometimes cancelled at the last minute due to financial constraints or poor planning. Other times, the training will be compressed in order to save on expenses. Another problem is the material is too theoretical and does not provide enough locally-relevant examples. Monitors should be able to go to the field every month, to see what the problems are, and report back, making sure that the key people in charge know what needs to be changed. Then recheck to see that changes

were made to improve the training. If monitors are only going once a year, this cannot happen. Once a month to all sites would not be realistic, but at least once a month to one site should be a minimum. The two MoCYS staff members also suggested that given what they've seen of the workload of PBEA programme manager and education specialist, which they feel could hardly be increased, UNICEF should consider recruiting an assistant to help them.

The problem of getting locally-relevant material into the LS + PE, treated later, is here linked to the financial constraints, since without sufficient monitoring the shortcomings of trainings in different areas cannot be flagged for future resolution by the programme.

The programs are there, but the money to make them work for more than a handful of youths is a big challenge, especially when considering that youths are sometimes turning to guns and violence out of social and economic need, and also even due to boredom, as explained Thomas (MoCYS):



You know, for the youth, we have so many programs. But the problem is lack of money. We are supposed to have camps for the youth to bring youth from the states, to be together to love one another. This year we will be in Central Equatorial [*he later said funds are now lacking to bring youth there*], next year in a different area. But lack of funds is the problem. We have a Youths Club, Youth League activities, and these really help. These kids were enemies before because of the cows, but now they're together. I would like to say in this context, that much of the cattle-raiding, the fighting, done by the youth, is actually a case of idleness. The idle mind is the devil's workshop. They are tempted to go raid. Everything revolves around resources. If the youth can be shown that there are other ways of acquiring resources, not necessarily through having cows or raiding animals.

## Additional Challenges

Other challenges were mentioned by the trainers, inspectors and directors from the concerned ministries based on their experience conducting the field visits. Training of monitors, logistics and communication were seen as the main challenges.

**Training of monitors is not keeping up with need, creating logistics bottlenecks.** There are only two monitors for PBEA (not the entire state) in Central Equatoria, and they are required to cover the entire state and still do their routine work at the Ministry. It is a major challenge just to cover the eleven schools in Juba County, a relatively privileged zone, let alone the counties in the rest of the country. There is thus a need to train more monitors. It was suggested that if more monitors are authorized, some very effective members present at the onset of the programme, with valuable computer skills, could be brought back in. Again, the bottleneck of government funding austerity hampers smooth and efficient implementation of the peacebuilding and life skills throughout the country, as is the case for routine education monitoring. The assessment forms were also an issue for some monitors, who cited too many, poorly-focused questions.

**Communication is a major challenge for monitoring.** Like for financial, access, logistics and monitoring challenges, communication is affected by the conflict. Most of the master trainers are based in Juba. Monitoring a cattle camp that moves in search of pasture is a challenge without an operating mobile phone network. The conflict presents new challenges, restraining or preventing travel to certain areas (particularly in parts of Jonglei and Upper Nile). Efficient communication is essential to ensure information from the trainers on how the information is being digested.<sup>40</sup> Thomas (MoCYS) illustrated with his own experience the difficulties monitors (or any civil servant) face:



It is difficult to evaluate [the impact and effectiveness of the trainings] because we have never really gone to take part in assessing how much the

learners have an understanding of the life skills and peacebuilding, but we have [been able] to see how there is really a push for this programme to go on. With the help of Antonia [PBEA staff] I think the state monitors have done the baseline, though I have not seen the report. I have been put in charge of Wau and Tonj East, but I've never been able to go there because of the road situation, but I have gone to Wau.

## 3.3 The Design of the National Curriculum Framework

The focus on LS+PE, which UNICEF, MoES and MoCYS are piloting in schools and the emergency context of IDP settlements, is being integrated into primary and secondary education through the national curriculum development process, also supported by UNICEF and through its engagement with the GPE. The South Sudan Curriculum Framework (Republic of South Sudan 2014) was developed in 2014 by the government and stakeholders, with guidance from their international partner, The Curriculum Foundation. A starting point is the General Education Act of 2012 (see text box). PBEA, the ministries and TCF are united in supporting common goals and vision of an education paradigm that moves beyond memorization and testing to provide pupils with lifelong learning skills that will allow them to remain adaptive in a world where change is accelerating.

### General Education Act of 2012

The education system in the Republic of South Sudan shall be directed towards meeting the following goals:

- a) Eradicate illiteracy, improve employability of young people and adults and promote lifelong learning for all citizens;
- b) Provide equitable access to learning opportunities for all citizens to redress the past inequalities in education provision;
- c) Achieve equity and promote gender equality and the advancement of the status of women;

40 Jurisdictional problems were not cited among the challenges to implementation. National-state collaboration was seen as positive.

- d) Contribute to the personal development of each learner and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation;
- e) Promote national unity and cohesion;
- f) Enhance the quality of education and encourage a culture of innovation and continuous school improvement and effectiveness; and
- g) Develop and promote a general scientific approach in education.

The Framework is premised on a Vision, that “a new country needs a new curriculum” built on ambitions for the nation, among them “for peace and prosperity, for growth and development, for harmony and for justice.” Rooted in the country’s rich culture and heritage, the curriculum is designed to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, time of rapid technological change, where people need to become “life-long learners” in order to compete effectively in a rapidly changing knowledge economy (South Sudan Curriculum Framework [SSCF] 1.1). The Key Aims are thus to develop “good citizens of South Sudan, successful life-long learners, creative and productive individuals, and environmentally responsible members of society” (SSCF 1.2).

To achieve these aims, the Philosophical Approach calls for “a curriculum that is based on an active, constructivist approach to learning. If the aims encompass more than the memorization of information, then students must engage actively in their own learning, and cannot be passive recipients of knowledge. Learning will need to move beyond textbooks and teacher-directed lessons to the active engagement of students in their own learning. If young people are to become lifelong learners, then they need to develop a love of learning as well as the skills and confidence to carry on learning by themselves. Therefore, independence within learning will need to be an important feature of the curriculum. If they are to appreciate their culture and heritage and become environmentally aware members of

society, then learning will need to be practical and relate directly to learners’ own lives” (SSCF 1.3). The next step in the process was to define the four frames that combine to form the curriculum, beginning with the Values and Principles that will “underpin and guide the subject syllabuses, and the way schools are run and how teachers are trained” (SSCF 2.1; see two text boxes).

**Ensuring cultural relevance and integration to curriculum.** South Sudanese Culture and Heritage provides a second frame, to aid in identifying formation and ground learning in the pupils’ own experiences, locations and cultures, to learn their cultural traditions, beliefs and understandings, to appreciate and value them, and make them part of their lives (SSCF 2.2). The third frame is composed of the Subjects, which naturally vary depending on the age of pupils and phase of learning, whether it be early childhood development education (ages 3-5), primary education (levels P1-8) or secondary education (levels S 1-4). In secondary school, students have some latitude to choose additional elective subjects based on their academic or professional interests.

It is in looking at “The Framework in Action” (Section 3) that we can see where Peacebuilding Education and Life Skills come into the curriculum (SSCF 3.4). Along with Environmental Awareness and Sustainability, the three constitute cross-cutting issues that inform teaching in all subjects from P1 to S4. The SSCF presents this as a picket fence or lattice: the subjects (Math, History, Social Studies, etc.) are the vertical planks, and the horizontal cross-cutting themes are bars reinforcing and maintaining the integrity of the structure. Integrating conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm into the curriculum as cross-cutting issues is a sustainable solution. Had they been added as new subjects, they would have been more susceptible to dropping out of the curriculum in the event of a reform.

Figure 5.

Values	PrinciplesThe South Sudan Curriculum should provide:
Education in South Sudan will be based on a shared commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights and gender equity</li> <li>• Respect and integrity</li> <li>• Peace and tolerance</li> <li>• Compassion and social justice</li> <li>• Democracy and national pride</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A culture of excellence that supports innovation, creativity, continuous improvement and effectiveness</li> <li>• An environment of empowerment that promotes independence, individual learning, critical thinking, problem-solving and emotional intelligence</li> <li>• A context of South Sudanese heritage and culture that builds national pride and identity within an understanding of global citizenship</li> <li>• A spirit of hope, respect, peace, reconciliation, unity and national pride, democracy and global understanding</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Transitioning Education from Knowledge to Skills and Competencies – Relevance of Learning Opportunities



One of the most useful things was right at the beginning of the curriculum design making the focus on skills development and competencies and thinking of the whole individual and taking away that focus on knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. And you can see as the colleagues are writing their units, sometimes you have to say ‘that’s just knowledge.’ But it’s been exciting to see how a lot more competence is coming through. They’re really thinking about it. It’s tricky; it’s not familiar in their experience. (Vikki Pendry, TCF consultant)

The transition from knowledge to skills and competencies is indeed a critical transition for education in South Sudan, a “game changer” that opens up the doors to critical thinking, a necessary skill for conflict resolution, risk avoidance, peacebuilding, and innovation. This section explores the processes involved in designing curriculum to better reflect LS+PE, as well as what the great transition to skills and competencies will mean for South Sudan’s teachers. In doing so further evidence is provided about how the **PBEA has contributed to achieving Outcome 1**

**level results** for integrating PB and conflict sensitivity into education sector plans and policies.

**Promoting critical thinking and constructive citizenship.** In the past, education was largely based on rote knowledge acquisition. When learning, for example, about physical features of their immediate environment, South Sudanese pupils were told what those were, or made to learn lists of geographical formations and climate events limited to other parts of the world, rather than allowing the students to do the observation, comparison and formulation themselves. Teachers, in a real sense, like students, must become researchers. “We want to give the teachers enough information, but it’s a delicate balance because you can’t put all the information in because then... you’re doing exactly what we don’t want to do with the children! [...] It’s choosing examples that trigger the thinking of the teachers themselves.”



There’s a very good unit on democracy [...] It’s all about investigation and evaluation and the comparisons. The unit isn’t about ‘this is democracy, and this is why it works, or not’, it’s about exploring and—this is what Brian<sup>41</sup> is very sure about—it’s about exploring and investigating and coming to your own conclusions about it with as much information as we can help our teachers provide the children with.”

41 Dr. Brian Male, is a TCF Director and author of two key works on curriculum design: *The Primary Curriculum Design Handbook: Preparing our Children for the 21st Century* and (with Mick Waters) *The Secondary Curriculum Design Handbook: Preparing Young People for Their Futures* (both published by Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2012).

Vikki Pendry went on to explain how the cross-cutting elements of peacebuilding education and life skills support vision, principles and shared values as well as subjects.



What's interesting is the 'respect' side as well, so it's like celebrating diversity and respecting and that comes everywhere, particularly in this subject [Arts] we are talking quite a lot about appreciation, critical and creative thinking about the arts that are produced. It's making sure that the teachers help students to be respectful of the work that is produced. And that applies to P.E. (physical education); P.E. is a very good example, where somebody is a very good runner, and that somebody is a slower runner. They talk a lot about teamwork; every unit has to think about cooperation and teamwork.<sup>42</sup> And I think in terms of peace studies, that's really important. So it's good that it is cutting across all subjects and they're thinking about how they can encourage the teachers to develop scenarios and activities which actively promote the discussions among the young people about encouraging each other and being specific with praise.

Peacebuilding, the cross-cutting issue, has been integrated into the discourse of the curriculum developers, as exemplified by a member of the history panel explaining how they worked:



We build on the local level and expand to the rest of the world. The same is what we do in history. There are a lot of elements that go into the history

subject, including peace education, conflict resolution and mitigations and all of this. This morning we have been looking at peaceful coexistence among the South Sudanese, and what are the challenges to mitigating our conflicts and differences. We look at the modes of how we can build reconciliation in South Sudan and also at the importance of building confidence in the conflict areas so that we can foster unity. [...] We have a lot of challenges, as a new nation, and we try to ask the learners to suggest ways that reconciliation can be achieved [...] When we look at Europe we will of course talk about Napoleon [...] as a personality—why he was very successful and why he was not—so that you can learn something from and use in order to manage our affairs in South Sudan at the moment.

**Strengthening conflict resolution.** An example of how the curriculum integrates peacebuilding through the cross-cutting dimension is having teachers develop dramatizations in class that explore conflicts and suggest reconciliation strategies. Teachers receive the textbooks, tools and training for developing the dramatization, but the design is up to them, as they have the privileged access to local conditions and know the typical local conflict scenarios that can be used to inform their dramatizations and make them believable. In the dramatizations, groups of students represent two opposing sides of an issue. Then a third team of students is brought in to act as mediators or discussants. Even the “big issues” are being opened up for classroom discussion through vivid examples and comparative analysis: Should pastoralists settle down and do agriculture? What would be a possible model for “conflict-free” pastoralism in South Sudan?

42 In a discussion with the spokesman for the P.E. subject panel (a P.E. specialist, he took part in the peace process in Khartoum, and is now working for the South Sudan Land Commission), the desire to exploit the diversity, cooperation and teamwork aspects of sports to advance peacebuilding was evident: “We deal with the rules and regulations of every game. These rules guide the participants, not to be violent, not to be arrogant, not to be hostile, but to play in peace. [...] We control our spectators and players just through this talk. Because we believe they know the regulations and they are implementing these regulations when they're playing the games. We're very much mindful about peacebuilding among our players through injecting into their senses the spirit of peace, cooperation, unity and love.” Mono-ethnic teams and associations or clubs are not allowed for sports played on “scientific” bases, but on the other hand it is still possible for ethnic groups to compete in traditional sports, such as wrestling, on an ethnic basis, since this is the traditional way of inter-ethnic or inter-village competition, which is to be encouraged in so far as it contributes to inter-ethnic contact, exchanges, respect, and peacebuilding. Traditionally, such non-violent competition was seen not only as entertainment, but could also sometimes serve as “pressure valves” to dissipate inter-group tensions.

To work, this new style of teaching will require much of teachers, for they will be given a curriculum framework and syllabi, and tools to aid them, but they will ultimately have to design their classes themselves, adapting the content to the unique local economic, social and environmental conditions of the location where they are teaching. Pendry again:

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I think, to be truthful, in the units being produced there is a clear description of opportunity of doing teamwork, cooperation, respectful[ness], difference, and diversity. The difficulty is thinking about activities, so the intention is very clear, the determination from everybody to include all of this is clear, and it's in black and white. But just thinking of activities, sometimes, that's the hard bit. But you find that you just have to ask the right question. They can give you examples, but it's triggered by questions from us, and you know often we'll be talking and I'll ask them to give an example, and I'll say: "Write that down! Exactly! Those words! That's what I mean!" Sometimes they haven't realized that they have so much, but they think it's too detailed, or not relevant."

Teacher training clearly emerges as the next great challenge for the curriculum development process. Central to training the new breed of teachers is giving them the confidence and tools they need to become researchers in their own right, in charge of making the education they provide reflect a national identity, an ethical universality while at the same time ensuring local relevance and content. According to Dave Peck, CEO of TCF, and present in Juba:

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[Teacher training] is a massive problem and they (the government, the ministries) have to understand it. These people [*gesturing to the subject panels in the room*] have been on a journey. And the Math people have got it. They now understand what it's about. And the Sciences people, the primary

people, it has taken them three weeks. And they've suddenly understood it. Five weeks [corrects Vikki Pendry]: those two weeks of the framework and three weeks of the unit writing so some of them [have been working on this for] five weeks. It has taken the best professionals that long to get to the point where we're happy most of the time! [*laughing*]"

Dave Peck explained this transformation was not a simple matter of flicking a switch:

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They are prisoners of their own education. So this is a microcosm of the bigger thing. So how you shift these people from a... , if you're going to empower children and communities to look after themselves, the teaching has got to change from someone—they've stopped asking me now, there's still a little bit of dependency, but they're not asking me anymore—from someone forcing them to do it. 'I'll give you a hand, but you've got to do it, that's the way you build capacity.' It's the same in the UK: unless you build capacity in communities, they'll always be expecting that someone will come and help them out. So if we want them to overcome poverty: they've just been talking this morning in the Maths panel, over there, about how in the Maths modules, they've now written in the Senior Maths about how children need to use their maths to think about how they might start a business. Now that's what we're doing! Because that's how you'll deal with poverty; you work with the children and they'll go home and tell their parents, that's how you do it. But we need the teachers to do that [i.e., to make the material relevant]. We've put that in the framework. [For Math, it has been a challenge for the primary level writers] because maths is maths is maths, forever, but the Senior Maths in senior school, they've been able to shape it around their local communities."

Examples here are creative, locally relevant ways of presenting data that gets other cross-cutting lessons across. Dr. Brian Male explained how UNICEF, as a key stakeholder, contributed directly to the curriculum development process:



We had people from UNICEF, and they said peacebuilding was important. 'OK, so you write down what you think the kids should be doing every year, right through.' So we got peace education built into the syllabuses. So it's there and will be in the textbooks. It's linked to the citizenship. It runs right the way through P1, P2, P3, right the way through. Citizenship and peace education will continue to be compulsory [to the end of secondary school].

**Cultural relevance for promoting equity and inclusion.** The curriculum development teams are aware of the need to make the curriculum relevant to South Sudanese conditions (TCF has local relevance as one of their guiding principles), and they have made a great deal of effort to make each subject in this curriculum more relevant to the peoples and cultures of South Sudan. Although the framework in South Sudan is based on the very basic English framework used in English schools, for South Sudan it has been enriched with great detail. Subject teams are encouraged to go even farther to give as much local and national content as possible. Examples from daily life in South Sudan are used in mathematics, chemistry and physics problems, and English uses examples from South Sudanese literature in addition to the usual English and world literature canon.

It remains to be seen how representative the material will be. The addition of local content depends on the capacities of each subject team to ensure inclusivity. To be absolutely certain that all subjects have locally relevant

content, it would be necessary to have members drawn from a diverse selection of rural societies, probably too much to ask for the ministries during this period of austerity and war. At least, the effort is being made and the principle of inclusivity and relevance is enshrined, to be improved on as conditions permit. LS + PE instruction could also benefit, no doubt, from more inclusivity to avoid dispensing generic lessons to groups far removed from the 'mainstream' culture (e.g. for minority groups with traditional lifestyles in rural and hard-to-reach areas).

Nevertheless, like many partners in South Sudan the PBEA has been grappling with the issue of how to reach and adequately serve excluded groups, such as pastoralist communities, precisely because often such groups experience high levels of conflict internally, and their interactions with other communities are often contentious. Relevance of learning materials is considered to be a critical aspect of such efforts, especially in relation to the cultural and economic relevance of curriculum and learning materials. Inequities and social tensions arise when, for example, when materials produced are not well suited to the needs of excluded communities due to 1) being designed by members of 'dominant' groups at the centre who tend to have a different world view from that of the excluded communities on the peripheries (or who approach curriculum revision processes for excluded communities as a 'civilizing mission'); 2) being less relevant to the social and economic realities of excluded communities, such that the lessons and messages transmitted do not resonate with the daily lives and requirements of existence in such communities; 3) being delivered in way that is incompatible with the needs and livelihoods constraints of excluded communities. UNICEF is making efforts to reach excluded communities such as pastoralists (discussed in below on Livelihood Issues) in extremely remote and marginalised areas such as Tonj East.

## 4. Economies of Conflict: The Role of Education

### 4.1 Conflict Sensitivity, Livelihoods, and Barriers to Quality Education

Several commonly cited challenges about the pastoral livelihoods in relation to children's rights and pressures for violent conflict include the low valuation of children's education, high population growth, increasing amounts of polygyny leading to higher dowries and raiding, as well as growing conflict in zones of contact between pastoral groups and agriculturalists as a by-product of the war, recurrent droughts and climate change.

Moreover, many of South Sudan's most deadly conflicts have been over access to valued resources in the pastoral societies: over land, water, food, and cattle.<sup>43</sup> The conflicts are traceable to longstanding socio-economic relationships existing between household and clan members. The pastoral societies are structured on the basis of reciprocal exchange of cattle upon the marriage of kinsmen. The cattle necessary for dowry payment to the family of the bride are substantial, and increasing. Family and clan members contribute to enable the groom to amass the necessary head of cattle, and expect to be reimbursed sometime in the future when a girl from the same group can be given away. Similarly, a brother or other relative of a potential groom will lend cattle to a kinsman with the expectation that in the future he will be able to receive back an equivalent amount to finance a marriage for himself, his son, or a kinsman. Thus, while many observers believe that the rising cost of dowry has become unsustainable, and measures should be taken to reduce the size of dowry payments or discourage dowry payments altogether, such measures would be resisted by those who have provided cattle in the past and still see themselves as being on the receiving end of a debt.

Thus, forcing modifications of a cultural practice by decree – for example, requiring reduced dowry payments or outlawing them outright – are likely to fail, and result in covert payments. When one broaches the subject with pastoralists, although they understand the problem and some even express agreement with the principle, they insist that the reduction not apply to dowry they themselves expect to receive.

Some evolution is being seen, for example the increasing acceptance of cash in lieu of cattle, though there is little if any reduction in overall dowry payment value in such cases. Many are getting around the problem, by marrying outside of their ethnic group or eloping, and avoiding dowry altogether. At best, elopement carries a heavy price for the couple: they cannot return to their village without settling the dowry price. At worst, it can spark violent conflict between the two families and uncertainty as to the degree of acquiescence of the girl.

There is some movement towards mixed agro-pastoralism, where part of the family or clan will settle in an area for sedentary farming, the other part ranging with the cattle in search of pasture. The Murle, for example, have long been mixed agro-pastoralists; some are now farmers only.

Thomas, of MoCYS, who has been bringing youth together from diverse backgrounds to understand each other and work for peace, understands how conflict over cows flows from the very real material value the animals represent and the social requirement that cattle be paid in order to marry—the social requirement is both attitudinal and very material, due to the family investments and expectation of return on that investment. Creating new economic opportunities to diversify income-gathering possibilities is thus seen as an appropriate solution for the problem

43 See companion study on PBEA emergency response in South Sudan for further historical detail.



Figure 6. A cattle camp in Tonj East (courtesy of T. Majela & L. K. Lomodong)

of pastoralist conflict. In other words, *attitude change* cannot occur until it makes economic sense to individuals to give *behavioural change* a try. If mobile schools dispensing relevant life skills can give pastoralist children the opportunity to learn new competencies, and begin to envisage other livelihoods, education will have played a role in transforming structures of contention found in traditional livelihoods systems. But these skills and competencies must be those that are valued in the future South Sudanese political-economic system. The introduction of LS+PE for these communities is therefore about getting children and communities engaged in critical thinking about what causes conflict in their locality, and how their community can better respond to changes and shocks. Moreover, an assumption underpinning education development assistance in cattle camps is that the introduction of economically relevant learning opportunities for young people will address economic drivers of conflict among pastoral communities. In this light, UNICEF's engagement with pastoralist societies in the

Tonj East area merits closer analysis.<sup>44</sup>

### Tonj East

Tonj East is an area of Warrap state where UNICEF has been involved in bringing communities together in an attempt to end cycles of violent conflict. Conflict drivers among communities in Tonj East include theft, cattle raiding, high dowry, water points for animals, border disputes, elopement and rape of women, and continuation of cycles of revenge. Contested borders are a source of tension in this area as well. Disputes happen when, for example, a government official comes to the border area and both groups want to greet him by slaughtering cattle. As a result, conflicts arise during what should be a joyful occasion because the two groups begin arguing over land boundaries. In 2014, it was decided that the two groups would meet for the event at a neutral venue of the county government office. As noted by the PBEA programme manager in South Sudan:

44 Fortunately, Thelma Majela and Lucy Kithoi Lomodong went to Tonj East in July 2014 and provided a detailed briefing for this study on their return.



...the decision was taken during one of the four peacebuilding dialogues that were conducted in Tonj East. The practice was identified as a source of conflict and although it has good intensions but realising that the modality of conducting created conflict led to the concerned parties agreeing in that dialogue to separate the celebrations – so it was a dividend from the peacebuilding dialogues that were conducted in Tonj East.

#### UNICEF Field Report Extract, Tonj East, July 2014

Although a conflict was triggered during the reporting period due to ‘eloping,’ which led to violence in Romich in Tonj East, there were still some major peace dividends achieved with ‘mobile peace conferences’ with 415 people (43 females) across the six payams. These contributed to the reduction of conflicts and greater stability in Greater Ananatak communities between Akook and Luackoth communities as well as Thiik of Ngapagok and Pariak of Pawang Payam. Another peace dividend led to the inter-sectoral link between GPE and PBEA where the context specific conflict analysis made a request for a school (TLS) to be constructed in a neutral location to support inter-ethnic reconciliation and peacebuilding. It was identified that the school would become a positive connector that will enable the two conflicting communities to send their children, hence Loliith Primary School including Temporary Learning Spaces were constructed and will be used in 2015.

**Conflict sensitive education delivery for pastoral communities.** Conflict over access to government services are also regarded as important conflict drivers fuelling grievance and inequity between communities. Through community-level peacebuilding dialogues supported via PBEA in mid-2014, one solution proposed by communities during that had been in conflict for a long period during was to build a school/ TLS (Temporary Learning Space) together with GPE on the boundary between

two communities. PBEA-facilitated community dialogues led to agreements on the specific location for the school construction and modalities for joint community participation in the management and support of the school. The intent was for the learning space to become a way for bringing the children from different communities together and through them forge interethnic links of friendship and increase social cohesion between Akok and Luackoth tribes in the County. Both tribes identified numerous impacts of conflict including: the loss of numerous lives; the destruction of homes; displacement; unemployment; poverty and widespread trauma. As a result of conflict women were at greater risk of violence, and school-age children mostly remained deprived of education over the past 9 years. Among the concrete solutions found was to establish a Temporary Learning Space (TLS) at Ananatak which is an area bordering the land where both tribes live. PBEA also trained teachers and community members to help ensure that the TLS will adhere to the guiding principles for establishing “Schools as Zones of Peace”. The teachers subsequently began to teach life-skills and peacebuilding education curriculum to 68 students (23 girls). Since the initiative began, the Chiefs from the two tribes have reported a positive change in the lives of children and adolescents, who they feel are “learning to live together”. At the same time, both Chiefs and the newly established PTA began working jointly to find support for constructing boreholes, latrines and a permanent school structure. The community was heavily involved and were working to ensure that routes to and from school are safe for students. Peace Clubs for adolescents and youth were also established at the TLS to reinforce what is being taught in the classrooms and to provide a forum for constructive interaction and dialogue. The Chief of Nagapapok Payam and Chief of Palal Payam both expressed a view that there is a growing ‘culture of peace’ – though it needs to be “nurtured and supported”.

This demand for educational facilities highlights an interesting point: the critical importance of service delivery in conflict epidemiology. Government services represent a common good, which must be shared and protected over the long term. With no common goods provided the notion of community weakens, because with nothing to share and

protect, families will focus on their short-term individual and clan needs. Conflict will be more likely to result from the focusing inward and towards short-term gain. Moreover, the conflict sensitive manner in which resources were used to bring communities together addressed a specific point of tension and helped to strengthen social cohesion between ethnically divided communities. Initiatives such as this have seem to clearly demonstrate progress with PBEA Outcome 3 goals of transforming behaviours to support conflict resolution among individuals and communities.

Equally relevant, the case cited above provides **further evidence with achieving PBEA Outcome 1 results**. Based on the successes of such pilot initiatives, conflict sensitive approaches have been mainstreamed into GPE and other school construction initiatives with the aim of bringing communities together by promoting inclusion, equity, and 'living together'. Through its involvement in GPE and other programming streams, UNICEF has built 13 schools in Warrap state over the years, none of which previously seemed to have applied such principles. During 2014, it was reported by UNICEF staff involved in the GPE that conflict sensitivity has now become integrated to all current school construction initiatives.

#### **Constructive community empowerment for peacebuilding**

Constructive transformative action for conflict resolution was modelled through assessment of conflict drivers, triggers and interventions and yielded peacebuilding dividends in contributing to reduction of violent incidents between tribal groups. This was witnessed in the way rival communities were able to work together, share resources and promote collaborative social engagements. For instance, in Tambura County (Western Equatoria State), the tribal and border conflicts in 2014 between the Azande and Balanda tribes affected youth and children in schools. After the peacebuilding conferences, 50 youth in the church (40 female) were trained on Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

and Church congregations were also trained on developing peacebuilding messages in sermons and other Church services to promote peaceful co-existence. Youth from Balanda and Azande tribes had previously been split across livelihood opportunities, namely the "boda boda" business. Through the Youth Union, social cohesion was restored through peace and reconciliation strategies between the Balanda and the Azande using constructive participation of youth where 58 children (37 boys and 21 girls) engaged in shared recreational activities (football matches). These activities took place in early December 2014 and no further confrontations have been reported.

**Conflict Sensitivity and Building Peace through Peace Dialogues.** In Tonj East inter-communal tensions are highly visible. People often feel that their clans are not being favoured in appointments, or that their people are not given the same chances in life. For example, one group will perceive that the market is all in the hands of another clan. Very distinct identity markers tend to separate clans. Other inter-ethnic conflicts exist with the neighbouring counties of Tonj North and South, and between different Dinka clans.<sup>45</sup> When conflict occurs, groups get cut off from their families on the other side of the divide. The traditional court system is very active dealing with such issues.

To address such intercommunal tensions in Tonj East (and risks associated with conflict spreading to these areas from other states in the country), PBEA organized four peace conferences and four cattle camp peace dialogues during the latter half of 2014 where 95% (690 out of 730) of invited local residents participated. The target groups for these dialogues were executive chiefs, paramount chiefs, higher administrators, high government officials, community leaders, youth, and especially the *galweng*. The *galweng* are the militia or community defence forces specific to Dinka cattle camps; their role is to defend cattle and defend community from attack by other groups, such as the Nuer who they have on their eastern border. The approach was to

<sup>45</sup> Tonj East was the site of clashes that left 30 to 40 dead and more than 60 wounded in early September 2014, following a marriage across clan lines (Miraya FM 2014).

target those community leaders and key actors who could be engaged to act as community level peacebuilders and mobilize communities toward constructive action and inter-group engagements as opposed to violence and war as show by an extract from the South Sudan PBEA 2014 Annual Report (i.e., **increasing societal resilience against violent conflict**).

One of the very interesting initiatives for which evidence can be cited in regards to its peacebuilding impacts occurred in May 2014 – with two PBEA-sponsored youth conferences in Western Equatoria State. The youth conferences, implemented under the theme “Constructive Citizenship”, brought together youth from all the 10 Counties to form a youth body and begin peacebuilding activities through sports, awareness raising and other community outreach initiatives. Clear action plans developed suggested that participants would begin to ‘mainstream’ mainstream peacebuilding and life skills activities into their own community-based activities. The direct involvement of the beneficiaries also acted as a means of promoting community participation in addressing the root causes of conflict in their State and, ideally, in neighboring States. At the end of each of the two conferences, action plans were developed by the participants to engage them directly in peacebuilding activities in their own communities. Moreover, as a result of the conferences the State Youth Union restructured itself and has since achieved several interesting **results for bringing communities together and preventing conflict or supporting reconciliation**, as show in extracts of PBEA monitoring reports below<sup>46</sup>:

#### **PBEA Monitoring Report – Tonj East – Youth Union Activities for peacebuilding**

In Tambura county, the tribal and border conflict between the Azande and Balanda tribes is drastically increasing to the extent that there is a manifestation of division among the business boda-boda youth and children in schools, thus amounting to a time-bomb that violence can easily erupt. The peace conference

participants have done the following in connection with the action plan drawn in the conferences to address this risk:

- Trained 50 members of Secret Heart group in the church (40 female and 10 male) on Conflict Resolution & Peace Building so as to participate in restoring peace between the Balanda and Azande.
- Engaged 58 children (37 boys and 21 girls) in peace building and recreational activities (foot ball match) during the independence day of 9th July, 2014. Elders were brought together and the idea was getting children from the two conflict ethnic groups to play together and participate in peace building to see themselves as one people.
- Brought together 100 children (68 girls and 32 boys) and 11 teachers (9 male and 2 female) to discuss peace and reconciliation strategy between the Balanda and the Azande in a Child Protection workshop used by the peace conference team to mainstream peace building into child protection programme.
- Composed peace songs presented during the independence day of 9th July, 2014, captured by the media and presented in South Sudan TV to cover the community widely.
- Planned and organised a reconciliation meeting with women to be held on Monday 28 July, 2014 next week.
- Paramount Chief holding peace meetings after the conference with elders, sub-chiefs and head-men to resolve conflicts between the Azande and Balanda Paramount Chief playing vital role in exercising his powers in court to ensure respect for the rights of accused and fair trial. For example, he successfully followed up and released 2 children who were arrested and accused innocently on tribal basis due to their tribal identity.

46 Life Skills and Peacebuilding monitoring Report, Western Equatoria State (WES), August 2014.

## Education in the cattle camps

There is a strong sense in the cattle camps that they need more from government, and education is highly desired, but the demands of their pastoral livelihoods prevent many children from attending fixed schools. In some of the schools there is just too much overcrowding for the little learning space, let alone school furniture, that is provided. These groups depend on the children to take care of cattle as they move from one grazing area to another. Additionally, although public primary school education is officially free in South Sudan, informants speak of fees in addition to costs for meals and transportation (for many children separated from schools by distance and poor infrastructures, the cost of transport alone is prohibitive, as is the alternative of being sent to boarding school). This is particularly true as families have all of their wealth tied up in cattle.

**Adapting services to meet local conditions and needs.** To address the sort of challenges listed above, UNICEF was working to set up 'education groups' in the cattle camps of

the Wau - Tonj East area. The July 2014 visit conducted by UNICEF personnel identified six volunteers from the cattle camps willing to run such education groups and one had already started the same month. The government has established some mobile schools with many more being planned, but the limiting factor is typically teachers. It is very difficult to find teachers willing to travel and accept the rigors of life in the cattle camps. An alternative using 'volunteers' has been to establish schools where pastoral communities are expected to travel (i.e., along their migratory routes). As cattle camps are set up for two to three months at a time before moving to a new location, pastoral pupils could shift to fixed schools over the course of the year, joining pupils that are either sedentary at that point or moving with other cattle herding groups. Not only will this approach ensure a continuity of their education and retain quality, it permits children to make friendships in different communities and across ethnic and clan lines, and renew those social contacts on a regular basis as they grow up.<sup>47</sup> In support of this pilot model in South Sudan, the participating volunteers



Figure 7. Congested classroom of Primary and ECD combined - Ngabagok Primary School

<sup>47</sup> The complex needs, means, and logistics constraints of pastoral communities with regard to education is a subject that should be treated in more depth, in a variety of settings, as the particularities of each context will require tailored solutions. The UNICEF-UNESCO Institute of Statistics Out-of-School Children Initiative will be assessing barriers to school access and "develop innovative policies and strategies that will deliver them to the classroom and ensure that they are learning." South Sudan is among some 50 countries participating (see UNICEF 2015).

were highly motivated and immediately started mobilising children in their cattle camps to begin schooling, with more than 500 children to participate in these informal classes (i.e., **thus demonstrating progress with PBEA Outcome 4**). While preliminary results such as these are quite encouraging with increasing children’s access to relevant quality education, UNICEF staff identified availability of teaching and learning materials as ongoing bottlenecks to the success of this initiative – thus potentially undermining the sustainability of this approach (i.e., as with UPE in several countries across Africa, the initial progress with enrolling children into education in cattle camps can suffer reversals due to supply and quality factors).



**Figure 8. Though over age, this Lologo student from Jonglei is determined to become a doctor**

**Economic barriers to access.** While many barriers to education exist for children and young people in cattle camps, a key one relates to school fees. There is a great deal of reluctance to the idea of selling cattle to pay for school fees (or transport to school, which depending on location can represent a huge expense). As a UNICEF program officer explained: “They are very resistant to selling their cattle. Even for purposes of paying school fees. There was a young man who was telling me he was going to university but he couldn’t

continue because he needed money for fees. So he went back to his father to ask him if he could sell a head or two in order to pay his school fees. His father said no, asking ‘What about your marriage?’” The father was more concerned about keeping the hundred, two hundred or even three hundred head that would be required for his son’s marriage instead of selling 2-3 for his education. In another case from Tonj, a woman explained that although she had received 9 head of cattle when her niece got married, it is her brother who has control over them. She cannot sell even one of them to fund her current projects, to set up a business or pay her daughter’s school fees. Some children with intense desire to attend school, but whose parents refuse to sell cows, go ahead and do work themselves to raise money. Two brothers interviewed said they made building bricks in order to finance their own schooling, while others are engaging in the sort of livelihood activities outlined below to overcome economic barriers to school and support their local livelihood resilience.

**Conflict Sensitive Service Delivery Supporting local livelihoods and resilience.** As PBEA was originally designed, the focus in pastoral areas would be on providing LS+PE, but after the conflict erupted and necessitated programme adjustments, PBEA looked to focus also on promoting sustainable livelihoods to start addressing conflict pressures related to economy. As the UNICEF programme assistant in Juba put it:



One thing that really strengthens peacebuilding is tangible things to go along with it. It can’t just be software and dialogues. People are fighting because they don’t have all that they need. They don’t have access to resources.

UNICEF has been exploring solutions to such problems for pastoralists in the Wau and Tonj East areas, where communities are based on mixed agriculture and herding. Almost every household has a home garden. Many communities there consist of villages where families practice sedentary agriculture, planting groundnuts, sorghum and maize agriculture. Some members of each household follow the itinerant cattle camps travelling in a radius of some tens of kilometres from the

village in search of grazing land, returning to their villages periodically to get food. UNICEF has found that these communities, as a result of their diversified farming systems combining sedentary agriculture for the production of grains and other food crops and cattle raising, tend to be more resilient. One way the communities are more resilient is that the women who stay behind in the villages can produce food and income over which they retain control, both for themselves and for their children. Additional incomes generated from small enterprise or local livelihood initiatives thus helps to ensure that children and adolescents have access to schools and public services, among other benefits (e.g., increased nutritional intake and reduced levels of stunting for young children).

To strengthen individual and community level resilience, while at the same time addressing potential economic drivers of conflict, the PBEA moved forward in 2014 with a livelihood initiative based on ox ploughs for young people. Supporting this initiative is ACROSS, a new implementing partner that began work with UNICEF in 2014 to supplement the ox plough pilot with life skills, numeracy and literacy training for young people in cattle camps. Close to 25 young people from six counties were trained in ox-plough farming techniques. The training also allowed communities from different clans to interact constructively in an economically empowering context. While there is much hope that the pilot will improve livelihoods and food security while addressing specific conflict drivers, it remains far too early to see tangible results around the objectives underpinning the initiative (or at least concrete evidence has not been gathered as yet).

However, an unintended result that seems to have been achieved is with PBEA Outcome 2 (increasing capacity to deliver conflict sensitive education services). The project has proven to be a very practical model for applying the principles of Conflict Sensitivity as the Romic in Tonj East is a highly remote area with limited resources. By working in remote areas that are seemingly quite disadvantaged, and by facilitating constructive community engagement while monitoring potential inter-clan risks, the project is addressing issues of inequity driving conflict and mistrust between clans to help 'bring them together'. Conflict sensitive capacities have also been

demonstrated strongly by examination of the implementation and programme management modalities employed by ACROSS. ACROSS has successfully resolved community tensions around the selection of its staff by initiating a transparent recruitment process where adverts were placed across local market places, in church, and people invited to apply for employment directly. As many as 45 people applied for 4 positions who were subjected to a transparent written and oral interview. Following the recruitment of its staff the community subsequently expressed a high level of appreciation for the process as it mitigated tensions in the community and, in fact, built a sense of 'trust'. Similar transparent processes have been applied in managing all other project resources such as ox-plough, motorbikes and seeds, among others. While such an approach may seem quite logical and straightforward, it appears that communities have rarely encountered such transparency when formal sector jobs are available. Similarly, the PBEA has partnered with the NGO Don Bosco in Tonj East and in WES (Yambio) to train young people in alternative vocational and livelihood skills especially carpentry, building and construction, driving, fishery, while in Malakal they have also included a 'saving and lending scheme' for the local community. The programme aims to shift 'mind sets' in cattle farming to include literacy and numeracy and to demonstrate the value of other economic means apart from cattle farming. It was reported that these additional partners are, similarly, applying principles of conflict sensitivity to the management and distribution of their resources to prevent community tensions and to help bring communities together around common initiatives.

## 4.2 Gender and Equity

Women and children, "relatively" protected in traditional societies, have in recent decades been targeted in times of war, beginning in the late 1980s with the Islamic Baggara attacks on Dinka villages or the attacks on fleeing Southern Sudanese refugees when Ethiopia's leader Mengistu Haile Mariam was forced out of power in 1991. The situation is no better today, when the country is plunged back into civil war with itself, as Caroline Nyamemombe of UNFPA explained. South Sudan's ongoing civil war makes women highly vulnerable outside the camps or small spaces of family

and kin to which they belong. Outside this small circle, there are security risks, rape and abduction among them, particularly in times of crisis. Other risks include tripping over mines when seeking water or firewood in some areas.

### Family planning disregarded, women as commodities

The availability of family planning is restricted, so only about 6% of women are using it, compared to 63% in Zimbabwe. The general attitude is that because many children died in the war, men and many women feel there's no need for it. In South Sudan, as a result of attitudes, the communication messages UNFPA and other agencies employ point to the benefits from birth spacing rather than birth control. It appears that South Sudan will only recognize the population issue once it has become critical.

Despite war and disease, despite the highest maternal mortality rate in the world, and high rates of fistula, South Sudan's population is increasing rapidly. According to Nyamemombe, in the many polygamous households the woman is expected to produce many children, the standard being set by all the other women around, each trying to show that they are the most productive. Parents favour early marriage for the girl; the onset of menstruation is a signal that it is time, lest she lose her virginity. About 40% of girls are married before they turn eighteen, 20% by age fifteen. UNICEF has been working since 2012 with the Ministry of Social Development to put together a Communication Strategy for the Prevention of Child Marriage in South Sudan. Many women are not familiar with the link between number of pregnancies and maternal mortality and morbidity. For some groups, a difficult birth is seen as proof a woman is unfaithful.

"The rise in bride price is making women into commodities," says Nyamemombe. "We have to make them realize they're individuals, as capable as a man, not just a loaf of bread. A little boy has no respect for his big sister. When there's a group of women and say three or four men, the men alone will talk, even about women's issues." "Girl-Child Compensation"<sup>48</sup> is a custom whereby when a

killing occurs, the victim's group can demand compensation from the killer (or the killer's community) in the form of a girl child. The practice is being actively fought by UNFPA and other NGOs.

In South Sudan's pastoralist societies, women have few rights and limited choices, a condition that in some cases creates the potential for abuse. Few girls attend much less complete primary school. Their future marriage is the main concern for parents, who will seek the suitor willing to pay the most cattle for her. Many rural and pastoralist parents feel that the longer a girl is left in school, the higher the risk of her becoming pregnant outside of marriage, becoming less attractive to potential suitors due to a high educational level, or beginning a relationship with a boy who will not be an acceptable suitor. It must also be noted that there are numerous cases of rape by the girls' teachers or classmates. SGBV in schools and non-formal learning centres is rampant. In the case of an unacceptable suitor, should the boy be incapable of paying the dowry, but the couple is in love, they might elope to avoid the need for dowry. Elopements appear to be on the rise, as an alternative to steadily increasing levels of dowry, and new conceptions of the relations between women and men. Elopement carries high risks for the girl. It means having to flee to another town, and cutting off all contact with the family for an extended perhaps indefinite period. Should the girl return home, she stands to be married by force to a suitor willing to pay the dowry, and have any children she might have conceived during the elopement period confiscated.

Boundaries between elopement, wife abduction, marriage, adultery and rape are frequently blurred. Rape is most common during times of war and raiding. It is sometimes used as a form of forced marriage: aided by a group of men, a boy will abduct a girl and rape her in a room. Marriage could result from this *fait accompli*; in many cases however it leads to violent retribution from the girl's family. An apparent elopement could in fact be the product of a rape and abduction, the vulnerable girl once far from her family reasoning that her safety is best served by acquiescence.

48 Donovan 2013.

**Empowering girls as equals.** In this context, peacebuilding education and the Peace Club participation enables boys to articulate new perceptions of gender, of SGBV including rape, and of what defines peace. Examples of this provided by the PBEA programme relate to its communicating for peace and C4D strategies, which have ensured that radio programmes, classrooms activities, and peacebuilding clubs (among other avenues) include messaging which allows girls to articulate the effects of gender based violence. Girls are facilitated with safe, secure and empowering spaces to discuss issues that affect them and their communities, while at the same participation in recreational and sporting activities has been helping to break down traditional gender-based stereotypes.<sup>49</sup>

PBEA's LS+PE curriculum has also included issues of gender, sexuality education and gender based violence as sub-themes into the formal education system, thus mainstreaming gender sensitivity to education services. PBEA staff have also reported anecdotal evidence based on discussions with teachers and education officials during peace conferences and curriculum revision meetings that there is a gradual change in the participation of female students in schools, and perhaps leading to higher levels of girls' participation and inclusion in civic engagements. Additionally, PBEA staff have noted that women's participation in discussions in peace dialogues in Wau and Tonj East are revealing of the gender dynamics at play in South Sudan. In meeting after meeting, the women were silent at the outset, but the dynamics of the gathering quickly changed:



Female participation was very low at the beginning. The first few meetings were without women: it was the men talking about the causes of the conflicts, the consequences and the solutions. But the women came in there and they gave us a different perspective on the conflicts and the possible solutions. Towards the end,

we found that we had 9 or 10 women actively taking part. The team leader added: "Although they struggle to talk, when they finally do so, they speak so confidently. Also, I think because they were seeing women there as more or less running the show, we were seen as role models for them. They saw us talking to the chiefs and running the show." It was not only something that happens on television, it was real and happening in front of them. That the empowerment could happen so quickly was encouraging to the team, and facilitated their obtaining female perspectives on the issues facing the communities.

### Equity in education for girls

Inequity is experienced by numerous groups and is often based upon several characteristics, many of which can be overlapping (ethnicity, geography, income, livelihoods, language, culture, norms, and so on). As several characteristics of inequity (or equity) have been touched upon in earlier sections of this case study, this section focusses on equity in education for girls given the particularly difficult barriers they face in South Sudan. Thomas (MoCYS) spoke of the barriers to girls being educated in Wau among pastoral groups:



Of course, in the Wau area, with the pastoral communities, there is this tendency to keep the girls at home to prepare them to get married in order to get the bride price and [there persists] this idea that the girl who goes to school, when she gets married she will not fetch more cows than the one who stays at home. Because [the one who stays at home] her morality has been kept, and that one she has maybe been exposed to the world outside. These are the tendencies among the cattle herders. The culture that they

49 It is worth noting here that UNICEF's Education and Peacebuilding Specialist in ESARO has advocated for introducing courses such as "karate for girls" as a means of empowering and protecting them. Pointing to evidence from Karamoja in Uganda as well as Cambodia, such programmes have led to a reduction of attacks against women, reductions in cases of sexual violence against girls, and seemingly a reduction of violence at community level. Taking the argument that violence against girls, as a legacy of conflict signifies the 'normalization of violence' against more vulnerable groups, the best way to break such cycles is to empower girls to protect themselves. This note has been included at his request and for the reader's consideration.



Figure 9. Volleyball game in Kacuat Primary School.

hold is very powerful. A man who has been educated will prefer to marry a girl that has never been to school. But I think in some communities it is now changing, because they are beginning to see it's important to train them. But after a time they drop out, when a man appears who is ready to pay many cows for them. So you find that they begin very well, and then after a time they [the rates of female schooling] continue to drop.<sup>50</sup>

He estimates that for P1-4, 75% of boys attend school, while less than 50% of girls do so. Anthony, head national trainer, explained that in Juba the situation was different: about 70% of each gender attends school and sometimes girls outnumber boys. This is because girls come to Juba to learn if the social atmosphere in their home area is not conducive to girls obtaining education. His impression might be true for the town of Juba, and the states of Central and Western Equatoria have relatively high percentages of female enrolment (46.7% and 45.6%, respectively) but in South Sudan as a whole, females make up only 39.2% of

the primary school pupils. Gross enrolment rates (GER) clearly show gender disparity (73.3% for boys, 52.7% for girls) as do net enrolment rates (NER: 47.3% and 36.3%).<sup>51</sup>

While there is not yet evidence available to demonstrate PBEA progress with addressing broader inequities with girls access to education, there is some evidence regarding progress that is being made with addressing cultural barriers to girls being treated equitably. As noted earlier, PBEA has promoted girls participation in programme activities with an aim of increasing girls' confidence, attitudes and 'outlook', and to strengthen 'coping strategies' (i.e., individual resilience). As a result, girls are increasingly engaging in various sporting and social clubs (e.g., peace clubs) and livelihood activities. As an example, PBEA staff point to girls' participation in a career fair conducted in Wau during 2014 in which deliberate measures were taken to increase female participation (ultimately reaching 33%) and that provided girls with information on accessing professional careers, vocational training and technology, and business and medical fields. In Tonj East, the facilitation of

50 By secondary school, the gross enrolment rates for Western Bahr El-Ghazal state, which includes the town of Wau, are 19.6% for boys and 9.8% for girls, highest and second highest, respectively, in the country, in Warap state, which includes Tonj East and South, the rates drop to 6.5% and 1.2% (page 68 in EMIS 2012, Education Statistics for the Government of South Sudan, National Statistics Booklet 2012 (Ministry of General Education and Instruction, Government of Republic of South Sudan).

51 Figures are from EMIS 2012.

the peacebuilding conferences by women from UNICEF as mentioned in the previous section had a vicarious positive modelling effect – women’s initial participation in dialogues was very low but many gained confidence to speak once they saw the UNICEF female staff confidently facilitate sessions in male dominated meetings! The youth and women cascaded gender-conflict-sensitive models to the various counties in Western Equatoria (Yambio) and this influenced community peace clubs to mobilize local peacebuilding initiatives. Moreover, PBEA implementing partners have worked to ensure equal distribution of women when selecting beneficiaries for teacher training in Sports for Peace, Teacher Training, HIV and AIDS, PTAs and Women’s Groups to increase girls’ access. Framed in the light of UNICEF’s MORES Determinant Framework (i.e., removing barriers to achieving equity), PBEA activities seem to have targeted removing cultural barriers, addressing social norms, and related ‘demand’ side’ determinants that reduce equity for girls. The anecdotal and qualitative evidence gathered thus suggests some very positive progress is achieved in addressing such determinants, though more robust data is required to verify such observations.<sup>52</sup>

### 4.3 Is PBEA Missing Key Vulnerable Groups?

Street children, numerous in Wau, Tonj South, Juba and other cities across the country, is a group that is largely excluded from education and that could be preyed on by armed or criminal groups. MoCYS staff (Thomas) with experience in Wau agreed that they could be missed by the programme, and spoke at length of the challenges and importance of reaching them:



The street children are from different ethnic groups and they take drugs and are not normal. They do fight, even those from the same tribe; they group themselves according to their own

understanding. Sometimes the bigger one bullies the smaller one. They are using some drug in a tube for mending, glue: they squeeze it into a water bottle and sniff it. Sometimes they drink beer and use opium. There is one also called *mira* (Swahili word for the mild narcotic khat leaves) which is available in Juba. It is like khat and is chewed. It keeps you awake and it brings to you a lot of things in the mind. It gives you the courage to do something contrary to what’s right. There are probably pills and tablets obtained from clinics. These children have no access to education. There are in the thousands, because it is visible along the street, the whole day you continue to see this number of people. The question is why these children are left like this. The reason is that little has been done because the state government considers this a problem belonging to the states of origin. The first thing is to solve the problems in the neighbouring states first. Some come from Warrap, some from Lakes. They don’t really flee the war, they are starting very young, from the age of 8, 9 or 10. Our program surely misses them. The Ministry of Social Development [and the Ministry of Gender] has some social workers who are working with them. In Tonj South, the issue of street children is similar; there are [many] street kids. [...] To me I see that bringing them from the street to class is not possible. They will make conditions: “If you want me to come to the class, buy me a soda or give me a plate of food.” It will not be possible because they need to be rehabilitated first. The life studies programme is for those who are in the school and those who are outside the school. We have what you call the ALP (Alternative Learning Programme) for those who dropped out [temporarily, but wish to resume their schooling]; so that problem has been sorted out [through accelerated schooling over

52 The PBEA team suggests that such evidence will be made available with analysis of KAP survey data for social cohesion and resilience that will be completed at the end of 2015 or early 2016 following end line surveying when a comparative dataset is available against which to measure change.

four years] so they can re-join their colleagues in secondary school. And also there are vocational training centres and youth centres. These are tracking those who are outside of school. The youth centres use the same syllabus as we use, the same for those inside as outside school.

Thomas was then asked if UNICEF programmes miss others who—perhaps for reasons of pastoral livelihoods, need to contribute to family chores, or other reasons—are not in school or other structures.



I think the number is big. Not because they work, but because their parents do not have the money to send them to school. [...] Many people prefer to send their children to private schools; in

public schools, in Juba it is 120 pounds per year from P1-P4, and around 160 for P5-P8. For high school, cost is 375 pounds. For private schools it is double or triple. Extra fees are [required] in the final graduation years.

According to ministry officials in Juba, cost is the main factor inhibiting pastoralists from schooling their children, not mobility; however, it would seem he is speaking of a very small elite class of cattle raisers who can afford to send one or more children to a Juba boarding school, not of the vast majority of pastoralists. This would suggest a potential disconnect that exists between the realities of excluded groups and the perceptions of ministerial staff involved in education and youth-targeted policy-making. This is perhaps understandable if staff are underfunded and cannot spend the time necessary in the field to understand the specific needs of these populations.

# 5. Results, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

## 5.1 Results Achieved

The case study has identified several PBEA-supported initiatives that have shown clear progress toward achieving Outcome levels results of the programme cutting across Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4. Moreover, and perhaps surprisingly, even in a context of civil war the case study also provides evidence of increasing social cohesion and resilience among ethnically divided communities with long histories of tribal conflict and among youth populations, as well as for girls through the targeting of cultural and social barriers to equity in education.

If the enthusiasm of government officials, trainers, teachers and learners interviewed as part of this case study is any indication, the PBEA trainings and the overall programme are very well received in the capital and pilot states of South Sudan. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) integrated Life Skills and Peacebuilding (LS+PE) components in the national curriculum. Forty-eight schools in four intervention areas in at least six counties received the LS+PE curriculum, reaching a total of 13,109 students at primary and secondary school level. PBEA facilitated 28 participatory workshops during the review and revision of the LS+PE curriculum guidelines, the formation of and technical support to an inter-ministerial (MoEST and MoCYS) group and facilitated the participation of education personnel in national peacebuilding fora and processes. LS+PE together with support for the national curriculum development process **has established conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding as cross-cutting themes across all levels and subjects (gains with PBEA Outcomes 1 and 2)**. Moreover, partnerships with GPE have helped to mainstream conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into the entire national curriculum and the overall ethos of the MoEST. The curriculum process is also home-grown, not merely imposed by external consultants, though they provide needed expertise. These efforts have also led to a growing recognition among government duty-

bearers that peacebuilding through education is strongly related to issues of equity, inclusion, and the relevance and quality of curriculum for improving social cohesion, resilience and improving the livelihood opportunities of young people.

When speaking to a number of officials at both the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MoCYS), **one is convinced that on the whole the South Sudan authorities have assimilated the language of conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm** and are using its key concepts to explain their actions, genuinely convinced that PBEA is positive, necessary, and even urgent. In this regard, there is very strong evidence that the understanding and knowledge among government duty-bearers within key ministries for education and youth have increased due to support provided by the PBEA programme (i.e., **gains with Outcome 2** for strengthening institutional capacity for delivery of conflict sensitive education services). This has also been demonstrated by the increased capacity of UNICEF's implementing partners in cattle camps to apply principles of conflict sensitivity effectively in often tense and sometimes threatening environments. Particularly striking are the energy and inventiveness of teachers who—often with only basic support materials—are teaching and organizing innovative activities, including dances, dramas and peace clubs as part of the peace education and life skills programme. It demonstrates the powerful potential of such programming even in the context of multiple and complex crises in which South Sudan finds itself enmeshed.

For **Outcome 3**, cattle camp initiatives and conflict sensitive school construction and cattle camp interventions have produced clear changes in behaviour among ethnically divided communities who have been able to resolve disputes peacefully by strengthening conflict resolution skills and using school construction as means of strengthening social cohesion. At the same time, **Outcome 4 results** have been demonstrated through school

construction and adaptive services for pastoral communities, contributing to increased levels of access for children and young people – though the sustainability of such gains depends on ensuring quality and relevance of services. While several pilot initiatives for strengthening livelihoods and income generation among pastoral communities were in their early stages, positive signs of progress were already being recorded with these activities that contributed to **Outcome 3 and 4 level results** by leading to changes in behaviour by potentially addressing economic incentives driving conflict among adolescents and youth and providing them with **access to education as a transformative peace dividend**. **Additional progress with Outcome 3** can also be found with peace club activities, which have shown signs of progress with changing attitudes and behaviours leading to increased levels of gender inclusion and promoting girl's rights by working on specific determinants limiting equity in education for girls (and by extension marginalized boys). While this latter transformation could only be identified in relation to PBEA-supported peacebuilding activities with young people, it nevertheless suggests that useful models have been identified in South Sudan that, if built upon, can further promote equity and inclusion for girls in South Sudan.

Significant and encouraging outcomes were identified in terms of interaction among youths, tolerance, engagement in conflict resolution and innovative risk reduction, suggesting that the PBEA Theory of Change (ToC) is making valid assumptions regarding the effective means for encouraging tolerance and other positive behavioural changes among children and building social cohesion and community resilience in South Sudan (for a summary of ToC impacts see Annex B). The case study documents several examples in which PBEA interventions directly helped to mitigate conflicts between groups and, based on qualitative data, have increased levels of tolerance and inclusion (i.e., **achieving higher level programme objectives related to strengthening social cohesion and resilience**). All case study interlocutors underlined very positive and necessary contributions the

programme is having. One example is worth quoting at length, of an inspector from Central Equatoria state explaining how *despite the logistics problems, peacebuilding and life skills trainings were rapidly posting significant gains on the ground*:



Let me not rule out the achievements. It is better that we iron it out. Because it is from there that gives us what's next. Life skills and peacebuilding have helped us in two areas. The first is when the war broke out, most teachers were able to help some students and pupils not to fall into problems. They were able to contain [the risks]: "let's go this way, let's go that way." So that is one of the areas where life skills and peacebuilding has helped us. The second is when this cholera epidemic came in, truly, life skills did wonders, because of the messages they have heard and the clubs they formed, particularly when we come to Juba Girls Secondary School. Their club, every morning when there is a parade, the first thing is news and information having to do with the life skills, for example what happened in one of the areas of Juba Town, how many were affected, how many were discharged, and what do we do. That really helped in getting the message to the people. It is our pride, actually for me it is my pride, because when I go to the school and see the students how they are passing the messages how to get help using those life skills and peacebuilding, I say I think we have done something. [...] Not only that, they were able to discover some diseases, which are not surfacing, like the bacterial infections. There were able to bring up in the news, that in our area there was somebody so and so who was affected, and they got check-ups and found that he was affected from the food they were eating. They were applying the knowledge and skills in this shortest period of time.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> According to MoEST sources, some short videos have been made showing student initiatives to reduce danger as a result of the peacebuilding education and life skills training. Unfortunately, these could not be tracked down.

## 5.2 Lessons Learned

Better understanding the history of conflict and culture of peace

- **A history of inequities.** Understanding the conflict in South Sudan presupposes a basic knowledge of the historical trajectory through successive Turkiyah, Mahdiyya, Anglo-Egyptian and Sudanese government central authorities situated to the north to the present South Sudan government in Juba. Defined by inequities for virtually all of its known history, enduring either slavery and exploitation or neglect (the virtual absence of schools is a prime example), South Sudan's present challenge is to convince people that governance of an independent country can be any different;
- Conventional histories from the colonial period, with serious inaccuracies, have too often been drawn on as unassailable public record by subsequent academic researchers;
- **A strong cultural history of peace exists** (see Annex C) but it has been distorted through decades of bureaucratic incompetence during the history of occupation and challenges with building a function independent state, some wilful misinformation, and inadequate peacebuilding education grounded in cultural history and knowledge.

### Strengthening Curriculum

- For education to participate fully in the economic and social development of South Sudan, it must be based on the values and principles set out in the South Sudan Curriculum Framework and aimed at achieving the goals of the General Education Act of 2012, as these values and principles have gained consensus through inclusive consultations of all groups present in South Sudan;
- Although the general values and principles of the Curriculum Framework and goals spelled out in the General Education Act are national in scope, local knowledge, examples and interpretations are essential components of teaching;
- Communities need to "own" the education dispensed in their locality, and ensure it remains culturally and economically relevant to local needs and constraints, through parents, teachers and community leaders being consulted on all issues, including

curriculum, programming, calendar, content, access, and evaluations.

### Promoting Equity and Inclusion

- Pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities that engage in seasonal migration will present special challenges requiring tailored solutions (mobile schools, curriculum including para-veterinary, education not seen as means of sedentarization) to ensure the principle of universal and equal access to education;
- Improved livelihoods are one way to enable pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities to become more resilient and better able to educate their children, even if in many areas the cattle culture is well adapted to environmental and climatic regime;
- Education should be constantly adapted to remain relevant with evolving economic and social needs and its quality maintained if gains in access are to be sustained;
- Girls require additional support to overcome sociocultural and economic barriers to their full participation in education and community affairs.

### Key Challenges for promoting conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding through education

- Serious bottlenecks in training, supervision, monitoring, teacher recruitment and supply of materials can be traced to austerity due to the government being on a war footing, complicating programme adjustments and refinements, and limiting the extent of lessons learned from pilot needed for optimising LS+PE within the new curriculum;
- The quality of education services are severely affected by government budget allocations;
- Insufficient school infrastructure, supplies, qualified teachers, and incentives continue to seriously undermine access to quality education and fuel regional inequities that contribute to identity based cleavages in the country;
- Insufficient oversight and accountability mechanisms continue to undermine the quality of services. Additionally, no evidence was identified during the field

work of the government applying conflict sensitive monitoring systems to support the implementation of conflict sensitive education services;

- While significant enthusiasm exists among ministry partners about conflict sensitive education, there remains a conceptual blurring between conflict sensitive education, peacebuilding education and peace education, creating risk that government efforts for promoting peace will remain narrowly focussed on more traditional peace education models in classrooms, thus diminishing the transformative potential of education services overall (i.e., redressing issues of inequity, strengthening education sector planning, oversight, transparency and accountability, quality, relevance, violence in schools and gender based violence, and so on).

### 5.3 Recommendations

Government and Donors - Correcting historical narratives in curriculum

- South Sudan's education curriculum needs to reflect recent historical findings on the origin of ethnic conflict and the role of traditional peacebuilding. Much disinformation has muddled a proper understanding of South Sudan's history of ethnic cohesion, which must be reclaimed and its legacy integrated into the curriculum. Setting the historical record straight as to the extent of past traditional peacebuilding practices is a necessary step towards fostering the realization that the violence of the present is illegitimate and cannot be justified on cultural grounds;<sup>54</sup>
- Curriculum needs to inject more local content on life-ways, culture, folk literature, poetry and performing arts into the curriculum as a way of assisting teachers and trainers in their required task of giving local relevancy to key concepts such as justice, solidarity and conflict sensitivity.<sup>55</sup> It would require few resources for UNICEF to constitute a comprehensive library of documents on the cultures of the country. If this database could then be disseminated to teachers and trainers in different parts of the country, in electronic or digest form, the latter could draw on examples of daily life, arts and culture appropriate to the groups in their area. This would complement the work of pupils, who will be encouraged to offer examples from their own knowledge of their cultures, or provide hints to get them speaking about their culture (a good way to encourage collaboration and sharing among peers). Many of the ethnographic texts describe traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, inter-ethnic contacts and forums, and even practices of raiding that avoided large-scale violence, killings and destruction, and encouraged respect and restraint towards women, children, outsiders and vulnerable populations;
- Ensure that LS + PE training, whether in normal or emergency contexts, is locally relevant by ensuring that inclusivity is encouraged for design and input so that lesson and message resonate with local culture and experience;
- Provide discussion ideas, scenarios, and other materials to assist teachers and students in charge of Peace Clubs to support and stimulate their own creativity and inventiveness;
- Complete the critical transition from rote knowledge acquisition to skills development and competencies, but monitor the outcomes, particularly the transition to higher education; mitigate unintended consequences.

54 The need for a return to traditional modes of conflict resolution has been underscored by others, including the Sudd Institute; see their "Special Report, June 7, 2013: Peace and Reconciliation in South Sudan: A Conversation for Justice and Stability," p. 6 (<http://www.suddinstitute.org/assets/Publications/National-Reconciliation-formattedSudd-Institute.pdf>). See also *Nuer Prophets: A History of Prophecy from the Upper Nile in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, 2007), in which the author, Douglas H. Johnson, argues that the major prophet's key contribution was their vision of peace and moral community, a vision that remains relevant for many Nuer and other South Sudanese today.

55 To contribute to this effort, the Director of TCF, Dr. Brian Male, was sent through his consultant for social sciences, Ms. Vikki Pendry, physical education and arts, pdf files of key books and articles on the culture of three of South Sudan's main ethnic groups, the Dinka, the Nuer and the Zande. A fundamental text—necessary as a corrective to conventional histories of peace-building in South Sudan—is Douglas H. Johnson's *Nuer Prophets: A History of Prophecy from the Upper Nile in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). The importance of setting historical records straight is illustrated in the companion case study "Responding to a Conflict-Induced Humanitarian Crisis through Education in South Sudan," and in a detailed historical example given in Annex C of the present case study.

## **Government - Management of Education Services**

- Communication is essential to maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of education programming. Results from evaluation and monitoring should always be provided to teachers so they can make adjustments and improvements to their teaching;
- Education has been recognized as the primary development issue, therefore to build on the curriculum development process recently accomplished national and state budgets for education must be commensurate with the requirements to provide equal access to quality education, reduce and eventually eliminate inequities in service delivery, ensure adequate training and support for teachers including living wages paid on time, and carry out regular performance monitoring;
- For education and other government services to succeed in South Sudan, there needs to be political will to effect institutional change to create more inclusive, participatory, transparent, accountable and just forms of governance that serve all South Sudan's people in a more equitable fashion than is presently the case. Provision of quality education (or health care, or markets, or roads, etc.), irrespective of where one lives, what social or ethnic group one belongs to, and what language one speaks, should be the government's number one priority;
- Encourage inter-ethnic engagement through early childhood, primary and secondary education by attracting learners from all communities, particularly minority, isolated, and vulnerable sectors of the population; consider setting up schools on borderlines between communities, clans and tribes, as a way of encouraging inter-ethnic contact, familiarity and exchange;
- Anticipate bottlenecks in teaching, training and monitoring needs by hiring sufficient staff and providing for transportation to maximise coverage of sites;

- Provide enough printed materials and enable their distribution to support teachers and trainers, and stimulate interest among students.

## **Government and Donors – Empowering Children and Youth as Constructive Citizens**

- Consider ways of giving tangible recognition and visibility to leaders of youth peacebuilding activities, including members of Peace Clubs, trainers of LS + PE, and those making key investments in PBEA programmes. It is difficult to overstate the degree of pride and sense of gratification that can result from the awarding of a simple T-shirt or other token of appreciation for efforts rendered;
- Find ways to encourage transfer of LS + PE from children to parents and their communities. Support traditional conflict resolution structures and continue to engage religious and secular leaders around common goals such as conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Enlist their aid in resolving any continued occupation of schools.

## **Government and Donors – Promoting Equity through Education**

- Continue engagement with pastoral communities using livelihoods as entry points to build household resilience, encourage education among girls and boys, and build on UNICEF's successes in brokering peace deals;
- Institute gender quotas or other means of ensuring that women are equitably represented in all programme activities and at all levels of responsibility;
- Strengthen education sector planning processes to promote conflict sensitive education services that will increase equity, inclusion, and improve social cohesion and resilience.

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# Annex A

## Basic Data on Education in South Sudan

(Source: Impact Evaluation Report of the South Sudan Education Cluster, May 2013, pp. 14-15)

### Extremely limited coverage and quality of education<sup>56</sup>

- Many children receive no formal education
- Complex historical, social and cultural attitudes ('false beliefs') surround western education among some tribes and particularly girls' education
- Predominantly pastoral livelihoods in some communities means mobility in search of water and pasture for livestock, creating challenging conditions to supply timely, relevant and appropriate educational services compared to communities in settlements
- Whilst primary education is meant to be free and compulsory, associated 'hidden' school costs, such as uniforms and school building fees, increase barriers for poor families
- For a total of 1,365,757 enrolled primary school children there are only 3,639 primary schools, the classrooms for which are mainly open air or semi-permanent structures
- Pupil classroom ratio is 1:132 (Unity: 199, Upper Nile: 132)
- Pupil textbook ratio is 1:7 for English (Unity: 1:24, Upper Nile: 1:10)
- Only 42% of primary schools have access to drinking water (Unity: 26%, Upper Nile: 32%)
- Only 44% of primary schools have access to latrines (Unity: 23%, Upper Nile: 42%)
- In 2012, a total of 1,365,757 children were enrolled in primary school – just 39% of these were girls (Unity: 38%, Upper Nile: 42%)
- There are 28,029 teachers in primary schools – only 13% of whom are female (Unity: 4%, Upper Nile: 19%)
- Other indicators relevant to education:<sup>57</sup>
  - 27% of the adult population is literate
  - 51% of the population live below the poverty line
  - more than half of the population is below the age of 18

<sup>56</sup> Data taken from the Government of Republic of South Sudan National Statistical Booklet, 2012 unless otherwise stated. These data are provided for information only. The situation in different areas may have improved or deteriorated due to emergency response, government efforts, economic austerity and renewed fighting. Impacts from the crisis since December 2013 are treated in the main text.

<sup>57</sup> From the Republic of South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics website (ssnbs.org).

# Annex B

## Theory of Change and its Relevance for South Sudan

Four elements of the Theory of Change (ToC) inform and underlie key PBEA programme outcomes and make explicit the links between education and peacebuilding.<sup>58</sup> For reference purposes, these are presented below along with validation proposed from the case study.<sup>59</sup>

- a) If the national curriculum and target policies are revised to address unequal access to education, promote tolerance, self-awareness, self-confidence specifically in girls, and provide relevant and context specific skills and knowledge, then there will be an increased contribution by the formal and non-formal education system to the reduction of violence and the increase in social cohesion.

UNICEF support for the curriculum development process has been instrumental in the overhauling of outdated primary and secondary curriculums, making them more relevant to the specific challenges South Sudan is facing as an independent state. Including in the curriculum Peace Education, Life Skills, along with Environmental Awareness and Sustainability as cross-cutting issues, from P1 to S4, supports shared visions, principles and values to be reinforced throughout the child's education. Self-awareness and self-confidence can be specifically promoted in girls through discussions of state-building, community development, changing gender roles, global citizenship and other topics opened up by the revised curriculum, particularly when such discussions include references to other cultures and regions, as is encouraged by the curriculum. By implementing target policies with conflict sensitivity and a "do no harm"

approach, ensuring that issues such as teacher recruitment, language of instruction, and school location cannot lead to grievances from one group or another, the GoSS with support from UNICEF will contribute to reducing levels of violence and increasing social cohesion.

There are already indications that the reasonable assumption of ToC a is being borne out in behavioural changes in communities leading to peace outcomes. Certainly the changing curriculum, or the anticipated arrival of the changing curriculum, has had an effect on women teachers, who are increasingly motivated and confident in the value of what they are teaching, and actively seeking to involve girls and encourage them to participate and take the lead more in class discussions. Changes among children also appear to be occurring, but this will require more follow up and robust survey data to better gauge.

- b) If teachers and educational personnel are trained in the development, piloting and revision of materials, the institutional capacity to deliver PB and conflict sensitive education materials that are appropriate and relevant to the context will be increased. If teachers and educational personnel are furthermore trained in teaching and using the national curriculum and the LS+PE components therein, then targeted schools and educational sites will have an increased ability to provide educational services that promote conflict resolution, tolerance, appropriate management of interpersonal relations, and teambuilding.

This ToC underpins UNICEF support for the South Sudan curriculum development programme and the integration of LS+PE components in primary and secondary

58 Mario Novelli and Alan Smith, in Research Strategy for the UNICEF Education and Peacebuilding Programme 2012-15 (April 2013; p. 11).

59 ToC points *d* and *e* are addressed in the "Responding to a Conflict-Induced Humanitarian Crisis through Education in South Sudan" case study.

education. The success of these initiatives will depend on a resolution of the current conflict and the redeployment of government funds away from war and towards development, including of education. The study finds support for viewing the outcomes predicted by ToC b as logical entailments, already occurring to some extent and very likely to occur on a larger scale. However, a number of constraints currently affecting schools due to the ongoing conflict, the serious infrastructural challenges that hamper mobility of trainers and educational personnel, and the channelling of most government funds to the war effort, make it impossible to present a timeline for the achievement of these objectives in all areas. Nevertheless, the present study has found a very high level of dedication to the new methods and interest in the materials among education functionaries, along with impatience at the inability to implement faster. Communities in areas not chosen for the pilot are highly interested and eager to have LS + PE available in their schools as well. The concrete examples of change seen on the ground in Juba do provide grounds for cautious and patient optimism.

- c) If youth from different tribes and ethnicities, male and female, are provided with venues where their voices and opinions can be heard and where they can compete and interact and demonstrate leadership and advocate for others in a peaceful manner, they will experience increased self-esteem and sense of belonging to a common identity.

This ToC is reflected in the Peace Clubs and Schools as Zones of Peace initiatives supported by UNICEF,<sup>60</sup> both seen as instrumental for fostering nonviolence and social cohesion. Both work to eliminate violence against children (VAC), encourage diversity, inclusion and tolerance, and create goodwill and a sense of belonging to a common citizenry. The continuing conflict has understandably not allowed these initiatives to spread to the war zones, where communities are most in need,

but a peace agreement could rapidly permit their introduction. ToC c hits on the most fundamental peacebuilding accomplishment of PBEA, which is the ability of many of its components to bring communities together from all sides of the ethnic divide and help them find common ground and a shared identity through a focus on important issues such as their children's futures, equitable economic development, sharing of resources and increased equity. This coming together is indicated by the enthusiasm of youths involved in the activities supported by the programme, including life skills training and peace clubs.

A common finding of both South Sudan case studies is that the fears and animosities held towards other ethnic groups from one's own are fed by toxic histories and false legacies perpetuated for various reasons, including ignorance of historical sources, past and present political-economic advantage, or the misguided notion that ethnic, cultural and local processes of knowledge production are irrelevant to modern education provision. South Sudan's children should be provided with appropriate education that—in the disciplines of history, civics or literature, for example—can counter faulty historical or contemporary information. Linking high quality LS+PE with critical thinking skills, conflict analysis and the imparting of tools for dismantling toxic histories should be the eventual goal for conflict sensitive primary and secondary education, particularly in the emergency and post-conflict contexts, but also in areas relatively free from conflict.<sup>61</sup>

- d) If marginalized children in medium to high risk areas regularly attend relevant LS + PE, livelihood and literacy and numeracy classes, then they will have increased access to relevant quality education that contributes to their positive behavioral and intellectual development.

Viewing LS + PE classes in progress was not possible during the short time in Juba, but discussions with trainers and monitors,

60 UNICEF South Sudan & ESARO (2014). See companion case study for more on Learning Spaces as Zones of Peace (LSaZoP).

61 An analysis of the critical role of prophets in traditional peacebuilding drawn from the historical record is offered in Annex C of this case study as a starting point for creating the tools for dismantling toxic histories based on prophetic traditions.

including extensive follow up provided by PBEA personnel during and after the field work, and presence at a ToT graduating class reveal a high level of enthusiasm among them regarding their missions, and every expectation that LS+PE will have a positive impact on the development of their charges. More definite results are provided by ministry officials who related very rapid assimilation of LS+PE materials and outcomes directly

linked to it, the LS+PE providing a stimulus for creative thinking to deal with risk factors in their environment. PE was seen in action in one Juba secondary school where a well-organized Peace Club is composed of students eager to speak of their conflict analysis and management skills learned in the Club and applied in their community.<sup>62</sup>

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62 This example is presented in the companion case study.

# Annex C

## Conflict, False Histories and Traditional Peacemakers

Education needs to provide more accurate context to the ethnic and religious parameters of South Sudanese conflict. Moreover, education needs to set the record straight and correct a number of myths regarding the violent proclivities of its diverse people, particularly its pastoralist communities. These myths must be dismantled now, as they still serve to frame erroneous interpretations today. Recent historical and anthropological scholarship has challenged much of the received wisdom regarding the relationships between South Sudan's ethnic groups, and importantly for this and the companion case studies, uncovered their traditions of peacebuilding, and shed light on the importance of governance and service delivery. It is useful to briefly summarize these findings and consider ways they may be used in future peacebuilding education.

During the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium period (1899-1956), while colonial policy in the North favoured Islamic orthodoxy and uniformity of practice (based on a perception that Sufi and other mystical groups represented a subversive threat), in the South, Native Administration discouraged borrowings of cultural elements from neighbouring groups and encouraged religious diversity as a way to limit movement of people between political groups (Johnson 2003:13). Fear of "witch-doctors" and a general suspicion of prophetic, millennial or ecstatic religion in the South motivated policies to eliminate or exile local leaders and prophets whose peacebuilding roles were misunderstood or ignored (Johnson 2003) with tragic consequences.

British administrators in the South tended to align their policies with the prevailing view among their allies, which more often than not were the Dinka. Nevertheless, a few could see beyond the myths of Nuer-Dinka rivalry in which conventional histories of the region had been steeped. An Upper Nile Province

inspector declared in 1913 that "to imagine that Nuers and Dinkas on each side of the boundary live in a constant state of war is quite contrary to the facts." And the inspector from Bor in Mongalla Province observed: "So long as a firm administration on the spot, and therefore easily accessible to the natives, holds the balance and redresses grievances, the tendency of the Nuers and Dinkas, who are closely allied in customs, both tribal and personal, is to fuse with one another. This has always occurred in the past in [between] the intervals of fighting. To support the idea of a tribal boundary is merely to strive to keep open a sore which will otherwise tend, with proper treatment, to heal itself."<sup>63</sup>

The inspector alluded to a state of governance, with administration providing justice, protection and peace, which rarely existed during the Condominium. Until the 1930s, the administration's main role among the pastoralists seems to have been the once a year armed tribute patrols to gather cattle.

### Governance and service delivery

To understand the endemic weakness of South Sudan's administration and challenges to equitable service delivery, we need to go back at least to the beginnings of British colonialism. Its claim over Sudan rested on prior Egyptian sovereignty over its former territories. Though a strong legal argument, the claim required reinforcement through effective occupation on the ground, causing a rush to establish presence on Egypt's former borders "as if the outline of the country was to be drawn first, leaving the interior to be shaded in later." (Johnson 1994, p. 7) Military columns would eventually pass through seeking submission, generally obtained, from tribal leaders, but administration of the interior was never made a priority, and administrative centres of the Southern Sudan were located along the main rivers, linking them to Khartoum. Seasonal constraints of the Upper Nile were responsible in part; the rains interrupted administration

63 J. Stevenson-Hamilton, inspector from Bor to the governor of Mongalla Province, 14 September 1918, cited in Johnson 1994, p. 20.

of the Nuer and other peoples of the flood zone and clay plains as shifting government and Nuer settlement patterns were at odds (the government on the plains when the Nuer moved to seasonal watercourses and rivers during the dry season, then the opposite during the rainy season). Continuity of administration was achieved during both seasons only in the last two decades of British rule. Administration came in fits and starts, an inspector opening a new district only to close for lack of resources or another reason. Government was plagued by the structural amnesia of administration: "Local alliances were made by one official and subsequently forgotten by another. Most Nilotic pastoralists experienced an episodic administration until the 1930s. This affected their perception of the reliability, strength and permanence of government".<sup>64</sup>

A number of problems in policy-making were caused by the reliance on soldiers in administration, many that had no local roots. "Most of the soldiers, and therefore most of the police, were ex-slave soldiers impressed into the Egyptian army during the nineteenth century. [In the Nuer areas] many were Dinka and Shilluk; only a few were Nuer." Nonetheless, the primary concern of government was to obtain submission and tribute, in the form of cattle. Government leaders alternated between advocates of civil administration and military control, the latter illustrated by the following example:



Major Arthur Blewitt was the commander of the first Anglo-Egyptian military campaign against the Nuer, an incursion into Lou Nuer country in 1902. It was a campaign undertaken with the dual purpose of supporting the government's allies among the Dinka of the Sobat and Khor Fulluth and undermining the power of the Lou prophet Ngundeng. It was instigated by Dinka complaints (which we will see

were false) of constant harassment and raiding by Ngundeng and his people. Blewitt summoned Ngundeng to submit and pay tax, or be punished. When there was no reply the Lou villages were burned, their cattle seized, and Ngundeng's shrine desecrated; Blewitt was convinced that Ngundeng had 'lost all prestige' by these actions and advocated a continuation of the policy of patrols traversing Nuer country.

Blewitt and the large number of Sudanese troops and Dinka warriors who accompanied him to the Lou Nuer villages found them empty, as Ngundeng and his people had fled upon learning of the approaching expedition. Among the booty captured were numerous elephant tusks surrounding Ngundeng's Mound.<sup>65</sup> Blewitt was replaced due to the lack of tangible gain from this policy. As his successor Major G. E. Matthews wrote:



The Government has undoubtedly lost rather than gained ground, owing to the unfortunate results obtained by the expedition to Dinkur [sic] in April last when the inhabitants fled before the Government troops and returned to find their villages burnt and cattle vanished, without having realized the force which had effected these removals.<sup>66</sup>

Matthews tried a different course, one that saw government as a provider of services, first among them legal protection and guarantor of peace. He replaced platoons of soldiers with a few police for tribute collection, set up judicial courts based on customary law and the Sudan Penal Code, returned cattle and hostages taken by Government allies in 1902, and sent senior inspectors to contact the most influential prophets. He wanted tribute to be paid only when a system of justice was instituted.

64 Johnson 1994:7-8.

65 Johnson (1979) "Colonial policy and prophets: The Nuer Settlement, 1929-1930" (manuscript available on [http://www.isca.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/ISCA/JASO/Archive\\_1979/10\\_1\\_Johnson.pdf](http://www.isca.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/ISCA/JASO/Archive_1979/10_1_Johnson.pdf)), p. 5.

66 Johnson 1994:10.



It was Matthews's hope that his inspectors would 'give interpretations to British honesty' and demonstrate the government's pacific intentions through the righting of wrongs and the return of stolen property. He wished to win over the Nuer (especially the Lou) by ensuring that justice was seen to be done and giving wide publicity to those cases where the government found in favour of Nuer against Dinka.

But the policy of tribute patrols were reinstated by Matthews' immediate successors, intent on making the Nuer people obey and respect the government. Government arbitration in the settling of disputes declined. Active resistance to the paying of tribute tax increased from 1913, leading the acting commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army in Khartoum to write to the provincial commander, 'I cannot help thinking of the time it took us to gain the confidence of the Nuers south of the Sobat owing to our war-like attitude in the time of Blewitt Bey. Moreover, it seems scarcely reasonable to expect people to pay a tax when you have done absolutely nothing for them.'<sup>67</sup>

### Traditional authority and peacebuilding

As we have seen, the British were intent on securing the borders of Sudan, and obtaining submission from all ethnic groups within those borders. They were particularly wary of what they described as 'Mahdis', 'Khalifas', 'fakirs', 'sufi faqis', or pejoratively in the South, 'kujurs', who would usurp the legitimate authority of the tribal chiefs or the

colonial government. Among the Dinka and the Nuer, the concern was with the prophets, who emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. The first and most famous prophet in South Sudanese history was the Lou Nuer named Ngundeng Bong (end 1830s – 1906). His prophesies and songs continue to live on in South Sudanese folklore and belief systems. The return of his rod in 2009 was a momentous event hailed by all the parties.<sup>68</sup>

Prophetic movements have been a feature of many East African societies until the present day.<sup>69</sup> In South Sudan, ignorance and misunderstandings of the actual history and biography of the prophet Ngundeng have allowed his name and legacy to be used in every way from fanciful conjectures<sup>70</sup> to jingoistic and inflammatory discourse. Endless discussions continue today, especially in the context of the latest crisis, over the political meaning of his prophesies, and the support they might give to one or another contender for political leadership. On the Internet one can easily find hate speech and calls to war that cite Ngundeng, sometimes as a warrior, or one who can provide force in battle.<sup>71</sup> But the only war fought by Ngundeng during his lifetime (c. 1830s-1906) was in defence when in 1878 his group of Lou Nuer were attacked by a coalition of Dinka and Gaawar at Pading. He never attacked, he merely avoided the British, but that avoidance, and the words of rivals, were enough to earn Ngundeng, and by extension the Nuer, a reputation as aggressive and resentful. Dutifully recorded in colonial documents, the reputation of prophets and Nilotic groups as heroic resisters of colonialism carried into ethnographic texts and can still fit well with modern nationalist discourse and fashionable postmodernist and postcolonial critique.

67 Cited in Johnson 1994, pp. 10-11.

68 The account of the relic's return is revealing of the extent to which Ngundeng's legacy is alive and can be politicized. See Douglas Johnson (2014) "The fate of Ngundeng's dang," Rift Valley Institute on <http://www.riftvalley.net/news/fate-ngundeng%E2%80%99s-dang>

69 Matthew Kustenbauder (2008) "Prophetic movements: Eastern Africa," pp. 261-270 in John Middleton and Joseph C. Miller, eds., *New Encyclopedia of Africa 4* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale).

70 Many educated Nuer believe that Ngundeng once gave cattle or refuge to Haile Selassie, foreshadowing his hosting of the 1972 peace negotiations, though the latter was only a child when Ngundeng died (Johnson 1994:338).

71 One example among many is the 2012 call on Dinka and Nuer White Army youth to punish Murle for their incursions at a holy site where Ngundeng had built a pyramid (reported here: <http://www.trust.org/item/?map=south-sudan-ethnic-militia-warn-of-major-new-operation>). In February 2014, a part of Ngundeng's family has tried to put an end to the political manipulation, and reaffirmed Ngundeng's legacy as a peacemaker (<http://www.southsudantribune.org/news/states-news/51-ngundeng-s-family-calls-upon-lou-nuer-white-army-to-stop-fighting-the-government>).

Recent scholarship has re-established Ngundeng and other prophets as the peacemakers that they were. Operating in zones where government services were lacking or justice provision inadequate, they intervened to stop raiding, provide arbitration of conflicts, and protection from epidemics. Their lasting contribution was not a role in war, but their vision of peace.

### Grassroots traditional leaders

Grassroots traditional leaders in South Sudan (chiefs, cattle camp leaders, traditional religious prophets, and elders) “hold great potential for future peace efforts based on their historical role in managing conflict between warring pastoral communities. The chiefs retain key functions, such as maintaining traditions, providing witness, and negotiating blood money payments (diya).” Although governments and rebel groups have generally sought to disempower traditional authorities, there have been precedents for re-empowering traditional leaders to take advantage of their credibility as peace builders. Following the Chukudum Convention (1994), the SPLM/A began to restore the authority of chiefs to dispense customary law through the reestablishment of chiefs’ courts.

By virtue of the resources they appear to control and salaries, local actors involved in relief and development work can also acquire local-level leadership roles. Highly innovative initiatives in peacebuilding are often found at the grassroots level involving both external

agencies and internal actors, such as the UNICEF/NGO psychosocial programmes to assist war-affected children and unaccompanied minors, training teachers to recognize symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following the returnee crisis along the Sudan-Ethiopia border following the fall of the Mengistu regime in mid-1991. Other successful initiatives have included local peace monitoring teams and peace commissions set up after peace conferences, such as the Ikotos Conference (which addressed intercommunal violence in the Equatoria region) or the Akobo Peace Conference (held to address conflict between two sections of the Nuer people).<sup>72</sup> A study of the Akobo Peace Conference found



[...] a variety of lessons for indigenous peace processes, among them the importance of employing traditional conflict mechanisms and of involving a wide range of leaders (traditional, military, administrative, and religious), women’s groups and leaders, and others with moral authority in the community. The study stressed that external support should be minimal and not replace the indigenous leadership. Indigenous processes represent long-term interactions between traditional and modern societies, and cannot act as quick fixes; they must be placed firmly in historical context for the participants and outside observers.<sup>73</sup>

72 John Prendergast, “Applying concepts to cases: Four African case studies,” pp. 153-180 in John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace), pp. 156-159.

73 John Prendergast (1997, p. 160) cites William Lowrey (n.d.) “The role of religion in peacemaking and reconciliation: A case study among the Nuer in Sudan” (Union Institute, unpublished mimeograph), p. 9.



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