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**Enhanced People to People Relations and Communities Rehabilitation Program,**

**Akobo and Wanthoa Woredas, Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia**

**Cooperative Agreement No: AID-663-A-13-00004**

**Year One, Fourth Quarter Report: April – June 2014**



*Photo: (top) Not only the men return to the villages but also their cattle, their wives and children. Drinking water and schools are their biggest need. (bottom) The people of Akobo hold their cattle near the river.*

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## I. Introduction

This project is located in the Wanthoa and Akobo woredas of the Gambella Regional State of Ethiopia, which lack basic services and are challenged by poor infrastructure. The Akobo woreda lacks roads, water supply schemes, health facilities and schools. Violence is mainly from cross-border attacks by South Sudanese, including those from the Lou Nuer and Murle tribes. A major attack in January 2009 forced the displacement of approximately 24,000 people from the Akobo woreda to the Wanthoa woreda. As a result, the majority of the Akobo woreda (approximately 10,000 people) are living as internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Wanthoa woreda. A limited number self-returned from the Wanthoa woreda in early and mid 2013, initially lived in the Akobo woreda administrative capital of Tirgol. After seed and tool distribution (by another donor) in Tirgol to 1552 households, many of these households have recently returned and re-established their livelihoods within their kebeles of origin.

Conflict is the main driving force that has led to the displacement of communities from Akobo to Wanthoa. The conflict analysis identifies two complex, interlinked causes to the increasingly violent conflict in Akobo and risk of the same in Wanthoa: (1) competition for limited resources based on poorly managed/supported in-migration, poor resource management, lack of livelihoods opportunities particularly for youth, socially promoted raiding, and flooding, and; (2) poor capacity to mitigate/prevent violence due to increasingly disenfranchised youth, a breakdown in traditional leadership, and weak government mitigation/prevention structures.

To address the aforementioned root causes of the frustrations and conflict, ZOA and USAID entered into an agreement to implement “Enhanced People to People Relations and Communities Rehabilitation Program” in the Wanthoa and Akobo woredas of Gambella Regional State. Key strategies and activities of the project include:

- The development of common complex identities across ethnic, gender and age through facilitated groups of individuals and stakeholders
- Facilitate constructive engagement of key stakeholders to address common concerns around conflict and competition for resources
- Capacity building of kebele and woreda administration
- Diversified livelihood opportunities including skill training opportunities for youth and a wide-scale establishment of village saving and loan associations for groups of men, women, and male/female youths

The project is a three-year people-to-people program, which started on July 7, 2013 and is scheduled to end on July 7, 2016.

## II. Context Development

The government planned to assist the displaced population to return to the Akobo woreda from the Wanthoa woreda in early January 2014. During late 2013, the Gambella regional government postponed the assisted return of the IDPs to Akobo woreda due to the sudden influx of South Sudanese refugees into Akobo. Since December 2013, 38,889 refugees have entered through Akobo, of which all but 1,126 have been resettled into refugee camps in Gambella by IOM. The remaining 1,126 refugees are awaiting relocation in Mattar.



*Photo (above): Approximately 200 refugees crossing the river by open boat, Tirgol, Akobo*

At the Akobo entry-point there have been many challenges and obstacles, including a complete lack of food and medication, although, clean drinking water is still being provided to the new arrivals. Recently, there was a rebel attack in Ayot County in South Sudan, Jonglei State. Because of this, there is an increased influx of new arrivals into Akobo entry-point. UNHCR is preparing to open a new camp to accommodate these new arrivals, but because this camp has not yet been established, the new arrivals are forced to stay at the entry points for months now instead of weeks as before.

<b>South Sudanese New Arrivals (since December 15, 2013)</b>	
<b>Entry-point</b>	<b>Qtr 4: As of August 1, 2014<sup>1</sup></b>
Raad, Pochalla, Punyido, Wanke	3,782
Pagak	91,440
Burbey / Mattar	47,762
Akobo	38,889
<b>Total</b>	<b>181,873</b>

During the fourth quarter of the project, over 12,000 asylum seekers entered through Akobo, Gambella and within weeks were relocated to refugee camps. The Akobo Tirgol border entry point has presented significant logistical challenges for UNHCR and International Organization for Migration (IOM). Without a road, the location is accessed only by air or by the river. During the last month of the quarter, IOM relocated just over 400 refugees from Akobo by boat every second day. These refugees were then taken to a reception center in Mattar. Due to difficulties in building sufficient shelters in the new camps, the number of refugees waiting for transport in Mattar, of which most were women and children, grew to over 10,000 by the end of July. Contrary to Akobo, the inhabitants of Mattar do not help refugees with food because this is provided by the World Food Program. As per UNHCR request to intervene in Hygiene and Sanitation in Wanthoa for the influx from Nasir, S. Sudan, ZOA has built temporary communal latrines and keeps the latrines and its surroundings clean in this quarter.

A helicopter was contracted by UNHCR midway through the previous quarter for regular air movements between Gambella and Akobo. The helicopter also transports vulnerable refugees who cannot undertake the 10-12 hour cargo boat ride from Akobo to Mattar. There are expectations from UNHCR that refugee influx since December, 2013 will top 350,000 in Gambella by the end of 2014.

ZOA, the only international non-government organization established in the Akobo woreda, has hired additional staff to support an emergency response funded by ZOA Netherlands, UNICEF and UNHCR in the sectors of WASH, Education and Protection. As the influx continues, the required humanitarian

<sup>1</sup> New Arrivals Statistics 01 August, 2014, UNHCR

support is not in place, ZOA is struggling to provide clean drinking water and education and child protection support through UNICEF funding. This emergency response is kept separate from the USAID-funded project activities. Activities are continuing in Akobo and Wanthoa woredas with the bulk of activities in Wanthoa woreda due to the delayed return of IDPs back to Akobo.



*Photo (above): When travelling from Mattar to Tirgol many newly constructed houses can be seen. IDPs are returning home.*

The inhabitants of Tirgol also benefit from the emergency relief operation. The clean drinking water has had a positive effect on the health situation. People are willing to walk about half an hour to fetch water from one of the two EmWat systems.

There are still over 10,000 displaced people from Akobo awaiting return in Wanthoa, Lare, Hang, Makuey and Jikawo woredas. In 2014, there was a spontaneous return of IDPs from Wanthoa, Lare and Itang woredas in Gambella and from Nasir in South Sudan. Though, the number of displaced people still outnumbers the amount of returnees. At least 250 HHs have now settled in each of the following kebeles: Kuchar, Debok, Babe, Tore and Anyale. The work

being done in Akobo woreda by ZOA has attracted these people to return on their own. The self-returned households and individuals have constructed their tukuls (local houses), resuming their livelihoods linked to small scale agriculture and livestock. Woreda authorities including the council are fully functional in Tirgol, which has encouraged return.

### **III. Project Implementation**

In the fourth quarter, ZOA continued working on detailed planning with the Justice Bureau so as to ensure plans were broken up over the year as well as reflected activities anticipated per woreda. For this, detailed TORs have been developed for Community Cohesion related activities for both Wanthoa and Akobo woredas to be signed by both ZOA and the Regional Justice Bureau. The following outputs and activities have been approved by ZOA and subsequently submitted to the Justice Bureau:

- 1. Increased capacity to prevent and mitigate conflict**
  - 1.1. Training of community cohesion facilitators
  - 1.2. Community cohesion Sessions
  - 1.3. End of Session Ceremonies
  - 1.4. Incentive community based peace facilitators
- 2. Improved Social cohesion between conflicting groups**
  - 2.1. Establish Kebele and Woreda peace leadership committees
  - 2.2. Support to Workshops of peace leadership committees
  - 2.3. Identification Workshops to obstacles to peace agreements
  - 2.4. Kebele level validation workshops
  - 2.5. Support to peace meetings
  - 2.6. Peace agreement ceremonies
  - 2.7. Radio Broad casts
- 3. Increased opportunity for positive inter-klan interaction on Sports**
  - 3.1. Training sport life coaches
- 4. Improved management of limited resources**
  - 4.1. Kebele level Validation Workshop
  - 4.2. Support Working groups for resource use planning

- 4.3. Working group validation exercise/peace meetings
- 4.4. Dissemination workshop resource agreement
- 4.5. Radio Broadcasts

## **5. Improved Capacity of stakeholders to facilitate peace building**

- 5.1. Study traditional/modern conflict resolution approaches and factors/ success of peace initiatives
- 5.2. Study validation Workshop
- 5.3. TOT Workshop dissemination for trainers
- 5.4. Woreda Level Dissemination workshop
- 5.5. Kebele level Dissemination Workshop
- 5.6. Develop curriculum for peace negotiation and conflict
- 5.7. Train peace facilitators on training curriculum
- 5.8. Training workshop for Woreda and region on peace/conflict mitigation
- 5.9. Radio broad cast

A consultant has been hired by the Justice Bureau for two months and assigned by ZOA to work more closely with the Justice Bureau to speed up its implementation and increase the capacity building of bureau staff on project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

## **Objective 1: Increase Capacity to Prevent and Mitigate Violent Conflict**

### **1.1 Reduced Likelihood of Individual Violence by Members of Conflicting Groups**

#### Activities:

1. Training Peace Facilitators (6 in Akobo, 6 in Wanthoa)
2. Incentive for Community Based Peace Facilitators
3. Peace Group Sessions
4. End of Session Ceremonies

NOTE: In order to ensure names given to these facilitators are sensitized, ZOA staff has agreed to call Peace Facilitators: Community Cohesion Trainers.

The 24 community cohesion facilitators (12 in Wanthoa, 1 in an IDP location and 11 in Akobo) are working both in Wanthoa and Akobo woredas. During the quarter, community cohesion facilitators organized and conducted meetings in Wanthoa and Akobo woredas to resolve disputes linked to the flood recession on farming plots. The community cohesion facilitators have identified communities with common complex identities (CCI) for the purpose of establishing community cohesion groups within 12 kebeles of the two woredas. CCI will increase the likelihood of seeking non-violent conflict resolution and make resorting to violence against another less palatable, as stated in the Cooperative Agreement. Further activities of these facilitators will be implemented after the approval of the TOR by the Justice Bureau.

In working closely with the Justice Bureau it has been established that the Justice Bureau will second staff at the Woreda level who will give the trainings to the community members due to the sensitivity of community cohesion topic and ownership of the process. The Community Cohesion Facilitators will help facilitate the process. Further activities towards the training of community members will be implemented after the approval of the TOR by the Justice Bureau.

Following the submission of the TOR to the Justice Bureau, a detailed work plan explaining community cohesion activities was completed. The following are activities listed in the TOR:

- Selection and recruitment of community cohesion facilitators, 6 in Wanthoa and 6 in Akobo
- The community cohesion facilitators will be assigned within in 12 Kebeles of the two Woredas (6 in Wanthoa and 6 in Akobo) and Work with Justice offices staffs
- The community cohesion facilitators and the two Woreda Justice Offices representatives as well as the local leaders (Kebele, church leaders, elders, Women and youth representatives) will work together on the identification and selection of communities with common complex identities.
- Register individuals and community cohesion group members
- Encourage and support the establishment of 1 peace leadership committee at each kebele

- Identify potential conflict early warning system
- Based on the identified and agreed early warning system organize meetings to develop community based bylaws
- Ensure the approval of by Laws by local authorities and Justice Offices
- Ensure all documentations including minutes, records and reports are available
- Organize end of session ceremonies
- Radio broad cast (working with the Regional Communication Bureau)

Activities related to the community cohesion group sessions and end of session ceremonies will be implemented by the Regional Justice Bureau and Woreda Justice Offices experts (Akobo and Wanthoa).

## **1.2 Improved Social Cohesion between Conflicting Groups**

### Activities:

1. Workshops Kebele & Woreda Peace Leadership Committees
2. Workshop Woreda Peace Leadership Committees

Enhanced People to People Relations and Communities Rehabilitation (EPPR&CR) staff will provide Peace Leadership Committees (PLC) workshops on conflict mitigation and leadership, and facilitation to develop bi-laws. These activities are planned in the TOR which has been submitted and is awaiting approval. Upon approval of the Justice Bureau, these workshops will be started in the coming quarter.

## **1.3 Effective Combination of Traditional/Modern Approaches to Peace Building and Conflict Mitigation/Prevention Adopted**

### Activities:

1. Study Traditional and Modern Conflict Resolution Approaches
2. Study Validation Workshop
3. TOT for WS Dissemination Trainers
4. Woreda Level Dissemination Workshop
5. Kebele Level Dissemination Workshop
6. Radio Broadcast

Through a facilitated process of constructive engagement, mutually accepted, effective methods of conflict mitigation will be developed for use by leaders across ethnic, age, and gender groups, as stated in the Cooperative Agreement. Detailed terms of reference for professionals to study traditional and modern conflict resolution approaches have been prepared and submitted in the TOR to the Justice Bureau. This will be implemented upon approval.

The purpose of the proposed study is to carry out research on the traditional and modern approaches to conflict resolution and factors to success and failures of peace initiatives in Wanthoa and Akobo, Gambella. More specifically, the study will:

- provide an understanding of modern and traditional systems for conflict mitigation and their inter-relationship;
- outline factors affecting successes and failures of past peace initiatives including an itinerary of past peace agreements; and
- Provide recommendations on most effective approaches in the current context.

The findings of the study will be disseminated through trainees to the communities. A consultant for the workshops will be hired in the coming quarter.

## **1.4 Balance of Power More Equitable Between Conflicting Groups**

### Activities:

1. Obstacle Identification Workshop
2. Kebele Level Validation Workshop

3. Support to Peace Meetings
4. Peace Agreement Ceremonies
5. Radio Broadcast

The Obstacle Identification Workshop is included in the submitted TOR. This kind of workshop has been previously done by ZOA. But now, a more targeted workshop in the 12 selected kebeles will be performed in the coming quarter upon approval of the TOR. EPPR&CR will then turn its attention to assisting PLC to facilitate peace agreements between conflicting groups at the local level, as required from the Cooperative Agreement.

### **1.5 Local Government Capacity to Predict and Monitor Conflict Enhanced**

#### Activities:

1. Develop Early Warning System (EWS) Manual (consultant)
2. EWS Training Workshop (transport, food, per diem)
3. CB Equipment (laptop, printer, walky-talky, etc.)
4. EWS Rehearsal (transport, food, per diem)

Capacity Building material needs have been assessed and items have been distributed to the Regional Justice Bureau. These materials were provided with the appropriate USAID and ZOA branding on them. The following items were provided:

- Laptop Computers (8)
- Office Furniture
- Video Cameras (2)
- Photo Cameras (3)
- Diesel Generator (1)

This equipment will help each woreda to enhance their EWS and keep them better prepared for potential conflict.

### **1.6 Youth Have Alternative Methods to Contribute to Their Society that are Mutually Acceptable to Both Elders and Youth**

#### Activities:

1. Vocational Skills Training
2. Peace Sports Coaching Training for Peace Facilitators
3. Support Local "Peace Sports Teams"
4. Support Matches and Competition Between Teams

Beyond limited traditional agriculture and cattle production, youth within the project area have few opportunities for education, employment and entrepreneurship. ZOA will proceed with vocational skill training based on the needs and feasible business opportunities.

Thirty-two (32) trainers have been selected from both Akobo (16) and Wanthoa (16) for Training Of Trainers (TOT) training. The training started in May and will be completed on September 5, 2014. Then, the trainers will return to their kebeles and provide training to beneficiaries, whom will be selected from the 12 kebeles. The training is being conducted in the Gambella Don Bosco Technical and Vocational Skill Training Institute.

## **Objective 2: Lessened Competition for Resources**

### **2.1 Improved Management of Limited Resources**

#### Activities:

1. Kebele Level Identification Workshop
2. Support to Working Groups (resource use agreement)
3. Working Groups (resource use agreement) Validation

4. Dissemination Workshops (resource use agreement)
5. Radio Broadcast

As described in the Cooperative Agreement, local stakeholders will develop agreements on fishing, grazing, land and water rights; then, participatory kebele-level two-day workshops will be facilitated to define local resource competition. Following, 12 kebele-level working groups will develop resource-use agreements that will be validated in larger groups of kebele stakeholders. Quarterly agreement reviews will be held with PLC to address problems arising and adherence issues. Kebele gatherings and radio programming will be used to disseminate agreements. These activities are included in the TOR submitted to the Regional Justice Bureau. The above activities are planned for later this year and will be reported on accordingly.

## **2.2 Diversified Livelihood Opportunities**

### Activities:

1. Training Livelihood Facilitators (6 Akobo, 6 Wanthoa)
2. Trainer (consultant) for TOT
3. Support to Establish Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) Groups (saving boxes, stationeries, etc.)
4. Skills Training Plus Start-up Input

VSLA has been used extensively in Ethiopia and across much of Africa to successfully improve livelihoods for poor people. Previously, fifty-six (56) VSLA groups were established; 28 in Akobo and 28 in Wanthoa. ZOA has previously provided training to these groups. Fifty-four (54) VSLA groups continue their work in both woredas (27 in Akobo, 27 in Wanthoa). ZOA is currently following up on these groups in order to establish lessons learned and assess successes and challenges of the VSLA groups.

## **2.3 South Sudanese are Appropriately Hosted in Akobo and Wanthoa Woredas**

### Activities:

1. Contingency Planning Workshop
2. Contingency Planning Workshop Trainer (Consultant + Manual Development)

EPPR&CR will work with stakeholders to develop a Contingency Planning Manual and a three-day Contingency planning workshop will be held for 20 people (PLC representatives and administration) per woreda to be better prepared for refugees. These activities are also included in the submitted TOR and are planned for the second year of the grant. However, in consideration of the current situation, discussions are being undertaken regarding whether these activities should be adjusted.

## **2.4 Community Cohesion Facilitation**

### Activities:

1. Community Cohesion Coaching and Support
2. Community Cohesion Resource Materials
3. Facilitation and CB partners (local NGOs and government)

The submitted detailed TOR includes these activities. As per the request from the Regional Justice Bureau and approval of the donor, ZOA has completed the purchase of materials as part of the office capacity building.

## **IV. Lessons Learned and Challenges Encountered**

### **Lessons**

Given the sensitivity for community cohesion and the CSO Proclamation in Ethiopia, ZOA signed an agreement with the Regional Justice Bureau for implementation of community cohesion activities. ZOA is learning how to work closely with the bureau to ensure activities are carried out in accordance with the project proposal. It is important that ZOA informs the other government authorities as well at woreda and zonal level as well and because the information channels within the government have to be developed well. There is no access to the network nor internet in Akobo and Wanthoa.

Because of the civil war in South Sudan, the border area has become a highly sensitive area. Government officials are nervous about everything unusual in Akobo. It requires perseverance on the part of ZOA staff to deal with this uncertainty. The staff need extra attention because most of their families don't live in Akobo and are uncertain about the security.

This program is highly encouraging and is helping to motivate the return of the displaced people. IDPs who have been in Lare, Itang, Wanthoa and South Sudan locations have started returning on their own to their place of origin, A problem is that these people have possible accesses to be registered as a refugee and get the refugee status for the required humanitarian assistances. But the situation in Gambella is now very different; a significant number of households have returned to their original kebeles. This is not through organized return but it is self initiated. It is the reflection of a strong intention to return, while providing support to the people in their original areas also attracts people to return. Most of the returnees have returned within the area where there are no basic services, which shows a strong desire for displaced people take initiative to rehabilitate their life in their area of origin. The program support will go further to different kebeles, not only in Tirgol

Another other lesson is the harmonious relation in between the different sub-clans of Nuer. The Jikany Nuers are receiving and allowing the Lou Nuer to be with them, showing possible coexistence between these different sub-clans.

### **Challenges**

The civil war in South Sudan has resulted in an influx of refugees into Gambella and insecurity in nearby areas of South Sudan. The threat of related violence occurring in project areas or adjacent areas could impact the security of staff so ZOA is carefully monitoring the situation. Thus far, the staff have been safe and activities are moving forward.

Returnees within the return areas are not provided with the required basic services. Many children are far away from the school. There are also no health facilities and no access to clean drinking water,

Another challenge that was encountered was that the project area has experienced a large influx of refugees from South Sudan. This has meant that possibly conflicting groups are residing in the same areas. Discussions and reassessments have been carried out at woreda and regional levels, mainly with the Justice Bureau to assess how community cohesion trainings and activities fit within this new context. This has required us to reconsider how to implement the community cohesion related activities, therefore, delaying the implementation of these activities.