Gender Norms, Conflict, and Aid

Research conducted in Rumbek and Yambio
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CSRF
Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility
SOUTH SUDAN

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1.0 Introduction

South Sudan attained independence from the Sudan on the 9th of July, 2011 and in December 2013, just over two years after this momentous achievement, the world's newest nation descended into a civil war that rages on to date. Restoring security and supporting peacebuilding processes and democratic governance in the long-term needs to be built on a good understanding of the damage caused by the history of armed conflict and the prevalence of different types of violence at the community, sub-national and regional / inter-state level.[1] The human fatalities and the increase in the activities of communal militias have severely impacted on the South Sudanese population and subjected them to constant displacements, severe food insecurity, economic hardships and the worst security situation in the region. The latest bout of conflict experienced in July 2016, just a few months after the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), has severely increased displacements and vulnerabilities of civilians across the country.[2]

The Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility (CSRF) was initiated in 2016 by the British, Swiss, and Canadian donor missions to provide technical analysis, advisory services and practical support to integrate conflict-sensitive principles and practices into donor strategies and programming in South Sudan. The CSRF, which is implemented by a consortium of NGOs comprising Saferworld, Swisspeace, and CDA, provides guidelines, research and analysis, capacity development and training, and institutional learning to participating donors and implementing partners over an initial two year period.[3]

 The CSRF is conducting initial research on the interaction between gender norms of masculinities and femininities, and capacities for peace and conflict in areas that are receiving assistance. The aim of the research is to better understand how gender norms, including violent notions of masculinity and gender inequality in Greater Lakes State and Western Equatoria State may be

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[1] South Sudan Human Rights Commission, Interim Report on South Sudan Internal Conflict December 15, 2013 - March 15, 2014.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Terms of Reference   - http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/Vacancies/sow---field-researcher---gender-norms-in-conflict-16-12-04-1-hg.pdf.

affecting: the scale and the nature of conflict and violence; the roles played by men, women, boys and girls in fuelling violence or promoting peace; and better understand the impact of external assistance on these dynamics.[4]

1.1 Study Area Backgrounds - Greater Lakes and Greater Western Equatoria States:

Bordered by Greater Unity, Warrap, Jonglei, Western and Central Equatoria states[5], the Greater Lakes State (GLS) tends to experience violent conflict which results in instability, displacements and constant expectations of violence. In Lakes, 80% of residents are pastoralists possessing an estimated 1.1 million heads of cattle while the rest engage in agriculture and fishing. In addition, 29% of the state is food insecure and suffers from a scarcity of water points. By 2009, there were only 75 operational water points in the whole state, which means that pastoralists constantly move in search of water and pasture, especially during the dry seasons. The majority of the state's citizens are members of the Dinka ethnic group and the Bongo and Jur Bel tribes which occupy Wulu County.[6] In 2006, 35% of residents, mainly men in GLS admitted to possessing firearms while less than half of the surveyed population claimed that their personal security has improved since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005.[7] Due to the constant upheaval, the capacity of the local social and economic infrastructure is one of the lowest in the country.[8]

In GLS, the main economic activity for men and boys is cattle keeping. Not only are cattle a main source of livelihoods, they also serve as a symbol of cultural identity and social cohesion through marriage or dowry payments, making cattle highly valued possessions for men both economically and socially. Cattle are also regarded as a safety net and often sold as a last resort. Men engage

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[4] Ibid.
[5] For the purpose of geographical clarity only, this report refers to the states and counties as they were in the 10 states administrative unit framework.
[6] Community Consultation Report, Lakes State, Published by South Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control South Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission United Nations Development Programme MAY 2012.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

in selling goats, sheep, chicken and running small retail shops. Many women and girls stay at home doing household chores like cooking and fetching water and only a few engage in income generating activities like selling tea and operating restaurants in the market.[9] In the advent of World Food Programme support in the form of vegetable gardens, women and girls engage in tending the vegetable gardens and selling the proceeds in the market.[10]

Greater Western Equatoria State (WES) is landlocked and borders Greater Lakes, Western Bahr El Ghazel to the North, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the South, Central African Republic (CAR) to the West and Greater Central Equatoria to the East. There are eight ethnic groups in the state: Avokaya, Azande, Beli, Balanda, Baka, Fertit, Mundu and Moru.[11]

Heavy fighting broke out between several armed groups and the government forces in November 2015 around Ezo, Source Yubu and Yambio and a second conflict erupted in December 2015. The government launched serious offensives against the armed groups in early January 2016 and another surprise attack on the armed groups on the 21st of January 2016, leading to a counter-attack on Yambio.[12] Civilians and not combatants bear most of the brunt of the violence. Government forces deploy counter insurgency tactics that collectively punish civilians, inflicting heavy damage on civilian life and assets. An interagency assessment reported that 117 houses were burnt in Mundri in 2015, 196 houses were destroyed and a hospital vandalized in June of 2015 and 200 homes destroyed in December 2015 in Yambio. Another interagency assessment reported the destruction of crops, health care facilities, looting and destruction of civilian property.[13]

Detention and disappearances of young men were prominent features of the violence. Young men from Ezo, Kotobi, Maridi, Mundri, Source Yubu, and Yambio reported being continually harassed and detained. It was also reported that many of those disappeared were later killed. In

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[9] Challenges to Security, Livelihoods and Gender Justice in South Sudan, The situation of Dinka agro pastoralist communities in Lakes and Warrap States, March 2013.
[10] FGD with WFP in Greater Lakes State, February 2017.
[11] Western Equatoria state (WES) briefing pack RCSO team, June 2010.
[12] Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, conflict in Western Equatoria, Describing events through 17 July 2016.
[13] Ibid.

early August 2015 and January 2016, thousands of IDPs fled to the outside perimeter of the UNMISS compound in Yambio for protection. Fighting between government forces, more than 6,000 IDPs arrived and were crowded into the compound of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), squeezed in between the UNMISS and UNICEF compounds. In response, the UN led efforts to provide clean water and sanitation for the refugees, but no food was distributed, and the IDPs were encouraged to leave.[14] In January 2017, fresh fighting between government forces and opposition groups north of the town led to a new wave of IDPs, some of which integrated with existing populations in Yambio, others which are receiving some assistance.[15]

Increased conflicts in GLS resulted into forced migration of Dinka pastoralists into WES from 2014. While in search of pasture to graze cattle, crops of settled farmers were destroyed, increasing tensions between the Western Equatorians who are settled farmers and the migrant pastoralists who usually carry along small arms.[16]

The main economic activity in WES is crop production undertaken by both men and women as small and large scale enterprises. Men under take the tedious task of tilling the farm and preparing it for crop planting while women help with other tasks of weeding and planting. Women, who undertake farming on their own, pay labourers to clear and till the farms. Produce from the farms are consumed and some is sold in the market. Men engage in large scale businesses of selling merchandise like bicycles, motor bicycles and household items, while women engage in small scale businesses like running small restaurants and tea making. There were 234 IDPs Households, mostly women and children. The men engage in casual labour around Yambio in order to provide for their families; however these opportunities are very scarce. The IDPs noted that the displacement rendered both men and women incapable of supporting their families.[17]

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[14] Ibid.
[15] UNHCR, South Sudan Operational Update 04/2017. 15-28 February, 2017.
[16] FAO, the Impact of Conflict on the Livestock Sector in South Sudan, February 2016.
[17] FGD with Community Based organizations February, 2017

When interviewed, the IDP representatives observed that economic activities were very limited and many could barely take care of their families. For the women, the lack of water was a major concern and most of the IDP women spoken to noted that they travel for up to 5 miles in search of water because they can hardly fetch water from the nearby water points as it is reserved for the host community. The women felt that they could be subjected to violence on their way to search for water and firewood.[18]

3.0 Key Findings of the Research

The key research findings are presented along the three research objectives on: the scale and the nature of conflict and violence; the roles played by men, women, boys and girls in fuelling violence or promoting peace; and to better understand the impact of external assistance on these dynamics.

3.1 The scale and the nature of conflict and violence

Violent conflicts in South Sudan are multi-layered and local-level community conflicts have complex cross-state (within South Sudan), national and regional interactions. There is a variance in the type, scale and nature of conflicts and violence in GLS and in WES.

In GLS, conflicts within and between communities have been extremely recurrent, usually caused by armed cattle raids, revenge killings, retaliation for cattle-related attacks and marriage-related disagreements.[19] Ownership of cattle is very important to communities in GLS, with cattle being a source of wealth and also used for paying the bride price.

The most prevalent conflicts in the Agok and Greater Yirol areas of GLS manifest in the form of inter-clan violence caused by cattle theft, cattle raiding and revenge killings. This is further fuelled by any movement of cattle to access water or pasture – for which there is strong competition - or to move cattle to higher ground after floods. Increasingly, criminal activities such as raping and looting, and eloping with girls without paying the bride price aggravate the violence and conflict between communities. The presence of small arms has exacerbated the scale and viciousness of

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[18] FGD with IDPs in Western Equatoria State, February 2017
[19] *Community Security Assessment – Lakes State*. Saferworld. October 2014.

cycles of revenge attacks and killings, especially amongst the Kuei and Rup sub- clans.[20] In April 2016 alone, 116 people from Kuei, Rup and Pakam were killed.[21]

National level conflicts have a bearing on the state-level violence and conflicts. For instance in 2013, when GLS expected attacks from the SPLA-In Opposition (SPLA-IO), the youth in GLS ceased inter-and intra-clan feuds and convened to protect their territory. In another incident, the national-level conflict led to the killing of a paramount chief in GLS. In one focus group discussion, respondents noted that national level conflicts have increased the presence of small arms in the state as fighting spread across the country and armed factions obtained more weapons. This has worsened the security situation along the GLS state borders. The same respondents noted that politicians at the national level incite the youth in GLS to engage in conflicts for their own political gains.[22] These youth groups are usually young men, including the cattle camp youths (who herd the cattle), as well as different types of community defines groups or militias.

In the current situation of multiple conflicts, alliances shift easily from one group to the other and are often influenced by past woes and reprisals. The fluidity of alliances in GLS makes the conflicts very unpredictable.[23]Border disputes have emerged recently between previously peaceful communities, because of the creation of 28 (now 34) states that influences the ethnic make-up of the new states and who controls the resources.[24]

Respondents also noted that there was rise in domestic violence against women which was attributed to changing cultural values and norms. The adoption of modern dress styles, making eye contact with men and being vocal, was regarded as modern and disrespectfulness towards men. So for men to reclaim the respect that was accorded to them before the era of modernization, interviewees reported that some men have resorted to beating their wives.[25]

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[20] KII with RRC in Greater lakes State, February, 2017.
[21] Key informant Respondent in Greater Lakes State, February, 2017.
[22] Focus Group Discussion with United Nations Mission in South Sudan, February, 2017.
[23] Focus Group Discussion Respondents Greater lakes State, February, 2017.
[24]Ibid.
[25] Focus Group Discussions with respondents in Western Equatoria State, February, 2017.

In a focus group discussion (FGD) with IDPs who had returned from Khartoum around independence, it was noted that the proliferation of small arms and their presence in the hands of the young men are the primary causes of violence because the arms enable the youth to loot property with impunity. The armed youth engage in criminal activities because of the current economic situation and the fact that there are no jobs from which they can earn a living – so they resort to violence.

In WES, the situation is quite different, because the Azande, the Balanda and other tribes in Yambio have a history of co-habiting relatively peacefully. However, in recent years, the advent of migrations of armed, aggressive pastoralists from GLS into WES has caused some tensions in an already tough economic climate for communities in WES. More recently, there have also been incidents of shooting and killings by pastoralists of Dinka origin at Hai Kuba. Respondents in a FGD explained that when the farmers in WES complain about the cattle of the pastoralists grazing on their crops, the pastoralists respond with violence and several incidents of shootings and killings have been reported to the authorities.[26]

In WES, respondents observed that over the past year alone, local conflicts have gotten worse due to the presence of small arms and the fact that simple quarrels potentially escalate into major conflicts with major consequences like killings and revenge attacks between Dinka and the communities in WES. Respondents representing local community-based organizations felt that conflicts were changing from the usual communal conflicts experienced in WES and now presenting in the form of revenge killings, which is perceived as a pastoralist trait of killing in retaliation of a death which occurred in a past violence. The respondents felt the increase in revenge killings was at least partly driven by the acceptability of revenge killings for attacks among many pastoralist communities.[27]

In the advent of the armed youth activities in WES, the SPLA were deployed to patrol and flush out the armed youth from their hideouts late last year. However, on the 1st of January, as the

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[26] Focus Group Discussion with respondents in Western Equatoria State, February 2017.
[27] Focus Group Discussion with Community-Based Organizations, February 2017.

SPLA engaged the youth militarily, civilians were subjected to threats, rape and killings, triggering movements of civilians towards safety in Yambio Town.[28]

Yambio is now home to 234 Households of IDPs (approximately 1,346 total) from Rimenza, Bazumbulu, B'odo, Gitikiri and Banzungua bomas, who recounted brutal actions such as killings, indiscriminate shooting and slaughtering of civilians, and sexual violence by the SPLA. The displacement which occurred on the 1st of January 2017 at the hands of the SPLA was one of the most recent bouts of conflict with significant consequences for those affected.[29] The IDPs live in a church in the centre of Yambio and are yet to receive assistance. Surprisingly, this bout of violence has not been reported outside of the state, apparently because of a crackdown on free speech.[30]

Some of the violence at the household level in WES was attributed to domestic violence. Respondents talked about a high incidence of husbands physically beating their wives, usually because they suspect that their wives have committed adultery.[31] Many community members also held misconceptions regarding women's empowerment programmes such as trainings on human rights and awareness raising on gender-based violence, which they believe cause violence at familial and household levels. They believe that the trainings have raised women's levels of consciousness regarding their rights, and accounts for their disrespectfulness towards their husbands and other male relatives. So in order curtail their new found rights and freedoms husbands, brothers and uncles beat up their wives and sisters.

In WES, gender disparities such as high illiteracy rates amongst women and girls, fewer women being employed in the civil service, inheritance rights which favour men, and a higher school dropout rate for girls than boys were common, but not as deeply embedded as in GLS or other places in South Sudan. This was attributed to the interactions that people in WES have had with

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[28] Information from several research respondents in Western Equatoria, February 2017.
[29] Focus Group Discussion with IDPs in Yambio, 15th February 2017.
[30] Focus Group Respondents with IDPs in Greater Lakes State, February 2017
[31] *Community Security Assessment – Western Equatoria State.* Saferworld. October 2014.

Congolese and Central African Republicans, who are more used to men and women taking joint decisions and joint consultations on questions of public interest. Due to this more cosmopolitan environment, women became more vocal and outspoken when asked to voice their concerns during the research. The existing disparities in WES are linked to patriarchy, a customary practice which places men and boys as the heads of households and authority at the expense of women and girls. For example, one respondent emphasized that, due to the denial of the right to inheritance of land and property, men owned more plots than women and the preference of sending males to school affected the education of girls and women.[32]

In attributing the gender disparities to customary practices, a cross-section of respondents in WES indicated that since patriarchy accords significant authority and opportunities to men and boys and not to women and girls, gender-based inequalities persist. For instance, gender roles continue to be understood and assigned in the same manner as previously which leaves men as breadwinners and in leadership positions, while women are seen as caregivers and housewives, limiting their opportunities in education and public life. Currently, there is only one woman as the Minister of Agriculture and one woman as the State Commissioner, leaving the majority of women as junior level civil servants.[33]

In WES it was highlighted that state authorities and international partners have contributed considerably towards alleviating the situation of gender inequality by introducing women's empowerment programmes and capacity development initiatives in the area of human rights, addressing gender-based violence and raising awareness on negative customary practices. The researcher observed that in all meetings and interviews with the communal leaders and state authorities, women were represented.

In as much as these initiatives have been instrumental in creating change and realization of a level of equal rights for women, the deeply entrenched customary law and patriarchy inhibits some of the progress made because statutory laws, including the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan, embeds the rights of women on the one hand, while customary law perpetuates

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[32] WFP, key informant interview, February, 2017.
[33] FGD with Young Women Christian Association in Yambio, February 2017.

discrimination of women on the other hand. As a widely practiced and acceptable form of law, customary law practices override statutory provisions on women's rights [34] For instance, when discussing some of the benefits of economic empowerment of women and girls, several male respondents implied that economic empowerment has increased women's earning capacities and independence, but at the same time, economic empowerment of women has increased the rate of divorce and domestic violence because women no longer listen to their husbands and they feel that they can live on their own without the support of husbands.[35] A recent meeting of customary authorities discussing their role in their communities also cited an increase in divorce rates, but attributed it to women's increased access to statutory justice.[36]

This illustrates that the empowerment of women, while having positive economic impacts on the family, is also causing a backlash from the men and those keen to keep in place the traditional patriarchal norms and expectations of women and girls. This contradiction was said to cause domestic violence within homes. For instance, when husbands do not provide for their families as sufficiently as expected, women who have become aware of their rights, are now vocal and may make demands on their husbands or call on them to take up the responsibility of providing for the family seriously and as expected, the men get offended and become violent towards their wives.[37]

It is against this background that one respondent of a FGD noted that,

> *"Information on emancipation should be passed in the context where the woman lives and where she belongs and the information must be seen to preserve the traditional roles of women and not viewed as those that will erode the societal norms."[38]*

This feedback illustrates how deeply entrenched patriarchal norms are and the risks that women face when trying to challenge these norms.

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[34] Information from several research respondents in Western Equatoria February, 2017
[35] Traditional chief, in a FGD with IDP chiefs, February, 2017.
[36] Rift Valley Institute. *Now We Are Zero.* 2016.
[37] FGD with Young Women Christian Association in Yambio, February 2017.
[38] Hon Minister of Education, Western Equatoria State, February, 2017.

In GLS, the gender disparities were more pronounced than in WES. This was attributed to customary practices and patriarchy, which keep women out of the public domain. Respondents revealed that traditionally, men and boys bore the ultimate authority, while women and girls played subordinate roles.[39] Women and girls accepted this communal position and when called upon to participate in public, they take their place at the back of the gathering and barely speak. When the community is requested to propose participants to attend a training or a workshop, they would only front men and young men leaving out women. Development partners and international actors have been demanding the inclusion of women. Some organizations have implemented awareness-raising programmes to counter the effects of negative customary practices and to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence. The tradition of giving preference to men inhibits women's progress in education and political participation, but most significantly, it has made women submissive and accepting of all forms of violence against them.[40]

At the time of conducting the research, the Deputy Governor of GLS was a woman, and respondents emphasized that when women demand more political posts, they are often reminded that the Deputy Governor position is held by a woman. One other senior position held by a woman was perceived as adequate for women by the state authorities. This could suggest that the representation of women was seen as more symbolic rather than women having real authority in the few positions they do have. It also suggests that some feel the inclusion of women in powerful positions more of a favour to them and not earned.

The gender disparities have exacerbated the prevalence of domestic violence. In GLS, suspicions of adultery are taken very seriously because of the payment of dowry in the form of cattle. The dowry can be very expensive and married women are considered an important 'asset' belonging to their husbands. In the event that a man suspects that his wife has been unfaithful, he can

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[39] FGD with traditional Authorities in Rumbek, February 2017.
[40] FGD with women in Rumbek, February 2017.

murder her. At the time of the research, one respondent from GLS gave the example of a recent murder arising out of adultery.[41]

It was also indicated by respondents in GLS that gender disparity is directly linked to the view of women as resources – when a family is blessed with daughters, the marriage of the daughters will invariably add cattle to the family. This explains why many girls are married early and are not in school. Dowry is the primary consideration for any marriage negotiations, so when a girl is impregnated by a man who owns no cattle, there will be a conflict between the two families, which can escalate into a conflict between their communities.[42] Cattle are everything in GLS and men who do not have cattle may marry women from the Equatorias where the dowry is much smaller and can sometimes be paid in cash and not cattle. In South Sudan, where customary law is the legal framework that governs communities, inherent biases such as women have smaller brains, are generally erratic and stupid and incapable of making informed decisions are deep. In GLS the women respondents observed that the disparities are significant because their husbands pay cattle as bride price. Part of the reason for the disparity was related to the fact that interactions with other communities are very limited, so women remain in their traditionally assigned roles which perpetuate the subordination of women. Even economically empowered women remain in traditionally accepted roles of women by still being responsible for the household tasks and the family, and by handing over proceeds from their businesses or day jobs to their husbands.[43]

3.2 The roles played by men, women, boys and girls in fuelling violence or promoting peace

Social expectations require men and boys to protect their communities and to perform their duties as household heads whilst demonstrating their strength. In GLS, men and boys were cognisant of their roles as primary protectors of the community; the undisputed heads of households who are duty-bound to defend the community by engaging in cattle rustling and returning raided cattle, committing revenge killings and any other violent acts. A man's first

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[41] FGD with the Directorate of Gender and Social welfare in Rumbek, February 2017.
[42] Ibid.
[43] FGD with women in Greater Lakes State, February 2017.

demonstration of strength and bravery occurs during the age set initiation ceremony where deep sharp incisions are made to the forehead. After the ceremony, boys become men and thereafter are expected to take their social roles of being a man seriously. One FGD respondent noted that when boys undergo the initiation without the slightest expression of fear of pain and emotion, they regard themselves as men. As such, boys are already expected to tolerate physical violence from a young age and are socially pressured not to show their pain and emotions.

On the other hand, women in GLS are expected to encourage men and boys who show bravery to protect their communities and families, which perpetuates violence and existing notions of violent masculinities. Many respondents mentioned that women and girls are expected to prepare food and take it to the fighters in locations of conflict. Women sing praises like *"Ok Diar Maboorjok Ok Cieleu" (which means "we women of Maboorjok, we are not defeated*) to men and male youth who have demonstrated bravery. Women and girls also rebuke those with "cowardly" traits in the songs they compose.[44] In some instances, women design flags which bear clan emblems signifying strength and they fly those to demonstrate that their clans remain undefeated, so when the men see the women do this, they are encouraged to further engage in violent acts.[45]

In WES, the roles played by men, women, boys and girls take the same form. As the primary protectors of the families and communities, men are cognisant of their duty to protect the community and that's why during the LRA insurgency, the Arrow Boys mobilized to repulse them. In the LRA reprisals, women were not part of the Arrow Boys, but now, women joined the armed youth in WES in large numbers, acting as spies and combatants. One respondent noted that nearly 40% of the armed group members were women and girls.[46] Recently when there was a national call for youth to join the army, WES identified 5,000 youth, both male and female to be recruited. When the initiative collapsed, the well-trained recruits took up arms, primarily to protect their communities from the new wave of violence by the SPLA.[47]

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[44] FGD with the Directorate of Gender in Greater lakes State, February 2017.
[45] FGD with youth in Greater Lakes State, February 2017.
[46] KII with a senior government authority, Ministry of Education, Western Equatoria State, February 2017
[47] FGD with the Directorate of Gender and Ministry of Education, Western Equatoria State, February 2017

Before the current enrolment of women in the armed groups, their role in fuelling conflicts was indirect. In WES, when women and girls were subjected to rape and their sons killed, they protested and marched to the state government offices and demanded the state government to act. Last year, women threatened to carry the bodies of those killed by the army to the state government premises.[48]

The role of men and the male youth in fuelling violence is influenced by communal expectations. In GLS, men and youth do not have the liberty to express their feelings about conflicts and violence because they are expected to act and defend the community, avenge the death of a community member and return raided cattle. Women and girls are expected to cook meals for the men and male youth who are fighting and in extreme situations they are expected to run to safety with children and other vulnerable dependents. Culture and practice does not permit male youth and men to expect defeat - they must win a war at all costs. Participation in a raid or communal fight attracts a reward such as cattle and cowardice attracts rebuke, loss of legacy or recognition and the possibility of not being regarded as a real man.

One youth in GLS noted that,

"If we can look into where things were before now and before the constant conflicts, if we stop playing the roles that are expected of us, the conflict will end. As conflicts increase so do the consequences, so when we realize where the problem started, how it felt when we were together, we would find out where we went wrong…"[49]

The traditional roles of men and women in fuelling violence is gradually changing in WES and not in GLS where women have continued to play supporting or encouraging roles in violence. The findings indicate that women in GLS do not participate in raiding and revenge killings because they are considered weak. But in WES, women and girls have exhibited new combat roles by joining the armed male youth and acting as spies. The women and girls joined the rebellion

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Research respondent in Greater Lakes state, February 2017.

because they felt less protected by the men and youth, so in order to protect themselves they joined the armed youth so they can acquire guns, the ultimate tool for power.

For men and boys, fuelling violence is not about communal expectations only, but the existing traditional belief and expectations that men are strong and they are duty bound to protect the community and defend it. A significant factor that fuels conflicts is the concealed role that women play in encouraging men and the youth to participate in violence. So fuelling violence is not an individual decision, but a collective one, influenced by individual attributes of strength and obligations to defend and to prove ones worth as a man.

Generally, the researcher observed that some gender norms were changing as a result of the violence and some of the consequences of the conflicts at familial and communal levels. For instance in GLS, respondents indicated that the prevalence of small arms mean that male youth and men use guns in times of cattle raiding and those without guns leave the cattle camp to reintegrate back into the community. As they reintegrate, some begin cutting and selling grass used for thatching huts in order to take care of themselves and their families. This is an activity which was reserved for women and girls only, so men who engage in cutting grass are not seen as real men, since in GLS, real men take care own and take care of cattle. In the same area, after the death of many men and male youth during cattle raids, women and girls became responsible for their own security and provision of food for the family. In the IDP communities, the respondents were mostly women who have to undertake roles like brick laying, thatching houses, cutting wood etc., because the young men feared the violence and fled, or have gone to the big cities to look for jobs.[50]

In WES, changes in gender norms were also attributed to the conflict. Many respondents indicated that, due to fear of being arrested, men stay at home and it is the women who go to the farms, and it is the women who collect items provided by humanitarian agencies because the men cannot go further from their homes. This does not only create more work for women, it

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[50] FGD with IDPs from Khartoum, February 2017 – these IDPs are from Khartoum but did the FGD also take place in Khartoum, if not then why don't we omit the Khartoum and just add where the FGD took place to not disclose identity

gives them more authority in the household. This is accepted by the men and women, because they know that the situation arises due to the insecurity and it is best to have the men stay at home, than having them get in harm's way.[51]

When it comes to promoting peace, women and girls are seen as the front runners because they are so severely affected by the consequences of conflicts. In several interviews respondents noted that it is women's sons, husbands, sons-in-law who get killed in conflicts, so the loss pushes women to demand for peace and participate in peace initiatives.[52] Even though men and boys are the ones who lose their lives in conflicts, they are not expected to speak about peace. In the event of a lost battle, men and boys are expected to reconvene and fight again and win – forcing them to attack and attack with dire consequences of repeated attacks and killings. This sentiment, expressed by youth in GLS, implies that men are not allowed to express their feelings and desires about peace, except to fight. That leaves the churches, international partners and women to lead peace initiatives.

In WES, when the conflicts claimed so many lives, women and girls began to implore the men to abandon the rebellion and return home, because they do not want more deaths. Women therefore have a powerful role as they encourage the conflicts on the one hand, but are also influential in stopping the conflicts when the consequences become too serious. There was no single example of men promoting peace except for those men affiliated to churches and international organization, but it is common for women to.

"Protest, fast and pray, and wear mourning clothes or sing sad songs to evoke the men to stop any fighting. When the government failed to implore the youth to return home, women were tasked to speak to their men, children to return home and that worked, because these men are their husbands, brothers, sons and boyfriends"[53]

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[51] – KII with humanitarian INGO, Western Equatoria State, February 2017
[52] FGD with YWCA, in Western Equatoria and Directorate of Gender in Greater Lakes State, February 2017.
[53] Research respondent in Greater Western Equatoria State, February 2017. – is this KII?

3.3 The impact of external assistance on these dynamics

In GLS, World Food Programme (WFP) and partners provide assistance in the form of Food for Assets; Food for Education (broken down as take home for girls and school feeding for all); General Food Distribution for vulnerable residents; and vegetable gardens for communities in Cuiebet, Wulu, and Rumbek. The beneficiaries are mostly IDPs, returnees from Khartoum and other vulnerable residents identified through an inter-agency assessment led by UNOCHA. Other agencies provide non-food items and health services.[54] The scale of assistance in WES is less than that of GLS due to the assumption the area is food secure and also because of the state government's policy to discourage dependency. So distribution is done at Mapwandu refugee settlement and targeted food distribution is done to address IDP influxes. Additionally, WFP engages in purchase for progress (P for P) initiatives, where grains are purchased from local farmers and distributed to IDPs and refugees. Cash for assets is provided to encourage resettlement of IDPs back to their homes.[55]

In GLS, assistance is managed through an inter-agency coordination mechanism which involves the participation of an array of partners (NPA, Plan International, UNOCHA, UNHCR, RRC, UNFPA, WHO). All agencies participate in an inter-agency assessment to ascertain the needs of the community, and then each agency provides assistance along their programme mandates and on a case–by-case basis. WFP provides training to the beneficiaries to enhance the optimum usage of the assistance. One of the most significant challenges in managing the assistance relates to the issue of maintenance, management of the assets (schools, roads) provided and how to ensure that the women's vegetable gardens produce the expected yields. Provision of assistance is an inclusive and participatory process – beneficiaries are consulted throughout the assessment.

There are beneficiary committees who provide inputs during the planning phases and there is a continuous monitoring of the assistance provided by WFP to ensure that the right beneficiaries are the ones receiving the assistance. When there are issues with quality or quantity, the monitoring teams provide feedback on the areas that need improvement or areas of beneficiary

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[54] FGD with humanitarian INGO, Greater Lakes State, February 2017.
[55] WFP respondent in Greater Western Equatoria State, February 2017. – is this KII or FGD?

satisfaction. The management of assistance in WES State is unclear and mostly directed by individual organisations, but a coordinated approach would improve assistance and offer a broad-based and cost effective intervention.[56]

External assistance influences gender roles in two ways: on the one hand it builds on or reinforces the existing gender norms; and on the other it also makes adjustments for when women and men are not in a position to fulfil their gender roles. In GLS, when providing food for assets, tasks are assigned according to gender roles. In FFA assistance, women and female youth are assigned light tasks such as carrying water or preparing food, while the men and male youth engage in heavier work like construction, and carrying sacks of grain and sorghum. In instances where women and girls have no male relatives to assist them, other male community members help out with the heavier tasks like carrying sacks of grains and sorghum. However, women have taken on more masculine roles of breadwinning. For example, when assistance is provided in the form of food, women will often take some of it to sell in the market in order to get an income, which will be used to pay tuition for children, feeding the family and the provision of other needs in the family. Taking care of the family and providing for its needs was traditionally the sole task of men, but with the advent of humanitarian assistance, women sell some of the food received and contribute towards the upkeep of the family. The impact of this ensures that women are in position to assist their husbands with some family upkeep needs.

There is an occasional gendered preference in the provision of assistance, for example, in GLS the IDPs from Khartoum were mostly women so assistance was given to them and only a few men. In Purchase for Progress initiatives in WES, WFP purchases farm produce from women farmers only to increase their household incomes. The men voiced their disagreement, but no conflict occurred. In one key informant interview with WFP in Yambio, the respondent noted that occasional gendered preference in the provisions of assistance is acceptable because men know that when women earn income, they use the money to contribute to the welfare of the family.[57]

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[56] Ibid.
[57] KII with humanitarian organization, Western Equatoria State, February 2017

In both GLS and WES it was observed by several respondents that contrary to popular expectations, assistance unites families and communities. Assets like Primary Health Care Centres are jointly accessed regardless of past feuds. Assistance is a peace catalyst and only few minor feuds were a direct result of assistance. In situations where WFP targets its assistance to vulnerable groups like, women, children and the elderly, the community understands because these are known vulnerable people.

3.4 Conclusions

For GLS, the likelihood that sectional and intra- communal violence will re-occur remains high, amidst evolving trends of violence against women, including rape and other attacks on women and girls. In WES, it was noted that while violent notions of masculinities play a dominant role in fuelling conflicts, emerging gender norms demonstrate that women have taken on other roles such as joining armed rebellion and breadwinning which was traditionally considered as masculine traits. The scale of conflicts in WES is increasing considerably and was attributed to an influx of pastoralists of Dinka origin from other parts of South Sudan into WES. The Dinka migrate with their cattle that graze off farmers' crops, causing tensions and giving rise to some of the conflicts experienced in the area. These dynamics and other economic factors have pushed male youth to rebel to defend their community and women against rape and violence from the army and the pastoralists. It has also caused women to join the armed male youth in the rebellion to protect themselves and their assets.

At the local communal level, it was noted that gender disparities explain the prevalence and changing faces of gender-based violence and other forms of violence that occur at the household level. Gender norms of violent masculinities do not exclusively drive conflicts - other factors like communal and societal expectations contribute to violence as well.

Gender norms are considerably changing because of the violence. When men are killed during conflicts, women take up the roles of providing for the family and other tasks like laying bricks, building huts. For men, those without guns, returned to the community and took up other roles like cutting grass and for men whose wives have been killed, they begin to cook and perform other household chores which were traditionally performed by women.

The researcher held meetings with those delivering assistance, state authorities and beneficiaries. The findings indicate that humanitarian assistance is more of a unifying factor than a cause of conflicts, and have shifted gender norms in a context where women are involved in receiving assistance and benefits that generate income. Humanitarian assistance helped communities to return back to areas that were once affected by conflict, however the overall impact of assistance was unavailable. Assistance was very limited in WES because it was considered as relatively secure and a bread basket for the region. These assumptions will change because the recent conflicts have increased the vulnerabilities of people in WES and undermined their ability to continue producing their own food. International assistance to women's empowerment programmes seems to have had some positive impacts in making women aware of their rights; but has also contributed to a backlash for some women in the form of domestic violence from their husbands.

3.5 Recommendations

South Sudan's conflicts are underpinned by notions of violent masculinities. The prevalence of arms has changed the trajectory of conflicts from less violent traditional conflicts experienced during raids and cattle rustling to more ferocious violence which includes rape, looting and excessive use of force. Many grievances like political exclusion and poverty have increased tensions, thus fuelling very violent conflicts.

Men, boys, girls and women have continued to play the traditional societal roles as expected of them, but new emerging trends of women and girls joining armed groups were observed in WES. Overall, notions of violent masculinities fuel conflicts, with men and women putting more pressure on men to act in a violent way. Therefore, additional research should be conducted to ascertain the reasons behind women's increasingly active role in conflicts in WES.

Women and girls have been at the forefront of peace initiatives, while the role of men and male youth has been very minimal. While the demands of women and girls for peace have been attributed to the severity of the consequences of conflicts for them, men and boys have participated in initiatives spearheaded by international partners and not on their own. Therefore peacebuilding initiatives should target both men and boys who are the primary perpetrators of

conflict and violence. Furthermore, men, boys, women and girls should be encouraged to discuss how the societal expectations of men and boys to commit violence, and of women and girls to encourage them, is fuelling violence and conflict. This should also open the door for men and boys to become more active in peacebuilding processes.

Economic viabilities need to be explored because some of the reasons attributed for the rise in young men participating in armed conflict are the harsh economic conditions being experienced.

International humanitarian assistance in the research areas has to a large extent conformed to the Do No Harm principle and has contributed to fostering peace, not conflict. However, given that it often targets women specifically, it remains important to continue monitoring the impacts of this assistance in terms of how gender norms and roles change, and what impacts and potential risks this pose for women. A reassessment of the needs of vulnerable communities should also be done in WES to devise a comprehensive response to areas and communities which were once considered food secure but are increasingly affected by conflict and displacement.

There is need to provide information on the overall impact of humanitarian assistance for the communities receiving assistance.

To alleviate the gender disparities in the state – it is essential that more trainings and awareness raising campaigns on negative customary practices, and gender-based violence are conducted. Working with women, girls, men and boys is important for changing the mind-sets on the equally important role that women and girls can play in the community and to discuss how gender norms and roles that fuel conflict and violence can be changed. If traditional beliefs can be changed, it could contribute towards reducing violence and conflict, and also to better outcomes for women and girls, such as an increase in school enrolment for girls.

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3.6 Annexes

(1) **TORs** available at *www.saferworld.org.uk/.../sow---field-researcher---gender-norms-in-conflict*

(2) **Table of Respondents consulted**

Institutions / Actors in GLS	Male	Female	Total
FGD with World Food Programme	3	1	4
KII with Relief and Rehabilitation Commission	1	0	1
KII with Non Violent Peace Force		1	1
FGD with UNMISS/ Gender/ Civil Affairs/ UNPOL	4	2	6
KII with Diocese of Rumbek	1	0	1
FGD with State Ministry of Gender	1	1	2
FGD with Traditional Authorities	11	0	11
FGD with Youth in Rumbek	5	0	5
FGD with Women in Rumbek	0	8	8
FGD with IDPs from Khartoum	6	24	30
Total in GLS			69
Institutions/ Actors in WES			
FGD with Ministry of Education and Directorate of Gender	2	0	2
FGD with women and youth	4	5	9
FGD with IDPs in Yambio	4	1	5
FGD with Women CBOs	0	2	2
Relief and Rehabilitation Commission	1	0	1
FGD with Traditional Authorities	4	1	5
FGD with four CBOs	7	1	8
KII with World Food Programme	1	0	1
Total in WES			33
Overall total			102

(3) Research Questions

Framing:

1. **Understanding the conflict**
2. **Understanding gender norms, e.g.,** [*quite often gender behaviors change, but not really the norms, so it can be helpful to make this distinction. For instance, during a time of war, it may be acceptable for a woman to be the head of a household and make all the decisions while the man is away fighting. But after the war when the man comes back, the woman may be expected to be subservient to him again and he takes back the role of main decision-maker for the family. This would indicate that behaviors changed during the war, but the norm did not change – men are still expected to have the ultimate power over family decision-making.* (the gender toolkit, Section 3, where specific exercises are set out on this).
3. **Understanding how gender norms and conflict / peace processes interact,** looking at:
4. **How external assistance is either impact on the above dynamics**

Questions	Rationale	Approach
1. What is your understanding of conflict? And what kinds of violent conflicts have been experienced in this community?	It is important to start with understanding the conflict issues first	Understand the conflict dynamics in each location, i.e. who is in conflict with who; what are the reasons for the conflict; what efforts are there to resolve the conflict and who is involved in that) and ask specific questions to: Cross-check our understanding of the conflict issues and potential peace opportunities is correct, so ask a few questions to this effect.
2. How gender norms, including violent notions of masculinity and gender inequality, may be affecting the scale and the nature of conflict and violence?	This seems to really focus on, in broad terms, on the links between gender norms and violence and conflict.	Ask questions about gender – i.e. the roles of men, women, boys and girls in the conflict and why this is 'expected' of them. Generally to get a sense of whether men are 'expected' or 'allowed' to use violence as part of showing that they are strong. Or whether women are encouraging such behavior, e.g, men being asked to sign up and defend 'their' women and children against an enemy who will come and kill and rape them. What roles people of different genders play in the community (e.g. cooking, working in the fields, making decisions for the family etc.). What the main gender norms are for different social groups (e.g. a young man needs to be married before he has status; or an older women can make important community decisions if she owns land; etc.).How do people's actual behaviors

		compare to the gender norms (e.g. is it impossible for young men to have any status in their communities because they are unable to get married because they don't have the cattle / money to get married?). And if people don't behave according to the expected gender norms, then what happens to them (e.g. the young men stay 'boys' for much longer and cannot become 'men' in the eyes of their community. Therefore they may engage in violence as a way to be seen as 'men' by virtue of proving they are strong and play an important protection role for the community instead).
3. What do men and women expect of each other in relation to conflicts and violence? And what are the consequences of these gender expectations?	To bring out expectations of men and women in times of conflict/Consequences of the expectations as well	straight forward - intended to bring out expectations of men and women during conflict and in times of violence
4. What roles do women, girls, men and boys play different roles during conflicts and do these different roles affect levels of violence and the nature of conflicts? Are these old or emerging roles? And how?	The question focuses on how expectations of men, boys, women and girls may affect the scale and nature of conflict and violence. So this is about direct expectations (e.g. men or boys being asked / told to go and attack a neighbouring community); but also about alternative behaviours if e.g. men/boys feel they cannot be 'real men' (i.e. live up to these gender expectations) and then they try to do something different to make them feel like they will be seen as 'real men'. This may for instance lead them to beat their wives or rape somebody in their own community because it helps them show their power. Or it may not!	Attempt to understand the roles men, women, boys and girls play in fueling violence or promoting peace (partly because certain behaviors are expected from them because of the gender norms of their societies)
5. What are the gender disparities between women and men in this community? And how is impacting on conflict and violence?	Is to bring out the gender differences(great difference) between men and women in the community and the impacts of difference in the community	Ask respondents about the gender differences between men and women in the community

6.	Are there different roles that community members play in times of conflicts?	To understand the different roles that community members play in times of conflict	Find out the roles that community members play in times of conflict. Intention is to understand the community dynamics and roles in times of conflict. Roles of youth, women, chiefs etc., etc.
7.	What roles do women/girls, men/boys and elderly play in diffusing conflict and building trust with in the community, and beyond?(I suggest we merge 7&8)	To explore the roles of each gender in reducing conflict and building trust/ peacebuilding processes within the community(I suggest that 7 and 8 are merged) These are the same except that 7 is about diffusing and building trust and 8 is about fueling and influencing peace processes	Combine with fueling conflict, probe on different demographic themes such as age, economic status, etc.
8.	How do men, women, boys and girls play a role in fueling conflicts? How do these categories influence peace processes?	Refer to question 7	Refer to question 7
9.			
10.	How is conflict and peace perceived by different gender categories in this community?	Gauge the different perceptions on conflict and peace in the community	Ask respondents how they (male and females) perceive conflict and peace I their respective communities
11.			
12.	What external assistance is provided in this community and how is it managed and who are the primary beneficiaries?	How does such external assistance benefit men, boys, women and girls? Who manages it? Who makes decisions about it?	Straight forward
13.	To what extent does external assistance influence gender roles both positively and negatively in this community?	How is (conflict- or peace-related) external assistance influenced by (what inputs does it get from) women, men, boys and girls? Does it give more power to some groups rather than others? What are the consequences of this? Does it in any way fuel violence? Or does it instead strengthen opportunities for resolving conflicts and stopping violence?	Find out from respondents how external assistance influences their(gender) roles in the community, there will be varied experiences depending on the external assistance provided, opportunities, access etc., etc.

14. Is there a gendered preference in the provision of external assistance and does that have a bearing on violence and conflict trends? Peace initiatives?	To comprehend - if in the event of the provision of assistance a specific gender is preferred at times(and for good reasons) , but does such preferences sometimes influence conflicts and violence	Ask questions about instances where assistance has been provided to (men only or women only and how such preferences can influence violence and conflict
15. How does external assistance contribute to peace and conflict among men and women? How does external assistance contribute to (or work against) gender norms that fuel violence? Or those that work for peace?	To find out how external assistance contributes to peace/ conflict amongst men and women and how that could work against gender norms sometimes	Probe more about external assistance and how it has contributed to peace or conflict – respondents will give examples of when external assistance has contributed to peace/ conflict/ and instances when assistance has worked against gender norms or fueled violence

Methodology and Research Objectives

1.0 Research Objectives

The research was undertaken in order to understand how gender norms, including violent notions of masculinity and gender inequality, may be affecting:

(1) The scale and the nature of conflict and violence;

(2) The roles played by men, women, boys and girls in fuelling violence or promoting peace; and

(3) To better understand the impact of external assistance on these dynamics.

2.0 Research Framework and Methodology

Mixed methodologies (e.g. desk-based and participatory) were used to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. The methodology considered the most cost-effective approaches to collect information which sufficiently respond to the research objectives. The approach included a desk study of documents provided by CSRF, key informant interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and observations. The approach allowed the researcher to collect a mix of primary and secondary data in order to respond to the research objectives. The methodological approach was mostly qualitative. In total, 13 FGDs and 5 KIIs were conducted in both GLS and WES. In GLS, 7 FDGs and 3 KII while in WES 6 FDGs and 2 KIIs with women, men, youth (male and female and mixed male and female), traditional leaders, state officials, church leaders, community-based organisations, UN and INGOs.

2.1 Selection of field sites:

Field sites were selected with a realistic scope in mind as per the terms of reference and also to ensure that outcomes from the field locations provide contrasting scenarios and information in order to enrich the contents of the report. After several consultations and considering the security situation, Greater Lakes and Greater Western Equatoria States were selected.

Data Collection Methods

Desk study

During the desk study and research phases, the researcher worked through a number of documents provided by the CSRF Team. These included publications by Saferworld on gender and conflict analysis, and on masculinities and peace building. A list of documents consulted in included as bibliography in the annex.[58]

Key informant interviews (KIIs)

Semi-structured interview questions were drafted by the researcher and in consultation with CSRF and administered to all relevant stakeholders in the proposed sites of study. Stakeholder mapping was done in consultation with the CSRF team in both locations.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The researcher collected data from a representative sample of participants in selected sites. FGDs were held with government agencies, CSOs, the UN, CBOs and IDPs, traditional authorities, women and youth. A complete table of stakeholders consulted is annexed to this report.

Ethical Considerations

Considering the theme of the research, the inclusion of the most vulnerable population, such as IDPs, women and girls was crucial and therefore in interviews and FGDs, ethical dimensions were taken into account. In line with CSRF Research Ethics, the researcher ensured that informed consent of all research respondents was sought before interviews. Prior and after to conducting research, the respondents were assured of the confidentially of the information provided and anonymity of their identities. To comply with ethical standards, any support (translators etc.) requested was provided in carrying out the research.

Limitations to the Research

All authorisations were sought in advance of the field trips**.** In Yambio, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) pursued armed youth in the bomas of Rimenza, Bazumbulu, B'odo, Gitikiri and Banzungua on the 1st of January 2017, leading to indiscriminate killings of civilians, burning of houses and acts of sexual violence against women. The incident led to an influx of 234 households, totaling 1,346 people, into Yambio. The incident and the continued presence of the

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[58] See the Bibliography for the detailed list of literature reviewed.

SPLA within Yambio and among the civilians have caused fear amongst the people. As the field trip was undertaken from the 13th to 18th of February, respondents for the research found it very difficult to speak freely. In addition, all activities in the state had to first receive approval from the National Security and for the respondents who were aware of the involvement of the National Security, fear inhibited their free participation.

The researcher informed the respondents of the levels of confidentiality involved and at some point, the researcher had to empathise with respondents because many had experienced traumatic events. When the researcher showed concern for the events which occurred in January of 2017 in WES, she gained the trust of the respondents who began freely share their experiences.

Research Phases

(1) Inception and data collection tools developed

(2) Desk review and data collection at the field locations

(3) Drafting of final report