

End-Term Evaluation Report

END-TERM EVALUATION OF PAMANA PROJECT: BUILDING PEACE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN WEST NILE (WN), UGANDA, AND CENTRAL EQUATORIA STATE (CES), SOUTH SUDAN

TO

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List of Abbreviations

Acronym	In Full
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AFARD	Agency for Accelerated Regional Development
CACH	Caritas Switzerland
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDC	Community Development Centre
CES	Central Equatoria State
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
ETE	End-Term Evaluation
ETET	End-Term Evaluation Team
FAs	Field Assistants
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
HH	Household
HO	Hannington Odongo
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IPs	Implementing Partners
IR	Inception Report
KI	Key Informant
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
JK	James Komakec
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MS	Microsoft
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations

NR	Natural Resources
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OFAO	Organic Farming Advisory Organisation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PAMANA	Building P eace Through Sustainable A ccess to and M anagement of N atural Resources
PEA	Political economy approach
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PWD	People with Disabilities
RAF	Results Assessment Form
RRC	South Sudan's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SSPDF	South Sudan People's Defence Forces
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ToC	Theory of Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WN	West Nile

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

CACH in Uganda and South Sudan and its implementing partners (Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD), Community Development Centre (CDC) and Organic Farming Advisory Organisation (OFAO)) implemented the three-year (2021 January - December 2024) PAMANA project in Koboko and Yumbe districts in WN, Uganda and in Yei and Lainya in CES in South Sudan. The project aims to reduce conflict over and pressure on natural resources (NR). This is to be achieved by building local capacities to support the most vulnerable groups, including host, refugee, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) communities, with a special focus on women. It seeks to meet their immediate needs and secure sustainable livelihoods in ways that promote peace, stability, and gender equality.

The logic of this intervention is that by supporting immediate needs of the most vulnerable in WN and CES, reducing conflict over NR, improving equitable access to, sustainable management and usage of NR as well as sustainable livelihood opportunities, through the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus¹ strategies, working with diverse actors, individuals and communities in both regions will be better equipped to meet current and future

¹ The HDP nexus approach is based, in part, on the recognition that emergency needs are often symptoms of underlying causes that make people and societies vulnerable in the first place and that a more effective and inclusive response needs to do more to address these root causes. It is defined in the following way: Addressing immediate needs of the most vulnerable (humanitarian assistance); developing and supporting sustainable NR livelihood opportunities that take pressure off natural resources (development support) and facilitating opportunities for diverse groups to come together to solve issues through information sharing, leadership training and conflict resolution skills (peacebuilding).

challenges in non-violent, sustainable and productive ways, reduce pressure on NR and promote peace and stability in communities (as laid out in the Theory of Change)².

The specific project outcomes, as laid out in its logframe, are:

Humanitarian: The immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups amongst the host, refugee, and Internally Displaced People (IDP) communities (with special focus on women) are better met due to conflict-sensitive and gender responsive humanitarian assistance.

Development: Local capacities are developed and strengthened to create opportunities for medium and long-term livelihoods based on sustainable Natural Resource Management (NRM) practices that foster self-reliance and resilience and enable peaceful coexistence.

Peacebuilding: Understanding of conflict causes, especially in regard to NRM, is increased and the capacities of the target groups and beneficiaries are strengthened to facilitate dialogue and manage tensions to promote NRM and climate change adaptation in peace-conducive and gender-responsive ways.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the End-Term Evaluation (ETE) was to assess the project's progress towards its objectives, ensuring accountability to the beneficiaries, donors and stakeholders, in order to provide credible and reliable findings to support evidence-based decision making for strategic and future interventions. ETEs can perform three interconnected functions: a learning function; a steering function and an accountability and communication function.³

This ETE's main focus was on the first function, the learning function.

The specific objectives of this ETE exercise were:

To evaluate the project's relevance, effectiveness, and prospects for sustainability, on reducing conflict over natural resources and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

To assess how gender equality, conflict sensitivity as well as the Triple Nexus (HDP Nexus) have been incorporated in project design, implementation, and monitoring and how this has affected relevance, effectiveness, and prospects for sustainability.

To document good practice, success stories, lessons learned and challenges encountered.

To provide evidence-based actionable recommendations for future interventions.

Scope

The ETE was carried out by Ruth Malleson and Hannington Odongo, focusing on WN; and James Komakec, focusing on CES, along with two field assistants in WN and two field assistants in CES. The scope of the ETE was as follows:

² PAMANA Project Document

³ Federal Ministry for Europe Integration and Foreign Affairs. 2019. Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation

https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web_Evaluierungspolicy_EN.pdf

Content Scope: The ETE focused on assessing the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria: **relevance, effectiveness**, and prospects for **sustainability** questions; as well as how gender equality, conflict sensitivity and the HDP nexus have been applied.

Time Scope: The ETE covers the project period, i.e. the start to the end of project operational period from 1st December 2021 to 31st December 2024.

Geographical Scope: The ETE was conducted in four study settlements in West Nile (WN), Uganda and two Payams in Central Equatoria State (CES), South Sudan

ETE Methodology

A mixed methods approach was applied, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, employing triangulation. Primary data were collected between 1st November to 9th November 2024 from the field and focused on four study settlements, two in Koboko District and two in Yumbe district, West Nile (WN) and four bomas in Yei and Lainya Counties, Central Equatoria State (CES). Details of the methodology and sampling frame of households are laid out in the Inception Report (IR), see Annex I.

A total of 48 key informant interviews (KII), 24 Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and 126 Household Questionnaires were conducted. A total of 180 people were consulted, as listed in Annex XII, of which 85 were women and 95 were men. Interviews were not recorded. Written reports were developed for each country and the research team came together for discussions on 10th November 2024 to discuss and develop key findings. Annex XVII provides data collection instruments.

Key Findings

Relevance

It is clear from the context analysis and participatory mapping exercises that the issue of conflicts and competition over natural resources in the region is growing and covers a large area. This makes the PAMANA project increasingly relevant. Yet the scope of the PAMANA project is relatively small compared with the enormity of the NRM challenges the region faces.

Overall, the HDP nexus approach of addressing humanitarian and development issues and peacebuilding at the same time is an effective one. Ideally, the project's relevance would have been improved if more efforts had focused on ensuring that HDP interventions drew more strongly on holistic, climate smart landscape⁴ and agroecological⁵ approaches. A climate-smart landscape is characterised by climate-smart practices at farm level, a high diversity of land uses at landscape level and the purposeful management of land-use interactions in ways

⁴ We define landscape as an area with a characteristic configuration of topography, vegetation, land use and settlements that is influenced by the ecological, historical, economic and cultural process and activities of the area. Scheer, Shames and Friedman, 2013. Defining Integrated Landscape Management for policy makers. Ecoagriculture policy focus series no.10. EcoAgriculture Partners Washington DC

⁵ We use Nyéléni's idea of agroecology as '... the answer to how to transform and repair our material reality in a food system and rural world that has been devastated by industrial food production and its so-called Green and Blue Revolutions. We see Agroecology as a key form of resistance to an economic system that puts profit before life...Our diverse forms of smallholder food production based on Agroecology general local knowledge, promote social justice, nurture identify and culture, and strengthen the economic viability of rural areas. As smallholders, we defend our dignity when we choose to produce in an ecological way' Nyéléni. 2015. Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology <https://www.foodsovereignty.org/forum-agroecology-nyeleni-2015-2/> , quoted in Pimbert, M. (Ed.) 2018. Food Sovereignty, Agroecology and Biocultural Diversity. Routledge

that balance the interests of local people and others related to crop and livestock production, local livelihoods, conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation. A key outcome in this approach is that local people are encouraged and equipped to actively participate in landscape level decision making processes that will address natural resource degradation, particularly in relation to communal natural resources areas of forests, grasslands and wetlands. However, embracing the landscape approach in PAMANA was complicated by the method used for selecting intervention sites: In South Sudan, local governments, and in Uganda the OPM and UNHCR strongly influenced the choice of settlements and communities to be targeted. This meant that the communities covered by the project were located at considerable distances from each other and had no common or communal natural resource use areas. The relevance of the project would have been improved if the intervention locations had permitted a greater focus on landscape level, communal grasslands and forests.

Overall, all three project outcomes are very relevant to the needs and rights of target beneficiaries. In relation to Development and Peacebuilding needs (outcomes 2 and 3), it has made significant progress in relation to addressing gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV) issues of beneficiaries in relation to both household, farm and natural resource management issues. In relation to outcome 2, Development, the project has done well to address the issues of food security, income generation and soil fertility through intensifying farming systems and through promoting market gardening of high value crops, such as *sukuma wiki*⁶, local maize varieties (in CES), onions and tomatoes; as well as agroforestry and poultry production (in WN). These activities can all be carried out effectively and efficiently on small areas of farmland. In relation to outcome 3, peacebuilding, the project has made significant progress in improving the capacity of beneficiaries to facilitate dialogue and manage tension to promote NRM in a gender responsive way.

In relation to whether the PAMANA project is adapted to the present capacities of the key implementing partners (IPs) (CDC, AFARD, OFAO), it was noted that training was given on humanitarian issues; on conflict sensitivity; gender mainstreaming and Outcome Harvesting. These trainings, especially the Outcome Harvesting, were seen to be useful to the IPs. However, some interventions and training aspects for NRM lacked certain valuable elements of the landscape and agroecology approaches. Particularly in relation to landscape scale interventions relating to the management of communal grasslands and forests and in relation to recognising the value of indigenous crops and tree species.

A huge challenge for the IPs was the issue of scope, in that the project covers a large area and that host and refugee communities within the same district are very far apart. This meant that IPs staff had to travel long distances and that there is limited connection between host and refugee communities. IPs increased staff numbers working on the project in response to this challenge. However, the project budget provided limited support to IPs in relation to basic requirements, such as the provision of vehicles, to implement the project. This meant that some IPs, such as AFARD, encountered implementation delays due to the poor condition of their vehicles and the large areas covered by the project.

Effectiveness

Overall, the PAMANA project has brought about significant changes to the lives of beneficiaries particularly in relation to farming practices and income generation as well as leading to substantial adoption of skills in PSEA, GBV and NRM conflict resolution. In relation to humanitarian and development components, the project has made impressive progress in improving farming methods to increase and sustain farm yields. Key changes noted are

⁶ *Brassica oleracea* var. *acephala* or collard greens in English

increase in food production, both for consumption and sale; improved farming methods, such as planting in lines and improved soil fertility and reduced soil erosion (due to mulching, composting and adding farmyard manure). Least commonly cited changes are the use of energy saving stoves. The grant intervention for vulnerable households aims to facilitate the survival and safety of individuals, which covered 30% of the final beneficiaries identified as the most vulnerable. Although this means that the number of households receiving grant money was relatively small in comparison to the project's overall beneficiary population, individual households who received the grant said it made a significant difference to their lives, giving them the opportunity to diversify and increase household income.

Overall, the gender equality, PSEA, GBV and peacebuilding training and activities were very effective at contributing to behavioural change relating to improved gender equality and conflict resolution, both in relation to household and community issues. A large number of those interviewed and surveyed commented that the PAMANA project had significantly improved the participation of women in household and natural resource management (NRM) decision-making.

In relation to the quality of inputs (seeds, farm tools, poultry, radio), overall, there was positive feedback from beneficiaries and KIIs on these items. However, some respondents commented on the poor quality of knapsack sprayers, and others reported that the introduced poultry had led to illness and death of existing, local poultry. They also commented on what they perceived as lack of support with the prevention and cure of poultry diseases.

Sustainability

In relation to sustainability, a key positive point is the feedback from local government in WN indicating that they think the HDP/ triple nexus approach is effective and that they will adopt this approach, going forward. However, the contrasting and conflicting approaches of different NGOs in relation to sustainability is a challenge. Some NGOs pay local people to carry out interventions. For example, some NGOs operating in the region are paying individuals to make energy saving stoves or to be paravets. This contrasts with PAMANA's market systems approach which provides training and relies on people's intrinsic motivation (and explicitly does not pay people to perform these services). Some project structures, such as Energy Saving Champions and Paravets that are accustomed to receiving payments, may discontinue as 'project interventions'. However, this does not mean that the benefits of such interventions will be lost, as some individuals trained by the project may continue to perform these services, in exchange for payment from local people or NGOs.

Based on the ETE's FGDs, KIIs and HH survey results as well as review of relevant project reports, interventions that are likely to continue after the project ends are: kitchen gardening, poultry production, peace building groups to resolve NRM conflicts and behavioural change relating to gender equality, PSEA and GBV. The PAMANA project has motivated project beneficiaries and increased their awareness of the importance of vegetable growing and poultry rearing (applicable for WN only) in the improvement of nutrition and income in their households, thus encouraging them to save vegetable seeds and motivate them to continue keeping chickens. In addition, beneficiaries have been motivated to continue agroforestry and coppicing practices (especially in CES) which will contribute to sustainable firewood supplies and improved soil fertility and reduced soil erosion. In addition, the village ambassadors and beneficiary community members, particularly women, have further developed their skills to address domestic and natural resource management conflicts and conflict sensitivity.

Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

Overall, the HDP nexus approach of addressing humanitarian and development issues and peacebuilding at the same time is an effective one. The project's assumptions have held true. In relation to all three outcomes, the project has made significant progress in addressing key challenges related to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups, especially women, although this was limited in scope (Outcome 1); strengthening the capacities of local people to create opportunities for medium and long term livelihoods in relation to crop and poultry, but to a lesser extent in relation to non-farm activities (Outcome 2); and to strengthening people's (especially women's) capacity to facilitate dialogue and manage tensions to promote sustainable farming and livestock conflicts between households, but to a lesser extent in relation to the management of communal natural resources (grazing lands, water, forests) (Outcome 3). In relation to the project's overall contribution towards significantly reducing conflict over natural resources, it is still too early to gauge its extent; however, it is clear that the project has been relatively more impactful in relation to addressing farm, livestock and firewood related conflicts. Conflicts and competition relating to communal areas, including communal grazing lands and forests, over use of thatching grass, forage (particularly in relation to cattle herders in CES) and security of water supplies remain, to differing extents, latent.

In conclusion, in relation to relevance, the HDP nexus approach is seen to be a relevant, effective and sustainable approach to addressing the pressing NRM needs and rights of rural people in CES and WN. Further efforts to adopt a more holistic landscape level and agroecological approach would increase the effectiveness of the HDP approach. However, because the IPs had little choice over the settlements they worked in, there were inherent limitations on adopting a landscape level approach, meaning that there was little connection between beneficiary communities within the same district or county.

A key risk identified by project beneficiaries, other key informants as well as the project itself⁷ is that the increasing risk of extended droughts and erratic rainfall means that farming systems need to be very resilient to climate change. One way to increase farming resilience to drought and erratic rainfall would be to put more time and effort into building on local indigenous knowledge and promoting the production of more indigenous, drought tolerant crops, such as sorghum, cowpeas, pigeon peas and conservation and restoration of indigenous tree species. Furthermore, a better understanding of how to address the violence connected with armed cattle herding groups which has led to smallholder farmers having their crops damaged and livelihood destabilised in CES would be useful.

In relation to effectiveness, the project has made impressive progress in improving farming methods to increase and sustain farm yields of beneficiaries. This has led to increased food production both for home consumption and for sale, and improved soil fertility. Going forward, effectiveness could be further increased by broadening the scope of interventions to include non-farm activities and landscape approaches to address issues related to scarcity and fragilities of natural resources and the conservation of valuable ecosystem services: including

⁷ Pamana Progress Report No.5 1/1/24 to 30/6/2024

grasslands for forage and thatching grass, woodlands for useful fruits, beekeeping, as well as wetlands, rivers and streams.

Recommendations

Going forward, it is recommended that CACH and its IPs:

- Work with local government, CSOs as well as NGOs to raise awareness about the effectiveness of the HDP approach and facilitate its adoption.
- Put far greater emphasis on the need for transdisciplinarity and strengthening of the agroecological and landscape approaches, in order to counter the movement towards 'quick fix, silver bullet' solutions that policy makers, industrial food producers and some NGOs are pushing in the region⁸. This would do much to facilitate the HDP Nexus Approach. Addressing this type of work is at the heart and intersection of many disciplines and sectors including food, agriculture, water, energy, climate, environment and economy and includes multiple actors at multiple scales: farmers, breeders, private sector, NGOs, CSO, local, district, national authorities, environmental, agricultural and water policy makers, and development partners. A deliberate effort to bring these actors' different forms of knowledge and expertise together, including technical, social and indigenous knowledge, would strengthen the interventions.
- Reinforce the HDP, climate smart agriculture and agroecology approaches by mainstreaming an appreciation of the value and use of indigenous technical knowledge in relation to resilience and sustainable natural resource management. This should include encouraging local people to think about and analyse the full range of local uses of communal forests, grasslands, wetlands and rivers. Cattle herding, for example, is often viewed as a problem by farmers and outside agencies, or otherwise completely neglected, however it is often a valuable and resilient local land use in this region⁹. The value of wild fruits and other foods, game, essential oils, honey, wood and other non-timber forest products may also exceed the value of firewood – which often remains the focus of project interventions¹⁰. Spiritual values, rarely mentioned by economists and scientists, may be extremely important and must be taken into account. Rules defined by local communities and users may be highly effective in regulating natural resource management, and should be the starting point for effective resource management¹¹. It is also important to appreciate overlapping rights to communal lands. Projects tend to focus on rights relevant to settled farming communities, rather than traditional rights of temporary users, such as cattle herders. It is important these traditional rights are accommodated to reduce conflicts¹². All stakeholders, including both permanent and temporary resource users, pastoralists, landowners, owning large tracts of land, as well as government sectors, such as agriculture and livestock departments should be involved in decision making, enforcement and conflict resolutions over communal lands.

⁸ These interventions focus on 'contract farming' where smallholders are provided with inputs (seeds, agrochemicals) and sell their farm produce directly to industrial food producers at a price set by the latter.

⁹ Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel

¹⁰ Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel

¹¹ Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel

¹² Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel

- Focus on encouraging diversification into non-farm activities. The project has made substantial impacts and significant headway in relation to increasing beneficiaries' farm production and making it more sustainable. Going forward, it is recommended that IPs consider incorporating into their approaches traditional natural resource related activities that are linked with, and provide incentives to conserve, nature and sustainable NRM, such as beekeeping, the production and management of wild fruits and thatching and forage grasses on communal lands. This recommendation is especially important in relation to refugee beneficiaries, who have less access to land compared to hosts. Suggested non-farm income generating activities could include small businesses (trading) and tailoring, as well as activities that build on economic opportunities linked with the clean-energy revolution; such as encouraging the use of solar energy as an alternative to biomass and fossil fuels.
- Address water insecurity in relation to farm production, in view of the likelihood that this region will continue to experience increased risk of drought. The project has made good progress in ensuring the high rate of adoption of soil and water conserving practices (such as mulching and use of water channels). It is important to think of how the HDP approach can be used to promote better water governance and water security at the landscape scale level.

Further recommendations, going forward, are to use the market systems, agroecology and landscape approaches to continue to focus on NRM concerns that are commonly shared between host and refugee beneficiaries including:

- The need to conserve thatching grass and indigenous tree species by wise management and putting restrictions on harvesting periods through applying traditional and official laws.
- The training of the beneficiary groups in indigenous tree nursery management and seed collection, facilitation of the establishment of tree nursery and provision of indigenous tree species.
- Linking paravets, agroecology and energy-saving champions to local government extension departments for regular refresher training, monitoring and supervision.
- Promoting the continuity of the small business and farming activities, the provision of business grants to farmer cooperatives and booster funds through the development of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) of the beneficiary groups to ensure there is adequate money for the members to borrow to finance their activities and to strengthen social cohesion.

The main recommendations discussed above are summarised in Table 1, along with the target audience for each recommendation, key intended users and potential constraints to follow up.

Table 1 Recommendations, with target audience, key intended users and potential constraints to follow up

Recommendation	Target Group	Key Intended Users	Potential Constraints as to Follow Up
Work with local government, CSOs as well as NGOs to raise awareness about the effectiveness of the HDP approach and facilitate its adoption.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	Failure of key intended users to agree on the HDP approach as the way forward
Put greater emphasis on transdisciplinarity and strengthening of the market systems, agroecology and landscape approaches.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and implementing partners, local government, policy makers, research institutions (such as National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) ¹³ CSOs, NGOs, and local people	Key users continue to operate in silos. Failure of key users to appreciate the value of bottom up, local knowledge. Tendency to continue the top-down approach. Pressure to implement 'quick fix, silver bullet solutions' that benefit big business and industrial agriculture
Focus on encouraging diversification into non-farm activities.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	
Address water insecurity in relation to farm production and use HDP approach to address water governance and water security issues.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	
Linking paravets, agroecology and energy-saving champions to local government extension departments for regular refresher training, monitoring and supervision.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	Not seen as a priority by key stakeholders. Failure of key intended users to agree that this approach is the best way forward
Promoting the continuity of the small business and farming activities, the provision of business grants to farmer cooperatives and booster funds through the development of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	Not seen as a priority by key stakeholders. Failure of key intended users to agree that this approach is the best way forward

¹³ <https://naro.go.ug/about-us/naro-about-us/>

2. Introduction

2.1 Background to the project

CACH in Uganda and South Sudan and its implementing partners (Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD), Community Development Centre (CDC) and Organic Farming Advisory Organisation (OFAO)) are implementing the three-year (2021 January - December 2024) PAMANA project in Koboko and Yumbe districts in WN, Uganda and in Yei and Lainya in CES in South Sudan.

The project aims to reduce conflict over and pressure on natural resources (NR). This is to be achieved by building local capacities to support the most vulnerable groups, including host, refugee, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) communities, with a special focus on women. It seeks to meet their immediate needs and secure sustainable livelihoods in ways that promote peace, stability, and gender equality.

The logic of this intervention is that by supporting immediate needs of the most vulnerable in WN and CES, reducing conflict over Natural Resources (NR), improving equitable access to, sustainable management and usage of NR as well as sustainable livelihood opportunities, through the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus¹⁴ strategies, working with diverse actors, individuals and communities in both regions will be better equipped to meet current and future challenges in non-violent, sustainable and productive ways, reduce pressure on NR and promote peace and stability in communities (as laid out in the Theory of Change)¹⁵.

The specific project Outcomes, as laid out in the project's logframe, are:

- 1) Humanitarian: The immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups amongst the host, refugee, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) communities (with special focus on women) are better met due to conflict-sensitive and gender responsive humanitarian assistance.
- 2) Development: Local capacities are developed and strengthened to create opportunities for medium and long-term livelihoods based on sustainable NRM practices that foster self-reliance and resilience and enable peaceful coexistence.
- 3) Peacebuilding: Understanding of conflict causes, especially in regard to Natural Resource Management (NRM), is increased and the capacities of the target groups and beneficiaries are strengthened to facilitate dialogue and manage tensions to promote NRM and climate change adaptation in peace-conducive and gender-responsive ways.

2.2 Purpose of the End-Term Evaluation

The overall purpose of the ETE is to assess the project's progress towards its objectives, ensuring accountability to the donors and stakeholders; in order to provide credible and reliable findings to support evidence-based decision making for strategic and future interventions. ETEs can perform three interconnected functions:

¹⁴ The HDP nexus approach is based, in part on, the recognitions that emergency needs are often symptoms of underlying causes that make people and societies vulnerable in the first place and that a more effective and inclusive response needs to do more to address these root causes. It is defined in the following way: Addressing immediate needs of the most vulnerable (humanitarian assistance); developing and supporting sustainable NR livelihood opportunities that take pressure off natural resources (development support) and facilitating opportunities for diverse groups to come together to solve issues through information sharing, leadership training and conflict resolution skills (peacebuilding).

¹⁵ PAMANA Project Document

- Learning function: supplying reliable findings that contribute to the on-going improvement and optimisation of the quality and effectiveness of development cooperation.
- Steering function: providing findings that contribute to evidence-based planning of development policy objectives and underpinning strategic and operational decision-making processes.
- Accountability and communication function: giving account of the use of public funds and the related impacts achieved to partners, donors and the public.¹⁶

This ETE's main focus was on the first function, the learning function.

The specific objectives of the ETE exercise are:

- To evaluate the project's relevance, effectiveness, and prospects for sustainability, on reducing conflict over natural resources and promoting sustainable livelihoods.
- To assess how gender equality, conflict sensitivity as well as the Triple Nexus (HDP Nexus) have been incorporated in project design, implementation, and monitoring and how this has affected relevance, effectiveness, and prospects for sustainability.
- To document good practice, success stories, lessons learned and challenges encountered.
- To provide evidence-based actionable recommendations for future interventions.

Additionally, the ETE assessed and documented intended or unintended project impacts or consequences, challenges, lessons learned and proposed recommendations to support the basis for possible scaling-up and or modification of interventions and implementation of similar projects in future. The assessment focused on both the process and outcomes of the project, as well as activities, inputs, outputs and impact or long-term changes. The project log frame, all relevant project documents and data collected by the ETE team informed the assessment.

2.3 Scope of the Evaluation

The ETE was carried out by Ruth Malleson and Hannington Odongo, focusing on WN; and James Komakec, focusing on CES, along with two field assistance in WN and CES respectively. Based on the TOR (see Annex XIV), the scope of the ETE was as follows:

Content Scope: The ETE focused on assessing the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria: **relevance, effectiveness**, and prospects for **sustainability** questions; as well as how gender equality, conflict sensitivity and the HDP nexus have been applied.

Time Scope: The ETE covers the project period, i.e. the start to the end of project operational period from 1st December 2021 to 31st December 2024.

Geographical Scope: The ETE was conducted in four study settlements in West Nile (WN), Uganda and two Payams in Central Equatoria State (CES), South Sudan.

After discussions with PAMANA staff on the ground it was agreed that the Evaluation Team should focus on the following host and refugee settlements in Uganda:

- Yumbe District:

¹⁶ Federal Ministry for Europe Integration and Foreign Affairs. 2019. Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation
https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web_Evaluationpolicy_EN.pdf

- a. Bidibidi refugee settlement (Zone 3)
- b. Host community sub-counties: Kululu, Bijo, and Londonga
- Koboko District:
 - c. Waju II 'Iyete', Lobule refugee settlement
 - d. Utukaliri, Ombachi Parish, Lobule sub-county

The following two Payams in Central Equatoria State, South Sudan were chosen:

- Yei River County:
 - e. Yei Town Payam: Jansuk Boma and Rwonyi Boma
- Lainya County:
 - f. Mukaya Payam only: Dimo Boma and Lorige Boma

The choice of settlements in South Sudan had to be adapted due to the security situation. The ETE team decided not to carry out fieldwork in Kupera, which was one of the payams in Lainya county originally selected for inclusion in the evaluation, because road ambushes there had intensified, and the Implementing Partner's security focal person recommended to avoid the area. Instead, the ETE team chose to work in Mukaya and Yei Town Payam, to mitigate risks.

2.4 Intended Users and Intended Use of the Evaluation

The intended users of the evaluation report are Caritas Switzerland (CACH) and its implementing partners (AFARD, CDC, OFAO), backstoppers (swisspeace and BOMA) as well as the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and other donors. In addition, the evaluation report will be shared with relevant local/administration government bodies, local partner CBOs in Uganda and South Sudan and other PAMANA stakeholders. These organisations can use the evaluation's findings, lessons learned and recommendations to inform strategic decisions and future interventions.

3. Background and Context Analysis

3.1 Context

Landscape, Livelihoods and Natural Resource Change in Central Equatoria South Sudan and West Nile, Uganda

This section brings together key points from the ETE team's PEA work. CES and WN region have over the last 25 years experienced substantial demographic changes, due to wars and political unrest. This region has a fast-growing population that suffers from widespread poverty and substantial under-development and marginalisation. It is a key formal and informal cross-border trade area, critical to its economy.¹⁷

Key drivers of conflict in the region are identified as:

- Land shortages, especially for refugees, and boundary disputes
- Conflicts between communities and former combatants
- Fuelwood shortages
- Food shortages

¹⁷ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacher, J.C., Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

- Shortages in building material, i.e. wood, thatching grass, etc.
- Youth disenfranchisement
- Gender violence
- Water insecurity (insufficient quantity and poor quality due to conflicting needs of water users)

International development and humanitarian aid also play an important role in the economic fabric of the region. In WN, up until recently 60% of refugee household income came from food aid and/or cash payments, which flows into the local economy. Local host communities also benefit from aid programmes as a way of compensating them for their hospitality towards refugee households.¹⁸ Three quarters of the South Sudanese population required aid in 2023 – the result of climate shocks and violent conflicts that have persisted despite a 2018 peace deal¹⁹.

Central Equatoria State (CES) has been hit by severe insecurity and displacement, during the conflict of 2013 and 2016-2018 as well as currently. The security situation is deteriorating, and returnees are being affected by the insurgents. Insecurity restricts people's movements and livelihoods. Abduction and the illegal recruitment of young people into militias is common. According to humanitarian needs overview for 2023, there are an estimated 72,500 people with humanitarian needs in the county which is approximately 64 % of the estimated population for the county. The South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) allow humanitarian actors to access vulnerable populations without hindrance; nonetheless, there were many instances of ambushes, armed conflict and kidnappings reported in the Project's operational areas in June and July 2024.²⁰ There has also been an inflow of refugees and returnees into South Sudan from Sudan.

The economy of South Sudan is also in a poor state with a devalued currency and associated inflation, which has affected the prices of basic goods (Annex II) as well as project planning and operations²¹. An extreme heatwave affected South Sudan in March 2024, leading to the two-week closure of schools there.

The influx of South Sudanese refugees to West Nile (WN), which started in 2016, has increased the total population of WN by about 30%, with over 1 million refugees²². Total refugees in Uganda (as of 31/10/24) are 1,722,314 of which 54.6% are from South Sudan and 36% from DRC²³. There are stark contrasts between refugee and host households in WN. The former are generally poorer, have lower education levels and more limited income sources. Uganda continues to receive new migrants from South Sudan, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Tensions in Uganda have increased in refugee and host communities, due to the fact that international aid has been shifted to other regions of the globe, such as Ukraine. Aid packages and NGO support are reducing²⁴.

Over the last few years (from 2021), the World Food Programme (WFP) has cut food assistance to refugees in Uganda. Cuts in 2022 meant that refugees were receiving less than 40% of their basic survival rations, with many receiving no rations at all. Refugees have been

¹⁸ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacher, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

¹⁹<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/first-person/2023/08/09/south-sudanese-returnees-story-khartoum-their-childhood-home>

²⁰ Pamana Project Progress Report No.5 1/1/24 to 30/6/24

²¹ Pamana Project Progress Report No.5 1/1/24 to 30/6/24

²² Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacher, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

²³ <http://data.unhcr.org/eng/country/uga>

²⁴ Pamana Project Progress Report No.5 1/1/24 to 30/6/24

assigned different vulnerability levels, ranging from Category 1 (most vulnerable) who receive 60% of standard food rations; to Category 2 (moderately vulnerable) who receive about 30% of the standard rations; to Category 3 (considered self-sufficient) receiving nothing at all. About 4% of refugees fall into Category 3. The WFP rationalises these cuts in food assistance partly on the grounds that the refugees living in settlements (approximately 94 percent of the total refugee population) receive a small plot of land to grow crops, rear livestock and feed their households, which is intended to foster refugee self-reliance. However, a core problem is that in the northwest, where most of the settlements are located, the land is often barren (particularly in the case of Bidibidi refugee settlement) and the plot (30x30 m) too small to allow for food self-sufficiency. As a result, refugees remain dependent on food aid, and the WFP aid cuts have led to high levels of food insecurity, malnutrition, illness, and associated developmental delays in children²⁵. The rising cost of essential items (Annex II) in the region is also making life harder for both refugee and host households.

Changing Demographics, Climate, Local Livelihoods and Natural Resources in WN and CES

The influx of refugees from Sudan and South Sudan, combined with the influx of refugees from DR of Congo, widespread poverty, the effects of climate change (drought and intense heat) and environmental degradation, have put immense pressure on this region's natural resources.²⁶

Local communities in the region still largely rely on natural resources for their livelihoods and food security, as well as development aid (for refugee households). Key livelihood activities are: rain-fed farming (cassava, millet, sorghum, maize, tobacco, coffee), livestock production (poultry, goats/sheep and cattle); extraction of building materials (poles, stones and sand from rivers), firewood (which is still the primary source of cooking fuel), bushmeat, wild vegetables and fruits, medicinal herbs and honey production. Many resources are still harvested from indigenous natural woodlands which consist of trees interspersed with grasses and shrubs as well as wetlands.

Although officially banned in Northern Uganda, commercial charcoal production in both West Nile²⁷ and Central Equatoria has recently increased significantly with increasing poverty, the lack of other income generating opportunities and the expansion of logging²⁸. The charcoal business is an important means for sustaining incomes to afford basic provisions such as soap, sugar and salt. It is reportedly used by organised armed forces in South Sudan to supplement meagre salaries which are delayed for months. However, it has now started to take its toll on many fruit and other useful trees, such as mangoes, tamarind and shea trees

²⁵ Haugseth, E. Fisk, K. and Schjøberg P. 2024. Community Initiatives to Mitigate Group. Tensions: Reflections from Uganda. <https://blogs.prio.org/2024/08/community-initiatives-to-mitigate-group-tensions-reflections-from-uganda/>

²⁶ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacker, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

²⁷ Bernard, B., Aron, M., Loy, T., Muhamud, N. W., & Benard, S. (2022). The impact of refugee settlements on land use changes and vegetation degradation in West Nile Sub-region, Uganda. *Geocarto International*, 37(1), 16-34.

²⁸ Kindersley, N., & Tiitmamer, N. (2024). The costs and values of life in South Sudan's militarized charcoal economy. *Journal of Modern African Studies*.

(*Vitellaria paradoxa*) which few people would have considered felling in the past as they are valued for their fruits and oils.²⁹

Local communities also have spiritual and religious attachments to such woodlands. In South Sudan, they are perceived to be places where their ancestors live and are honoured³⁰. They also believe that sacred trees protect their lives from evil.

These forest, grassland and wetland ecosystems provide many direct and indirect contributions to human well-being and have significant impacts on the survival and quality of life of all plants and animals, including people. These contributions are often referred to as 'ecosystem services' and are summarised in Annex III. The categories specifically relevant to the PAMANA project are highlighted in bold.

Changing weather patterns, increasing average temperatures, heatwaves, more unpredictable rainfall and droughts are directly impacting on the livelihoods of people; exacerbating food insecurity as well as biodiversity loss and water shortages leading to conflicts over land and water³¹. The project region is predicted to be at risk of increasingly frequent hot and dry years that will reduce crop yields and result in acute water scarcity. Deforestation and forest degradation contribute to climate change through increases in carbon dioxide emissions, affecting local rainfall patterns. Furthermore, increasing populations and the influx of refugees in West Nile have increased pressure on natural resources, natural forest lands, rangelands, farmlands, wetlands, rivers and streams which are becoming increasingly degraded.

Natural Resource Governance and Conflict

In South Sudan, illegal logging has undermined many local, traditional forest related livelihoods such as provision of building materials, hunting, fishing, given the local communities' dependence on forest for building materials³². Natural woodlands have been subjected to intense illegal logging, especially during 2016-2018, when local communities fled violence.³³ There is reportedly a sense of grievance within communities who were impacted by this violence against those who remained as they are seen as collaborators with the political and military forces that promoted logging³⁴. Natural forests are also a focal point of tension and potential conflict in West Nile, particularly because most refugee and host households still rely on wood as their primary cooking fuel³⁵. This reliance has increased the risk of tension and conflict over control and access to forest resources and heightens the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), particularly against women and girls who collect firewood.

²⁹ South Sudan Council of Churches and the UK Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund. 2020. The Impact of Logging Activities on Local Communities. <https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2020-10-The-impact-of-logging-on-local-communities-Final-Report.pdf>

³⁰ South Sudan Council of Churches and the UK Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund. 2020. The Impact of Logging Activities on Local Communities. <https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2020-10-The-impact-of-logging-on-local-communities-Final-Report.pdf>

³¹ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacher, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

³² https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/county_profile/lainya/

³³ South Sudan Council of Churches and the UK Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund. 2020. The Impact of Logging Activities on Local Communities. <https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2020-10-The-impact-of-logging-on-local-communities-Final-Report.pdf>

³⁴ South Sudan Council of Churches and the UK Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund. 2020. The Impact of Logging Activities on Local Communities. <https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2020-10-The-impact-of-logging-on-local-communities-Final-Report.pdf>

³⁵ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacher, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

Refugees have no designated access to areas to collect firewood or rights to access surrounding lands. There are no areas gazetted for firewood collection for refugee settlements that could then be sustainably managed.³⁶

Farmlands, essential for cultural identity in West Nile, also have a complicated history with political interference in the region. Ugandan authorities negotiated with local community leaders to acquire land for the establishment of refugee settlements. In some cases, this has led to resentment and intercommunal tensions.³⁷ Shortage of farmland in secure areas is a growing issue in CES, particularly with IDPs and returnee households, who are no longer able to work in the farmlands and harvest crops located in insecure and distant locations.

Customary communal land, governed by traditional land chiefs in the subclans, contains not only forest but grasslands. Grass, used for feeding livestock and for thatching roofs, is increasingly becoming a scarce resource. Occasionally people burn grass, a traditional custom for enriching pastures for grazing in preparation for cultivating land or for hunting wild animals. Communal land, which was formerly forests and grazing land is being privatised and turned into smallholder farmland. It is often fenced off, resulting in the blocking of traditional grazing lands and livestock migration routes. This enclosure of farmlands has led to overgrazing of existing grazing lands and has led livestock herders to migrate in search of pasture and, in some cases, to move deeper into forests.

In CES, in the first three months of 2024, cattle herders from neighbouring counties, such as the Mundari from Terekeka and Dinka from Awerial and Jonglei Mundari, moved into Lainya county for grazing. This has led to competition and conflict between farmers and pastoralists, resulting in the loss of lives and damage to crops, livestock and wetlands^{38 39}.

Wetlands were traditionally important sources of water, fish and wildlife. However, these have increasingly been encroached and converted to farmlands, as well as degraded through sand mining. Competition over water from water points (boreholes) and natural springs is likely to increase, due to population growth and demand from agriculture and other uses as well as decline in availability of water due to climate change and forest degradation.

Going forward, the deterioration of the security situation in South Sudan could result in a new influx of refugees into West Nile region, which would further increase the pressure on natural resources, potentially driving communal conflict.⁴⁰ Alternatively, more peace in South Sudan and DRC may lead to an out-migration as refugees decide to return home, which could relieve pressure on natural resources in WN but increase pressure on NR in CES.

In the long-term, pressure on natural resources is likely to increase, if population growth continues at the same rate. Furthermore, climate change may mean that the arid north-eastern regions of Uganda become less suitable for livestock rearing, which could cause livestock herders may move to northwest Uganda, leading to increased deforestation and declines in water availability and crop production.⁴¹

³⁶ Boswell, A. 2018 Contested Refuge The Political Economy and Conflict Dynamics in Uganda's Bidibidi Refugee Settlements, European Union

³⁷ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacker, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

³⁸ https://www.csrf-southsudan.org/county_profile/lainya/

³⁹ Pamana Progress Report No.5 1/1/24 to 30/6/2024

⁴⁰ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacker, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

⁴¹ Destrijcker, L., Kyeyune, M., Dieffenbacker, J.C, Zwar, C. 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Study: Uganda, West Nile sub-region. Adelphi and World Food Programme

3.2 Key Stakeholders

The key stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the programme or project are listed in Annex IV.

The PAMANA project chose to work with the following target groups and direct beneficiaries:

- National and local government structures (such as representatives of Districts, OPM's Department of Refugee Affairs, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), the Ministry of Water and Environment, Payam administrations and Police, South Sudan's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), County Administration)
- Religious and traditional institutions (youth leaders in the church, religious leaders, traditional leaders)
- Civil society organisations (mothers' unions, refugee led civil society networks, district civil society forums, environment clubs, peace clubs, refugee welfare councils, women's organisations)
- Farmer groups, cooperatives societies, radio stations and district farmers associations.

3.3 Logframe, Theory of Change and Implementation Status

The Logframe is found in Annex XVII). The logic of this intervention is that by supporting immediate needs of the most vulnerable in WN and CES, reducing conflict over Natural Resources (NR), improving equitable access to, sustainable management and usage of NR as well as sustainable livelihood opportunities, through the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus⁴² strategies, working with diverse actors, individuals and communities in both regions will be better equipped to meet current and future challenges in non-violent, sustainable and productive ways, reduce pressure on NR and promote peace and stability in communities (as laid out in the Theory of Change)⁴³.

The overall impact of the project is: Conflict over and pressure on natural resources is significantly reduced in West Nile (Uganda) and Central Equatoria (South Sudan) through building local capacities for supporting the most vulnerable groups amongst the host, refugee and IDP communities (with a special focus on women), meeting their immediate needs and securing sustainable livelihoods in ways that promote peace, stability and gender-equality.

There are three key outcomes:

⁴² The HDP nexus approach is based in part on the recognitions that emergency needs are often symptoms of underlying causes that make people and societies vulnerable in the first place and that a more effective and inclusive response needs to do more to address these root causes. It is defined in the following way: Addressing immediate needs of the most vulnerable (humanitarian assistance); developing and supporting sustainable NR livelihood opportunities that take pressure off natural resources (development support) and facilitating opportunities for diverse groups to come together to solve issues through information sharing, leadership training and conflict resolution skills (peacebuilding).

⁴³ PAMANA Project Document

Humanitarian: 1. The immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups amongst host, refugee and IDP communities (with special focus on women) are better met due to conflict-sensitive and gender responsive humanitarian assistance

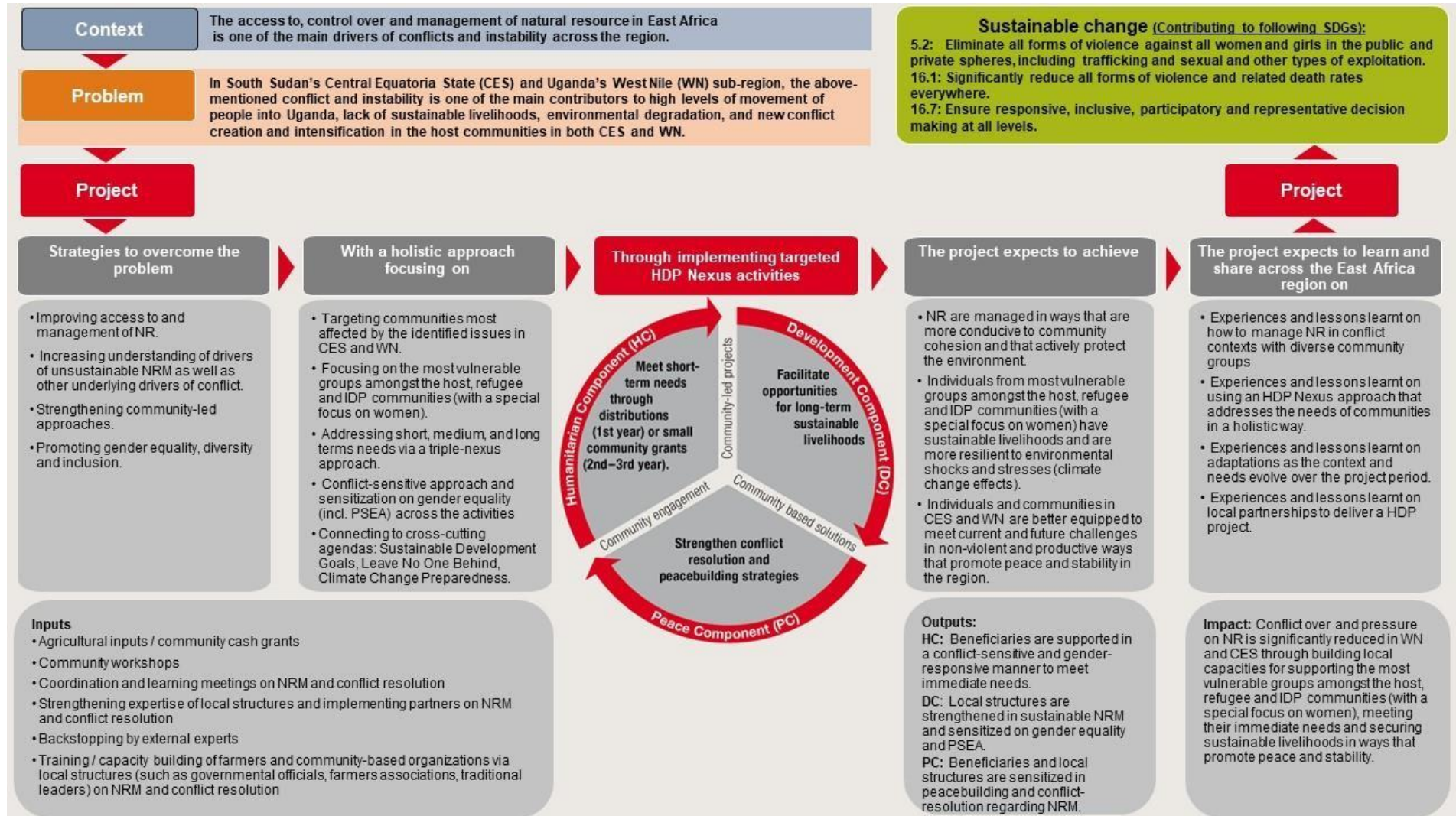
Development: 2. Local capacities are developed and strengthened to create opportunities for medium and long-term livelihoods based on sustainable natural resource management (NRM) practices that foster self-reliance and resilience and enable peaceful co-existence

Peacebuilding: 3. Understanding of conflict causes, especially in regards to NRM, is increased and the capacities of the target groups and beneficiaries are strengthened to facilitate dialogue and manage tensions to promote sustainable NRM and climate change adaptation in peace-conducive and gender-responsive ways.

The project is drawing to its close on 31st December 2024.

The ToC is shown in Figure I below.

Figure I PAMANA Theory of Change



4. Evaluation Design and Approach

4.1. Methodological Approach

The methodological approach, including literature references, is described and justified in the Inception Report (IR) (see Annex I), which includes the rationale for selecting the particular level and activities for consultation. A description of how the approach chosen reflects the basic principles underlying ADA's work as well as the human rights-based approach and the commitment to cross-cutting issues are also described in the IR.

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis Tools

Data collection methods are described and the rationale behind their choice is outlined in the IR. The following details are also included in the IR:

- the description of how data collection methods and related process employed reflect the basic ADA's principles and commitments to human rights and cross-cutting issues.
- the measures taken to ensure data quality, including evidence supporting the reliability and validity of findings (e.g. interview protocols, survey design, observation tools) are described.
- the description of what type of (source, method, data, theory) triangulation was employed

Primary data were collected between 1st November to 9th November 2024.

4.3 Sampling Frame

Geographical Scope:

The choice of study settlements had been discussed as detailed in the IR. However, the choice was changed at the start of the fieldwork training and data collection period. The changes were partly informed by up-to-date security information in South Sudan, but also because the End-Term Evaluation Team (ETET) realised that the excel sheets of data about beneficiaries had not been entered correctly. It was unclear which actual settlements the beneficiaries came from.

After discussions with PAMANA staff on the ground it was agreed that the ETET should focus on the following host and refugee settlements:

Four study settlements in West Nile, Uganda, were selected:

- Yumbe District:
 - Bidibidi refugee settlement (Zone 3)
 - Host community sub-counties: Kululu, Bijo, and Londonga
- Koboko District:
 - Waju II 'lyete', Lobule refugee settlement
 - Utukaliri, Ombachi Parish, Lobule sub-county

Two Payams in Central Equatoria State, South Sudan, were chosen:

- Yei River County:
 - Yei Town Payam: Jansuk Boma and Rwonyi Boma
- Lainya County:
 - Mukaya Payam only: Dima Boma and Lorega Boma

The choice of settlements in South Sudan had to be adapted due to the security situation. We decided not to carry out fieldwork in Kupera, which was one of the payams in Lainya county originally selected for inclusion in the evaluation, because road ambushes had intensified and the Implementing Partner's security focal person recommended not to go there. We chose to work in Mukaya and Yei Town Payam instead, to mitigate risks accordingly.

For the household survey, we simplified the selection of the sample of households as follows: in Uganda, within each of the above selected Host (2) and Refugee (2) Settlements we chose seven female-headed households, seven male-headed households, all of varying ages, and one household with a person with disabilities (PWD) of any age or sex. Table I summarises the household categories for WN.

Table 2: Household Categories included in the Household Survey, Uganda (by gender of HH head and with/without at least one PWD)

Status	Total Households	Female Headed Household (of varying ages)	Male Headed Households (of varying ages)	HH with PWD
HOST	15	7	7	1
REFUGEE	15	7	7	1
Total	30	14	14	2

For South Sudan, within the two Payams, a total of 15 households were selected from one Boma in each Payam, giving a total of 60 households. Within each Boma, six female-headed households, six male-headed households and one household with a person with a disability (PWD) of any age or sex, which could be part of either a male or female headed households were selected from Host, Returnee and Internally Displaced Person (IDP) households. Table 2 summarises the characteristics of the households sampled for the Household Survey in South Sudan.

Table 3: Household Categories per Boma included in the Household Survey, South Sudan (by gender of HH head and with/without at least one PWD)

Status	Total	Female Headed Household (of varying ages)	Male Headed Households (of varying ages)	HH with PWD
IDPs	5	2	2	1
HOST	5	2	2	1
RETURNEES	5	2	2	1
Total	15 (per BOMA)	6	6	3

The actual choice of households that were included in the Household Survey was made by the local field assistants who knew the location of all the beneficiary households in each of the study settlements and chose those that were reasonably accessible and fitted the selection

criteria. Table 3 summarises the actual household categories chosen for both South Sudan and West Nile.

Table 4: Household Categories included in the Household Survey (by gender of HH head and with/without disabilities)

Status/Country	Total HH	Total FHH	Total MHH	FHH without PWD	MHH without PWD	FHH with PWD	MHH with PWD
South Sudan							
Host	24	9	15	5	9	4	6
IDP	24	7	17	1	8	6	9
Returnee	16	8	8	5	5	3	3
Total South Sudan	64	24	40	11	22	13	18
Uganda							
Host	37	19	18	10	7	9	11
Refugee	25	12	13	3	3	9	10
Total Uganda	62	31	31	13	10	18	21

Data were collected from a range of respondents including women, youth, religious leaders, local government staff, through in-depth open-ended interviews, focus group discussions and one-on-one meetings.

There were also some unstructured interviews with other key informants. All these data were included in the analysis as they provided important sources of comparison, different views and corroboration of information across geographic areas and different topics.

Induction and orientation training sessions were carried out with the seven-person research team (with three people in South Sudan joining remotely) for two days prior to the fieldwork, to familiarise them with the research objectives, tools (questionnaires, participatory mapping and interview guides) and ethics. The team were trained to ensure they sought the views of women, men, youth and elderly and people living with disabilities. The field researchers who carried out the household surveys were selected based on their experience, knowledge of the research areas and knowledge of the local languages spoken in the research areas. The Household Survey Questionnaire and interview templates are provided in the IR Annex I.

A total of 12 FGDs, 18 KIIs and 126 Household Questionnaires were conducted. A total of 179 people were interviewed in FGD and KIIs (as listed in Annex XII), of which 85 were women and 94 were men; 155 beneficiaries (82 women and 73 men), 18 local government staff (1 women and 17 men) and six implementing partners (3 men and 2 women) were interviewed. Interviews were not recorded. Written reports were developed for each country and the research team came together for discussions on 10th November 2024 to discuss and develop key findings.

4.4. Limitations, Risks and Mitigations Measures

The choice of payams and bomas in South Sudan was changed due to the increase in insecurity, as mentioned above. The actual choice of households to be included in the Household Survey was made by the local field assistants who knew the location of all the beneficiary households in each of the study settlements. This potentially introduces a risk of sampling bias, since the field assistant could arguably select the households, they thought would be 'good' to include in the survey. However, the ETET stressed to the field assistants the importance of selecting a variety of beneficiary households engaged to a greater or lesser extent and not only households that were seen to be exemplary.

Season: The evaluation took place at the end of the rainy season when farm and grazing lands are still looking lush. In South Sudan people were harvesting maize, sorghum and cassava in good quantities. Children were observed playing happily, giving signs of food security. In Koboko, children were up into the early hours of the morning catching edible grasshoppers. In Koboko, the field work took place during the second swarming season of the non-destructive, edible grasshoppers, known locally as *nseene* (*Ruspolia differens*)⁴⁴. People and children were observed and heard catching these grasshoppers from the wild, for home consumption and trade, using locally made light traps into the early hours of the morning in Koboko Town. These highly nutritious, edible grasshoppers are a delicacy in East Africa and were being sold in Koboko town market. However, the populations of these grasshoppers appear to be falling due to conversion of natural forests and wetlands to farmland.⁴⁵ The ETET may have observed sharp contrasts if it had come in January to February, which is often called the 'hungry season'. Rains disturbed the fieldwork hindering access to study areas and household survey respondents in Yumbe and CES, but generally communities were receptive to the ETET.

Interview fatigue: Although people did not refuse to be part of data collection exercises, many refugees and host individuals in Koboko and Yumbe have seen so many research and NGO teams come and the ETET observed a significant level of "interview fatigue." Some people only joined discussions when news got around that there were refreshments given at FGDs. Donor dependency is also noticeable, an issue that was noted by researchers in the past.⁴⁶ For example, some interviewees used the interviews to ask for additional assistance, suggesting a tendency towards aid dependency.

Attribution, defined as the extent to which any changes observed were brought about by the actions of the PAMANA project (as opposed to other organisations or projects) is a challenge, due to many different organisations working in the project area. In South Sudan, interviewees within Yei Payam had to sometimes be reminded to focus on the PAMANA project, rather than the 'Peaceful Project' being implemented by OFAO.

In relation to the Household Survey, in Lorega in South Sudan the evaluation team found that most households were IDPs who had fled conflict a few years ago and settled in Mukaya. This is not surprising since 90% of structures registered by the project were IDPs. However, it meant that a considerable amount of time and effort was used to find host and returnee households to survey.

⁴⁴ Nabikolo, D., Njue, L., Abong, G., Tanga, M. 2023. The potential contribution and challenges of edible grasshopper (*Ruspolia differens*) to food and nutrition security in Uganda- a literature review. East African Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation, Vol.4 (Special Issue) August 2023. <https://eajsti.org/index.php/EAJSTI/article/download/744/187/3904>

⁴⁵ BBC News. 2018. The Ugandan love of grasshoppers – and how to harvest them. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-46357020>

⁴⁶ For example the UN Multi-sector needs assessment conducted in Koboko in 2018 interviewed a total of 379 host and refugee households. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/65832>

The different focus of reporting on progress at Baseline, Mid-Line and End-Term/End-Line, made it more challenging to compare project achievements from start to finish. Whilst the Mid-Term Evaluation focused more on the implementation process and little on the outcome and impact levels, the Mid-Line study assessed income and the self-sufficiency indicators at impact and output levels. This ETE focused on relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

5. Findings

5.1. Relevance

Relevance to Target Beneficiaries

It is clear from the context analysis and participatory mapping that the issue of conflicts and competition over natural resources in the region is growing and covers a large area. This makes the PAMANA project increasingly relevant. Yet, as already mentioned, the scope of the PAMANA project is relatively small compared with the enormity of the NRM challenges the region faces. It is important to note that the 30 x 30 m plots allocated to Bidibidi refugees are far less fertile and often located far from where refugees live, unlike the situation in Lobule in WN. Whereas CES is blessed with fertile land, a significant portion is off-limits because of insecurity, and its natural resources are being exploited by those in positions of authority.

Overall, the HDP nexus approach of addressing humanitarian, development and peacebuilding issues at the same time is effective because it was seen to instil a positive mindset. One key informant from local government in WN said 'it has made a difference, and we want to expand this approach because it has led to a positive mindset amongst target groups. Ideally, the project's relevance would have been improved if more efforts had focused on ensuring that HDP interventions drew more strongly on a holistic, climate smart landscape⁴⁷ approach. A climate-smart landscape is characterised by climate-smart practices at farm level, a high diversity of land uses at landscape level and the purposeful management of land-use interactions in ways that balance the interests of local people and others related to crop and livestock production, local livelihoods, conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation. A key outcome in this approach is that local people are encouraged and equipped to actively participate in landscape level decision making processes that will address natural resource degradation, particularly in relation to communal natural resources areas of forests, grasslands and wetlands. The degree to which this was achieved is discussed under effectiveness.

Landscape approaches are key to achieving development, conservation, land rehabilitation and climate change adaptation and mitigation goals. Going forward, more could be done to improve understandings about the interconnectedness of climate, land, water, food and ecosystems and about the causal relationships in the key ecosystem services mentioned in Table II in the Annex; especially, the interconnections between forests and trees, grasslands, agriculture and water availability, for example. Some of the farming activities, for example

⁴⁷ We define landscape as an area with a characteristic configuration of topography, vegetation, land use and settlements that is influenced by the ecological, historical, economic and cultural process and activities of the area. Scheer, Shames and Friedman, 2013. Defining Integrated Landscape Management for policy makers. Ecoagriculture policy focus series no.10. EcoAgriculture Partners Washington DC

encouraging people to grow large number of cabbages, which are relatively water hungry crops, potentially risk exacerbating water insecurity by depleting surface water (drying up of rivers) and groundwater (drying up and salinisation of boreholes). On the other hand, focusing on conserving and restoring communal woodlands and grasslands can contribute to improved water security through improved infiltration, reduced run-off and improving groundwater storage.

Targeting

Focusing on the landscape approach is easier said than done because the project had little choice over the settlements it could work in as the choice was strongly influenced in CES by the local government and, in Uganda, by the OPM and UNHCR. This meant that the communities targeted by the project within the same local government area were located at considerable distances from each other. This distant spacing created implementation challenges and precluded communities from sharing any common or communal natural resource use areas.

The project achieved a balanced distribution of final benefits for both host communities and refugees in WN and Hosts, Internally Displaced and returnees in CES.

The selection of local structures in WN was informed by the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which mandates interventions that ensure an equal allocation of resources between hosts and refugees. The project targeted existing local structures including cooperatives, farmers' groups, women groups, youth groups, VSLA groups, etc. Of the targeted cooperatives, it was realised that cooperative members are mainly from host communities, as most refugees are not members of cooperatives. It then took a long time to set up refugee cooperatives, since cooperatives are formed by the district commercial office, and they do not work in refugee settlements. Refugees exhibited a significant degree of scepticism towards integrating into host community cooperatives, leading them to establish separate organizations. This tendency has resulted in a proliferation of local/target structures within WN. The issue of relevance is discussed below in relation to the different project outcomes.

The selection of structures and target groups in CES was carried out in partnership with county and Payam administrations. This selection process prioritized areas marked by natural resource disputes, high population density, and a certain level of security. Most of the structures in CES comprise between 10 and 30 members, often located far apart from one another. Consequently, this necessitated the registration of multiple structures to ensure that the target final beneficiaries were adequately reached, leading to an expansive project scope.

In relation to Humanitarian development (Outcome 1), some KII thought that cash grants could have been better targeted, through taking into consideration the criteria used to select households developed by the MGLSD in WN. The ETE team think it would have been wise if the IPs had independently verified the choice of cash grant recipients as a check to ensure these recipients fitted the criteria used. Furthermore, some KIIs thought that Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) should have been included as part of the humanitarian development activities since project staff observed that groups with VSLAs performed better.

The project is extremely relevant as it addresses some of the basic and immediate economic needs of vulnerable households in relation to food security. One interviewee from Lobule

refugee camp said that ‘children are not yellow (iron deficient) anymore because they are eating green vegetables grown from seeds provided by the PAMANA project’.

However, a key risk in relation to Outcomes 1 and 2 identified by project beneficiaries, by other key informants as well as the project itself⁴⁸ is that the increasing risk of extended droughts and erratic rainfall means that farming systems need to be very resilient to climate change. One way to increase farming resilience to drought and erratic rainfall would be to put more time and effort into building on local indigenous knowledge and promoting the production of more indigenous, drought tolerant crops, such as sorghum, cowpeas, pigeon peas and indigenous tree species as well as early maturing varieties of such crops.

As noted above, a key constraint to farming activities in the region, particularly for refugee households but also for hosts, is limited access to farmland. This is particularly the case in Koboko district. Whilst the majority of refugee households in Lobule (73%) and Bidibidi (60%) have access to land for agricultural production, such access is limited, plots allocated are small (30m x 30 m), are often far from the homes of refugees, and are relatively less fertile⁴⁹. This, in turn, limits refugees’ ability to produce sufficient quantities of surplus farm produce, after home consumption, to sell at market.⁵⁰ Research⁵¹ indicates that plots of this size cannot meet the dietary needs of refugees in the absence of food rations. Furthermore, the study indicates that the land given to refugees varies widely in relation to soil fertility. It challenges the assumption that refugee households can become self-reliant through farming on these plots. Furthermore, research from 2017 indicates that each refugee household would need a 50m by 50 m plot just to grow enough trees to meet its firewood needs⁵².

The project has done well to address the issues of food security, income generation and soil fertility through intensifying farming systems and through promoting market gardening of high value crops, such as sukuma wiki, onions and tomatoes; agroforestry; poultry production and improving soil fertility. These activities can all be carried out effectively and efficiently on small areas of farmland.

However, in view of the substantial land and water shortages, particularly for refugee and returnee households, it would be effective, going forward, to encourage additional diversification into non-farm activities. These could include traditional natural resource related activities that are linked with and provide incentives to conserve nature and sustainable natural resource management, such as beekeeping and the production of economically useful trees (such as shea butter and Amarula) in community forests and improved grassland management for increasing the production of thatching grass and forage. Other activities that build on

⁴⁸ Pamana Progress Report No.5 1/1/24 to 30/6/2024

⁴⁹ As Project staff mentioned, it is crucial to incorporate government initiatives regarding land, even though the location is situated far from the Bidibidi settlement. To address this challenge, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has successfully secured over 260 acres of land. However, the considerable distance from the Bidibidi settlement limits the effectiveness of this solution.

⁵⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Office of Prime Minister (OPM). 2018. Food security, resilience and well-being analysis of refugees and host communities in Northern Uganda. Rome.

⁵¹ UNDP 2018. Understanding Land Dynamics and Livelihood in Refugee Hosting Districts of Northern Uganda. <https://www.undp.org/africa/publications/understanding-land-dynamics-and-livelihoods-refugee-hosting-districts-northern-uganda>

⁵² Gianvenuti, A, A. Ortman, E. Kintu, R. Dannunzio. 2017. Rapid Woodfuel Assessment: 2017 Baseline for the Bidibidi Settlement, Uganda. FAO <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/525ba72a-b9eb-44a2-9326-f559be6ae2f9/>

economic opportunities linked with the clean-energy revolution, such as encouraging the use of solar energy as an alternative to wood and fossil fuels, might also be considered.

Relevance in Relation to Gender

Through the provision of training on gender relations and promotion of community dialogue in both WN and CES, results from the household survey, FGDs and KIs indicate that the PAMANA project has encouraged joint decision-making among male and female partners and children concerning household requirements. This training has also increased women participation in local community meetings and taking-up leadership positions in their groups and the communities.

Relevance in Relation to IP Capacities

In relation to whether the PAMANA project is adapted to the present capacities of the key implementing partners (IPs) (CDC, AFARD, OFAO), it was noted that training was given on humanitarian issues; NRM; conflict sensitivity; gender mainstreaming, and Outcome Harvesting. These trainings, especially the Outcome Harvesting, were seen to be useful to the IPs. However, there were gaps in relation to training aspects for Natural Resource Management, with respect to agroecology, particularly in relation to the importance of indigenous knowledge and the provision of tree seedlings. PAMANA partnered with UNHCR and DCA in relation to the provision of tree seedlings.

However, a huge challenge for the IPs was the issue of scope, in that the project covers a large area and that host and refugee communities within the same district are very far apart. This meant that IPs staff had to travel long distances and that there is no connection between host and refugee communities. IPs increased staff numbers working on the project in response to this challenge. However, the project budget offered limited support to IPs in relation to basic requirements, such as the provision of vehicles, to implement the project. This meant that some IPs, such as AFARD, encountered implementation delays due to the poor condition of their vehicles and the large areas covered by the project.

CES partners faced significant limitations as they were required to use motorcycles with restricted mobility. This was largely due to stringent security protocols that enforced a strict 2km movement radius from Yei town payam, making travel beyond this distance nearly impossible unless through car.

Overall, in relation to the choice of implementing partner, all three IPs have worked well together. In all the PAMANA project teams' monitoring visits, the districts in WN and CES Payam administrators acknowledged OFAO, CDC and AFARD. However, in Yumbe district it was noted that, few final beneficiaries mentioned having interaction with CDC except Nyori Multipurpose Cooperative Society. The officials interviewed from Yumbe district local government also mentioned they had limited interactions with CDC.

Effective commitment from stakeholders

The majority of key stakeholders in WN and CES also demonstrated effective commitment to the objectives of the intervention.

Feedback from local government staff in WN indicate that many were impressed by the HDP approach and are adopting it as part of their strategy. Through the local government structures, the project involved the lower local government officials in the selection of beneficiaries and enterprises, and established structures including the village ambassadors, agroecology champions and paravets who were trained to facilitate the formation of

smallholder farmer groups and peacebuilding / listening groups among the beneficiaries in the participating sub counties. Local government staff were involved in the same trainings as those attended by beneficiaries, in order to harmonise skill sets and build relationships. The district local government officials were involved during the inception meeting and joint monitoring of the project activities. In WN, the project monitoring reports were shared with the livelihood sector working group through the District Production Officer in each quarter.

In WN, rapid staff turnover of government extension workers, due to numerous transfers, was a challenge for the project. In one location, the project had to work with three different people over the lifetime of the project. Likewise, also in CES, the project team dealt with constant staff changes at government bodies, largely because incoming county commissioners typically introduced their own Payam administrators.

In WN and CES, there are many different organisations in the project area working on similar issues and there is a potential risk of duplication of efforts. However, a partner coordination platform exists that aims to avoid duplication between different NGOs and actors. The platform meets quarterly and is very useful for information sharing.

5.2 Effectiveness

Overall, the PAMANA project has brought about significant changes to the lives of beneficiaries particularly in relation to farming practices and income generation as well as leading to substantial adoption of skills in PSEA, GBV and NRM conflict resolution. These changes are summarised in Annex XVIII.

In response to the question: “What has changed, if anything, in your life due to the PAMANA project?”, over a third of HH survey respondents said that their farming practices had improved and under a quarter (21%) of households said their income had improved. Four percent of respondents said there was more peace within their HHs due to the PAMANA project and four percent of respondents said that they were experiencing improved peace with their neighbours (Annex V).

In relation to the statements presented to HH survey respondents (Annex VI), the vast majority of respondents (98% of total responses) agreed with the statement that the PAMANA project had changed the way conflicts over land, trees, forest and water are being addressed in communities. Most respondents (96% of total responses) agreed that the PAMANA project changed the way host, refugees, and IDPs (in South Sudan) live together.

Outputs provided by the PAMANA project fall into three categories: i) Humanitarian component focusing on training in conflict sensitivity and PSEA and the provision of seeds/tools and cash grants; 2) Development Component provided training to IPs and local structures on NRM, sustainable production, value addition, gender equality and PSEA; 3) The Peacebuilding component focused on ways to raise, discuss and resolve issues and conflicts relating to NRM. The following sections discuss the quality of these different components. Overall, all three components made impressive progress in addressing key livelihood and natural resource related challenges.

Effectiveness of Humanitarian and Development components

In relation to humanitarian and development components, the project has made impressive progress in improving farming methods to increase and sustain farm yields. Results of FGDs and the HH survey indicate that the majority of beneficiaries interviewed in both WN and CES

received training and found these useful (98% of the HH survey respondents). Annex VII summarises the key changes that HH survey respondents cited that project development interventions linked to humanitarian and development components made to the way that they farm, differentiated by household status and country. The most common change given, cited by 43 out of 126 (34%) household respondents was that interventions and inputs had increased their food production, both for consumption and sale. The second most frequently cited change was planting in lines. This was mainly cited by respondents in WN. The third most frequently cited change was improved soil fertility and reduced soil erosion (due to mulching, composting and adding farmyard manure) with a quarter (25%) of all respondents stating this as a key change to the way they farmed. Other common changes that were cited included better farming practices, better quality harvesting, the establishment of nursery beds and kitchen gardens, the use of organic pest control measures and improved poultry production (only relevant to WN). Least commonly cited changes are energy saving stoves (only relevant for WN and cited by only one respondent there) and changes in 'natural resource management' cited by only one respondent in CES. This may be because people thought that these last two items were less significant to their immediate, everyday lives.

The cash grant intervention, which was intended to support the most vulnerable households to meet their immediate basic and economic needs, did, in some households, encourage savings and promoted income generating activities. Some examples of how the cash grants were used are provided below. It should be noted that cash grants were made available to just under one-third of the overall beneficiary population: in total, 1,604 (604 WN, 1000 CES) vulnerable beneficiaries received cash grants of the total 5000 beneficiaries (2000 WN and 3000 CES). At design stage, PAMANA had planned to distribute 50 (WN 20, CES 30) larger cash grants to structures; however, due to changes in context, especially the increase in the number of structures to 122 in both WN and CES and the fact that the most vulnerable beneficiaries cut across all the structures, it was resolved to select individual members from the total number of 122 structures. As such, the cash grant component was distributed to more individuals and in lower amounts than initially planned.

With the provision of the cash grants, chickens, vegetable seeds, establishment of village ambassadors and formation of peace-building groups, the income, nutritional status, and attitude and behaviours of the beneficiary community members have improved. Addressing malnutrition is seen to be a very strong point of the project. The availability and range of nutritious foods has reportedly increased enrolment and improved children's performance in schools, however this was mostly reported in relation to host community beneficiaries.

The cash grant enabled the refugees to rent land from the host landlords that strengthened relationships between them and allowed access to thatching grass, building poles and firewood. Among the host communities, the cash grant was mainly used for paying school fees, buying goats, planting cassava and starting petty businesses in selling vegetables. These activities have increased income streams for the beneficiary households and reduced conflict between husbands and wives due to the ability to meet daily household requirements like school materials (uniform, books, pens, mathematical set and pencils), medical and social demands. The following case studies illustrate the positive outcomes of the grants.

Case study 1:

Abile Magara Zubairi a member of Romogi-Kiri Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Romogi sub county, WN, used the cash grant to buy 3 female goats and the balance for paying school fees for his daughter in doing a vocational training in tailoring at a technical school in Yumbe

district. The three goats have multiplied to six, he sold three goats each at Ugx 360,000 to get Ugx 1,080,000 that he used to buy a sewing machine at Ugx 310,000 for his daughter. Part of the balance he used for paying school fees for his other children in primary 5 and 7 classes. He plans to buy three more goats and cultivate two acres of cassava that he hopes will generate more money to enable him to construct a four roomed iron sheet house in five years.

Case study 2:

Zainabu Viko, a widow with four children who is a member of Romogi-Kiri Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Romogi sub county, WM, started vegetable selling business with the Ugx 298,000 cash grant she received. She earns Ugx 200,000 per year and has invested the proceeds into her food kiosk business. The vegetable and food business is helping her to pay school fees of her four children in primary school without disturbance.

Case study 3:

Mary Opani, a cash grant beneficiary in Yei Payam, CES, used the money provided by PAMANA (via OFAO) to buy two goats. These goats gave birth to two kids, allowing Mary to multiply her assets, creating further income security for her family.

Effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Component

Overall, the PSEA, GBV and peacebuilding training and activities, which included dialogue meetings focusing on NRM issues and community conflicts; radio programmes/talk shows on NRM related issues; facilitating listening sessions; use of mobile speakers and SD cards for listening groups; Hagiga Wahid system; training on peacebuilding and conflict resolution; training of community ambassadors; community engagement meetings/peace forums; were very effective at contributing to improved gender equality and conflict resolution. Annex IX summarises the involvement of beneficiaries by status in relation to gender, PSEA and GBV activities. Involvement in training on gender equality and PSEA was high, with over 50% of Household Survey respondents citing involvement in this training.

A large proportion (42%) of HH survey respondents, especially in relation to CES (97% of respondents from CES), thought that the PAMANA project had changed the way men and women participate in land and natural resource decision making both in relation to household and farmland decision making (44% of all households) and in relation to NRM decision making (42% of all respondents) (Annex VIII).

In relation to peacebuilding (Outcome 3), the PAMANA project and the HDP approach it uses is very relevant to addressing natural resource management conflicts. Respondents reported that the training and interventions (radio programmes and talk shows), community listening groups and workshops have gone a long way to help them understand and address natural resource management conflicts. Overall, 79% of HH survey respondents said that women's participation in conflict resolution had increased as a result of PAMANA project interventions.

Annex IX also summarises the involvement of beneficiaries by status in relation to different peacebuilding activities. Attendance rates in relation to listening groups, listening to talk shows and discussions on land and NRM disputes and training on NRM disputes are relatively high with over half of all beneficiaries surveyed saying they were involved. Attendance rates amongst host and returnee households in South Sudan as well as host households in Uganda were relatively higher compared to refugees and IDPs respectively. When asked which of the trainings and activities related to peace building that respondents will continue to use after the project ends nearly half of all respondents said they would continue using the listening groups,

the training on PSEA and GBV and on land and natural resource management disputes (Annex IX).

The work on peace building and gender equality has improved the relationship among family members and the community and enabled beneficiary households to meet their daily needs and priorities like food, school, medical and social requirements, as illustrated by the following case studies:

Case study 4:

In a FGD in village 4, zone 3 in Bidibidi settlement in Romogi sub county, WN, a female beneficiary member said she used to raise her voice high to the children whenever there was no money in the house. When children asked for school requirements, she could not approach anyone for help. But now she can reach out to the neighbours and the community members freely. "With the small money I get from the sale of my vegetables and the regular advice I receive from the village ambassador, now I have a good relationship with my husband and the children as quarrel on resources sharing has reduced."

Household survey respondents reported that improved farming practices have had substantial impact on increasing farm production, both in terms of food for home consumption and sale. Water and soil conservation measures and vegetable production have increased incomes and diversified income sources and improved the resilience of the communities to food shortages.

In relation to challenges to effectiveness, some beneficiaries mentioned that PAMANA interventions had a limited scope, in terms of number of beneficiaries and most were short-term; which in turn meant that the interventions did little to enable them to get out of poverty. Some beneficiaries suggested that they would appreciate support to develop long term enterprises like cocoa, coffee and bananas.

Beneficiaries in Nyori multipurpose cooperative society, Yumbe district, reported that they are practicing soil and water conservation measures and coppicing trees for regeneration. This has increased their access to firewood and reduced conflict among community members.

In relation to natural resource management, significantly impactful work has been done by the project in CES in relation to agroforestry and coppicing, which are reflected in the HH survey results (see Annex X). Increasingly, people who used to clear trees on farmland now tend to keep them as windbreaks and prune them instead. Furthermore, the issue of logging in CES has partly been addressed by the Project through working with the military and community to relocate the military out of the area to enable women to collect firewood and by working with the South Sudan government to pass an order restricting the cutting of trees.

There were also reports by FGD respondents of reduced conflict over firewood due to the training on and use of energy saving stoves as well as coppicing practices by the beneficiary households. The reduced use of firewood from communal areas has contributed to regeneration of the vegetation on farm and communal lands. However, the effectiveness of energy saving stoves was not reflected in HH survey results (see Annex VII).

Furthermore, in WN, some sub counties are implementing by-laws to reduce conflicts over natural resources. For example, Romogi sub county WN is implementing a by-law on environment and natural resources with the focus on restricting stray animals and controlling tree cutting. Previously, there was conflict between the host community and refugees over thatching grass and grazing areas, but with the effective implementation of the by-law there is now a cordial relationship with refugees.

Despite these positive interventions, research findings (natural resource mapping exercises) indicate that the overall state of key natural resources such as forests, wetlands, rivers, and grazing lands continues to decline. In CES, sources of thatching grass and building poles, especially Barasus palm trees, are reducing due to an increase in human and livestock population, over-harvesting and drought. Areas of thatching grass are reportedly inundated with an invasive weed called 'garamba' in WN and 'kapanga' in CES. Respondents in CES reported that they now have to walk between three and seven kilometres to access thatching grass and firewood.

In relation to peacebuilding, one local government staff in Koboko district, WN said he was very happy with the way the project had made a huge contribution in relation to making host and refugee communities interact.

The listening groups, together with the radio messages, have improved sharing of information among beneficiaries, their families and the communities. This intervention has particularly improved the relationship between husbands and wives and among community members. The messages on the radios focus on family relationships, community natural resources management and productivity. It was reported that these groups had reduced laziness, excessive drinking, gender-based violence and had improved equality on the farm (with men and women working together), household decision-making, as well as hygiene among men leading to improved relationships between husbands and wives. The participation of women in decision making at community and local government levels has increased as they now actively deliberate during community meetings and are also taking up leadership positions at the group and community levels.

The dialogues were reportedly useful as people used them to identify and discuss pressing issues, especially in relation to land disputes in CES between local government and landlords. In Kupera, members of the listening group now have formed joint farms and are practicing greater gender equality.

The following case study illustrates the benefits of PAMANA peacebuilding interventions:

Case Study 5:

Before the project, it was reported that there was a lot of back biting by women at the water points that could lead to frequent quarrels. With the counselling and handling of gender issues and conflict resolution by the village ambassadors and peacebuilding groups, both the conflict among women and with the host communities have reduced as there is now order at the water collection points, and communities now live more peacefully together (FGD, Village 4, BidiBidi Settlement).

Case Study 6:

A female beneficiary, a member of a women's peace committee group from Mukaya, Lainya, CES, said that the project has empowered women to engage in resolving conflicts related to gender-based violence and access to farmland, while also improving relations between civilians and armed forces. In the past, women faced harassment from armed groups, making it difficult for them to access farmland and firewood. However, through the project's efforts, which included discussions with army leadership and community members, women now feel safer while collecting firewood and accessing land for farming. Now they communicate with military leaders about any issues that arise, compared to the past where people feared the military. These changes are due to the community center's media and the active participation of women in peace dialogues.

The integration of PSEA into development interventions in the PAMANA project has worked well to increase beneficiaries' awareness of the channels for reporting gender-based violence.

Key changes brought about by the project in relation to Outcomes are summarised in Annex V.

Quality of PAMANA Inputs and Outcomes

Overall, most of those interviewed for the ETE expressed satisfaction with the inputs provided by the project. This comment is backed up by findings of the PDM reports for WN and CES. However, some respondents suggested that the quality of some inputs could be improved. Whilst the PDM report expressed 80% satisfaction with the seeds distributed, some respondents reported that seeds were distributed too late in the planting season and that seeds of the local egg plants (*Solanum aethiopicum*), known locally as *nakati* did not germinate. Furthermore, the ETE team suggests that a wider range of seed varieties could have been provided by the project. Interviews and household survey data indicate that only a limited variety of vegetable seeds were distributed, including sukuma wiki, tomatoes, as well as *nakati* in WN and maize, beans, and eggplants in CES. However, the project could have encouraged a wider variety of local vegetables and tree seedlings to increase farming resilience to climate change. Some interviewees mentioned that the quality of the knapsack sprayers provided was relatively poor and many had problems with the nozzles not working. Some FGD participants noted that if you bought an 'original' pump it should last five years, however, the ones that the project brought were 'replicates' that do not last as long.

Feedback on energy saving stoves was generally limited. Only one respondent of the household survey mentioned that energy saving stoves had made a change to their lives. The most efficient stoves available are the Improved Cook Stoves, however, the stoves introduced by the PAMANA project are made with local materials, which makes them cheaper to make but less efficient. There were some reports that the home-made stoves had failed, due to lack of appropriate local materials to make them.

Some FGD participants reported that the sound boxes (radios) given to the listening groups stopped working due to a problem with the inner workings of the radios, not just the batteries. Participants also said that they reported to CDC that the radios are broken, however some of them have not been fixed yet. CDC fixed radios and replaced some radios, however, they continue to break down due to poor management. Listening groups through their community ambassadors were connected to technicians who could repair their radios at a fee, however, some still want CDC to repair them.

In relation to the introduction of poultry (in WN only), a substantial number of interviewees and HH survey respondents (40%) said they would continue raising poultry (see Annex X). Many people interviewed said they were happy with the poultry they had received and some, had managed to increase poultry production significantly, which had improved their diets and incomes.

Some respondents voiced concerns that the chickens distributed were too young (one month old), and that introduced poultry caused death and disease to local poultry. However, it is very difficult to know whether poultry introduced by the project caused these deaths or whether this was coincidence. Paravets were, in some cases, unable to effectively address these disease problems. This was partly due to a number of reasons: i) the paravets had to get vaccines from sub-counties (which were a long way away from their homes); ii) vaccines have to be stored in a cool place, otherwise they become ineffective and iii) government legislation means that some drugs can only be administered by qualified vets, so can't be administered by para

vets; iv) poor performance of some paravets because they did not take up the opportunity of making a business out of being a paravet. When these trainees saw others being paid for being a paravet (by other NGOs) they decided to give up. However, some have made good profits from the enterprise; v) some local people trained as paravets moved away from the areas.

Some respondents voiced concerns that poultry diseases and deaths were attributed to the fact that paravets did not provide adequate training on poultry management. Whilst people were taught that cockerels needed to be given water to drink and to be fed, since they are not used to scavenging, some people neglected to do this. In other cases, although people were asked to report sick chickens, nobody did.

Extent to which results are inclusive

A key strength of the PAMANA project is that it builds, wherever possible, on already existing local structures such as cooperatives. A key learning, already mentioned, is that very few refugees are members of cooperatives, so this meant the project had to put in considerable efforts to review small existing target structures within the refugee community. Whilst very few beneficiaries commented on the way that households were chosen for cash grants, a local government staff in WN suggested that the allocation of grants could have been made more inclusive and better aligned with government support schemes by considering the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development's vulnerability assessment tool to select beneficiary households.

A key issue, already mentioned in CES, is violence connected with armed cattle herding groups which has led to smallholder farmers having their crops damaged and livelihood destabilised. However, there is little evidence that the PAMANA project has made efforts to involve cattle herders in discussions or to understand the root causes of the cattle herder movements and how issues of conflict between cattle herding and farming can be addressed. Cattle herding is often viewed as a problem by farmers and outside agencies in the region, however it is often a valuable and resilient local land use.

In relation to the Household survey, most respondents (87% of total responses) agreed with the statement 'The Humanitarian assistance (seeds, farm inputs etc) given by the PAMANA project had been fairly distributed and without complaint'. However, 9% disagreed and 4% of respondents were unsure. The majority of HH survey respondents (75%) also agreed that the PAMANA project had involved equal numbers of men and women (Annex VI).

In relation to PWDs, whilst a significant number of beneficiary households included PWDs, there was little evidence that project interventions included or addressed issues specifically related to them.

Unintended positive or negative effects of the project

Overall, there is little evidence that the PAMANA project had any unintended negative or positive effects. In relation to cash grants given out, there were some ill-feelings as to why some people got a grant while others did not.

As mentioned already, there were some reports of poultry disease and death associated with the poultry component of the project. FGDs in WN report that introduced poultry spread disease among existing chicken flocks (symptoms included nasal discharge, diarrhoea, cough) that led to the death of some local poultry. However, it is very difficult to know whether poultry introduced by the project caused these deaths or whether this was coincidence.

Whilst training on energy saving stoves was reportedly useful, some FGD respondents said that the stoves they had made had not lasted because they were made with the wrong type of soil.

Some FGDs asked about marketing for surplus products, since they had produced a large quantity of cabbages but had only limited access to markets. Other respondents mentioned that increased production of vegetables had lowered selling prices.

5.2 Sustainability

In relation to sustainability, a key positive point is that feedback from Key Informants from Local Government in WN indicates that they think the HDP nexus approach is effective and will adopt this approach, going forward.

However, there are contrasting and conflicting approaches of different NGOs in relation to sustainability. Some NGOs pay local people to carry out interventions. For example, some NGOs operating in the region are paying individuals to make energy saving stoves or to be paravets. This contrasts with PAMANA's approach which provides training but not payment for people to perform these services. This is a deliberate decision in favour of sustainability, i.e. to use market-based approaches and to rely on participants' intrinsic motivation / business mind-set to carry out the tasks. Some project structures, such as Energy Saving Champions and Paravets that are accustomed to receiving payments, may discontinue as 'project interventions.' However, this does not mean that the benefits of such interventions will be lost, as some individuals trained by the project may continue to perform these services, in exchange for payment from local people or NGOs.

ETE's FGDs, KIIs and HH survey results show that interventions that are likely to continue are:

- Kitchen gardening: Nearly two thirds of respondents (64%) of all HH survey respondents indicated that they intend to carry this on. whilst over a third of respondents said they will continue practicing: planting in lines (42%); planting new types of vegetables (such as sukuma wiki, eggplants, onions) (40%). Female beneficiaries reported that they are saving their own seeds to plant in the next season. It is also part of the local system of improving food and nutrition security. In addition, the money earned from the sale will continue to be used to buy the seeds. However, the need to encourage the production of indigenous vegetable species like pumpkin leaves, cucumber, hibiscus (?), cowpea leaves, etc is important in improving the nutrition and resilience of beneficiary households.
- Agroforestry: planting trees alongside crops, 36% of HH survey respondents said they would continue this practice. Agroforestry was particularly popular as a technique to continue in CES where nearly two thirds of respondents said they would continue practicing this technique. This will contribute to sustainable firewood supplies and improved soil fertility and reduced soil erosion.
- Coppicing trees: respondents from CES said they would continue coppicing trees for use as fuelwood, forage and mulching.
- Poultry production (only applicable for WN) where 42% of respondents there said they would continue poultry farming for improved nutrition and income.
- Vegetable Gardening: The PAMANA project has motivated project beneficiaries and increased their awareness of the importance of vegetable growing to improve the nutrition and income in their households, thus encouraging them to save vegetable seeds.

- Soil improvement: just under a third of respondents said they would continue improving their soil, through mulching and using composts.
- Peace building groups to resolve NRM conflicts and behavioural change relating to gender equality, PSEA and GBV, including village ambassadors who will continue to resolve conflicts among community members. In addition, the village ambassadors and beneficiary community members, particularly women, have further developed their skills to address domestic and natural resource management conflicts and conflict sensitivity.
- The training and support of farmer groups, as this work will be taken up by the sub county local government departments of community service and production.
- Coordination and collaboration between the Implementing Partners (IPs) and relevant Local Government Departments with respect to grant planning, project design, supervision, monitoring and regular meeting.

In terms of what beneficiaries will continue to do after the project ends, findings from the Household Survey indicate that a substantial number of beneficiaries will continue to do many of the agricultural development interventions, as Annex VII illustrates. Only one HH survey respondent mentioned that they would continue using fuel efficient stoves.

Feedback from FGDs indicated that interventions that are likely not to continue are:

- Cash grants, as the local government does not have the funding for such items and donor funding is being scaled down.
- The agroecology champions and paravets are also not facilitated well and did not receive adequate training (only for a few weeks). Linking the agroecology champions to the sub county extension department is important for refresher training
- Training in peacebuilding and proper functioning of the peacebuilding groups as there is no proper funding system at the community level to facilitate the work of the village ambassadors.

6. Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

Overall, the HDP nexus approach of addressing environmental and development issues and peacebuilding at the same time is an effective one. The project's assumptions have held true. In relation to all three outcomes, the project has made significant progress in addressing key challenges related to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups, especially women, although this was limited in scope (Outcome 1); strengthening the capacities of local people to create opportunities for medium and long term livelihoods in relation to crop and poultry, but to a lesser extent in relation to non-farm activities (Outcome 2); and to strengthening people's (especially women's) capacity to facilitate dialogue and manage tensions to promote sustainable farming and livestock conflicts between households, but to a lesser extent in relation to the management of communal natural resources (grazing lands, water, forests) (Outcome 3). In relation to the project's contribution to overall impact of significantly reducing conflict over natural resources, it is still too early to gauge its extent; however, it is clear that the project has been relatively more impactful in relation to addressing farm, livestock and firewood related conflicts. Conflicts and competition relating to grazing lands, thatching grass, cattle herders (in CES) and security of water supply remain, to differing extents, latent.

Ideally, the project's relevance would have been improved if more efforts had focused on ensuring that HDP interventions drew more strongly on a holistic, climate smart landscape⁵³ approach. However, this is easier said than done, since one of the key problems is that the project had little choice over the settlements it could work in as these were chosen by the local government officials. This meant that the communities targeted by the project within the same local government area were located at considerable distances from each other and had no common or communal natural resource use areas.

A key risk identified by project beneficiaries, other key informants as well as the project itself⁵⁴ is that the increasing risk of extended droughts and erratic rainfall means that farming systems need to be very resilient to climate change.

Effectiveness: the project has made impressive progress in improving farming methods to increase and sustain farm yields of beneficiaries. This has led to increased food production both for home consumption and for sale and improved soil fertility. A key issue in relation to **sustainability** is the contrasting and conflicting approaches of different NGOs.

7. Recommendations

Going forward, it is recommended that the IPs:

- Work with local government, CSOs as well as NGOs to raise awareness about the effectiveness of the HDP approach and facilitate its adoption.
- Put far greater emphasis on the need for transdisciplinarity and strengthening of the landscape approach. This would do much to facilitate the HDP Nexus Approach. Addressing this type of work is at the heart and intersection of many disciplines and sectors including food, agriculture, water, energy, climate, environment and economy and includes multiple actors at multiple scales: farmers, breeders, private sector, NGOs, CSO, local, district, national authorities, environmental, agricultural and water policy makers, and development partners. A deliberate effort to bring these actors' different forms of knowledge and expertise together, including technical, social and indigenous knowledge, would strengthen the interventions.
- Reinforce the HDP, climate smart agriculture and agroecology approaches by mainstreaming an appreciation of the value and use of indigenous technical knowledge in relation to resilience and sustainable natural resource management. This should include encouraging local people to think about and analyse the full range of local uses of communal forests, grasslands, wetlands and rivers. Cattle herding, for example, is often viewed as a problem by farmers and outside agencies, or otherwise completely neglected, however it is often a valuable and resilient local land use in this region⁵⁵. The value of wild fruits and other foods, game, essential oils, honey, wood and other non-timber forest products may also exceed the value of firewood - which often remains the focus of project interventions⁵⁶. Spiritual values linked to trees and woodland, rarely mentioned by economists and scientists, may be extremely important

⁵³ We define landscape as an area with a characteristic configuration of topography, vegetation, land use and settlements that is influenced by the ecological, historical, economic and cultural process and activities of the area. Scheer, Shames and Friedman, 2013. Defining Integrated Landscape Management for policy makers. Ecoagriculture policy focus series no.10. EcoAgriculture Partners Washington DC

⁵⁴ Pamana Progress Report No.5 1/1/24 to 30/6/2024

⁵⁵ Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel.

⁵⁶ Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel.

and must be taken into account, since they often motivate and galvanise people into conserving and better managing communal woodlands and grasslands. Rules defined by local communities and users may be highly effective in regulating natural resource management, they should be the starting point for effective resource management⁵⁷. It is also important to appreciate overlapping rights to communal lands. Projects tend to focus on rights relevant to settled farming communities, rather than traditional rights of temporary users, such as cattle herders. It is important these traditional rights are accommodated to reduce conflicts⁵⁸. All stakeholders and both permanent and temporary resource users, including pastoralists as well as other government sectors, such as agriculture and livestock departments should be involved in decision making, enforcement and conflict resolutions over communal lands.

- Focus on encouraging diversification into non-farm activities. Whilst the project has made substantial impacts and significant headway in relation to increasing beneficiaries' farm production and making it more sustainable, going forward, it is recommended that IPs consider incorporating traditional natural resource related activities that are linked with and provide incentives to conserve nature and sustainable natural resource management, such as beekeeping, the production and management of wild fruits and thatching and forage grasses on communal lands in to their approaches. This recommendation is especially important in relation to refugee beneficiaries, who have less access to land compared to hosts. Suggested non-farm income generating activities could include small businesses (trading) and tailoring, as well as activities that build on economic opportunities linked with the clean-energy revolution, such as encouraging the use of solar energy as an alternative to biomass and fossil fuels.
- Address water insecurity in relation to farm production and in view of the likelihood that this region will continue to experience increased risk of drought. The project has made good progress in ensuring the high rate of adoption of soil and water conserving practices (such as mulching and use of water channels). It is important to think of how the HDP approach can be used to promote better water governance and water security.

Further recommendations going forward are to use the landscape approach to continue to focus on natural resource management concerns that are commonly shared between host and refugee beneficiaries including:

- The need to conserve the thatching grass and indigenous tree species by wise management and putting restrictions on harvesting periods through applying traditional and official laws.
- The training of the beneficiary groups in indigenous tree nursery management and seed collection, facilitation of the establishment of tree nursery and provision of indigenous tree species.
- Linking paravets, agroecology and energy-saving champions to local government extension departments for regular refresher training, monitoring and supervision.
- Promoting the continuity of the small business and farming activities, the provision of business grants to farmer cooperatives and booster funds through the development of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) of the beneficiary groups to ensure there is adequate money for the members to borrow to finance their activities and to strengthen social cohesion.

⁵⁷ Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel.

⁵⁸ Kerkhof, P. 2000. Local Forest Management in the Sahel: Towards a new social contract. SOS Sahel.

These recommendations summarised, with the target audience for each recommendation, key intended users and potential constraints to follow up in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Recommendations, with target audience, key intended users and potential constraints to follow up

Recommendation	Target Group	Key Intended Users	Potential Constraints as to Follow Up
Work with local government, CSOs as well as NGOs to raise awareness about the effectiveness of the HDP approach and facilitate its adoption.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	Failure of key intended users to agree on the HDP approach as the way forward
Put greater emphasis on transdisciplinarity and strengthening of the market systems, agroecology and landscape approaches.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and implementing partners, local government, policy makers, research institutions (such as National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) ⁵⁹ CSOs, NGOs, and local people	Key users continue to operate in silos. Failure of key users to appreciate the value of bottom up, local knowledge. Tendency to continue the top-down approach. Pressure to implement 'quick fix, silver bullet solutions' that benefit big business and industrial agriculture
Focus on encouraging diversification into non-farm activities.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	
Address water insecurity in relation to farm production and use HDP approach to address water governance and water security issues.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	
Linking paravets, agroecology and energy-saving champions to local government extension departments for regular refresher training, monitoring and supervision.	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	Not seen as a priority by key stakeholders. Failure of key intended users to agree that this approach is the best way forward
Promoting the continuity of the small business and farming activities, the provision of business grants to farmer cooperatives and booster funds through the development of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)	CACH and Implementing Partners	CACH and Implementing Partners, Local Government, CSOs, NGOs, Local People	Not seen as a priority by key stakeholders. Failure of key intended users to agree that this approach is the best way forward

⁵⁹ <https://naro.go.ug/about-us/naro-about-us/>