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# EVALUATION OF USAID/SOUTH SUDAN'S DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES UNDER NDI PROJECT 2009 – 2014

**August 2015**

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by Luis Arturo Sobalvarro and Dr. Raymond Gervais under contract with Management Systems International.

# **EVALUATION OF USAID/SOUTH SUDAN'S DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES UNDER NDI PROJECT 2009 – 2014**

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION SUPPORT PROJECT**

July 2015

AID-668-TO-13-00001



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# ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
ARC	Abyei Referendum Commission
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005)
CPSS	Communist Party of South Sudan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy & Governance
DI	Democracy International
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EU	European Union
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan/ Government of South Sudan
HRDO	Human Rights Development Organization
ICSS	Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (2005)
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
INC	Interim National Constitution of Sudan (2005)
IR	Intermediate Result
IRI	International Republican Institute
JEPDE	Joint Engagement for Peace and Democratic Governance
LTTA	Long Term Technical Assistance
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MESP	Monitoring & Evaluation Support Project
MSI	Management Systems International
NLA	National Legislative Assembly
NCC	National Constitutional Conference
NCP	National Congress Party
NCRC	National Constitutional Review Committee
NDF	National Democratic Front
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEA	National Elections Act (2008/2012)
NEC	National Elections Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUDP	National United Democratic Party
PDCO	Peace and Development Collaborative Organization
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PPC	Political Party Council
PPLF	Political Party Leadership Council
PURE	Peace, Unity, Reconciliation & Equality Party
RoSS	Republic of South Sudan
SANU	Sudan African National Union
SDA	Southern Democratic Alliance

SEASP	Sudan Electoral Assistance Support Project
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM-DC	Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement – Democratic Change
SSCC	South Sudan Council of Churches
SSDF	South Sudan Democratic Forum
SSHEC	Southern Sudan High Elections Committee
SSLP	South Sudan Labor Party
SSLS	South Sudan Law Society
SSNYP	South Sudan National Youth Party
SSRB	Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau
SSRC	Southern Sudan Referendum Committee
SSUNDE	South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections
SSWEN	South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network
SSYPADO	South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
SUCCESS	Systems to Uphold the Credibility and Constitutionality of Elections in South Sudan
SUGDE	Sudan Group for Democracy and Elections
SUNDE	Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections
TCRSS	Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (2011)
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDP	United Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMIS	United Nations Mission to Sudan
UNMISS	United Nations Mission to South Sudan
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAP	United Sudan African Parties
USG	United States Government

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was signed in January 2005, a roadmap for ending the country's long civil war and achieving potentially long-lasting peace was designed and put in place. Among a series of important political milestones incorporated into the agreement were the 2010 nationwide elections<sup>1</sup> — including in Sudan's restive south — and, subsequently, the 2011 referendum to determine whether Southern Sudan would secede or remain with the Khartoum-led regime.

While the agreement relied heavily on, and was made possible by, the support of the international community, its implementation, too, would need significant backing. Indeed, countries from around the globe, along with multi-lateral organizations, invested considerable resources — financial, human, material, and other — to guide the process and ensure its progress. Within this broad-based, international initiative, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) played an instrumental, if not leading role. As part of USAID's comprehensive and well-designed strategy to support the CPA's implementation, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) provided crucial advice, guidance, and technical support in ensuring widespread knowledge, understanding, citizen participation, and ultimately, legitimacy to the CPA's most important milestone events: the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. In so doing, NDI also made important contributions towards setting the stage for what would eventually become the World's newest country: the Republic of South Sudan.

After close to ten years of implementing important and trailblazing civic education and citizen participation-related activities in South Sudan<sup>2</sup>, NDI effectively ceased its operations in South Sudan in December 2013<sup>3</sup>. Without a doubt, NDI's \$61 million "Supporting Civic Participation, Peace-Building and Conflict Mitigation" Project, wholly funded by USAID, was essential in promoting and facilitating an end to the 21-year old war between northern and southern Sudan. And, while NDI was ready and well-positioned to provide support in the democratic construction of post-independence South Sudan, political developments in the country mooted these efforts. The situation in South Sudan has deteriorated significantly since its birth as a nation.

To gauge the success of NDI's 2009-2014 initiative, identify lessons-learned, and formulate recommendations for future consideration in South Sudan, USAID commissioned Management Systems International (MSI) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of this project. Initially designed as a three-year (January 2009 – January 2012), \$44 million effort, the NDI project was extended by 32 months, to September 2014. Ostensibly to provide ongoing and related support in the construction and development of the new country, an additional \$17 million were awarded to NDI for this purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> The national elections held in April 2010 were originally mandated for and scheduled to be held between March and April of 2009. A series of political and – consequently – technical delays on the part of the Khartoum-led government forced the postponement.

<sup>2</sup> Although NDI had been actively present in Southern Sudan since 2004, this evaluation only covers the 2009-2014 period within which this project was implemented.

<sup>3</sup> While officially slated to end in September 2014, the December 2013 outbreak of war in South Sudan forced NDI's evacuation and, effectively, its programmatic operations. Although smaller scale initiatives did continue, these were related mostly to administrative and close-out activities.

Among the most important and significant findings, the evaluation team determined that:

- NDI's long-term presence in Southern Sudan afforded it critical and unequalled knowledge regarding on-the-ground developments and realities; as well as crucial access to indigenous leaders. Its considerable pre-2009 history allowed it to build confidence and trust among Southern Sudanese leaders and actors, proving to be a significant advantage, not only for its own programmatic planning and strategizing, but also for USAID's.
- Dating back to NDI's initial incursion in Southern Sudan in 2004, its programmatic activities and strategies were directly linked to the CPA and the various milestones therein mandated. The 2009-2014 project was not a stand-alone initiative, but rather a continuation of the institute's previous work. NDI's strategies followed a logical and natural progression of CPA-related political developments as they evolved.
- NDI's project was part of a broader, well-designed USAID strategic initiative that included other organizations. For example, while NDI worked on civic education and building the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs), the International Republican Institute (IRI) worked with political parties; and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) worked with electoral authorities. This strategically holistic approach was as vital as it was successful.
- To implement this effective and ambitious strategy, USAID deployed pragmatic and highly competent staff to design, implement, manage and oversee the broader Democracy and Governance (DG) program. Moreover, these individuals had a high degree of Sudan specific knowledge, including the complexities surrounding the challenging political and working environments. USAID staff were key to the success of the DG program, and, by "leading from the back", fostered an essential working and collaborative environment among the DG implementers.
- NDI's contributions in spearheading and organizing the founding of the South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections (SSUNDE)<sup>4</sup> in 2009 was an extremely important element in ensuring local ownership and buy-in through critical civic/voter education efforts. SSUNDE's creation and subsequent nationwide presence and reach was key to facilitating widespread knowledge about the CPA process, and increased participation in the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. Consequently, SSUNDE was well-positioned to promote and undertake democratic construction in the post-independence period.
- The focus group activities undertaken by NDI represented the cornerstone of its programmatic approach. The results or findings rendered from these activities served to inform other project initiatives. NDI's *Let's Talk* radio programs, civic/voter education strategies, community organizing projects, constituent relations activities, and constitutional development work, for instance, were designed and adjusted based on focus group findings. Likewise, information gathered from these activities served to inform future focus group activities. This strategy represented a solid, comprehensive and integrated project implementation approach that should be replicated in similar circumstances.

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<sup>4</sup> Before South Sudan's independence in July 2011, SSUNDE was simply known as the Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections, or SUNDE.

- Unlike other DG initiatives that may have had a much more mission-critical approach in terms of the CPA's implementation, NDI did have a post-referendum (independence) vision. Its history in South Sudan — along with its very close relationships with leaders and actors — gave it a unique perspective and allowed it to think and plan with sustainability in mind. Certainly before independence, NDI had a good idea of what initiatives it could potentially support and implement once South Sudan emerged.
- NDI's contributions to constitutional development and other legal framework initiatives were very useful, particularly in the pre-independence stage, i.e. 2005 Interim National Constitution of Sudan (INC), 2005 Interim Constitution of South Sudan (ICSS), and the 2008 National Elections Act (NEA), under which the 2010 elections were organized. Political developments in post-independence South Sudan rendered NDI's constitutional development efforts ineffective, however.
- Given the importance and sensitivities surrounding the pre-independence stage, NDI's work with SSUNDE did not allow for long-term capacity-building efforts. Rather, NDI's efforts were focused on ensuring SSUNDE was an effective vehicle and tool to promote and facilitate citizen participation in the CPA process, namely the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. NDI's substantial involvement in SSUNDE's administrative and operational matters, however, continued in the post-independence phase. As a result, the organizational capacity of SSUNDE and its network was not built-upon or strengthened.
- Despite the best intentions and efforts of USAID/NDI, post-referendum/independence euphoria in South Sudan was not conducive to an adequate environment for building democracy. While the SPLM/A quickly moved to consolidate its power, the new authorities were preoccupied with financial, technical, and administrative issues of seceding from Sudan.
- A decrease in the NDI project's effectiveness was evident in the post-independence phase of its implementation. While there were substantial NDI staffing changes after the 2011 referendum, there were also exogenous factors that could have contributed to this situation.
- The entrenchment of the SPLM/A in positions of power has resulted in a polarization of positions within the government and the opposition. Concurrently, other actors have been squeezed-out of the equation, completely marginalized from any discussions related to an end of hostilities and the future of the country. Similarly, democratic spaces continue shrinking, i.e. CSOs, media.
- As the newly created Republic of South Sudan (RSS) struggled to get administratively and operationally off the ground, few efforts were made to safeguard and strengthen its democracy and institutions. Ultimately, political developments overwhelmed the country's democratic construction. The December 2013 outbreak of war resulted in the suspension of several assistance initiatives, including those related to democracy building and strengthening.

As a result of its findings, the evaluation team believes NDI's strategic vision and implementation approach was very successful in contributing to USAID's broader goal of supporting the CPA. The project's focus and design, mixing focus group activities with civic/voter education, community organizing initiatives, and constituent engagement efforts, coupled with an important small grants component, resulted in a highly successful model. But, while NDI had a vision and viable plans to support the democratic construction of South Sudan in the post-independence period, political developments on the ground rendered these mostly useless.

Although the execution of the 2010 elections, the 2011 referendum, and consequently, the secession of Southern Sudan can be considered significant successes, the economic, political, and democratic construction of South Sudan has stalled, if not altogether failed. And while these shortcomings cannot be directly attributed to USAID or NDI, there were pre-referendum signs of what would potentially happen in the post-independence period. Whether or not mitigating actions could have been taken or not is unknown, but a general lack of unpreparedness neutralized any ability to react swiftly and appropriately.

Despite the technical success of ensuring the (partial)<sup>5</sup> implementation of the CPA, adequate planning for post-referendum/independence within USAID was largely absent. Relying on its substantial experience on the ground and the wealth of information it had garnered from its own activities, NDI did have a vision for what it could do in the post-independence period and had formulated viable strategies. Seemingly, however, these were not part of a broader, well-orchestrated USAID programmatic strategy, but rather, a result of NDI's own internal analysis. Unlike the pre-referendum/independence phase where USAID had a clear and well-designed approach, strategies for building South Sudan were mostly fractured and not part of an integrated vision or approach.

As a result of the findings identified and the conclusions reached, MSI evaluators have formulated a series of recommendations aimed at formulating democracy assistance strategies for South Sudan in the future. Taking into account the unstable and volatile on-the-ground conditions, the evaluation team has categorized its recommendations under three divergent scenarios: Improved Situation, Situation Unchanged, and Situation Worsened. Among the recommendations outlined in this report, the evaluation team would like to highlight the following:

### **Improved Situation**

- Full, but conditioned re-engagement with the GoSS. Immediate actions to re-start assistance initiatives with National Constitutional Review Committee (NCRC), National Elections Commission (NEC), and the National Legislative Assembly (NLA). Formulation of roadmap with specific benchmarks and timetables for continued assistance and gradual expansion/increase.
- Thorough review/re-design/reformulation of international community's assistance strategy; independent assessment of USAID portfolio, weigh course-corrections/changes.
- Re-doubling of efforts to strengthen capacity of CSOs (SSUNDE) and re-activate nationwide network; immediate capacity building and outreach efforts, and designing of civic education strategies.
- Immediate support and re-establishment of public consultations for constitutional review/drafting efforts.
- Development/strengthening of conflict mitigation initiatives throughout the country; lessons-learned/replication of regional experiences, i.e. Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda.
- Organization of second women's conference; reactivation of efforts to promoted women's issues; full incorporation of gender specific strategies in all projects/programs.

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<sup>5</sup> While major CPA milestones have been completed, other significant requirements of the agreement have not been met, i.e. Abyei Referendum, consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. These pending – and significant – issues must be addressed if permanent peace is to be achieved.

### **Situation Unchanged**

- Development of criteria/benchmarks to determine timeframe and up/down decision for partial/full re-engagement.
- Reactivation of work with CSOs (SSUNDE) continued; building capacity of local organization to position them as key frontline players in informing citizens and facilitating participation.
- Launching of civic education campaigns on specific issues — conflict mitigation, peace, history of South Sudan, nationhood, citizenship, women’s rights, civics, etc.
- Re-launch of focus group and polling activities led by CSOs. Coupled with civic education campaigns, focus group activities can maintain engagement and participation of citizens creating a groundswell of support for peace and nation-building initiatives.

### **Situation Worsened**

- Nation-wide data collection initiatives undertaken by local CSOs: building the capacity of CSO’s under all three scenarios is extremely important. Regardless of the on-the-ground situation, CSOs can and should play pivotal roles. Should situation deteriorate, CSOs can play very important role in being eyes and ears, serving as lifeline to citizens.
- Information dissemination initiatives expanded: if CSOs are supported and strengthened, they can lead efforts to inform citizens on developments and facilitate continued engagement.
- Continue/strengthen capacity building initiatives for political parties.
- Depending on level of deterioration, complete disengagement must be considered.

# INTRODUCTION

Under USAID's Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), the National Democratic Institute (NDI) implemented what was planned initially as a three-year democracy and governance program from 2009-2012 in Sudan, including the southern region. The agreement underwent 10 modifications which involved expanding its lifecycle to September 2014 with a combination of cost and no-cost extensions. After the successful 2011 self-determination referendum, the project limited its activities to the newly created and recognized RSS. "The main purpose of this project was to support civic participation in a holistic manner, by promoting the adaptation of a sound legal framework for major political process that promotes civic participation by preparing citizens to inform, participate in, and observe those processes."<sup>6</sup>

## PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

This performance evaluation<sup>7</sup> of CEPPS/NDI's contribution to USAID's portfolio of democracy and governance projects in Sudan and the RSS seeks to assess: (1) its level of achievement of goals, strategic objectives, and intermediate results; and (2) determine and document lessons learned and best practices for improved future programming of similar project activities.

## AUDIENCE AND INTENDED USERS

The primary audience for this evaluation is USAID headquarters' Africa Bureau and USAID/South Sudan's Democracy and Governance team. As the purpose is not only past performance but lessons learned for future planning and implementation, the results shed light on strategies most adapted for conflict prone zones and unstable political environments.

Although NDI is no longer present in South Sudan (for the time being), an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of its approaches and implementing choices can assist the institute in adapting to other difficult contexts. In addition, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GoSS) should find insight into strategies to enhance civic education, citizen participation, and gender sensitivity as it prepares to debate the contents of the new constitution. Finally, the new implementing partner, Democracy International (DI), may identify lessons in time to adjust its implementing approach before the upcoming elections and constitutional debate.

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. What have been the intended and unintended results of USAID's investment through NDI's interventions and their relationship to the project's overall objectives?
2. How relevant was NDI's project to the short, middle and long-term development needs of South Sudan in terms of meeting critical political processes in the country?
3. What were the negative effects of conflict on project implementation?

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<sup>6</sup> Statement of Work: Performance Evaluation of Democracy and Governance Activities Under NDI Program, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> USAID's glossary defines Performance evaluations focus as: "Performance evaluations focus on what a particular project or program has achieved (either at an intermediate point in execution or at the conclusion of an implementation period); how it was implemented; how it was perceived and valued; whether expected results occurred; and other questions that are pertinent to project design, management and operational decision making." (USAID. Glossary of ADS Terms, 04/30/2014 Partial Revision, <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/glossary.pdf>)

4. In project implementation, how did NDI apply the principles of “Do No Harm”?
5. Did the project achieve the right focus and balance in its theory of change?
6. What interventions helped support a sound legal framework for major political processes that promoted civic participation needs of South Sudanese?
7. What measures did the project develop to enhance women’s participation in South Sudan’s critical political process?

# BACKGROUND

The 2005 CPA between the GoS and the SPLM/A represented a blueprint for ending the country's long civil war and, subsequently, achieving potentially long-lasting peace. Designing and brokering the agreement required significant involvement from the international community — led by the United States. But without this continued assistance and guidance, the CPA's implementation would not be possible. Understanding the importance and historical significance of the agreement, countries from around the globe, as well as multilateral organizations, lined up to provide financial, technical, and political support. And although the CPA has still not been fully implemented, key milestone events were successfully completed, resulting in the eventual secession of Southern Sudan from the north in 2011.

USAID played an instrumental, if not leading, role in ensuring the CPA process moved forward. Indeed, USAID's support — which included a comprehensive DG programmatic strategy — was clearly the backbone of the wider international effort. As part of USAID's comprehensive program, NDI provided crucial advice, guidance, and technical support, focusing on educating and informing citizens on the CPA process, thereby promoting and facilitating their participation in the agreement's most important milestone events: the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. Together, these processes eventually resulted in the secession of Southern Sudan from the Khartoum-led regime, and the birth of South Sudan.

But, the post-independence euphoria was short-lived. Barely four years after its birth as the world's newest country, South Sudan continues to struggle to build itself as a nation. Internal power struggles breed uncertainty and instability. The wounds of the December 2013 outbreak of war, still painfully fresh, promise to deepen before improving. The country's highly militarized political class and system, coupled with, conversely, highly politicized military and paramilitary structures has kept South Sudan in a state of political and democratic purgatory. Despite the international community's best intentions, its post-independence vision and strategy seem to have been weak and incomplete, unable to effectively deal with the quickly evolving post-independence circumstances and the SPLM/A's quick moves to consolidate their power and close the country's democratic spaces.

## NDI'S ASSISTANCE INITIATIVES

NDI first became involved in Sudan in 2002, when together with the International Republican Institute (IRI); it conducted a political assessment of both the northern and southern regions. As a result of this activity, NDI determined that there were opportunities in which it could implement small, but meaningful activities. Consequently, NDI launched an initiative aimed at working with women's organizations in both regions, bridging the existing gaps.

As the CPA negotiations moved forward, NDI maintained its presence and continued with smaller scale activities. In September 2004, NDI was awarded a \$1.4 million cooperative agreement designed to compile "citizens' views in support of political dialogue and consensus building in Southern Sudan."<sup>8</sup> Within this project, NDI would initiate a series of activities that would eventually become the strategic backbone of subsequent initiatives that were directly linked to, and designed to support, the implementation of the CPA, which was signed in January 2005.

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<sup>8</sup> September 28, 2004 Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 623-A-00-04-00091-00.

For several years leading up to 2009, thus, NDI had been undertaking important activities, contributing to the implementation of the CPA. NDI's long-term presence in Southern Sudan allowed it to build strong relationships with local actors and leaders, gain valuable on-the-ground perspectives, and develop strategies that would help organize and conduct two of the CPA's key milestone events: the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. NDI's history in Southern Sudan was also useful to USAID as it designed and prepared its broader DG programmatic strategy.

In early 2009, USAID awarded NDI (and other implementing partners, as well) another cooperative agreement. This NDI project, which is being examined in this document, was part of a broader and integrated USAID strategy to support and ensure the successful implementation of the CPA, and perhaps more specifically, the 2011 self-determination referendum.

As part of NDI's contributions to this broader support initiative, it set-out to accomplish the following strategic objectives (SO) during the project's original three-year timeframe (2009-2012):

- SO1: Support the development, adoption and implementation of a legal framework and institutions for major political processes conducive to civic participation and consistent with international best practices;
- SO2: Enable civic participation in key political processes, including, but not limited to: government policymaking, national elections, and the referenda called for in the CPA; and,
- SO3: Enhance the understanding of key civic and political actors in Sudan concerning the viewpoints of citizens on political, policy and electoral issues and how to address them.

Following the conduct of the 2011 referendum and the subsequent independence of South Sudan, the NDI project was extended by another 32 months. In additional \$17 million was awarded to NDI to carry out four new strategic objectives, all of which were designed to meet the new demands of the emerging circumstances in the development of the new country. These were:

- SO1: Strengthen civic participation enabling environments and improve mechanisms for effective citizen-government cooperation;
- SO2: Strengthen and improve citizen participation (including youth visibility and increase gender equity in civic and policy making decisions) to engage government constructively — at national and sub-national levels — in key political and democratic processes.
- SO3: Strengthen public awareness of, discourse on, and support for democratic principles and processes; and
- SO4: Strengthen the capacity of CSOs, including mass-based and/or indigenous organizations to effectively engage with communities, government officials, and other key stakeholders in mitigating conflict and advancing peace-building and democratic processes.

# METHODOLOGY

Although the last version of the SOW, under the purpose statement, did not refer to international evaluation criteria, the evaluation questions nevertheless did implicitly point to these criteria: relevance (Q2, 4, and 5), effectiveness (Q6 and 7), impact (Q1 and 7), and sustainability (Q3). The SOW further required that the evaluation identify lessons learned and best practices “for better/improved future programming of similar project activities.” All these concerns guided the choice of methods and approaches for information gathering.

The design proposal document had anticipated the use of both qualitative and quantitative data; the documentation received did not offer any statistical data which could significantly inform the process. A qualitative approach was then set in motion. Primary and secondary sources were accessed and controlled for completeness; while in the field, a series of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Group Interviews (GIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted.

## DESK REVIEW

Preliminary contacts in Washington were made early in the process as the team prepared to travel to South Sudan. Unfortunately, these initial requests for interviews with NDI headquarters-based staff were not granted, resulting in weak and incomplete information gathering at that preliminary stage, with constrained communications when requests were finally followed through by internet-based conversations.

The bulk of the desk review occurred after the briefing meeting when a large quantity of documents (800+) was submitted for analysis and prioritization. Documents were classified according to their relevance to the evaluation process; selection and classification served to bring together documents linked to:

- policy statements: approaches and objectives stated by USG and the implementing partner;
- documents on agreements: request for proposal, proposals, signed agreements, and agreement modifications (12);
- project narrative: M&E plan, work plans and reports, combining the planning and actual implementation;
- NDI publications focusing on project documents: a majority was the focus group research reports (15), plus others such as guidance and manuals;
- NDI’s counterpart (SSUNDE): factsheets; and
- Sector specific documents: media, gender, and fragile states.

More than 160 references have been listed in References Section.

## INFORMATION GATHERING

To complement documentation-based information, stakeholders were identified through snowball<sup>9</sup> and purposive<sup>10</sup> sampling in order to identify the most significant informants. Key informant lists were slowly

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<sup>9</sup> Snowball sampling (also called chain sampling, chain-referral sampling, referral sampling) is a non-probability sampling technique where the evaluator is assisted in creating a priority open list of important informants through his set of preliminary or on-going interviews.

established as interviews were held; group and focus group meetings' composition was decided directly by the evaluation team (two political parties' group meetings and the CSO Resource Team on the Constitution) or through interaction with the organizing party (SSUNDE for the Torit focus group). No gender specific FGs were organized for lack of time and because it was felt a mixed set of participants would not affect the breadth and depth of collected information. The experience in Torit<sup>11</sup> proved the hypothesis to be a valid one.

Meetings, all types combined, were held with more than 60 informants (Annex Y of informants) from USG and USAID and its implementing partner, Sudanese stakeholders, CSOs, and the media. Interview and FG guides had been prepared at the inception phase and served for the semi-structured, flexible interviews. Special care was given to adapting lines of questioning to each type of participant. Most in-country interviews were held in Juba with one external site visit in Torit (Eastern Equatoria State). Table A and B offer disaggregation of interviewees by gender and by type of meeting.

Female	14
Male	49
Total	63

Method→ Source ↓	KII	GI	FGD	Total
USAID	3			3
NDI	10			10
Project beneficiaries	5	3	9	17
Political Parties	1	22		23
Other implementers	10			10
Total	29	25	9	63

## DATA ANALYSIS

A three tier approach of information analysis was adopted based on the normal sequence of qualitative processing of data: transcription, coding, interpretation, and theory-building.

- Hand-written transcription of oral exchanges during KII, GI, and FG meetings was transferred to word processing, producing a first level of clarification as notes were compared;
- The transfer itself was done by regrouping information by question (evaluation questions for KII or session's specific question for GI and FG). Formal coding could not be done economically as the volume of data was too small;

<sup>10</sup> Purposive sampling, (other names are judgmental, selective or subjective sampling), is also a type of non-probability sampling. It calls upon a judgment or selection criteria decided by evaluators (in this case) based on information received or data analyses.

<sup>11</sup> The CSO Resource Team on the Constitution was male only.

- Interpretation could begin through recurrence analysis, triangulation, and patterns emerging from transcripts.
- The draft report called for an evidence-based validation of theories.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Due to gaps in documentation, a complete narrative of the project's deployment could not be built: an exhaustive set of quarterly reports were not made available nor were important planning documents, such as the first RFP. The more elusive deliverables produced by NDI and its partners could not be located: Let's Talk programs and PSAs among them. This factor was combined to effects of recourse to recall methods: after 18 months, informants had difficulty remembering precise events or sequences of activities.

Limited access, for reasons of security, to sites affected the capacity to triangulate data from similar environments, e.g. other states than Central and Eastern Equatoria.

# FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

NDI's 2009-2014 project covered two unique and distinct phases in the history of South Sudan: the pre-independence phase, from 2009-2012, and the post-independence period, covering the 2012-2014 period. It's important to note, however, that NDI's original scope covered three distinct objectives, all of which were designed to support USAID's broader strategic goal of supporting the implementation of the CPA, namely, the 2011 referendum. Once the referendum was conducted, and South Sudan's independence decided, NDI's project was extended. Along with the extension, NDI was awarded additional funds to carry-out activities related to the democratic construction of the emerging country. Four new objectives were introduced and guided NDI's activities during this extension period.

Both phases brought with them completely different sets of circumstances and challenges. Despite these, NDI was well-prepared to undertake the appropriate and corresponding activities necessary for each phase.

## I. What have been the intended and unintended results of USAID's investment through NDI's interventions and their relationship to the project's overall objectives?

As stated, the NDI project's three original strategic objectives (for the 2000-2012 period) were geared towards providing support in the implementation of the CPA, and more specifically, the conduct of the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. After South Sudan's independence in July 2011, however, the project's objectives changed, shifting towards efforts to support the democratic construction of the new country. To that end, four strategic objectives were formulated and served as NDI's compass.

While there is no doubt that NDI successfully met the three pre-independence and four post-independence objectives of its five-year initiative, along the way, a series of unintended consequences resulted from the project's implementation. Of these collateral results, some were positive, while others were less so.

When looking at the NDI project's intended and unintended consequences, however, it's important to view these through the lens of the overall USAID DG program and the other components that comprised this broader strategy. NDI interventions alone were not responsible for, or the cause of, these results.

### Findings

#### Intended Results

- **Implementation of the CPA:** While the CPA in its completion has not been implemented, the agreement's most important milestone political events were conducted, namely the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. The NDI project's design and original objectives were formulated specifically to support this effort.

- **Increased knowledge and awareness of CPA, democratic principles, and electoral and constitutional processes:** One of the major pillars of the NDI project was civic education. In an effort to ensure widespread knowledge about the CPA and its importance for the future of Southern Sudan, NDI deployed significant efforts to educate and inform citizens about the process; as well as democratic principles and electoral and constitutional initiatives that would be conducted within the framework of the agreement.
- **Widespread participation of citizens in CPA's implementation post-independence:** While other USAID implementing partners may not have had a post-independence vision or strategy, NDI did have a clear picture of what it could potentially do in the post-independence period. In fact, NDI's strategic plans followed a very natural progression of political events as the CPA's implementation evolved. Understanding that the CPA's implementation did not end with the conduct of the 2011 referendum, NDI was prepared and ready to facilitate the widespread participation of citizens in the post-independence period. Besides creating significant enthusiasm and momentum for the continued participation of citizens in this period, NDI also provided key support in compiling the public's opinion and perceptions about what a new constitution should look like; its support for the establishment of the NCRC was considerable.
- **Formation of cadre of domestic electoral observers:** NDI's contributions in the organization and founding of SSUNDE were strategically important achievements, not only for ensuring success in the pre-referendum period, but also in the post-independence phase of the project. Never before had the citizens of Southern Sudan experienced electoral processes, much less participated so closely in their conduct. By facilitating their close involvement in the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum, NDI laid the foundation for the longer-term and permanent involvement of citizens in the country's future democratic processes.
- **Use of FG activities:** Since its initial incursion in Southern Sudan, NDI laid-out a very significant focus group strategy that would inform its future efforts and help design its project interventions for years to come. These activities were key in facilitating citizen participation, designing civic/voter education strategies, and towards providing inputs to the various constitutional and legal framework development processes, pre and post-independence. In fact, NDI's focus group activities were also very useful in informing and educating South Sudanese leaders and actors. As with the project's domestic electoral observation component, NDI set an important precedent in the country by introducing this important tool, one that can still be successfully built-upon several years later.
- **Constituent engagement initiatives:** While much of NDI's strategy was focused on informing and educating citizens and facilitating their participation in the CPA process and post-independence democratic construction efforts, the project also addressed important aspects related to the relationships between political and elected leaders with citizens. As part of its integrated and comprehensive project, NDI also worked very effectively at creating and establishing the links and mechanisms in which citizens and elected and political leaders could interact. These constituent engagement and dialogue activities created direct channels of communication in which citizens could talk to and express their opinions to their elected officials. Equally, these initiatives helped elected officials better understand their roles as representatives, listening to grassroots level concerns and advocating for their constituents. While it is true citizens had never had the opportunity to interact with political and elected officials, it's also true that political and elected officials had never before had the opportunity — and perhaps interest — in hearing what their constituents had to say. These initiatives helped

facilitate and ensure an important foundation for continued interactions between the elected and the electors.

### **Unintended Results**

- **Entrenchment of SPLM/A:** It's important to understand the preeminence of the SPLM/A in South Sudan's political history and structure. The SPLM/A is the standard-bearers of independence and peace — at least as it refers to the CPA. The CPA was signed by the Khartoum regime and the SPLM/A. As the *de facto* — and only — leaders of Southern Sudan, thus, the SPLM/A was the only authority with whom to deal, even before the 2010 elections that legitimized their position in power. Despite assurances and promises to build a democratically pluralistic political system in the new country, the SPLM/A instead moved to consolidate its hold on power. After battling so many years for independence, SPLM/A leaders have found it hard to expose themselves to the possibility of losing their hard-fought power and preeminence.
- **Polarization of positions:** As a result of the above, the SPLM/A has also fractured internally. Between the faction in government, the SPLM-IO, the SPLM-DC, and the former detainees, there are several SPLM-centric actors that claim to represent the real interests of the new country. But the internal power struggles among these factions, and even within the government itself, has only served to radicalize their positions, making peace ever more difficult to reach. In the meantime, other non-SPLM/A leaders and actors who represent significant portions of the population have been completely marginalized and essentially shut-out of the country's political discourse.
- **Closing of democratic spaces:** As the SPLM/A government has dug-in its heels, it has also moved to systematically close democratic spaces in the country. Opposition political parties have found it increasingly difficult to operate. Currently, they are facing significant and challenging requirements in a newly mandated political parties' registration process. In the meantime, CSOs have also found it difficult to work; facing harassment and intimidation from the government (save for pro-government organizations). Similarly, independent media organizations and journalists are also subject to constant intimidation and harassment from government security agents. The situation in this regard continues to deteriorate.
- **Creation of high expectations:** Naturally, the promise of a new future in a new country created very high expectations among the people of South Sudan. After so many years of conflict and violence, the potential for peace and prosperity was significant. Four years after independence, however, the initial expectations have turned into disillusionment.
- **Dependency:** The implementation of the CPA relied heavily on the assistance of the international community. Given the relatively short timeframe in which the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum were organized and conducted, there were few possibilities for adequate organizational capacity and institutional strengthening initiatives. The mission-critical focus of NDI — and other assistance providers — was geared toward ensuring the successful conduct of CPA-mandated events. As a result of the substantial involvement of assistance providers, local actors — including the government and CSOs — grew dependent and reliant on the international community. This reliance is still evident four years later.
- **Ineffective DG CSOs:** As mentioned above, the substantial involvement of NDI and other assistance providers in supporting the implementation of the CPA led to high dependency levels by local actors. While SSUNDE functioned exceptionally well, it did so with the very close

guidance, mentoring, and direct involvement of NDI. Since NDI ceased its operations in South Sudan, SSUNDE has been largely unable to function on its own. The inadequate and/or insufficient measures taken to build the longer-term capacity of SSUNDE have rendered it an ineffective organization. Without continued — and considerable — guidance, support, and mentoring, SSUNDE may not develop sufficiently to work in a meaningful, effective and independent manner.

- **Loss of capacities, gains, returns on investments:** Due to the very close involvement and mentoring of NDI and other assistance providers, little capacity building was achieved. As a result, much of the knowledge, expertise, and skillsets gained were short-lived. Many of these capacities have since been significantly reduced, or altogether lost. Without key milestones events on the horizon, returns on programmatic investments have also diminished.
- **Proliferation of CSOs:** The significant resources that were assigned to and destined for the CPA process and the post-independence construction of South Sudan resulted in the proliferation of CSOs looking to gain contracts and/or grants. Many of these emerging organizations have no experience, capacity, knowledge, or even, specific missions, or goals. These “brief case” organizations have muddled the CSO community and have made it increasingly challenging to know who’s who. Coupled with the SPLM/A’s staunch defense of its power structure, it has moved to deploy members and sympathizers to create organizations to defend and promote its particular interests.

## Conclusions

- **NDI project was part of a well-designed, comprehensive strategy:** NDI’s project was not a stand-alone initiative, but rather part of a broader DG program strategically designed by USAID. While NDI’s project focused on civic education and building the capacity of local CSOs, other USAID implementing partners focused on other key and integrated issues related to the CPA’s implementation. The overall USAID strategy that partnered NDI with IFES and IRI was tremendously successful and crucial to the overall success of the program as a whole, but also to each individual project.
- **USAID program management/coordination was key:** Despite working on separate and somewhat independent initiatives, NDI, IFES, and IRI were very much in-tune with USAID’s programmatic strategy. Good and complementary coordination between CEPPS partners is by no means a given, but the effective management and coordination employed by USAID was key in ensuring all three organizations worked in concert. Without USAID’s very well coordinated “leading from the back”, this program would certainly not have been as strategically successful.
- **International support for CPA:** While certainly led by the U.S. (politically, financially, technically, and diplomatically), the widespread support for the CPA and its implementation was part of a broad-based international effort. Countries from around the globe, as well as multilateral organizations, made important contributions to ensuring the success of the CPA’s implementation, particularly as it refers to the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum. Besides this key support, the broad international support and involvement lent the CPA implementation credibility and legitimacy.
- **NDI’s long relationship with South Sudanese fundamental to CPA:** NDI’s long and uninterrupted presence in South Sudan since 2004 was vital towards building confidence and trust among indigenous leaders and actors. These close relationships were important and useful

to NDI, enabling it to have first-hand knowledge and access to key developments. Its close proximity to local leaders and the CPA process itself gave it a unique advantage, allowing it to effectively formulate future strategies.

- **SSUNDE key in pre-independence success:** NDI's efforts to organize and found SSUNDE were strategically important to ensuring local level buy-in and ownership. Besides knowing the lay of the land and relying on its nation-wide network, SSUNDE's logistical and operational capacities were pivotal to the success of the project's pre-independence initiatives. While NDI itself also had a nationwide presence, deploying representatives and opening offices in all 10 states and the three areas, SSUNDE's grassroots level reach was critical in the first phase of the NDI project.
- **SSUNDE lessons learned carry-over to post-period:** NDI and SSUNDE set many important precedents in laying the foundation for a democratic culture in South Sudan. Many of the activities designed and promoted by NDI – and implemented by SSUNDE and its network – have carried-over in the post-independence period. SSUNDE network organizations, for example, continue organizing constituent engagement and outreach activities between citizens and local officials and leaders. Many of the lessons-learned that emerged from NDI/SSUNDE's CPA support initiatives are now being used to keep citizens engaged in other matters related to community-level issues.
- **NDI's mission critical focus led to institutional dependency:** While NDI set-out to build and strengthen the capacity of local CSOs, namely SSUNDE and its network member organizations, the immediate and mission-critical focus of ensuring the successful implementation of the CPA did not allow for adequate efforts in this regard to be properly undertaken. NDI's substantial involvement in SSUNDE's internal administrative and operational procedures and processes continued in the post-independence period. Capacity-building efforts were insufficient for ensuring the longer-term, permanent, and independent functioning of the organization.

## 2. How relevant was NDI's project to the short, middle, and long-term development needs of South Sudan in terms of meeting critical political processes in the country?

NDI's project strategies were clearly designed and implemented to coincide with, support, and complement the political developments that were necessary to carry out the implementation of the CPA. In fact, NDI's initial incursion in Southern Sudan goes back to 2004, before the CPA was even signed. From a very early stage, NDI understood the important roles it could play, and the instrumental support it could give, to ensure the CPA's success. Its close relationships with local leaders and its thorough understanding of political sensitivities allowed it to be a key player in the pre-independence period, and left it well positioned to continue providing valuable support in the democratic construction of South Sudan after its independence in 2011.

NDI was an essential piece in a larger puzzle that included other USAID partners; as well as the international community and local leaders and actors. While the NDI project was highly relevant in the short and midterm phases of its implementation, political developments in the country in the post-independence period made its interventions less effective. Although NDI was very well-prepared to continue providing meaningful support, the fluid political reality in post-independence South Sudan made any progress in this regard much more challenging.

## Findings

- **Clearly defined strategy for CPA implementation:** Since 2004, when NDI first started its work in Southern Sudan, its project was closely linked to the political developments and milestones that were necessary to move the CPA process forward. NDI's interventions, then, cannot be seen only as periphery activities intended to support the CPA's implementation, but rather, as an integral part of the strategies that facilitated the historic agreements progress. Indeed, NDI worked with and collaborated closely with indigenous leaders in the design and development of strategies to ensure the CPA's requirements were met. NDI's project, in fact, was designed specifically to facilitate and ensure the successful — if only partial — implementation of the CPA.
- **Strategically comprehensive approach:** NDI's project activities were strategically integrated to complement and inform each other; the project's implementation approach was very well thought-out and exceptionally effective. Focus group activities informed civic/voter education strategies; civic/voter education strategies were used to develop broader information dissemination campaigns; information dissemination campaigns relied on NDI's and SSUNDE's network building; network building facilitated NDI's community organizing efforts; and the community organizing efforts served to bring citizens and elected officials and leaders together through NDI's constituent engagement activities. While these activities could have potentially been developed and implemented as independent, stand-alone initiatives, NDI's project design integrated them to maximize their utility and impact.
- **Previous presence in country was clear advantage:** As has been previously mentioned, NDI's long history and presence in the country put it in an advantageous and strategic position. Its on-the-ground knowledge and key relationships were useful not only to its future planning, but also to USAID's.
- **SSUNDE key to short/mid-term objectives:** While NDI may have achieved meaningful impacts had it implemented its project on its own, the success of the overall intervention would not have been nearly as successful without the involvement and work carried-out by SSUNDE. SSUNDE was indispensable to the success of the project's pre-independence success, ensuring local ownership and buy-in to the CPA process, and establishing important precedents related to citizen participation, civic education, and advocacy.
- **Laid foundation for longer-term democracy strengthening:** It's important to note that before the citizen participation spaces were opened and facilitated by the NDI project, the citizens of South(ern) Sudan had never been exposed to or had the opportunity to participate in or opine on the region's/country's political discourse. The work carried-out by NDI and SSUNDE laid an essential foundation on which to build upon.

**Constitutional development work charted course for ongoing work:** NDI's constitutional development work was extremely useful and important, albeit more so during the pre-2009 period not covered in this evaluation. Indeed, NDI made important contributions in helping draft several legal instruments that were required to guide the CPA process, i.e. INC of 2005 (Sudan), TCSS (2005), and the 2008 NEA. While NDI was prepared for and ready to continue providing assistance in the drafting of a permanent constitution for the new country, post-independence political developments in South Sudan overtook these initiatives, making NDI's interventions less useful and ineffective. Consequently, as the new country emerged, the focus of the government, political parties, and even CSOs shifted. The

government, for one, moved quickly to consolidate its hold on power, while the opposition moved to find ways to gain power and/or weaken the SPLM/A and the government. Once independence was achieved, the mentality or strategic outlooks of South Sudan's political actors changed. For the government, the focus was not about building democratic institutions and paving a path towards a truly democratic system and society, but rather holding on to power. In the opposition's case, the new focus was gaining power. Thus, the real conditions on the ground were no longer favorable for democracy building, as were clearly the intentions of NDI and other's). The post-independence reality imply --and quickly -- changed priorities; democratic strengthening and development was not one of them, and thus NDI's (and others') interventions were less effective.

- However, the precedent set by NDI's pre-independence contributions is very important and did chart the course for continued work in the future.
- **Longer-term, post-independence vision:** Without a doubt, NDI's project design and vision went beyond the CPA's implementation. Indeed, NDI did have a vision and strategy for post-independence work. Consistent with its pre-independence project interventions, NDI's strategy seemed to follow the natural progression/evolution of what was unfolding in the country. Despite the exogenous factors that eventually derailed NDI's — and other assistance provider's plans — the organization was well positioned and ready to provide democratic construction support in the new country.
- **Introduction of civics/democracy in education curriculum:** In the post-independence period, NDI implemented a successful pilot program aimed at introducing basic civics, democracy, and citizenship, etc. issues into the country's education curriculum. Despite NDI's apparent intentions to continue with this highly useful and strategic initiative, the organization was unable to secure the necessary support for its continuation.
- **Capacity building of SSUNDE unsuccessful:** NDI's immediate focus on the CPA's implementation forced it to become heavily involved in SSUNDE's administrative, financial, and operational processes and procedures. While this may have been necessary to ensure success in the relatively short timeframe to prepare for the 2010 elections and the 2011 referendum, it did not allow for proper efforts aimed at building the capacity of SSUNDE as a local CSO. Ultimately, NDI's capacity-building efforts for SSUNDE were unsuccessful. As a result, SSUNDE is today unable and unprepared to stand on its own two feet.
- **Decreased project effectiveness in post-independence period:** The evaluation team detected a clear decrease in the NDI project's effectiveness after South Sudan's 2011 independence. While this drop-off can be attributed to exogenous factors, such as political developments in the new country, it also coincides with significant NDI staffing changes. For this period, the evaluation team also detected a decrease in NDI local and SSUNDE staff morale, and increased tensions with some international partners.

## Conclusions

- **USAID's role was crucial:** USAID led, promoted, and facilitated strong coordination among implementing partners and set the stage for continued collaboration in future activities. USAID also deployed very knowledgeable and politically savvy Sudan experts to oversee and manage DG program's implementation.
- **NDI's long history in South Sudan was key to success:** NDI's extended presence, dating back to 2004, gave it a clear advantage in planning and designing short, medium, and long-term

strategies to address the changing needs & emerging circumstances that developed. Project strategies were designed to closely support and link to the CPA's evolution.

- **Post-independence vision:** NDI's project strategy went beyond CPA implementation. Its logical framework and progression took into account post-independence activities and actions.
- **Key role of SSUNDE in overall success:** Without SSUNDE, the project's success would not have been ensured. Relying on its nationwide presence and reach (including three areas), and its knowledge of local customs and idiosyncrasies, SSUNDE ensured buy-in and ownership of South Sudanese citizens.
- **Constitutional development support very important to integrated strategy:** In the pre-independence period, NDI's work and support on constitutional and other legal framework development issues was crucial to laying the foundation and setting the rules of the game for the implementation of the CPA. Relying on and maximizing the utility of other project components, i.e. focus group activities, constituent engagement, women's issue, etc., NDI ensured widespread knowledge and participation in the constitutional development process.

**NDI relationships with local actors/leaders both advantageous and liability:** While NDI's long history in the country allowed it to build very close and strong relationships with indigenous leaders, which were necessary to successfully carry-out many pre-independence strategies, in the post-independence phase, these relationships may have turned into liabilities. Following independence, SPLM/A leaders have utilized and exploited their relationships with NDI — and other assistance providers — to legitimize their leadership and policy positions. Having worked and collaborated so closely with NDI for so many years, SPLM/A leaders often pointed to this intimate relationship as an endorsement of their less-than-democratic actions in the post-independence phase. Furthermore, the continued assistance of NDI and other partners during the initial post-independence period was seemingly considered as tacit approval of the SPLM/A's actions.

- **Post-independence developments overtook NDI work:** Although extraordinarily effective in the pre-independence period, NDI's interventions became gradually ineffective after independence. As the SPLM/A deployed efforts to protect its gains and entrench itself in power, NDI's activities became less relevant, as political developments in the new country simply overtook democratic development efforts.
- **CSO capacity building was ultimately unsuccessful:** NDI's mission-critical focus in supporting SSUNDE, vis-à-vis the CPA's implementation, did not allow it to focus adequate efforts at building the longer-term organizational capacity of its local partner. But even in the post-independence period, NDI's heavy involvement and mentoring of SSUNDE was not in-line with the building and strengthening of the organization's capacity. In fact, the strategies and activities carried-out by SSUNDE were formulated and designed by NDI, leaving the local organization with very little — if any — decision-making abilities and authority. SSUNDE was much more NDI's proxy than it was its equal partner. As a result, SSUNDE's lack of institutional independence did not allow for its organizational development, including that of its network members.
- **2013 crisis severely hampered ongoing efforts:** Though perhaps inadequate, NDI was ostensibly undertaking activities to build the longer-term capacity of SSUNDE. Any efforts in this regard, however, were severely hampered or altogether damaged with the outbreak of war in

late 2013. Any capacities that may have been gained up to that point were quickly lost as the much-needed momentum and mentoring ceased.

### 3. What were the negative effects of conflict on project implementation?

The long history of conflict in Sudan, which spans 1968-2005 with interruptions, certainly has left scars with loss of lives, large scale displacement of populations, and a guerilla focused approach to administration of goods and services. However, the evaluation question specifically seeks to identify constraints placed on the CEPPS/NDI project after the 2005 peace agreement.

#### Findings

- **Risk in fragile states:** The significant body of analyses on fragile states<sup>12</sup> has informed development partners on the risks involved and possible mitigation strategies. A country such as Sudan which has witnessed political and violent turmoil since 1968 qualifies it as a fragile state and has presented donors with inherent risks.
- **No notable impacts:** Nevertheless, before 2013, the conflict had not had any notable impacts on NDI's ability to implement the sets of interventions stated in its two agreements.
- **NDI' strategies:** NDI maximized its long-standing relationships with Sudanese and South Sudanese political parties and CSOs to mitigate many negative effects. Their approach was built on:
  - An intimate knowledge of the historical background giving depth to their analyses. NDI has been working in the region since 2004, developing networks in all regions of Sudan and then the RSS after the 2011 referendum;
  - Its far-reaching network of contacts among decision-makers;
  - Its contribution to the 2010 elections allowed for greater credibility in interventions, which might otherwise have been objected to;
  - After the closing of their Khartoum office in 2012 and the transfer of operations to Juba, NDI was still able to ensure presence in all states of the RSS, overcoming challenges in the three contested areas (Abyei, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile); and
  - The qualitative information produced by the focus group research<sup>13</sup> helped NDI understand mood swings in the South Sudanese population and anticipate some potential negative effects.
- **Unmanageable effects:** Four important and uncontrollable effects could not be completely managed by all parties, nor specifically by NDI: 1) the effects of a long-term conflict on the population (psychological instability) and elites (perennial "guerilla" mindset); 2) the effects of infrastructure deterioration on operational mobility; 3) a more human aspect of mobility, with the migration of qualified workers rendering it more difficult to keep or recruit qualified personnel in the last year of the project; 4) the December 2013 acts of violence which culminated in the evacuation of all donor agencies' staff. For NDI, this meant a complicated closure of the project with a no-cost extension for the remaining months until September 2014.

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<sup>12</sup> See Section 7 of the List of Documents in Annex X. The USAID 2005 Fragile States Strategy is still very relevant.

<sup>13</sup> See Section 4 of the List of Documents.

## Conclusions

- **Challenges:** The ten year period during which NDI had projects in Sudan, and then RSS, with the specific 2009-2014 of the CEPPS/NDI project under assessment, was not without its share of challenges, as is often the case in fragile states.
- **Foundations of NDI's intervention:** Nonetheless, our findings lead us to conclude that NDI maximized all of its assets through its knowledge of the region at least five years before the outset of the 2009-2014 projects. Its nationwide network and information gathering operations protected it from major negative effects. The network was particularly put to good use both in the political and civil society realms; it relied markedly on confidence and trust. A virtuous cycle is said to have emerged through successful interventions, such as constituency dialogues, which in turn produced leverage for NDI and its local partners.
- **Unpredictable conflict:** The most significant negative point came at the end of the project's cycle in December 2013. Though signs of tensions and internal struggles were accumulating, no one could reliably predict when and how tensions would develop into a full-fledged conflict; challenges therefore emerged which tarnished the last months of NDI's presence in South Sudan.

## 4. In project implementation, how did NDI apply the principles of "Do No Harm"?

The question, as it is stated, seems to have been an afterthought identified at the time of the evaluation. It presents a singular challenge for evaluation purposes: the "Do no Harm" (DNH) principles were not referred to in any of the agreements at the project's outset, but as conditions deteriorated, they became more relevant.

## Findings

- **Clarification:** A first point of clarification must be made; it touches upon the applicability of DNH principles during most of the lifecycle of the CEPPS/NDI project. As stated in the DNH handbook<sup>14</sup>, "DO NO HARM is useful for understanding the impacts of assistance programmes on the socio/political schisms that cause, or have the potential to cause, destruction or violence between groups." Identifying the core element of DNH principles' usefulness, the statement also establishes causal links between assistance programs and unintended impacts on the socio/political make-up of opposing groups. Most components of the DNH framework point to the fact that its principles are best suited to humanitarian crises, not really for conditions such as the 2005 post-peace agreement in Sudan.
- **Conditions of applicability in an evaluation:** From an evaluative perspective, the analysis should be able to establish that the 2005-2011 period was marked by high levels of risk of violence which would then have been ignited by NDI's choice of implementation strategies, albeit unintentionally. Moving beyond the implementing partner, it must then be determined

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<sup>14</sup> CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2004. *The Do no Harm Handbook. The Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict*. Cambridge (Mass. USA): CDA: p. 3.

whether USAID required that CEPPS/NDI apply DNH principles as part of its agreements and their numerous modifications.

- **Demand side perspective:** There is no evidence that application of DNH principles were ever requested from implementing partners, quite possibly because the government of Sudan and the main South Sudanese forces (SPML and SPLA) had initiated a peace process, reducing levels of risks; as well as allowing space for work in development of legal frameworks for political process, enhancement of civic education, and participation among citizens, and consolidation of CSOs.
- **No causal relations:** The instability which emerged after the referendum and marked in 2014 the end of the CEPPS/NDI project was the result of the ruling parties' decisions — for example of adopting a Transitional Constitution which did not meet expectations, or of consolidating its entrenchment. Though opposition political parties did attribute some responsibility to development partners for favoring SPLM, it is doubtful any solid causal links can be established between the rise of nepotism and corruption, and NDI's activities targeting civil society (not political parties).

## Conclusions

- **Dearth of evidence:** It is important to reiterate that there is no evidence that CEPPS/NDI's interventions during both phases of the program heightened internal contradictions emerging in the core political sphere after independence. These non-partisan activities directed towards the administrations responsible for important political processes, such as the National Constitutional Review Committee, or civil society organizations, such as SUNDEE, cannot be causally linked to events after 2011.
- **Need for DNH focused risk analysis:** However their seriousness does beg the question: should USAID and its implementing partners have conducted a risk analysis with references to the DNH framework? If hindsight is inserted in the line of reasoning, the answer could be positive; the risk analysis would have been most useful as close as possible to the post-referendum phase, i.e. at the very beginning of the second agreement.

## 5. Did the project achieve the right focus and balance in its theory of change?

Based on the NDI project's stated objectives, USAID's broader programmatic aims for South Sudan and, indeed, the international community's concerted strategy, it is clear that the goals that were outlined were, in fact, met. Understanding that the ultimate goal of USAID's broader programmatic strategy — which included other key technical components and specialized implementing partners — was to lend critical support to ensure the implementation of the CPA, and consequently, the independence of South Sudan, the NDI project did, in fact, achieve the right focus and balance in its theory of change.

However, it is important to stress yet again that the NDI project was one part in a larger USAID programmatic strategy, and similarly, USAID's programmatic strategy was part of a broader, internationally supported effort.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that a strong project design and strategy is only part of the equation. The other key ingredient has to do with NDI's organizational capacity, institutional experience and expertise; and implementation flexibility and ability. As it relates to its activities in South Sudan, NDI showed it deployed both a formidable project design and exercised a highly effective implementation capacity.

## Findings

- **The CPA was the goal of the initiative:** The design of the NDI project was intended and formulated specifically to support a broader USAID programmatic strategy, aimed at ensuring the implementation of the CPA, and ultimately, the independence of South Sudan.
- **Progressive continuation:** NDI's 2009-2014 project was not a stand-alone initiative, but rather a well-designed, progressive continuation of its previous and ongoing initiatives in Southern Sudan (dating back to 2004), which were specifically designed to support the evolution of the CPA.
- **NDI project design met requirements:** The design of the NDI project — as well as USAID's DG program — met the requirements of what was needed at the specific time of the CPA's implementation. The project/program strategy had the adequate focus, balance, and scope to meet the overarching objective of supporting the successful implementation of the CPA. In addition, NDI's long history in South Sudan allowed it to have the flexibility and foresight to prepare, adjust, and address the emerging circumstances.
- **International community:** While the international community broadly supported the CPA's implementation, the overall effort and strategy was clearly led by USG/USAID. In financial, political, technical, and diplomatic terms, the USG was at the forefront of marshaling support, coordinating resources, and leading efforts.
- **NDI efforts laid a foundation for longer-term democratic development:** Following the natural progression and evolution of its project interventions, NDI was well positioned to continue providing support to South Sudan in its democratic construction after its independence. While significantly detailed post-independence strategies may not have been yet formulated, NDI — through its highly effective work — had already laid the foundation for post-independence initiatives. NDI's pre-independence activities set many precedents among the people of South Sudan; building on these successes was a very realistic and viable next step.

## Conclusions

- **NDI's strategy was effective:** NDI's project strategy was carefully designed and implemented to ensure the implementation of the CPA. The effective mix and combination of activities served to maximize the project's various components; as well as those of USAID's other programmatic areas, i.e. political parties (IRI) and election support (IFES), among others. NDI's focus and activities allowed for a strategic continuation of its initiatives and was closely linked to the progression of the CPA as it was being implemented. This allowed NDI to work and plan for post-independence South Sudan.
- **South Sudan was not prepared for post-independence:** Despite the efforts and inroads made to create a democratic culture in the country, South Sudan was not prepared for its post-independence democratic construction. Once secession had been decided and independence guaranteed, the country's leaders focused their efforts on protecting their gains and consolidating their power. The well-intentioned plans to build a democratic South Sudan were quickly overtaken by political developments. Since its independence four years ago, little has been done to build South Sudan's democratic institutions. The nascent and weak institutions that did exist in the immediate aftermath of independence were vulnerable to political manipulation and were ultimately coopted.

- **Lack of basic elements for democratic construction/development:** Once independence was achieved, South Sudan lacked even the most basic ingredients for the construction and development of its democracy. The new country's professional capacity was — and continues to be — extremely limited; years of neglect highly limited education levels; and technical expertise and know-how were all but completely absent. Indeed, South Sudan was to rely heavily on the international community and partners such as USAID and NDI. The SPLM/A dash to consolidate its power and preserve achievements pushed democratic development and strengthening initiatives to the bottom of the list of priorities. Simply put, there was no political will to focus on the democratic construction of the country.

## 6. What interventions helped support a sound legal framework for major political processes that promoted the civic participation needs of South Sudanese?

When the 2005 CPA was signed, it called for a series of political events and milestones that would chart the course for either the definitive secession of Southern Sudan or its continued unity with the north. This culminating decision was determined by the outcome of the 2011 referendum, which was organized and conducted precisely to address the issue. However, several legal instruments and guiding documents were first prepared and drafted to guide and administer the six-year interim period between the CPA's signing and the 2011 referendum.

NDI's presence in Southern Sudan during this very historic period allowed it the opportunity to provide important advice, guidance, and assistance in the development and drafting of several key and guiding legal frameworks.

While NDI was ready and well positioned to continue providing similar support in the post-independence period, as has been already mentioned, political developments overtook project initiatives, rendering them ineffective, if not altogether useless. It's important to understand, however, that this shortcoming had nothing to do with NDI, but rather with exogenous factors.

### Findings

- **Significant contributions pre-2009:** NDI provided technical guidance and support to the then-Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development (government of Southern Sudan) on the INC of 2005, ICSS (2005) and the Interim State Constitutions (2005) of Southern Sudan's 10 states.
- **2010 Technical support and guidance:** Before the 2011 referendum, expectations were exceptionally high that its result would call for the secession of Southern Sudan. With its eminent independence just months away, South Sudan had to begin preparing for its birth as a nation. To that end, NDI provided key support to the Southern Sudan government's Constitutional Review Committee. Through this support, NDI assisted in the drafting of South Sudan's first sovereign *carta magna*, the 2011 TCRSS. NDI assistance also included support for the drafting of South Sudan's 10 state transitional constitutions
- **Post-independence support was short-lived:** Following South Sudan's 2011 independence, the new government moved to initiate a process in which the standing transitional constitution (TCRSS) would be reviewed and changed. The resulting document would be South Sudan's new — and permanent — constitution. For this process, the new government established the

National Constitutional Review Committee (NCRC). This committee was charged with reviewing the transitional *carta magna* and compiling citizens' views and opinions through a series of public consultations. For this process, NDI provided technical support and guidance to the GoSS, first in the NCRC's creation and establishment, and then, to the new committee directly as it initiated its public consultation activities. For example, NDI was instrumental in designing and developing the civic education materials and strategies that were used in the consultative initiatives. These materials have been preserved by the NCRC and can be easily updated and used if, and when, new consultative efforts are reactivated.

- **Citizen involvement set a precedent:** The above-cited NDI supported activities were groundbreaking in that they facilitated citizens' inputs into South Sudan's constitutional development process. Though short-lived, this experience was very important and positive. If, and when, public consultative activities are relaunched, the NCRC will be well prepared to undertake these efforts.
- **NDI strategic activities used effectively:** NDI's wholly integrated activities were relied upon heavily in its constitutional development efforts. Its *Lets Talk* radio programming, PSAs, listening groups, community organizing project, constituency engagement and dialogues initiatives, civic education and FG activities, were used to disseminate and collect information regarding the constitutional development process, including compiling information regarding citizens' views and opinions.

## Conclusions

- **Pre-independence interventions focused on informing and educating citizens:** Given the CPA's monumental importance, and the generalized and widespread lack of sufficient knowledge regarding its implementation, NDI focused its efforts during the pre-independence period on informing and educating citizens. NDI understood that having an informed citizenry was important in ensuring widespread participation and local ownership over the process, but also ensuring its legitimacy.
- **Post-independence constitutional development support was part of a broader effort:** As the newly independent government of South Sudan struggled to take off, important initiatives such as the constitutional development process did not receive the backing and financial support that was necessary. Understanding that the good will and momentum gained from the post-independence euphoria should not be lost, several international actors quickly mobilized to provide support to the NCRC and the constitutional development effort. Besides NDI, IFES, UNOPS, IDLO, and the Canadian government, among others, provided support and assistance to the NCRC and its efforts.
- **Lack of political will and funding for NCRC:** As the SPLM/A-led government<sup>15</sup> of the RoSS focused on consolidating its power, initiatives related to the democratic construction of the new country lost their urgency and level of priority. Ultimately, there was little — if any — political will for democracy building activities. Consequently, democratic agencies and institutions, like

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<sup>15</sup> It's important to note that after independence, both the SPLM/A and the GoSS moved to quickly consolidate their respective power. In the case of the GoSS, it's important to emphasize it that while it was led by the SPLM/A, it was made-up of other parties as well.

the NCRC and the country's election commission (the NEC), were soon budget-less and essentially inoperable.

## 7. What measures did the project develop to enhance women's participation in South Sudan's critical political process?

The gender factor in constitutional reform may easily be overlooked in newly recognized countries that have experienced decades of civil war conditions. Therefore the Conflict Dynamics International's position may serve as a preliminary cautionary note: "A constitution can seem removed from the everyday needs of people. But, a constitution is a foundation for laws and policies in a country. The challenge is to ensure that the constitution includes strong provisions that foster political accommodation and an inclusive nation in which women can participate equally in all levels of government and society. However, constitutional provisions on paper do not always translate into benefits in practice."<sup>16</sup>

This section will examine to what extent NDI met the challenges of designing and implementing, throughout the whole project's lifecycle, a gender sensitive approach in sectors of intervention.

### Findings

- **Gender before the project's outset:** The first focus group research (2004) organized by NDI in Southern Sudan before the 2009-2014 project set the tone<sup>17</sup>. The organization of gender specific focus groups offered men and women equal opportunities to voice their vision of the New Sudan at the eve of the 2005 peace agreement. This methodological protocol was kept — with the one exception qualified by the main researcher as "disastrous" — throughout the project's lifecycle; by doing so NDI was in effect following international guidelines and practices.
- **NDI'S complied to its positions:** Any other alternative method would have gone against NDI's own positions on empowering women in the political sphere<sup>18</sup>. Though NDI's guidebook deals specifically with women in political parties and arenas, it does isolate as a strategic goal (p. 43-44) the need "to form strategic partnerships with civil society organizations" to allow political parties to maximize impacts through these partnerships; and vice versa, CSOs and women's organizations can reap benefits from connecting with party decision makers and militants.

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<sup>16</sup> Conflict Dynamics International. 2013. Women's Inclusion and Equity under the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011. Briefing Note. Cambridge (USA): CDI: p. 4. See also: Appendix I: Table of provisions of the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan 2011 relevant to women's inclusion and equity, p. 15-18.

<sup>17</sup> Cook, T. D., Melia, T. O., and Deng, L. B. 2004. On the Threshold of Peace: Perspectives from the People of New Sudan. Findings from Focus Groups with Men and Women across Southern Sudan. Washington: NDI. Very significant first glance at the debates which NDI will document in the ten years that followed: "Women express a general desire to have more rights. Often, however, they cannot put into words with any specificity which rights they desire if new laws were to be written for their protection. The exceptions to this were strong support for laws: (1) specifying that a widow can retain ownership over their husband's land and cattle; (2) making girls' attendance at school mandatory; and (3) including women in the decision on when a girl is married (and thus taken out of school). All women interviewed see education as the key to changing society and many express a great desire for education for their daughters, and adult education for themselves as well." P. 24.

<sup>18</sup> NDI and UNDP. 2012. Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties. A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation. New York: UNDP. See: "Advancing democratic governance requires creating an environment of inclusive and responsive political processes and the empowerment of women. The inclusion of the perspectives of women and their participation in politics are prerequisites for democratic development and contribute to good governance." P. 39.

- **Engendered focus group researches:** During the 2009-2014 period, a number of focus group researches<sup>19</sup> actively included both genders to voice their concerns, sometimes with surprising clarity. Analyses of trends mark a continuing support to gender equality in political processes, but note reluctance by men in accepting far-reaching socio-cultural changes. These findings could only be achieved through a rigorous gender specific data gathering methodology and solid analytical tools.
- **Gender in the Let's talk programming:** Similarly, the *Let's Talk* radio program made multiple references to gender relations and/or the status and rights of women before and during the project's implementation<sup>20</sup>. Presented in five different languages, the program had a real impact<sup>21</sup>. The 2009 Paluck report notes: "The *Let's Talk* radio program is an effective civic education tool, and also produces measurable increases in civic participation." Though the experimentally designed impact assessment was done in 2009, it is plausible that with the format remaining essentially the same with the addition of listening groups, its impact lasted until it was ended in 2014.
- **Gender balance in partnerships:** Interviews with SSUNDE also made the point: NDI would insist that gender balance be attempted, if not achieved, when SSUNDE regional offices would be invited to send members of their staff for activities in Juba. It remained a challenge in a country with low levels of female school attendance, but NDI's instance was coherent with its guiding principles. Human resources may not have been sufficient to ensure a balance.

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<sup>19</sup> See section 4 of the List of documents in Annex X. The 2013 synthesis of both qualitative (NDI) and quantitative (IRI) data paints a broad picture of views of men and women on gender equality in the political sphere. It concludes: "There has also been widespread support for the quota for women's representation in government throughout the years, as demonstrated by multiple public opinion studies. However, recent qualitative studies suggest some males would not support raising the quota and earlier qualitative studies indicated that support for women's political participation among men depends somewhat on no major changes to the cultural order." (p. 4) It must be noted that the copies submitted to the evaluation team bore the mention "Not for circulation".

<sup>20</sup> Unable to find a complete list of topics of this program, it was however possible to find samples in the incomplete set of quarterly reports submitted by USAID-South Sudan. (Section 1 of the List of Documents in Annex X) In this sample one finds topics such as:

27	Rape in South Sudan
29	Girl compensation for murders committed by male relatives
31	Girl child education
37	High bride price
44	Maternal Mortality
50	Women's Inheritance Rights
52	Girl Child Education
64	Women and the Constitution
65	Women and the Constitution
71	Domestic Violence
82	Wife Beating (Domestic Violence)
83	Child Labor

<sup>21</sup> See general, but well documented reports by BBC and Internews : BBC Media Action. 2012. Country Case Study: South Sudan. Support to Media Where Media Freedoms and Rights Are Constrained. London: BBC and Masi, S. de. 2011. *Light in the Darkness. Internews Radio in southern Sudan and the Three Areas. Findings of Community Impact Assessment.* Arcata, CA: Internews. The more specific reports by Dr Paluck and her team establish the program's had : Paluck, E. L. and Vexler, D. 2009. *The Impact of the Let's Talk Civic Education Program. Examination of Listener Discussion, Attitudes, and Behaviour.* Washington: NDI; Paluck, E. L., Blair, G., and Vexler, D. 2011. *Democracy Promotion by Radio: Experimental Effects of Listening and Discussing in Southern Sudan.* Princeton: Princeton University.

- **Women Conference:** NDI's support to constitutional reform, though centered on the NCRC<sup>22</sup>, also culminated in a May 2013 South Sudan National Women Conference on Constitution Making Process. Initiated by Women CSOs and UN-Women<sup>23</sup>, the core organizing committee including important national organizations such as Voice For Change, South Sudan Women General Association, South Sudan Women Empowerment Network, South Sudan Democracy Monitoring Program, South Sudan Network for Democracy and Elections, South Sudan Southern Sudan Women lawyers Association, and End Impunity Organization. The Conference introduced a gender component to on-going discussion on constitutional reform which opened the door to broader conversations on the role of customary law on marriageable age and others. With its financial support<sup>24</sup>, NDI contributed to the success of the conference. The conference's detailed recommendation engendered somewhat the discussion on constitution reform as it is hoped RSS will move from a transitional to a definite constitution in coming years.

## Conclusions

- **Challenges to gender equality in the sector:** Most of South Sudan's partners recognized, in light of the Transitional Constitution, that many positive elements on gender were already present. Good intentions were prevalent, but, as noted by a researcher from the United States Institute of Peace: "Challenges abound, however. South Sudan is severely lacking in infrastructure and has some of the worst human development indicators worldwide. Social and cultural practices harmful to women compound the effects of conflict and marginalization. There are constant internal and external security threats, a limited understanding of gender equality, and a tendency within communities to view gender as an alien and illegitimate concern, given the acute problems that South Sudan faces."<sup>25</sup> Indeed the next steps involve turning good intentions into perennial reforms, laws, and administrative practices. NDI and local partners' approach broadened the discussion agenda to include a gender component which might otherwise have not been identified or prioritized.
- **Limitations to changes:** Local conditions — illiteracy, mounting security threats, with its correlated risks of gender based violence, urban-rural divide, and mood swings by men becoming aware of the social implications of many requested reforms (of inheritance or marriageable age) — may have stifled improvements or may yet constrain future attempts at reforms. Women CSOs' intuitions, which resulted in the May 2013 conference, were certainly not without foundations. It was therefore a timely and (positive) opportunistic decision for NDI to offer welcomed support to this unplanned activity, with possible far-reaching impacts in a, now engendered, constitutional reform sector.
- **Risks and mitigation:** The now confirmed downward trend in basic human rights as well as the rise of corruption and authoritarian rule have heighten the risks of overshadowing some of

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<sup>22</sup> . It must be noted that NCRC had a policy of ensuring representation of different interest groups, including gender.

<sup>23</sup> . South Sudan National Women Conference on Constitution. South Sudan National Women Conference on Constitution Making Process. Announcement; South Sudan National Women Conference on Constitution. South Sudan National Women Conference on Constitution Making Process. Recommendations; the official report Kamulegeya, M. J. and Elsa, N. 2013. National Women's Constitutional Conference - Juba South Sudan. 6th-10th May 2013. Report of the Conference Raporteurs. Juba: NWCC; the NDI funded report: Eragu, V. I. 2013. Report of the Women Constitutional Conference. April 23 - May 2013. Juba: USAID.

<sup>24</sup> . The Eragu report was one concrete form; it was in effect used to write portions of the official conference report (Kamulegeya and Elsa).

<sup>25</sup> . Ali, N. M. 2011. Gender and Statebuilding in South Sudan. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, p. 1.

these fragile preliminary gains. It does require careful monitoring of opportunities, planned and unplanned, of engendering all manner of conversations in as many sectors as possible.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the findings identified and the conclusions reached, MSI evaluators have formulated a series of recommendations aimed at designing democracy assistance strategies for South Sudan in the future. Understanding the unstable and volatile on-the-ground situation, the evaluation team has categorized its recommendations on three distinct scenarios: an improvement of the situation, situation unchanged, and a deterioration of the conditions.

In addition, MSI evaluators have also formulated general recommendations aimed at improving the administrative and operational components of both USAID and its implementing partners future performance activities.

### Situation Improved

- **Reengagement with government:** Full, but conditioned re-engagement with the GoSS. Immediate actions to re-start assistance initiatives with NCRC, NEC, NLA. Formulation of roadmap with specific benchmarks and timetables for continued assistance and gradual expansion/increase.
- **Review of international community's strategy:** Thorough review/redesign/reformulation of international community's assistance strategy to take into account new developments; independent assessment of USAID's DG portfolio, weighing of course-corrections/changes.
- **Immediate support for constitutional review/development process:** USAID and implementing partners should quickly move to restart support to NCRN and constitutional development process.
- **Strengthen capacity of CSOs (SSUNDE):** Efforts to strengthen the capacity and reach of DG CSO, specifically SSUNDE, should be re-activated. SSUNDE and its nationwide network would play crucial roles in informing and educating citizens on constitutional review and other related processes. Similarly, SSUNDE will be essential in designing, developing and disseminating civic education strategies.
- **Civic education campaigns:** Coupled with the above, effort to relaunch information campaigns focusing on peace, history of South Sudan, nation-building, nationhood, and citizenship should be launched and broadly disseminated.
- **Civic education in education curriculum:** Efforts to (re)introduce civics, democracy, etc. into education curriculum should be re-activated. Building citizenship among youth will be key to medium and long term democracy development.
- **Strengthen/incorporate conflict mitigation strategies:** Development/strengthening of conflict mitigation initiatives throughout the country; lessons-learned/replication of regional experiences, i.e. Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda.
- **Knowledge management:** To complement knowledge management efforts from their effective knowledge management system, USAID should contract out a mid-term assessment of its portfolio in DG to identify new opportunities and deploy necessary adjustments.

- **Gender sensitivity:** DG implementing partners should organize a second conference on “Facing the challenges of gender balance in the new constitution” as the next draft of the constitution is made public.

### Situation Unchanged

- **Criteria/benchmarks for continued/expanded engagement:** Development of detailed criteria, benchmarks and timeframes to determine up/down decisions for partial/full re-engagement. Benchmarks must be clearly linked to GoSS progress and commitments to peace and democratic development.
- **Communications with GoSS:** Regular contacts and communications with GoSS agencies must be maintained, even if minimal.
- **Work with CSOs (SSUNDE) continued:** Efforts to build the capacity of local organizations to position them as key frontline players in informing citizens and facilitating participation must be designed and developed. Without direct engagement from USG and implementing partners, local organizations can play important role to fill vacuum.
- **Civic education campaigns:** Information campaigns related to specific conflict mitigation issues should be launched and widely disseminated. Creating a groundswell of support from the grassroots level could be effective in mitigating unfavorable situations and tensions
- **Focus group and polling activities:** Led by local CSOs, focus group, polling, and other information/opinion gathering activities should be undertaken. Coupled with civic education campaigns, these initiatives can maintain engagement and participation of citizens, and create groundswell of support of peace and nation-building initiative.
- **Knowledge management:** Based on lessons from the evaluations of the previous phases and to meet USAID’s objectives of learning and accountability, USAID-South Sudan and its implementing partners should establish clear protocols to manage and make readily available all relevant information and data for decision-making and evaluation purposes. For example, it came to the evaluation team’s attention that a wealth of information may have been permanently lost as a result of the Mission’s forced evacuation in December 2013. In addition, a lack of clear procedures regarding the reception, storing and management of electronic files have resulted in the loss or misplacement of documents, or the circulation of more than one version of the same file.
- **Gender sensitivity:** USAID should continue setting gender as a priority and cross-sector concern for all its interventions in DG.

### Situation Deteriorates

- **Nation-wide data collection:** As previously mentioned, local CSOs – and SSUNDE, in particular – can play an instrumental role regardless of the on-the-ground situation. Building the capacity of these organizations will prove very beneficial to USAID under any circumstance. Should the situation worsen, SSUNDE can lead the way in continuing information-gathering initiatives, including but not limited to focus group activities. Relying on its wide presence

throughout the county, SSUNDE could provide valuable insights regarding developments and perceptions in otherwise unreachable areas.

- **Strengthen/expand information dissemination initiatives:** Local CSOs like SSUNDE can play a leading role in disseminating important information to the population at large, particularly in otherwise hard to reach communities. By developing specific campaigns related to conflict-mitigation issues, SSUNDE can keep citizens informed and facilitate wider spread support for peace initiatives.
- **Capacity building to political parties:** Political party strengthening development initiatives can be maintained and strengthened should the on-the-ground situation in the country deteriorate. Despite the fact that spaces for their participation may be shrinking, and that the political playing field may not be even, it is important to support parties other than those in government. Continued assistance to these actors should be carefully considered. Without a vibrant opposition, the potential for the further entrenchment of undemocratic actors is further facilitated.
- **Knowledge management:** To limit the effects of a volatile and threatening security environment, USAID and its partners should maximize the use of cloud technology by deploying a very strict protocol of information transfer outside the production zone. Design strategies to quickly link networks to offer advice, expertise and surveillance on gender violence; design support and include in basket of services
- **Gender sensitivity:** DG implementing partners should prepare to link very quickly and effectively with networks offering advice and expertise on gender based violence and psychological support as an added element in the basket of services to NGOs and CSOs of their networks.
- **Complete disengagement:** Depending on the level of deterioration, i.e. violent outbursts, armed struggles, outbreak of war, USAID should consider complete disengagement, and even, evacuation.

## General Recommendations

- **Meta-analysis of DG program after project evaluations:** In order for USAID to draw an exhaustive picture of its interventions in DG in South Sudan pre- and post-independence, it should quickly complete the sequence of assessments with the last on IRI. Correlatively, it should maximize lessons learned by conducting a meta-evaluation which would bring together all results from prior assessments and both internal (all three components) and external (comparative internationally) insights on DG in fragile states and conflict-prone environments.
- **Information management/knowledge transfer:** Given the unstable political — and operating — environment in South Sudan, USAID should consider incorporating solid information management and knowledge transfer strategies in all its programming. The loss of information in an environment like South Sudan could be significantly damaging. Efforts to secure information must be redoubled.
- **Longer-term commitments of contracts and DG officers:** While the evaluation team understands that traditional tours for contracts and DG officers in conflict and post-conflict environments are limited to one year, exceptions should be made. As previously mentioned,

USAID's role in the successful implementation of this project's — and the overall DG program's — pre-independence phase was absolutely crucial. After the 2011 referendum and the independence of South Sudan, however, the seemingly constant turn-over of USAID personnel did have a negative effect among project implementers across the DG spectrum. Many of these negative results were attributed to a decreased level of knowledge about the on-the-ground realities, and sudden changes in strategic direction related to ongoing project activities. USAID should consider longer-term assignments for its contracts and DG officers in conflict and post-conflict areas, particularly when highly sensitive political milestones, i.e. election, referenda, are to take place. Longer continuity and stability of USAID personnel would ensure more stability in project direction, strategy, and implementation, avoiding unnecessary changes of course, and/or delays.

- **Improved coordination with other international donors:** Though not always easy, close-coordination among international donors is key to the overall success of any multilateral international assistance initiative, or goal. The evaluation team would encourage USAID to continue playing a leading role in this regard, particularly as it refers to coordinating and collaborating with the UN and its agencies.
- **Conduct of internal and periodic project evaluations:** The conduct of mid-project evaluations can be very helpful to determine shortcomings, identify strategic opportunities, and make necessary adjustments. In a highly sensitive and fluid environment, such as was the case in South(ern) Sudan, these evaluations can take the form of short, status check exercises to ensure the effectiveness of project implementation. In traditional, slower-paced initiatives, this could take the shape of more formal SWOT analysis exercises. Regular, internal assessments of the project's performance can prove enormously beneficial, improving the overall performance of the project and its impact.
- **Organization and conduct of comprehensive, joint, end-of-mission debriefs:** Following the December 2013 outbreak of war in South Sudan, USAID implementing partners — including NDI — were forced to evacuate the country, indefinitely suspending its project activities. The forced evacuation of NDI left its local partner, SSUNDE, in a particularly vulnerable situation. The conduct of end-of-mission debriefs could be very helpful in preparing for an implementing partners eminent departure. While the December 2013 war was unexpected, efforts can be made to mitigate the negative effects of complete unpreparedness. In the best of circumstances, comprehensive, joint, end-of-mission debriefs between the implementer, USAID, and beneficiaries would be enormously useful, even more so with the participation of the new implementer, if applicable. In fact, even to address the point above regarding information management and knowledge transfer, a joint, end-of-mission de brief would prove helpful.

## ISSUES

As stated in the first quarterly report, the evaluation team accessed, for the most part, the focus of NDI's activities was primarily the upcoming 2010 elections<sup>26</sup> and the 2011 referendum: "NDI is supporting democratic development in Sudan through four types of activities: supporting the development of legal frameworks and institutions conducive to civic participation; undertaking public opinion research; promoting civic engagement and voter education; and launching a domestic election

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<sup>26</sup> Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening. 2009. CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: January 12, 2009 to March 31, 2009. Sudan: Support for Consensus-Building and Civic Participation in Political Processes. Washington: IRI, IFES, NDI, p. 2.

observation initiative.” Little was mentioned on capacity building in quarterly reports of the first phase of the program (2009-2012).

In the cost-extension phase of the program (2012-2014), four new activities were added, including most importantly<sup>27</sup>: “strengthen(ing) the capacity of CSOs, including mass-based and/or indigenous organizations, to effectively engage with communities, government officials, and other key stakeholders in mitigating conflict and advancing peace-building and democratic processes.” This objective quickly became a major topic of discussions during key informant interviews.

Indeed a recurrent theme systematically emerged from external (non-NDI) and internal (former NDI staff): though all informants recognized the enormous work done by NDI while trying to transfer expertise from NDI staff to SSUNDE, its core implementation partner, they underlined the challenges NDI faced and the solution it implemented too often, i.e. a systematic recourse to “substitution<sup>28</sup>”. In effect, it must be noted that much of these efforts were targeted toward SSUNDE’s headquarters. The reasons may have been numerous: a lack of vision of the potential negative effects, an accelerated schedule for delivery of results throughout the program, but most significantly in the last tumultuous months after the evacuation order, SSUNDE’s own reluctance to modify faulty practices, especially on financial management.

Whatever the prevailing reason, the result was identified by informants, including SSUNDE’s management: the network is not viewed from external viewpoints, nor does it view itself, as capable of facing the challenges of competitive bidding for mandates in programs, whether USAID or others, or of ensuring its perennial cohesive functioning.

In this regard, the objective of capacity building of CSOs was only very partially achieved. For lack of time, it was still unclear the extent of these inadequacies which may point to the first order of business to somewhat resolve the problem: a rigorous mixed-method institutional assessment; a combination of internal and externally supported assessment. If then the problem is to be addressed, the next step would be to design a mentoring system targeting both headquarters and regional office needs. Finally, a structural approach would help build the cohesion of more competent and capable SSUNDE staff. The approach would act on the whole while monitoring the evolution of its parts.

## **LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

While certainly appropriate — and strategically effective — to serving the purpose of ensuring the implementation of the CPA, USAID’s broader DG program for South Sudan may have been incomplete, not taking sufficiently into account, nor planning for, the then-probable post-independence scenarios that eventually emerged. The mission-critical focus of USAID’s strategy — and indeed, the international community’s — failed to put in place mitigating tactics to address the SPLM/A’s rush to consolidate its power and trample the country’s nascent democracy. Though no one could have predicted what has happened, there were troubling signs of what was to come shortly after South Sudan’s independence.

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<sup>27</sup> Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening. 2014. CEPPS/NDI Final Report: January 12, 2009 to September 15, 2014. Sudan & South Sudan: Supporting Civic Participation, Peace-Building and Conflict Mitigation. Washington: IRI, IFES, NDI, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “The act of putting one thing or person in the place of another.” In project management, and evaluation in particular, it refers to a situation whereby technical support does not or cannot enforce the transfers in expertise to beneficiaries it has planned.

Sadly, many South Sudanese interviewed by the evaluation wondered whether they were better off today than before independence. When the CPA was originally signed in 2005<sup>29</sup>, the hope of many Southern Sudanese was to remain unified with the north, albeit with an autonomous and semi-independent political system. Perhaps understanding — even if subconsciously — the challenges of seceding, many Southern Sudanese dreamed of “one Sudan, with two systems”. Instead, what the people of South Sudan have now, more than 10 years after the CPA’s signing is, “two Sudans, one system”<sup>30</sup>. Indeed, the SPLM/A’s heavy-handed, autocratic approach is not dissimilar to the one that ruled over the people of Southern Sudan before they became independent.

And although hindsight always provides for 20/20 vision, also disappointing is the amount of resources that were deployed to Southern Sudan for the CPA process. Despite the significant resources and efforts that were expended, these were ultimately designed to gain the independence of South Sudan, not for the new country’s democratic construction and development. In this regard, however, it is important to note that NDI did, in fact, have a post-independence vision, even if not part of a broader USAID strategy. And here, too, it is important to emphasize that NDI’s vision followed a logical progression and evolution of what it had already been doing. Given the emerging circumstances, NDI was prepared to provide valuable post-independence help.

Indeed, NDI’s long-term presence was an essential element to the overall success of USAID’s broader, pre-independence DG strategy. Since before the signing of the CPA, NDI was developing strategies and undertaking activities in Southern Sudan, building relationships and charting courses for the future, all the while compiling significant information and insight. If other USAID implementing partners may not have had post-independence, democracy building strategy for South Sudan, NDI’s on-the-ground experience allowed it to be several steps ahead. Unlike reactionary initiatives that are designed and developed within very short timeframes and tend to be largely ineffective, NDI’s long and previous history in South(ern) Sudan serves as an important lesson in longer-term assistance strategies.

As has been mentioned, however, political developments on post-independence South Sudan overtook NDI efforts, including those that may have already been in the programmatic pipeline. Eventually, these developments led to the 2013 outbreak of war. Needless to say, the environment and backdrop for democratic assistance work in the country has changed substantially. Direct USAID assistance to the GoSS has been suspended and is currently prohibited, leaving many of the initiatives started by NDI (and others’) significantly hindered, diminished, or altogether discontinued.

Despite the current situation, the international community, particularly USAID, must remain engaged. To do so, however, it must be creative and innovative, relying more, perhaps, on less-traditional partnerships and/or alliances. Conditions in the country may improve, or potentially, deteriorate. The situation may remain unchanged. Regardless, South Sudan will continue to need — and will remain completely reliant on — the assistance of the international community for years to come; the international community’s responsibilities in the country are not over. USAID and other international actors must be prepared to act swiftly when conditions and cannot be caught flatfooted.

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<sup>29</sup> Through his vision and political strategies, John Garang supported a very different, albeit unified Sudan. The original objective of the CPA was not necessarily the South’s cessation, but rather the emergence of a united New Sudan. After his tragic death, however, his original aspirations were somewhat hijacked by emerging SPLM/A leaders.

<sup>30</sup> The “one Sudan, two systems versus two Sudans, one system” description was widely discussed in interviews and focus group activities undertaken by the evaluation team.

Based on the work conducted throughout the course of this assessment, the evaluation team believes there are strategies that can be implemented to effectively build the capacity and facilitate the development of the country's CSOs, particularly and most prominently, SSUNDE. While the evaluation team understands the USG's decision to indefinitely suspend its direct assistance to the GoSS, CSOs can continue receiving support assistance; in fact, any support should be increased and expanded. Without direct engagement with the GoSS, the country's civil society could prove to be an increasingly important and useful actor.

In that regard, the evaluation team suggests USAID and its democracy and governance partners on the ground in South Sudan adopt and implement some, if not all of the below-outlined points during this unique and uncertain period.

- USAID's current implementing partners should re-double efforts to build and expand civil society networks throughout the country, namely SSUNDE. Efforts should first focus on genuinely building the capacity of the organization and network itself, as opposed to organizing and conducting activities.
- SSUNDE members and network representatives can be trained on various issues related to political processes in the country and can serve as important "eyes and ears." Without the ability to work with GoSS authorities directly, USAID and implementing partners can rely on locally-based organizations, which can be an important source of current, on-the-ground information and knowledge.
- USAID and implementing partner should (re)launch and/or expand its outreach and collaboration with faith-based organizations. The South Sudan Council of Churches, for instance, has an unequalled reach throughout the country and the ability to disseminate important information effectively and widely.
- Information-gathering activities should be considered. Especially during this largely uncertain period, focus group and polling initiatives can serve as valuable tools to compile information and design information dissemination strategies.
- Working closely with SSUNDE and other CSO actors, USAID implementing partners can design and develop public service announcements and other information dissemination campaigns aimed at informing the public and creating a groundswell of support in peace-building initiatives.
- In regard with the above, Internews' existing capacity and platform and be maximized and relied upon public.

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# ANNEXES

## ANNEX I: EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK

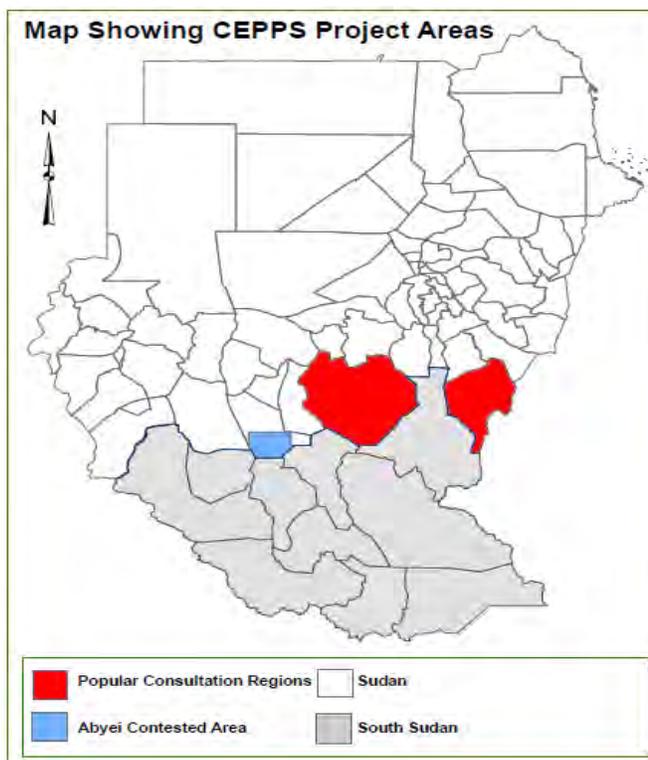
### Background Information

#### Project Identification Data

Activity Name:	Supporting Civic Participation, Peace-Building and Conflict Mitigation
Award Number:	<b>DFD-A-00-08-00350-00</b>
Procurement Instrument:	Cooperate Agreement
Funding:	About \$61 million
Program Beginning/End Dates:	1/12/2009 to 9/15/2014
Key Modifications:	Sept 2012
Implementing Partner:	National Democratic Institute (NDI)
USAID/South Sudan Technical Office:	DG (Democracy Governance)
Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR):	Patrick T. Riruyo
Contracting Officer:	Ragheda Rabie

Sudan became an independent country in 1956 when the British government (in parliamentary session) peacefully handed over power to Ismail El-Ashari who became the first prime Minister of an independent Sudan. For over half a century, Sudan has suffered from wars, military coups, and repression. The longest and deadliest of these was the armed strife started in 1985 between the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement and successive governments in the Sudan. This armed struggle caused a political deficit in the country that brought the country's political institutions to the verge of total collapse. In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) gave hope to the Sudanese and the country finally moved towards peace. USAID established the Supporting Civic Participation, Peace Building and Conflict Mitigation project in January 2009. Its aim was to strengthen the processes, mechanisms, and organizations that facilitate broad-based citizen and civil society participation in government decision-making and political processes, including peace-building efforts.

In line with CPA mandated political process, the program was designed, initially, as a three year project (2009 – 2012). The project had multiple modifications with a significant one occurring in 2012 that extended the life of the award, changed the project language; added standard provisions, e.g., disability policy; expanded the



project scope; added activities, and rephrased objectives.

The project was implemented by National Democratic Institute (NDI) throughout Sudan including the contested Abyei area, and areas where popular consultations were to be conducted, such as the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile State. The project targeted all eligible and registered voters in Sudan, South Sudan, CSOs, and government officials.

As noted above, the project's overall goal was to strengthen the processes, mechanisms, and organizations that facilitate broad-based citizen and civil society participation in government decision-making and political processes, including peace-building. From January 12, 2009-January 31, 2012 the strategic objectives (SO) were;

SO1 Support the development, adoption and implementation of a legal framework and institutions for major political processes conducive to civic participation and consistent with international best practices;

SO2 Enable civic participation in key political processes, including, but not limited to, government policymaking, national elections, and the referenda called for in the CPA; and,

SO3 Enhance the understanding of key civic and political actors in Sudan concerning the viewpoints of citizens on political, policy and electoral issues and how to address them.

The program design was revised in February 2012 as a part of a cost-extension to the cooperative agreement for the period of February 1, 2012 to September 15, 2014 with strategic objectives revised to:

SO1 Strengthen civic participation enabling environments and improve mechanisms for effective citizen-government cooperation;

SO2 Strengthen and improve citizen participation (including youth visibility and increase gender equity in civic and policy making decisions) to engage government constructively – at national and sub-national levels – in key political and democratic processes.

SO3 Strengthen public awareness of, discourse on, and support for democratic principles and processes; and

SO4 Strengthen the capacity of CSOs, including mass-based and/or indigenous organizations, to effectively engage with communities, government officials, and other key stakeholders in mitigating conflict and advancing peace-building and democratic processes.

### **Existing Background Documents**

Key project documents will be made available to the consultants one week before traveling to Juba. The team can request other documents which the consultants think will be useful background document for the evaluation exercise. The documents include, but are not limited to:

- CEPPS NDI Award Agreement DFD-A-00-08-00350-00
- CEPPS NDI Sudan Work Plan
- CEPPS NDI South Sudan Work Plan
- CEPPS NDI Sudan Annual Performance Management Plan (PMP)
- CEPPS NDI South Sudan Annual Performance Management Plan (PMP)

- CEPPS NDI project Modification documents
- CEPPS NDI Sudan Quarterly and Annual Reports, and
- CEPPS NDI South Sudan Quarterly and Annual Reports

## Evaluation Rational

### Evaluation Purpose, Audience, and Intended Uses

The purpose of this performance evaluation is to conduct an assessment of the USAID/South Sudan’s Supporting Civic Participation, Peace-Building and Conflict Mitigation project implemented by NDI. The evaluation will determine if the project has achieved program goals; and establish/develop lessons learnt and best practices for better/improved future programming of similar project activities.

### Audience and Intended Uses

This evaluation report is intended to inform: USAID/South Sudan Mission’s DG (Democracy and Governance) team, the Africa Bureau, NDI as the implementing partner, and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) as the development counterpart. USAID will use the report to determine if the project has achieved project goals; and establish/develop lessons learned and best practices for better/improved future programming of similar projects. It is hoped that NDI will likewise benefit from the findings in designing future programming. RSS – at an appropriate time – could also take the lessons learned to heart in order to make citizen participation an integral part of the political process in South Sudan.

### Evaluation Questions

1. What have been the intended and unintended results of USAID’s investment through NDI’s interventions and their relationship to the project’s overall objectives?
2. How relevant was NDI’s project to the short, middle and long-term development needs of South Sudan in terms of meeting critical political process in the country?
3. What were the negative effects of conflict on project implementation?
4. In project implementation, how did NDI apply the principles of “Do No Harm”?
5. Did the project achieve the right focus and balance in its theory of change?
6. What interventions helped support a sound legal framework for major political processes that promoted civic participation needs of South Sudanese?
7. What measures did the project develop to enhance women’s participation in South Sudan’s critical political process?

### Gender Disaggregation and Gender Differential Effects

The evaluation team should assess gender issues within the context of project activities and in gender differential effects into answers to evaluation questions.

## Evaluation Design and Methodology

This study is proposed to be a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) method evaluation study. However, USAID/South Sudan DG team expects the evaluation consultants to propose, for approval by USAID, a suitable methodology for this study once arriving in country. It is recommended that the methodology suggested should utilize both primary and secondary data from multiple sources to allow triangulation and to inform findings, conclusions, and recommendations. USAID’s expects that the design and

methodology used in this evaluation generate the highest quality and most credible evidence to address the stated evaluation questions.

### **Evaluation Methods – Data Collection**

The consultants are strongly encouraged to start development of evaluation tools after reviewing project documents. Fine tuning of the data collection tools for this evaluation will be developed during Team Planning Meetings (TPM) in Juba when all the team members are present including representatives of USAID/South Sudan. Although USAID/South Sudan reserves the right of final approval of the evaluation tools, USAID will seek opinions of the consultants before reaching any final decisions during TPMs.

### **Evaluation Methods – Data Analysis**

During the TPM, the consultants will present a detailed explanation of the methodological approach and data analysis plan to be used for the evaluation study. This plan will include how focus group interviews will be transcribed and analyzed; what procedures will be used to analyze qualitative data; and how the evaluation will integrate qualitative data from sources with quantitative data. The plan should explicitly reveal what is already known from existing data sources about answers to each evaluation question, and what are the gaps that need to be filled.

As mentioned above, disaggregating findings by gender is key to this evaluation study. In addition, where applicable, the team should disaggregate findings by project components.

### **Methodological Limitations**

This evaluation comes at a time when South Sudan is experiencing political unrest. This coupled with rainy season, and limitations on in-country travel can be challenging and may affect representativeness and reliability of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. In addition, the presence of observer(s), including project and USAID staff, may also affect findings during collection of primary data, depending on methods used. Thus, the evaluation team should propose a clear strategy of how they intend to lessen possible subjectivity and anticipated limitations during this evaluation in the explanation of methodological approach.

## **Evaluation Products**

### **Deliverables**

Below are deliverables that USAID/South Sudan DG team expects from the consultants:

**Work Plan:** During the TPM, the team will present an inception report highlighting the following:

1. Summary of key findings of document review organized by each evaluation question. This should include bullet points of identified gaps, and explanation on how to fill the gaps during data collection and analysis exercise.
2. Methodological approach and tools the team plans to use as part of this study. This should include, if any, other changes suggested by the team to the methodological approach suggested in the SOW.
3. Data collection tools and guides

This deliverable is due at the end of the last day of TPM. USAID will request modifications, reject or approve the inception report within 1 working day after presentation and submission.

**Midpoint Check:** There will be a midpoint check on the status of the data collection exercise. The date for the midpoint check will be agreed at the TPM. The midpoint check will be an informal briefing, and can be over telephone if the team is out in the field at the time of the check.

**Debriefings:** There will be two debriefings: First debrief will be with USAID/South Sudan DG team, and the second with wider audience (USAID team, government counterparts, the implementing partner, and any other interested stakeholder). The evaluation Team Leader is required to presents an oral PowerPoint presentation that shows clear findings, conclusions, and recommendations during the debriefing sessions. However, the Mission reserves the right to request the team to omit any findings of a sensitive nature during the presentation to the wider audience.

**Draft Evaluation Report:** A draft report of the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations should be submitted to the USAID/South Sudan DG team for review and comments prior to the team leader's departure from South Sudan. USAID/South Sudan will provide comments within 10 working days. The evaluation team is encouraged to self-score its evaluation report against USAID's evaluation review checklist – MSI will provide the evaluation report checklist.

**Final Report:** The team will submit two electronic, English versions of the final report. The reports shall incorporate the team responses to USAID/South Sudan comments and suggestions no later than five days after USAID/South Sudan provides written comments on the team's draft evaluation report. The first version of the report will be for internal USAID use and the second version for a wider external audience (excluding any procurement-sensitive information). The final reports should be prepared in line with USAID's How To Prepare a Report guidance in Appendix I of USAID's evaluation policy, reprinted below.

## APPENDIX I CRITERIA TO ENSURE THE QUALITY OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

- The evaluation report should represent a thoughtful, well-researched and well organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in the project, what did not and why.
- Evaluation reports shall address all evaluation questions included in the scope of work.
- The evaluation report should include the scope of work as an annex. All modifications to the scope of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition, methodology or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the technical officer.
- Evaluation methodology shall be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists and discussion guides will be included in an Annex in the final report.
- Evaluation findings will assess outcomes and impact on males and females.
- Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).
- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay or the compilation of people's opinions. Findings should be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- Sources of information need to be properly identified and listed in an annex.
- Recommendations need to be supported by a specific set of findings.
- Recommendations should be action-oriented, practical and specific, with defined responsibility for the action.

## Report Requirements

USAID requires that evaluation reports are 27 – 30 pages maximum. The report format should be restricted to font 12 Garamond, and should be arranged as follows:

1. **Executive Summary:** concisely state the most significant findings, conclusion and recommendations (1 - 2 pages);
2. **Table of Content:** (1 page);
3. **Introduction:** Purpose, audience and Questions: (1 page);
4. **Background:** brief overview of the project, strategies, and activities (2 page);
5. **Methodology:** describe evaluation methods, including detailed limitations, constraints and gaps (1 page);
6. **Findings/Conclusions/Recommendations (FCR):** organized FCR by questions, highlighting data quality, and reporting as bases for verification of spot checks, issues, and results as applicable (17–20 pages);
7. **Issues:** Provide list of key technical and/or administrative, if any (1 page),
8. **Lessons learnt and future directions:** (1 page);
9. **References:** (including bibliographical documentation, meetings. Interviews and focus group discussion);
10. **Annexes:** annexes that document the evaluation SOW, tools, schedules, and interview lists, and list of tables/charts.

## Team Composition

The evaluation consultants will consist of 3 main team members; a Team Leader and 2 technical experts. In addition, representative of the government, implementing partner, and USAID will also join the team. However, USAID will join the exercise on part time basis, and in selected trips. The Team Leader will take full responsibility for managing the team, organizing its work, and ensuring quality control and delivery of a final report acceptable to USAID standards.

**Team Leader:** Should be a senior Evaluation Specialist, and a postgraduate degree holder in International development, Evaluation, Political Science, or any other related Social Science. S/he must have at least 10 years' experience – 5 of which should be working in a developing country context especially in the field of political transformations, engagements of similar nature. The candidate should also have analytical and good report writing skills. S/he must have experience of leading large scale studies. A sound knowledge of understanding USAID programming approaches and methodologies will be an added advantage.

**Team members:** Two technical experts with extensive experience of 10 + years. The technical experts should have postgraduate degree in political science, law or any other relevant social science. S/he should also have expertise in one or combination of the following: establishment of legal frameworks, civic engagement or/and working with civil society organizations. The individuals should have experience in research and demonstrated knowledge of conducting qualitative studies. Local experience as well as experience in Africa or/and other similar settings will be an added advantage.

## Management of the Evaluation

### Logistics

Management Systems International (MSI) will provide overall management and support to the evaluation team including office and meeting space where the team can access internet, printing documents. This support will include coordinating and arranging team's meetings with key stakeholders. MSI will also

provide other logistical arrangements e.g. travel, and accommodation needed by consultants in the course of this evaluation. The consultants, however, will have to procure services like accommodation, and flight travels. Participating USAID and NDI staff will make their own arrangements.

## Schedule

The specified period of performance for this evaluation task is proposed to be approximately 6 weeks in total as arranged in the below table:

Task/Deliverables		Estimated Duration/LOE in days		
		Team leader	Technical Specialist I	Technical Specialist I
1	Travel to South Sudan	3	3	3
2	Preparation of inception report (literature review, methodology & tools development) and debrief USAID/South Sudan	5	5	5
3	Incorporate comments from the debrief with USAID	1	1	1
4	Data collection exercise	10	10	10
5	Data analysis	2	2	2
6	Draft evaluation report writing and preparation of presentation	2	2	2
7	Debrief meetings with USAID	1	1	1
8	Debrief with partners and key stakeholders	1	1	1
9	Team incorporate feedback/comments and complete draft evaluation report and submit to USAID	1	1	1
10	Depart (travel days)	2	2	2
11	USAID comments on draft Report due ten days after receipt of draft report			
12	Team revises draft report and submits final to USAID (out of country)	3	1	1
13	USAID completes final review			
14	Team Leader/MSI do final revisions and edit/brand final report for submission to USAID	2		
<b>Total Estimated LOE</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>

A six-day work is authorized when working in country. Additional LOE may also be allowed subject to approval by USAID/South Sudan

## ANNEX II: LIST OF CONSULTED INDIVIDUALS

<b>Surname NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
Deborah Ullmer	Former Deputy Director, Southern & East Africa	NDI, Washington, D.C.
Christina Hartman	Former Senior Program Manager, Southern & East Africa	NDI, Washington, D.C.
Jame David Kolok	Former Field Manager	NDI, South Sudan
Jacqueline Nasiwa	Former Program Officer	NDI, South Sudan
Dr. Lam Akol	Chairman	SPLM-DC
James Natana Abraham	Secretary General	NCRC
James Anaciento	Deputy Head, Civic Education Division	NCRC
Jeremiah Swaka Moses	Undersecretary	Ministry of Justice
Ijjo Elias Odego	Executive Director	SSUNDE
Maring Joseph Garamoco	Program Manager	SSUNDE
Uwal Charles	Program Officer	SSUNDE
Hillary Francis Koma	Program Manager	SSLS
Farouk Ukach	Project Officer for Constitutional Development	SSLS
Nichola Mandil Ukeil	Special Editor, Peace & Reconciliation	Eye Radio
David Gideon Ari	Project Manager	PAX
Patrick Riruyo	Agreement Officer's Representative	USAID, South Sudan
Rajab Mohandes	Former Civic Engagement Officer	NDI, South Sudan
David Moore	Vice President - Legal Affairs	ICNL
Keith Jennings	Director, Southern & East Africa	NDI, Washington., D.C.
Ian McIntyre	Former Director, Finance & Administration	NDI, South Sudan
Joseph Ukel Abango	Chairman	USAP
Philip Palet Gaden	President	SANU
Wilson Loding	Vice President	ANC
Felix Sunday	Secretary General	SANU
James Ardrea	Chairman	SSLP
Mathexis Mhtor	Secretary General	NCP
Taban Luka	Secretary General	SSLP
James Gharuci	Leader	Democratic Forum
Shawn Houlihan	Senior Director, Africa	Forum of Federations
Aaron Azelton	Director, Civic Participation	NDI, Washington, D.C.

Rehema Siama	Script writer	Eye Radio
Joseph Amin	Assistant Director	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Alonzo Filda	Member	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Orach Dennis	Chairman	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Okach Magiso	Assistant Coordinator	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Davidica Ikai	Director	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Kori Aliardo	Program Coordinator	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Darious Kuya	Assistant Coordinator	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Stephen Lado	Head of Finance	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Narol Christine	Member	SSUNDE NGO Network, Torit
Kent Noel	Regional Vice President	EDC
Fred Chol Ma	Executive Director	SSYPADO
Konat James Vens	Program Coordinator	PDCCO
Amanya Joseph	Program Manager	HRDO
Gasper Amule	Program Coordinator	JEPDG
Kornelio Kon	Chairman	NUDP
Praksalina Pridip	Chairwoman	SDA
Theresa Sirirco	Secretary, Foreign Affairs	SANU-National
Santino Anyetta	Chairman	PURE
Martin Algo	Secretary General	NUDP
Costa Urac	Member	NUDP
Nelson Fadamulla	Member	CPSS
Steward Soroba	Chairman	UDP
Deng Bior Deng	Acting Secretary General	SPLM-DC
Nkrumah Anai	Chairman	SSNYP
Edmund Yakani	Executive Director	CEPO
Traci Cook	Former Country Director	NDI South Sudan
Kym McCarty	Former Country Director	NDI South Sudan
Paleki Mathew Obur	Executive Director	SSWEN

## ANNEX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### NDI Evaluation – Supporting Civic Participation, Peace-Building & Conflict Mitigation

Eval. Questions	Interview Guide	Response
1. What have been the intended and unintended results of USAID’s investment through NDI’s interventions and their relationship to the project’s overall objectives?	<p>a. What is your general understanding about what the NDI’s project set-out to achieve?</p> <p>b. Do you believe the project accomplished its objectives/goals?</p> <p>c. What are some of the direct results of the NDI program?</p> <p>d. Are some of these results still evident today?</p> <p>e. Do you think the project may have directly, or indirectly influenced other outcomes?</p> <p>f. Do you think there were surprise, or unexpected results?</p>	
2. How relevant was NDI’s project to the short, medium, and long term development needs of South Sudan in terms of meeting critical political processes in the country?	<p>a. Do you believe the project played a role in supporting the implementation of the CPA?</p> <p>b. How well designed do you think the project was to address the development needs of South Sudan?</p> <p>c. Do you think the project addressed the post-independence needs of the country?</p> <p>d. What are the best examples of program successes?</p> <p>e. Were there any surprise results?</p> <p>f. In what ways did the program contribute to the overall democratic needs of South Sudan?</p> <p>g. What, if any, program achievements were difficult to measure/ demonstrate?</p>	
3. What were the negative effects of conflict on project implementation?	<p>a. How much do you think the situation on-the-ground affected the implementation of this project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways? (examples)</li> </ul> <p>b. Was the project flexible enough to adjust and make necessary changes given the ever-changing environment/conditions?</p> <p>c. Did the project face/encounter any operating restrictions? Please give examples?</p> <p>d. What sorts of things do you think could have been done differently/better?</p> <p>e. Was NDI/s relationship with USAID conducive to effectively managing the effects of conflict?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What about with other implementing partners?</li> </ul> <p>f. Did the environment have any effect on NDI’s subgrants?</p>	
4. In project implementation, how did NDI apply the principles of “Do No Harm”?	<p>a. Do you know if NDI incorporated the principles of “Do No Harm” in its programming?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How?</li> </ul> <p>b. Do you know if “Do No Harm” was a part of USAID’s overall implementation strategy?</p>	
5. Did the project achieve the right focus and balance	<p>a. How would you describe the original program purpose?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How central was the CPA to the program design and purpose?</li> </ul>	

Eval. Questions	Interview Guide	Response
in its theory of change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How realistic were USAID’s expectations of the project?</li> <li>• How realistic were NDI’s expectations of the project?</li> <li>• Was there a defined “theory of change” or “development hypothesis” for the program? Where did this come from?</li> </ul> <p>b. Were there different goals for the different phases of the program- i.e. 2010 elections, 2011 referendum, post referendum support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the differences?</li> </ul> <p>c. What kind of challenges did the program face in achieving planned results?</p>	
6. What interventions helped support a sound legal framework for major political processes that promoted civic participation needs of South Sudanese?	<p>a. Was NDI’s work related to legal frameworks a central component of the project?</p> <p>b. What specific support did NDI provide in the preparation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INC?, ICSS?, TSRSS?, 10 State Constitutions? South Sudan NEA of 2012? Voluntary and Humanitarian Organization bill?</li> </ul> <p>c. How crucial do you think this support was?</p> <p>d. Were any other groups/organizations providing similar support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there coordination?</li> </ul> <p>e. How important were these contributions in facilitating civic participation and citizen involvement?</p>	
7. What measures did the project develop to enhance women’s participation in South Sudan’s critical political process?	<p>a. Did NDI have a specific focus on gender for this program?</p> <p>b. What specific activities did the project implement in this regard?</p> <p>c. What were the most successful initiatives in this regard?</p> <p>d. Did NDI incorporate a gender-based focus in all its program components?</p> <p>e. What were USAID’s expectations regarding gender mainstreaming and reporting on gender for this program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were these expectations realistic?</li> </ul> <p>f. Which program activities had the most measurable effects on women?</p>	
OTHER	<p>a. How do you think this evaluation can be most helpful to current and future USAID democracy &amp; governance initiatives in South Sudan?</p> <p>b. What contextual issues should we keep in mind in assessing NDI’s performance?</p> <p>c. Who should we meet?</p> <p>d. Any further comments?</p>	

## **ANNEX IV: QUESTION GUIDES – IFES EVALUATION FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

### **NDI Evaluation**

#### **Focus Group Discussion: SSUNDE Network Organizations**

##### **Torit, Eastern Equatoria State**

###### General Themes:

- Support to development of legal frameworks related to CPA implementation;
- NDI role in supporting implementation of CPA;
- Facilitation of civic participation and effectiveness of initiatives, including community/civic engagement exercises, focus group activities, and civic/voter education;
- Organizational capacity/institutional strengthening of CSOs; sustainability issues and accumulated know-how;
- Effect of conflict on continued work initiatives;
- Recommendations for continued, on-going, future work;
- Facilitation of women's participation.

###### Guiding Questions:

1. How important was the CPA process?
2. Do you think the people of Southern Sudan had enough vehicles/ways to participate in this process?
3. How significant was the role of civil society in the implementation of the CPA?
  - a. What impact has civil society in South Sudan had on electoral and constitutional processes?
  - b. What impact has civil society in South Sudan had on the post-independence processes?
  - c. Do you feel government institutions take civil society into account?
  - d. In this regard, how big a role did NDI play in supporting CSOs?
4. In your opinion, what is the current state of civil society in South Sudan?
5. Tell us how you feel about the role of the international community in helping build and strengthen democracy in South Sudan?

### **NDI Evaluation**

#### **Focus Group Discussion – Constitutional Development Organizations**

##### **Juba, Central Equatoria State**

###### General Themes:

- Support to development of legal frameworks related to CPA implementation;
- NDI role in supporting implementation of CPA;
- Organizational capacity/institutional strengthening of CSOs; sustainability issues and accumulated know-how;

- Effect of conflict on continued work initiatives;
- Recommendations for continued, on-going, future work;
- Facilitation of women's participation.

Guiding Questions:

1. Why do you think the CPA process was so important?
2. How significant was the role of civil society in the implementation of the CPA?
3. What impact has civil society in South Sudan had on constitutional processes?
4. What impact has civil society in South Sudan had on the post-independence processes?
5. How big a role did NDI play in supporting CSOs involvement in these processes?
6. Do you feel government institutions take civil society into account?
7. In your opinion, what is the current state of civil society in South Sudan?
8. Tell us how you feel about the role of the international community in helping build and strengthen democracy in South Sudan?

## ANNEX V: TABLE OF USAID’S PRIORITIES IN STRATEGIC PLAN COMPARED TO NDI’S PROJECTS OBJECTIVES

Strategic Documents’ Goal Statement	Development or Strategic Objectives	Intermediate Results	NDI’s Projects Objectives and Links
USAID: South Sudan Transition Strategy 2011-2013			CEPPS/NDI: Supporting Civic Participation, Peace-Building and Conflict Mitigation, 2012-2014
An increasingly stable South Sudan post-CPA	DO1: Conflicts in Flashpoint Areas Mitigated	IR1.1.: Improved capacity for conflict mitigation and management at the local level IR1.2: At-risk populations engaged in productive economic and social activities IR1.3: Government presence and services extended at the local level	
	DO2: Effective, Inclusive, and Accountable Governance Strengthened	IR2.1: Political Competition Maintained or Enhanced IR2.2: Core GOSS Governance Institutions Strengthened IR2.3: Citizens’ Engagement with Government Institutions Increased	Objective 1: Strengthened civic participation enabling environments and improved mechanisms for effective citizen-government cooperation Objective 2: Strengthened and improved citizen participation (including strengthened youth visibility and increased gender equity in civic and policy making decisions) to engage government constructively –at national and sub-national levels – in key political and democratic processes, including the development of a permanent Constitution, in defining democratic legal frameworks, democratic institutions and in advancing democratic reforms Objective 3: Strengthened public awareness of, discourse on and support for democratic principles and processes Objective 4: Strengthened capacity of CSOs, including mass-based and/or indigenous

Strategic Documents' Goal Statement	Development or Strategic Objectives	Intermediate Results	NDI's Projects Objectives and Links
			organizations to effectively engage with communities, government officials, and other key stakeholders in mitigating conflict and advancing peace-building and democratic processes
	DO3: Essential Services (Health, Education, Nutrition, and Water/Sanitation) Developed and Sustained	IR3.1: Essential Service Delivery to Targeted Populations/Communities Improved and Expanded IT3.2: GOSS Systems and Enabling Environment for Service Delivery Strengthened	
	DO4: Agricultural-Based Economic Opportunities Expanded	IR4.1: Household Agricultural Productivity Increased to Improve Resiliency IR4.2: Agricultural Markets Developed IR4.3: Enabling Environment for Agriculture-Based Economic Development Strengthened	
USAID: Strategy Statement 2006-08			CEPPS-NDI: Sudan: Supporting Consensus-Building and Civic Participation in Political Processes, 2009-2012
	S.O.9: Avert and Resolve Conflict	IR9.1: Support Implementation of the CPA at the GNU Level IR9.2: South-South Tension Reduced IR9.3: Implementation of the Protocols for the Three Areas Advanced	Objective 2: Enable civic participation in key political processes, including, but not limited to, government policymaking, national elections, and referenda called for in the CPA
	S.O.10: Promote Stability, Recovery, and Democratic Reform	IR10.1: Core Institutional Structures for an Effective, Transparent, and Accountable GOSS Developed. IR10.2: Selected Urban Areas Strengthened IR10.3: An Electoral System Conducive for Free and Fair Elections Established IR10.4: Persons Affected by Conflict Reintegrated	Objective 1: Support the development, adoption and implementation of a legal framework and institutions for major political processes conducive to civic participation and consistent with international best practices Objective 3: Enhance the understanding of key civic and political actors in Sudan concerning the viewpoints of citizens on

Strategic Documents' Goal Statement	Development or Strategic Objectives	Intermediate Results	NDI's Projects Objectives and Links
			political, policy and electoral issues and how to address them
		Cross-cutting themes: A. Gender B. HIV/AIDS C. Youth D. Security	
Interim Strategic Plan for Sudan, 2004-2006			
Foundation established for a just and durable peace with broad participation of the Sudanese people	Special O.4: Expanded Support to the Sudan Peace Process		
	S.O. 5. More Responsive and Participatory Governance	IR5.1: Increased Participation of Civil Society in Peace and Governance Processes IR5.2: Increased Responsiveness of Civil Administration Bodies IR5.3: Increased Access to Quality, Independent Information	If the NDI proposal was available it would certainly fall under this SO.
	S.O. 6. Improved Equitable Access to Quality Education	IR6.1: Improved Teacher Education Programs IR6.2: Increased Capacity of Primary & Secondary Schools to Deliver Quality Education, Especially for Girls IR6.3: Improved Non-Formal Education For Out-Of-School Youth And Adult Learners	
	S.O. 7. Increased Use of Health, Water and Sanitation Services and Practices	IR7.1: Increased Access to High-Impact Services IR7.2: Increased Sudanese Capacity, Particularly Women's, to Deliver and Manage Health Services IR7.3: Increased Demand for Health Services and Practices IR7.4: Improved Access to Safe Water and Sanitation	
	S. O. 8. Foundation Established for Economic Recovery	IR8.1: Food Security Needs Of Vulnerable Communities Met IR8.2: Market Support Institutions Created And Strengthened IR8.3: Market Support Programs And Services Introduced And Expanded IR8.4: Transparent Policymaking Processes	

Strategic Documents' Goal Statement	Development or Strategic Objectives	Intermediate Results	NDI's Projects Objectives and Links
		Encouraged	

## **ANNEX VI: EVALUATION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Luis Arturo Sobalvarro, Team Leader**

Luis Arturo Sobalvarro has 20 years of experience working on democracy strengthening initiatives throughout the world. Focusing on electoral and political development assistance, he has designed, developed, managed and implemented related programs in more than 20 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. Mr. Sobalvarro has served as a staff member in several international organizations, including the International Republican Institute (IRI), the International City and County Management Association (ICMA), Democracy International, and IFES. In addition, he has undertaken numerous consultant assignments for the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank, (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and The QED Group, among others. More recently, Mr. Sobalvarro served as a Deputy Chief of Party and Chief of Party for USAID-funded elections assistance programs in El Salvador and Honduras, respectively. Mr. Sobalvarro holds a B.A. in International Affairs and Economics from The American University in Washington, D.C.

### **Dr. Raymond Gervais, Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist**

A Canadian citizen with a PhD in Historical Demography, Dr. Gervais has been living, travelling, and working in Africa for the past 45 years. He has been performing consultancies for more than a dozen bilateral and multilateral agencies since 1985. Since 2012 he is a credentialed evaluator, member of the Canadian Evaluation Society.

### **Beny Gideon Mabor, Constitutional Advisor**

Mr. Mabor is a South Sudanese national and a trained lawyer from the University of Juba in South Sudan and Kenya School of Government. Mabor is a renowned human rights activist practicing with number of regional and international human rights institution such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network. He has spent 12 years working both in the Government of South Sudan and non-governmental organizations on full time and on consultancy basis specifically on democracy, governance and social accountability matters.

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