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LOCALIZING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN SUDAN (LINCS) MID-TERM EVALUATION

MERCY CORPS

28 DECEMBER 2010

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LOCALIZING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN SUDAN (LINCS) MID-TERM EVALUATION

MERCY CORPS



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PROGRAM DATA TABLE

Program Name	Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS) (officially ‘Institutional Strengthening in Southern Sudan’)
Region/Country	Africa/Southern Sudan (Geographic Area 650)
Program	Bi-lateral under: Strategic Objective 9: Avert and resolve conflict Intermediate Result 9.2: South-South tensions reduced Intermediate Result 9.3: Implementation of the protocols for the Three Areas advanced Formerly (2005) under: Strategic Objective 5: More Responsive and Participatory Governance Intermediate Result 5.4: Institutional capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that support marginalized groups increased
Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Counterpart	No single GOSS Counterpart
Funder	U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Managing Contractor	Mercy Corps (MC)
Agreement Information (including key modifications)	Cooperative Agreement No. 623-A-00-05-00323-001 Modification #04 (16-Mar-07): Increase total estimated cost of \$9,682,000 by \$750,000 to a total of \$10,650,000; revise budget to accommodate additional funding from the modification; and (3) revise program description to add 6 peace building partners (including 2 female-led organizations) and associated targeted activities (including a one-month mini-conflict assessment) in Blue Nile State (with grant amounts of \$8,500). Modification #01 ² (16-July-08): Accommodated the following modifications: (1) budget increased and program description ; (2) Mercy Corps designated as sole implementer (International Rescue Committee no longer a sub); (3) a provision for program income that is additive to USAID contributions; (4) incorporate changes in key personnel who will all be from Mercy Corps; and (5) delete requirement for matching funds from the CA. Total obligated amount (\$15,682m) and current end date (December 31, 2011) remains the same. Modification #06 (15-Dec-08): Accommodated the following modifications: (1) revise program description to include Three Areas and realign budget to accommodate increased program activities; (2) merge Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) funds into the

² This Modification is most likely misnumbered; however, no subsequent modifications correct the numbering.

respective budget line items; (3) revise Agreement Special Provision to include 'program income'; and (4) revise Schedule A.11.1 Key Personnel.

Modification #07 (30-Sep-08): Accommodated the following modifications: (1) increase the CA amount by \$10,000,000 from \$20,650,000 to \$30,650,000; (2) revise program description to expand assistance to new geographic areas and new civil society/community organizations; and (3) provide incremental funding of \$6,189,000 from \$15,682,000 to \$21,871,000.

Key Program Dates	LINCS Impact Evaluation Mission	TBD
	LINCS 'Mid-Term' Evaluation Mission	June 17-July 16, 2010
	LINCS Implementation Period	1 September 2005 to December 2011
Total Program Amount	\$30,650,000	

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Finally, the team benefitted greatly from working directly with USAID/Sudan-Sudan Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR), Ms. Judith Hakim, during the evaluation.

ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ACA	Associate Cooperative Award
AOTR	Agreement Officer's Technical Representative
AP	Annual Plan
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BNS	Blue Nile State
CA	Cooperative Award
CAFS	Conflict-Affected and Fragile State
CB	Capacity Building
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CE	Capacity Enhancement
CES/CE	Central Equatoria State
COP	Chief of Party
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSPM	Conflict Sensitive Program Management
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
D&G	USAID Governing Justly and Democratically (Democratization & Governance)
DGESC	Directorate of Gender Equity and Social Change
DP	Displaced Person
E-OCA	Enhanced Organizational Capacity Assessment
E-OCI	Enhanced Organizational Capacity Index
EES	Eastern Equatoria State
FCR	Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations
F2F	Face to Face

Acronym	Description
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESC	Gender Equity and Social Change
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
HEAR	Health, Education and Reconciliation Program
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ID	Institutional Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IR	Intermediate Result
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
IT	Information Technology
LINCS	Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan
LLG	Local Level Government
LTA	Long Term Technical Assistance
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MC	Mercy Corps
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFGD	Mini-Focus Group Discussion
MoGSWRA	Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSI	Management Systems International
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTE Team	Mid-Term Evaluation Team
NBEG	Northern Bahr El Ghazal State

Acronym	Description
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NESEI	New Sudan Education Initiative
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCI	Organizational Capacity Index
OD	Organizational Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PMP	Program Monitoring Plan
PU	Program Unit
RC	Resource Center
RFA	Request for Applications
SDG	Sudanese Pound
SKS	Southern Kordofan State
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SMS	Short Message Service
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work/Statement of Work
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement
SRRC	Southern Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
STA/STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
STTI/STTC	State Teacher Training Institute or College
SUPPORT	Services Under Program and Program Offices for Results
TA	Technical Assistance
TL	Team Leader
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNS	Upper Nile State

Acronym	Description
USAID/Sudan	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Context and Program Description

Since gaining its independence in 1956, Sudan has been engaged in two civil wars carried out over 40 of the country's 50 years of existence. Sudan ended its second civil war in 2005. Civil war of such scope and scale has resulted in large numbers of displaced persons including refugees and returnees, a fracturing of traditional cultural structures and an embryonic government in the South that is, as yet, unable to deliver critical services to its citizenry.

The presence of international and, increasingly, "indigenous" Non-Governmental Organizations has fostered the emergence of civil society organizations (CSOs), but there is a distinct need for organizational development and for capacity building of personnel to engage with civil society. CSOs and government agencies alike have limited understanding of and interaction with one another. According to Mercy Corps, "Efforts to regulate and coordinate the activities of CSOs in Sudan have been hampered by the absence of a widespread enabling legal framework for their registration and operation, as well as a general confusion among local authorities on the ground, who are often unaware of national regulations or have poor information about regional regulations.

Civil society organizations have the potential to play a key role in supporting the implementation of the CPA, through service provision, representation, advocacy and serve as independent election monitors. These organizations can also play a prominent role in the reintegration of returnees and former combatants into the community."

Program Description

The USAID/Sudan 'Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan' (LINCS) Program is being implemented by Mercy Corps in the Southern Sudan states of Central Equatoria, Northern Bar el Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile and Warrap and in the Three Areas comprised of Abyei Area, Blue Nile State and South Kordofan State.

The 2005 Cooperative Agreement targeted the development of civil society organizations; subsequent to the CA, nine amendments have resulted in the following major changes: (1) an extension of the Life of the Program (LOP) to December 31, 2011 (formerly August 31, 2008); (2) a more than three-fold increase in the funding envelope (from \$8,400,000 to \$30,560,000); (3) an expansion of the Program's scope and scale which went from 56 CSOs to 114 as the LOP target, as well as the construction and equipping of 14 resource centers, the rehabilitation and refurbishing of six community radio stations and the establishment of coalitions and issues-based networks, and an expansion of the geographic locations targeted--from 17 counties to 21 particularly in Southern Khordofan (including the Abyei Area), Central Equatoria State, and in Northern Bahr al Ghazal, Unity State and Upper Nile States (including their state capitals).³

LINCS supports USAID/Sudan:

- Strategic Objective 9: Avert and resolve conflict
 - Intermediate Result 9.2: South-South tensions reduced
 - Intermediate Result 9.3: Implementation of the protocols for the Three Areas advanced

LINCS was formerly (2005) under:

³ According to a Program Description (drafted in September, 2008) that was finalized by Mercy Corps in October, 2008. This description is an enhanced version of the April, 2008 Program 'expansion version'.

- Strategic Objective 5: More Responsive and Participatory Governance
 - Intermediate Result 5.4: Institutional capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that support marginalized groups increased.

MOST SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS⁴ AND CONCLUSIONS

LINCS, now more than four years into implementation, has delivered impressive results in an extremely difficult operating environment. Overall, progress to date towards the five objectives of the LINCS Program suggests the objectives will be fully met by the end of 2011. It is clear that the partner CSOs supported by LINCS do important work for their communities and are substantial contributors to an active citizenry across the states and countries where the Program has activities. However, with only a year and a half of implementation time remaining, there are some significant gaps including several that will jeopardize the sustainability of the Program's benefits to date and that will, therefore, ultimately affect Program impact.

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Objective 1

Findings & Conclusions: Out of the target 114 partner CSOs, LINCS currently partners with 75 and additional CSOs are in the process of becoming partners. Re-admission into Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States in January 2010 has enabled LINCS to restore CSO partnerships that lapsed following the expulsion of International Non-Governmental Organizations, including Mercy Corps, from these states. As the LINCS Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCAs) and the corresponding indexing along a graded scale (the Organizational Capacity Index-OCIS) indicate, LINCS training, mentoring and support are clearly increasing partners CSOs' organizational capacity. In FY09 LINCS reported an 84% increase in organizational capacity among their partner CSOs.⁵ The participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups, including youth, in civil society through the activities of the partner CSOs has clearly increased—and not only in women-led CSOs.

There is solid evidence of that LINCS has built the organizational capacity of many of its partner CSOs. However, LINCS will need to reach and train 39 CSOs in a very short time frame if the Program is to reach the targeted number of CSOs and still have some assurance of the benefits being sustained after the Program ends.

Objective 2

Findings & Conclusions: LINCS has established 10 out of 14 Resource Centers that are consistently utilized by diverse groups and for a range of purposes including as training sites, for accessing information, and for meetings by a different people, including government personnel.

LINCS is on track and likely to reach the targeted number of RCs. However, the risk to sustainability of the RCs is the lack of traction in the establishment of any Community Action Boards for these facilities, which to date are staffed by MC LINCS personnel and funded by LINCS.

Objective 3

Findings & Conclusions: LINCS has been able to bring together partner CSOs, of which approximately 60 per cent are led by women, through a number of CSO networking, cross-site dialogs, and state meetings. Individuals interviewed note the benefits of these events for helping to build shared goals, methods, and experiences as well as shared aspirations for the future and to lay a foundation for joint activities and issue-based coalitions.

⁴ Findings are derived from the field work undertaken from June to July 2010 and from LINCS Program documentation up the end of Quarter 2 (March 31) 2010.

⁵ Mercy Corps LINCS Semi-Annual Report dated March 31, 2010

For the most part, the events are beneficial and help strengthen ties between and across organizations and should have some likelihood of enduring. However, the electoral coalitions formed through the LINCS partnership with National Democratic Institute (NDI), seem to have less prospects for durability, although they can be recreated for some activities around the referendum. It is also unclear how these networks and coalitions will continue to be sustained following the close of the Program.

Objective 4

Findings & Conclusions: The civic engagement activities of partner CSOs with their constituencies have increased due to LINCS interventions. Almost all partner CSO staff interviewed reported participating in dialogues and coalitions, using the media and undertaking advocacy work and elections work. The engagements have expanded due to the grant awards through LINCS; however, CSO staff note that it is unlikely that the financial base of their organizations for civic engagement activities can be expanded much beyond what it was prior to LINCS. Partner CSOs have regular ‘general’ engagement with communities to address issues in a wide range of sectors in a constructive and collaborative manner, but most have not yet taken the large step toward working explicitly to avert potential conflict.

It is unlikely that the funding base of CSOs will expand much in the future to enable increasing civic engagement. In addition, the many sources of tension between and within communities across Southern Sudan and the significant risk that these tensions will increase and could be manipulated in the run up to and aftermath of the referenda suggest that LINCS should rapidly progress its targeted peace building including conflict management and mitigation.

Objective 5

Findings & Conclusions: Five out of the targeted six CRSs have undergone significant technical upgrades and 286 training days covering a 16-unit curriculum from radio production to peace building have been provided to 33 reporters and 12 volunteers. The CRS broadcasting range is now 70 kilometers or more.

In an information-poor context, radio programs are often the only source of widespread information and the services provided by the CRSs is important. However, more could be done to link CRSs to CSOs, beneficiaries, and stakeholders to their mutual benefit. The CRS Advisory Boards have yet to be established and this is a threat to the sustainability of the investment.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: WOMEN AND REFUGEES/RETURNEES

Findings & Conclusions: In 2007, MC developed a set of guidelines and criteria to help categorize applicant CSOs as being ‘women-led’ organizations. All the women-led partner CSOs target women and vulnerable constituencies. All of the traditional leaders and elders and government personnel that the evaluation team met were male. Program documents refer consistently to gender and Program data are disaggregated by sex. In 2008 MC reported that 51% (the target was 50) of their partner CSOs were women-led and/or specifically focus on gender equality and gender equity.⁶ For example, 5 of the 33 journalists who were trained are female. The Program uses specific training modules that deal with gender. The evaluation team was not provided with an explicit gender strategy and there does not appear to have been a gender analysis undertaken. In addition, gender considerations appear to only take females into account.

Former refugees and internally displaced persons, now returnees to their communities, are a substantial part of the population of Southern Sudan and of many of the communities the team visited and are also prominent in partner CSOs as managers, staff, and beneficiaries.⁷ Many partner CSOs, through LINCS or other grant support, implement activities to support refugee and displaced person returnees. No quantitative data on LINCS support to returnees/refugees was available for analysis.

⁶ This percentage was reported in the MC LINCS March 2008 Semi-Annual report where it is stated that 36 CSOs out of the then current total of 70 CSOs

⁷ This was based on the evaluation team’s field observations and interviews

The civil society sector appears to be almost the only arena for women to participate in broader social life. Vulnerable groups, such as returnees and out of school youth, are also engaged in LINCS CSO sub-grantees, as participants, beneficiaries, and management staff. However, the Program focus on 'women' rather than the broader and more inclusive (and contemporary) framework of 'gender' can be problematic. A gender and development perspective does not mean that women cannot be targeted as a specific group and it does mean that the gender dynamics and institutional norms that so often marginalize women can also be addressed in a meaningful way. In some places, including Sudan, a women in development (WID) approach can have the potential to further marginalize women rather than empower them. MC LINCS (and the Cooperative Agreement) has conscientiously targeted areas with large numbers of refugees and returnees and the activities of partner CSOs, RCs and CRSs in these areas benefit these individuals. There does not appear to be anything more specific being done regarding returnees/refugees.

SUSTAINABILITY

Findings & Conclusions: Partner CSO staff and partner CSO beneficiaries consistently noted the contributions of local or county government and beneficiaries to LINCS (and other) projects. The contributions included in-kind donations such as land for CSO facilities and projects and building materials as well as cash (for example, up to US\$2/ SDP5 per student per month to those CSOs managing community schools). In some cases, community contributions exceed the size of LINCS grant support. At present, there are few other donors providing support to community-based CSOs and they are not ready to pick up and sustain these community CSOs. Beneficiaries recognize that their contributions can only sustain some CSOs and activities and that, overall, the funds raised are insufficient to meet the many needs of their communities. They noted that even with the combined resources of LINCS and communities, the resource envelope is still too limited. Beneficiaries and stakeholders mentioned repeatedly that they were trying to find additional funding from the GOSS and external donors.

Mercy Corps was expelled from Blue Nile State and South Kordofan State from March 2009 to January 2010 when the Chief of Party was able to re-enter the states and re-establish relationships with the partner CSOs. LINCS found that the more advanced partner CSOs (those that had reached a 'foundational' level on the OCI had been able to complete the activities targeted in their grant proposals and were ready with new proposal ideas.

Based on evaluation interviews, observations, and document review issues of sustainability of the various Program components appear to have been raised by MC LINCS within communities only recently and RCs and CRSs do not appear to have been designed with their communities in mind.⁸ Communities do not have the resources, skills, and knowledge to keep these organizations going on their own or to expand them further to meet the growing needs. The potential implications of the impending end of the Program and the sustainability of all LINCS components is of great concern to partner CSOs, beneficiaries and local government authorities. While communities and local governments do make some contributions to CSOs in particular, the level of resources is not enough to keep these organizations viable at their current level of capacity and activities. The cessation of external support would minimize the impact at a crucial time when work should instead be amplified. Leaving partner CSOs at this stage of development without additional capacity building and grants would be a disservice to the substantial investments already made, the communities, and the development of democracy in Southern Sudan. Any additional foci or issues, including the expectation of bringing an additional nearly 40 CSOs on as partners with just 18 months left in the Program would prove to be problematic.

⁸ In the LINCS 2010 Semi-Annual report, Mercy Corps itself cautions that there are factors (such as financial dependence on the project and lack of necessary skills and knowledge) limiting the leap to becoming independent functioning organizations. Further findings are presented under Objective 2 and 4.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Findings & Conclusions: Mercy Corps Sudan has centralized the management of operations across all of its projects in Southern Sudan through a countrywide pooling arrangement. Consequently, a central core of operations staff manage all operational requirements for MC projects, including the LINCS Program. At the start of LINCS, Mercy Corps was the prime Implementing Partner and the IRC was a sub. The relationship was terminated in July, 2008.

LINCS personnel feel that the organizational structure and difficulties accessing necessary assets hampers partner CSOs' projects and reduces the amount of time—and even the overall amount of funding available—for implementation. Some partner CSO staff noted delays in grant approvals that were due to both MC LINCS as well as their own organizations' issues. They also noted that MC LINCS staff sometimes lacked the funds that were promised for a tranche of sub-grantees on the promised date. LINCS staff interviewed noted that the delays in the availability of funds were due to MC's budget office not having them at the time required. In some cases, disbursements of LINCS grants to partners have been delayed due to the unavailability of funds which has in turn delayed partner Programs, forced revisions to their plans, and has even led to a smaller overall grants than agreed upon as the limited period of time for the award runs out. There is some evidence of mishandling of sub-grant funds by a handful of partner CSO. When mis-handling occurs, MC LINCS rapidly terminate the partnership.

LINCS Program personnel have been very successful at establishing good working relationships with the partner organizations (CSOs, RCs and one CRS) and local government stakeholders. LINCS personnel are to be credited for the work carried out to date in an environment that is not conducive in many respects to the work and with challenges that have emerged due to some Mercy Corps management challenges and constraints.

The Mercy Corps approach to LINCS includes staff development through on-the-job training and practice and mentoring was made an explicit outcome of the Program (a move approved by USAID/Sudan). While MC LINCS has done a commendable job in training national staff, the current training modules and types of training limit the staff's ability to provide different and additional approaches to support partner CSOs' (and other targeted organizations and groups) development and activities. A clearly articulated, individualized (and group-focused) professional development structure initiated early on could have helped LINCS staff progress more quickly and avoid the situation of an emerging gap in professional credibility that is now beginning to appear and could have enabled some staff to lead implementation at senior levels in LINCS.

There are several critical management areas in which Mercy Corps has been deficient in rectifying, to the detriment of LINCS Program implementation and potential Program effects. The dynamics between and within different levels and parts of Mercy Corps and the LINCS Program, the apparent domination of operations over technical programming and the lack of knowledge of and control by Program staff over budgeting are affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of LINCS and creating additional stress in an already challenging context. Effectiveness and efficiency of activity implementation also appears to have been compromised in numerous cases due to Program financing issues out of the control of the LINCS personnel but that may have been under the control of Mercy Corps Sudan. Several of these areas--communications with LINCS staff, inefficiencies arising because of lack of access to operational supports (transport, etc.) and to key financial information--appear to stem from the overall Mercy Corps Sudan organizational structure into which the LINCS Program is slotted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Mercy Corps:

Management⁹

1. Examine and rectify organizational structures, processes and budget practices that do not lend themselves to effective and efficient Program management and implementation.
2. Introduce improved human resource management and development processes to: (1) bridge the gulf in communication between Mercy Corps Sudan and LINCS management personnel and field staff; (2) offer an improved approach to individual staff development; and (3) empower Sudanese staff to take on greater responsibility for Program management and implementation.

Programming

3. Address peace building over the last year and a half of the Program in a comprehensive, integrated way across all Program objectives.
4. As a matter of urgency, develop and begin to implement a sustainability strategy that includes a clear exit approach.
5. Continue to build and strengthen CSO networks and coalitions around geographic and thematic areas of mutual interest and increase their reach to the state, regional, national, and international levels.
6. Improve the materials and the ‘one-size fits all’ approach used for the organizational development of the Civil Society Organizations, particularly review, enhance and expand the differentiation of the current modules used for
7. Continue to work with stakeholders on community input and management of the RCs and, when and where possible, increase the size and capacity of RCs to meet stakeholder needs for training, information, and meeting space.
8. Continue to support the five Community Radio Stations, including expanding efforts to reach people across Southern Sudan through existing radio stations, whether community based or not, and develop other social networking methods to broaden the number of beneficiaries that hear of CSOs and their work through their outreach.
9. Establish a formal process to promote and support synergies between and across Program elements in order to realize broader Program benefits.
10. Continue to build the understanding of the roles of CSOs as partners and in advocacy to government at the boma, payam, and state levels and expand this discussion to the national level.

For USAID:

1. Consider funding a substantial follow-on activity to LINCS that build on the solid base of community CSOs that LINCS has supported and increase its investment in civil society development to other states and counties after the referenda.
2. Engage in a dialogue with Mercy Corps Sudan management about the challenges associated with operational and budgetary control and ensure that LINCS management and the MC country office come to some agreement that provides greater control of operational assets and budget to the

⁹ While the nature of the agreement with MC LINCS potentially limits the ability of USAID to directly enforce changes in financial and operations management, it is the intent of the MTE team to raise these issues and promote a dialogue between USAID and MC on these issues. This is also raised in recommendation number two for USAID.

Program, which is needed to strengthen Program implementation and to improve the sustainability of LINCS achievements.

3. Future programming should consider the feasibility of supporting a greater diversification of CSO projects to respond to a broader array of community needs (for example, a wider variety of sizes, foci, and types of grants to CSO parties based on their capacity and community needs and priorities).

4. Consider expanding efforts to reach people across Southern Sudan through existing radio stations, whether community-based or not, and develop other social networking methods to broaden the number of beneficiaries that hear of CSOs and their work through their outreach.

5. Continue to prioritize women's issues as core community issues, both as part of and the ongoing process of addressing the unique challenges of women, and articulate a gender-sensitive analysis that considers both females and males.

II. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Context¹⁰

Sudan is the U.S. government's highest priority country in Africa due to its importance for counterterrorism and regional stability, as well as due to the magnitude of human rights and humanitarian challenges across the vast country. Southern Sudan has long been a priority within Sudan and the United States Presidency, the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Sudan) and is considered critical in reaching the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 and supporting its implementation.

Sudan is emerging from a protracted civil war between its north and south, with ongoing conflicts in the east and in the Darfur region in the west. Historic regional disparities between isolated and chronically underdeveloped regions and the capital Khartoum and other favored regions have been the basis for historic and current tensions. Although the CPA established a six-year roadmap for the transformation of Sudan, setting a potential framework for change, it has not been fully implemented. Expectations from citizens for tangible peace dividends, honest sharing of power and wealth, and an end to the insecurity that displaced more than four million people in Southern Sudan and caused an additional 550,000 refugees to flee to neighboring countries have, to date, been only partially met. The continued reintegration and safe transition of displaced and other conflict-affected people—including women, the disabled, youth, and orphans—is essential. Returnees need assistance, as do their communities, in developing water sources, health systems, schools, roads and vocational training, adult literacy, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) awareness, and in fostering agricultural and economic development.

Institutions and capacities are weak throughout Southern Sudan; the political and administrative structures of the new Government remain nascent and are all but absent in many communities. Security is still lacking for citizens. The police are weak, units of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) are common, and some areas have joint integrated units of the SPLA and Sudanese Armed Forces that appear far from integrated. Small arms are common, and tribal militias remain active. Southern Sudan remains vulnerable to conflict due to the proliferation of weapons, the presence of rival military forces, the absence of virtually any infrastructure, economic weaknesses, and few institutions of governance.

The Three Areas are addressed by two separate protocols in the CPA—"The Resolution of Conflict in southern Kordofan (Nuba Mountains) and Blue Nile States" and "The Resolution of Abyei Conflict"—that seek solutions to the political, administrative, economic, and social conflicts in these areas. Both the North and the South made significant compromises regarding the Three Areas. Critical issues that gave rise to conflict in these areas—land rights, Islamic law, the right to self-expression and freedom of identity, imbalanced development, and autonomy or self-rule—were captured in complex political processes and commissions outlined in the protocols. Since the Three Areas have the greatest Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) presence in the North, resolving issues and implementing the protocols continue to test the commitments to reform and peace. In addition, because these states are part of the front line between North and South, renewed conflict in these areas has escalated and caused significant violence and disruption of national and international assistance in these areas. These areas will likely continue to be flash points for conflict in the near and mid-term.¹¹ These border areas have suffered from substantial conflict in the years of war and corresponding population displacement. In particular, these past tensions and continuing aftermath

¹⁰ The majority of this content is taken from the Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan Mid-Term Evaluation Scope of Work (Annex 1).

¹¹ See Thomas, Edward (2010). *Decisions and Deadlines: A Critical Year for Sudan*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs Chatham House Report. <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/view/-/id/823/>.

have hampered relief and development activities in Abyei and the Three Areas. In 2008 the International Criminal Court delivered its indictment of President Bashir; the impact in Abyei was violence and the expulsion by the Khartoum government of many international NGOs, including Mercy Corps, from that area as well as from southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States.

The Abyei Protocol recognizes the Ngok-Dinkas' historic claim for a referendum to join Southern Sudan. With its significant oil reserves, Abyei is an important test of the National Congress Party's commitment to the CPA. The Protocol for the Resolution of Abyei Conflict addresses the significant oil reserves in Abyei and allocates two percent of the revenue to the nine sections of the Ngok-Dinka. Protecting the rights of the Ngok-Dinka have left the Misseriya people with perceptions of exclusion from both potential oil revenues and access to pasturelands unaddressed, making Abyei possibly the most fragile area addressed in the CPA. USAID/Sudan has specifically targeted interventions to Misseriya areas, as well as to the Ngok-Dinka areas. As in the rest of the Three Areas, USAID/Sudan will address potential violent conflict by supporting people-to-people peace processes, civil society organizations' development, civil society dialogue, community monitoring, institutional development of civil society organizations (CSOs) that promote women and marginalized groups, peace and education services through radio-based, non-formal education, and adult literacy Programs. Additionally, because much of the population of Abyei are returnees (most recently following the violence in 2008), programs concentrate on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Auto-Immune Disease (HIV/AIDS), information, and protection.

USAID/Sudan Strategy

USAID/Sudan has seized an opportunity to work with new government entities to support a reform agenda. Comprehensive USAID/Sudan assistance supports the reform agenda and the implementation of key CPA milestones: the 2008 census, the 2010 national elections, popular consultations in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, and the January 2011 referenda on the future status of Southern Sudan and Abyei Area. In support of these goals, USAID/Sudan is assisting in the administration of these processes, promoting civic participation and consensus building, and supporting international observation.

USAID/Sudan's primary goal under its fragile states strategy¹² is to nurture the achievement of a just and lasting peace through the implementation of the CPA. The strategy has two objectives: to avert and resolve conflict and to promote stability, recovery, and democratic reform in Southern Sudan. The Democracy and Governance (DG) program contributes to these objectives through support for good governance and free media as well as political competition and consensus building.

To help incorporate democratic structures and principles into the creation and stabilization of a legitimate, democratic government in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas, USAID/Sudan is assisting the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in the development of core institutions of governance and in the promotion of gender equity. USAID/Sudan is strengthening transparency and oversight through technical assistance to both the executive and legislative branches, and is supporting democratic and capable local governance is provided to help build the capacity of state and local governments in service delivery in states along the fragile north-south border, where stability is critical to keep the CPA viable.

USAID/Sudan also supports the development of the professional media corps and provides technical assistance to GoSS agencies to strengthen their strategic communications, through partners including the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the shortwave Sudan Radio Service (SRS). Activities have included assisting the development of the Southern Sudan media regulatory framework, supporting the establishment of public information radio and television stations in Southern Sudan, journalist training, and distributing solar-powered, wind-up radios to isolated communities in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

¹² USAID. (2005) Fragile States Strategy. Washington, DC: USAID.
http://www.usaid.gov/policy/2005_fragile_states_strategy.pdf

In its support for democratic elections and political processes, USAID/Sudan is providing technical assistance to the Southern Sudan Commission for the Census, Statistics and Evaluation in processing information from the fifth national census in 2008, for development planning and strengthening the capacity of electoral management bodies. This assistance includes voter education, domestic monitoring and political party assistance, and technical assistance to the National Election Commission and its subsidiaries.

Mid-Term Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

Management Systems International Services Under Program and Program Offices for Results Tracking (MSI-SUPPORT) Program was tasked by USAID/Sudan to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS) Program (officially called ‘Institutional Strengthening in Southern Sudan’) being implemented by Mercy Corps (MC)¹³ from September 1, 2005 to December 31, 2011.

Two external, independent evaluators, Mr. Lawrence Robertson and Ms. Vernice Guthrie, were contracted to undertake the evaluation in collaboration with Ms. Judith Hakim (Activity Officer’s Technical Representative, USAID/Sudan) and Ms. Grace Karanja (Deputy Chief of Party, Mercy Corps-LINCS) The mission was carried out between June 17–July 16, 2010 in the states of Central Equatoria (Juba Town and Yei, Lainya and Mugwo counties), Northern Bar el Ghazal (Aweil Town and Malualakon) and Warrap (Agok Town) and in the Abyei Area (Abyei Town).

The team was asked to address the following questions concerning Program implementation, quality, impact and design:

1. Are there any issues with respect to project design and assumptions (documented or implied) that should be reconsidered based on experience to date? Do project objectives remain feasible in light of political, security, logistics and staffing challenges?
2. USAID/Sudan elected to emphasize working directly with local and nascent CSOs. Has this strategy proved to be productive in terms of project goal and objectives?
3. Has the significant programmatic and geographic expansion resulted in any challenges to implementation or to product quality?
4. In what ways could the efficiency and effectiveness of LINCS be improved using the following components as potential lenses?
 - Mercy Corps management
 - CSO capacity building
 - resource centers
 - civic engagement
 - media
5. What has been the impact of LINCS (using the Program objectives as potential lenses)?
 - CSO and staff capacity building
 - resource centers and access to information,
 - civic participation and networking
 - access to and use of media

¹³ The IRC was sub-contracted from the start of the Program but was dropped as a sub. Mercy Corps established a partnership with Internews and the National Democracy Institute in 2008.

6. Which elements (or synergies between elements) of LINCS represent the most productive investment to create the foundation for a vibrant civil society?
7. How have design and/or implementation issues/challenges affected Program impact to date?
8. How is LINCS addressing sustainability for:
 - CSO and staff capacity building
 - Resource centers and access to information
 - Civic participation and networking
 - Access and use of media

The evaluation team reviewed secondary source data including LINCS Program and USAID documentation. The team collected primary source data through key participant interviews and group interviews with more than 200 individuals (approximately one-third of whom were female) from USAID/Sudan, Mercy Corps and 16 of the current 75 LINCS partner civil society organizations, several Resource Centers and one Community Radio Station, and local governments and community members. The evaluation team developed site and organization selection criteria that, in conjunction with logistical and travel considerations, drove the selection of the locations and, hence, the organizations to be visited. The team also developed three interview protocols to guide semi-structured interviews with the various participants in order to generate valid and reliable primary source data.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS) is being implemented by Mercy Corps in the Southern Sudan states of Central Equatoria, Northern Bar el Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile and Warrap and the Three Areas of Abyei and parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan States. The Program began on September 1, 2005 and was originally set to conclude on August 31, 2008. A modification of the Cooperative Agreement now puts the end date at December 31, 2011.

The 2005 Cooperative Agreement (CA) targeted the development of civil society organizations; subsequent to the CA, nine amendments contributed to changing the scope, scale and geographic locations of the Program. The major changes are depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Chronological Presentation of Key Program Changes

Focus	Cooperative Agreement	Modification 5 Program Description- version 2 September 25 2007	Mercy Corps Program Description- version 3 May 10 2008	Modification 7 Current Program Description- version 4 September 30 2008	December 31, 2011 TARGETED PROGRAM TOTAL
Funding	\$8,400,000	\$20,650,000	\$30,650,000	\$30,650,000	\$30,650,000
Locations	17 Counties	N/A	N/A	21 (increase of 4)	21 (aggregate total)
Civil Society Organization (50% women- led ¹)	56 (36 existing/20 new)	90 (increase of 34)	99 (increase of 9)	114 (increase of 15)	114 (aggregate total)
Resource Center	N/A	8 (increase of 8)	11 (increase of 3)	14 ¹⁴ (increase of 3)	14 (aggregate total)
Community Radio Station	N/A	5 (increase of 5)	5 (no increase)	5 (no increase)	5 ¹⁵ (aggregate total)

It is clear from Table 1 above, that between 2005 and 2008, the Program budget more than tripled, going from \$8,400,000 to \$30,650,000, and 2007 and 2008 were critical years for the Program with respect to redefining the scope and scale (upwards) to more organizations (CSOs, RCs and CRSs) and to more locations.

LINCS is the only USAID-funded activity that focuses on enhancing the capacity of CSOs, Resource Centers and Community Radio Stations at this point in time. There appears to be very little other donor/development partner attention to these organizations. Building the capacity of local government personnel and building awareness of local governance stakeholders is a focus area that is addressed by LINCS as well as by the Mercy Corps (MC) and Winrock International Building Responsibility for Delivery of Government Services (BRIDGE) in the same states in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

LINCS supports USAID/Sudan:

- Strategic Objective 9: Avert and resolve conflict
 - Intermediate Result 9.2: South-South tensions reduced
 - Intermediate Result 9.3: Implementation of the protocols for the Three Areas advanced

¹⁴ Including the Juba Civic Center.

¹⁵ As of March 31 2010, Mercy Corps LINCS was in the process of drafting a proposal to be submitted to USAID for a sixth CRS in Nasir, Upper Nile State.

LINCS was formerly (2005) under:

- Strategic Objective 5: More Responsive and Participatory Governance
 - Intermediate Result 5.4: Institutional capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that support marginalized groups increased.

The current LINCS program description (September 2008) is underpinned by the following “Objectives” which are intended to lead to corresponding “Program Effects” that address two Program Areas—Civil Society (Objectives 1,2, 3, 5) and Political Competition and Consensus Building (Objective 4). Objectives 2 and 5 were added post-2005.

Objective 1: 114 CSOs ranging from pre-nascent to nascent in organizational ability will improve their organizational capacity to promote and support active social, economic and political participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Program Effect: 114 CSOs improve their organizational capacity to promote and support active social, economic, and political participation and leadership of women and/or other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Objective 2: 13 Civil Society Resource Centers will provide civil society groups with necessary structural support and inputs to facilitate interactive information/ training opportunities and civic engagement space.

Program Effect: Local civil society-led community boards direct and lead civil society resource centers providing communities with access to trainings, access to information and forums for civic engagement.

Objective 3: Networking and issue-based coalitions are fostered to support the active social, economic, and political participation and leadership of women and/or other marginalized groups.

Program Effect: Networking and issue-based coalitions are utilized to support the public education, advocacy and active social, economic, and political participation and leadership of women and/or other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Objective 4: Civic engagements of CSOs are strengthened through skills and trainings, dialogues and coalitions, on advocacy, media, elections, conflict mitigation and peace building, and representation for both civil society organizations and governance stakeholders—to increase awareness and understanding of emerging political processes and enable a participatory and responsive society which will effectively avert potential conflict and address issues in a constructive and collaborative manner.

Program Effect: Civil society groups and local governance stakeholders effectively utilize trainings and forums to support information exchange, advocacy and coordination to address community issues especially the needs of women and vulnerable groups and mitigate local conflicts through dialogues and consensus building processes.

Civil society, local government and other community stakeholders understand the election law, voter registration and voting processes and role of domestic election monitoring, to help them make informed decision and increase turnout.

Objective 5: Network of community radio stations provide sustainable access to information, foster active citizen engagement and responsive governance.

Program Effect: Civil society, the business sector, local government and other community stakeholders understand the role community radio plays in development and are able to provide citizens with reliable, objective and accurate information to help them make informed decisions on matters that affect their lives.

LINCS also addresses the crosscutting issues of ‘women’ and ‘other marginalized people including youth, refugees/returnees, the disabled’.

III. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Overall Conclusions regarding Program Achievements

LINCS, now more than four years into implementation, has developed a workable operating style and systems and delivered impressive results in an extremely difficult operating environment. The evaluation team came to a series of conclusions regarding achievements on objectives.¹⁶ Overall, progress to date towards the five objectives of the LINCS Program suggests most of the objectives will be fully met by the end of 2011, but it may be a struggle to bring an additional 39 CSOs on board as partners and have them complete the organizational development process.

The table below provides a snapshot of the progress against the key indicators.

Table 2: Summary of Achievements Against Indicators

Indicator	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Semi-Annual (Quarters 1 & 2) Actual	End of Program Cumulative Target
1. # of CSOs using USG funds to improve organizational capacity	76	95	76	114
2.# of functioning resource centers	10	(same 10)	(same 10)	14
3.# of participants in USG funded programs that support participation and inclusion of traditionally marginalized, ethnic minority and/or religious minority groups	9,000	17,676 new people (13,708M/6,238F) (2008/2009 cumulative figure: 30,624)	Not available	43,000
4.# of non-state news outlets assisted by USG	4	5 (same 4/1 new)	5 (same 4/1 new)	6
5. # of journalists trained with USG assistance	19	27 (plus 12 volunteers)	35 (28M/5F)	35
6. # of groups trained in inclusive consensus building techniques with USG assistance	76	8	76	114

¹⁶ Using data reported in the Mercy Corps LINCS Semi-Annual Report dated March 31, 2010 as well as data collected during the evaluation.

7. # of groups trained in conflict mediation/resolution skills with USG assistance		99	0	114
8. # of people reached by USG assisted voter education		9,147	20,582	14,000
9. # of local CSOs strengthened that promote political participation and voter education		140	101	180

According to the data and program documentation available:

1. Out of the target 114 partner CSOs, LINCS currently partners with 75¹⁷ and additional CSOs are in the process of becoming partners. LINCS will need to reach and train 39 CSOs in a very short time frame if the Program is to reach the targeted number of CSOs and still have some assurance of the benefits being sustained after the Program ends. However, the LINCS Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCAs) and the corresponding indexing along a graded scale (the Organizational Capacity Index-OCIS) indicate that LINCS training, mentoring and support are clearly increasing partners CSOs' organizational capacity. In FY2009, LINCS reported an 84% increase in the organizational capacity of their partner CSOs.¹⁸ The participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups, including youth, in civil society through the activities of the partner CSOs has clearly increased—and not only in women-led CSOs.
2. 10 out of 14 Resource Centers have been built and fitted out and LINCS is on track and likely to reach the targeted number. However, the risk to sustainability of the RCs is the lack of traction in the establishment of any Community Action Boards for these facilities, which to date are staffed by MC LINCS personnel and funded by LINCS.
3. LINCS has been able to bring partner CSOs together through CSO networking, cross-site dialogs, and state meetings. These events are helping to build shared goals, methods, and experiences as well as shared aspirations for the future and to lay a foundation for joint activities and issue-based coalitions. However, electoral coalitions, formed through the LINCS partnership with NDI, seem to be less enduring, although they can be recreated for some activities around the referendum. It is also unclear how these networks and coalitions will continue to be sustained following the close of the Program.
4. The civic engagement activities of partner CSOs with their constituencies have increased due to LINCS interventions. Almost all partner CSO staff interviewed reported participating in dialogues and coalitions, using the media and undertaking advocacy work and elections work. Partner CSOs have regular 'general' engagement with communities to address issues in a wide range of sectors in a constructive and collaborative manner, but most have not yet taken the large step toward working

¹⁷ Program documentation is somewhat confusing with respect to numbers reported against indicators and the indicators can be misleading. For example, it is not clear if people are counted multiple times and reported on multiple times. If this is the case, then numbers of participants or beneficiaries get inflated.

¹⁸ As of the writing of this report, LINCS is in the process of conducting the next round of OCAs.

explicitly to avert potential conflict and LINCS has not yet been able to roll out its peace building (including conflict management and mitigation) program.

5. Five out of the targeted six CRSs have undergone significant technical upgrades and 286 training days covering a 16-unit curriculum from radio production to peace building have been provided to 33 reporters and 12 volunteers. The CRS broadcasting range is now 70 kilometers or more. More could be done to link CRSs to CSOs, beneficiaries, and stakeholders to their mutual benefit. The CRS Advisory Boards have yet to be established and this is a threat to the sustainability of the investment.

The following section discusses Findings and Conclusions specific to these five objectives in depth.¹⁹

Organizational Development of Partner CSOs

This section discusses:

- Objective 1--114 CSOs ranging from pre-nascent to nascent in organizational ability will improve their organizational capacity to promote and support active social, economic and political participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Findings: Between September 1, 2005 and June 22, 2010, MC LINCS has established relationships with 99 CSOs. Of these 99, as of March 31, 2010, current partnerships are being managed with 75 CSOs, including 13 former partners in Blue Nile and South Kordofan States. Selection of partner CSOs is undertaken according to established criteria and analysis. Expulsion from Blue Nile and South Kordofan States from March 2009 to January 2010 resulted in a cessation of Mercy Corps LINCS activities with targeted organizations in these states. In January 2010, LINCS's presence in the states resumed, four out of the previous five program offices re-opened and activities have been progressed. Several partner CSOs (those that had reached a more advanced level of organizational development) were able to carry on with their scheduled activities even though there were no LINCS personnel available to assist and MC re-established partnership agreements with 13 of the former partner CSOs (LINCS also established partnerships with new CSOs).²⁰

The partner CSO capacity building model now has firmly established, refined procedures that enable MC LINCS to reproduce the model almost mechanically, enabling the replication of core CSO structures across the varied terrain of the partner CSOs. Over 25 training modules have been developed and used consistently across CSOs. The model consists of the establishment of an initial baseline derived by LINCS management staff utilizing the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA), a diagnostic tool (including a questionnaire) to determine the stage of organization growth and specific changes needed to strengthen the CSO in six functional areas. The OCA culminates in a unique Organizational Capacity Index score and it provides the CSO with an organization profile that shows areas of organizational development that can be strengthened. Once these areas are identified, LINCS staff work with the partner CSO staff to develop an Organization Strategic Plan that guides the roll-out of the respective training modules.

LINCS staff (from the Deputy Chief of Party to capacity-building officers and project managers) and partner CSO personnel interviewed all indicate that good relationships have been established. All of the partner CSOs visited lauded LINCS staff for their capacity building (including training and mentoring), grant management and assistance in networking with other CSOs and local authorities. The partner CSOs lauded LINCS staff as having impressive dedication and patience. They noted that LINCS staff and partner CSO staff work together to overcome obstacles to Program implementation, such as having to walk 30 minutes to work with a CSO well-off of the road in a village with almost no literate people.

¹⁹ Findings are derived from the fieldwork undertaken from June to July 2010 and from LINCS Program documentation up to the end of Quarter 2 (March 31) 2010.

²⁰ This was reported by LINCS staff and in LINCS documentation as the evaluation team was unable to do field work in these areas.

In meetings with the team, partner CSO management, staff, and members consistently articulated a shared vision and explained the practices they used—which they had been introduced to, trained in, and mentored on by LINCS—that helped their organizations focus on community needs and work with their beneficiaries. Partner CSO staff interviewed are able to articulate their roles and responsibilities with respect to their involvement with MC LINCS and the learning they have acquired as individuals and as an organization. They are able to express their own failures (such as failing to produce adequate documentation needed for the grant approval process to proceed in a timely fashion) and their strengths. More advanced partners felt ready for more and different training and grants that the Program is not currently set up to provide—as well as less monitoring and mentoring—while some newer, weaker partners sought assistance that was even more basic than that available under the standard model and procedures.

Many LINCS staff and a number of CSO personnel felt that the CSO training modules align well to the capacity of some partner CSOs but not others. Some partner CSOs feel that their level of capacity is now such that they are ready to be stretched further. Program documentation notes an 84 per cent increase in organizational development gains (that is partner CSOs moving from a baseline to higher levels of organizational maturity as measured by the organizational capacity assessments).

For many meetings, partner CSO staff were able to work and meet with the evaluation team without their director present. Evaluation team observations indicate that LINCS partner CSOs do not appear to function as a “one-person show”.²¹ In the third revision of the Program Description,²² it is noted that partner CSOs still access grants to the value of \$7,000 (or \$8,500 for CSOs focusing exclusively on peace-building in Blue Nile State) in their first round of proposal submissions, but then in the second and third rounds, some CSOs are eligible to access grant awards of \$16,000. Many partner CSOs have been able to generate community and government contributions (although the evaluation team was not able to obtain a specific aggregated value). Some partner CSOs reported having only nine months during which to do work under their grant since the 12 month time frame for grants begins with the initial proposal development (rather than upon receipt of the grant monies) and time is eaten up by the need for documentation to be passed back and forth. Partner CSOs suggested a longer time frame for the grant awards to enable them to more fully implement their activities.

LINCS staff measure CSO development using the OCI that benchmarks CSOs on six dimensions of organization development. Partner CSO staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders can clearly explain the mechanisms used by LINCS partners to ensure community engagement in CSO project selection, design, implementation, and monitoring—and gave numerous examples of their participation in these processes. By comparison, most non-partner CSO staff who were interviewed appeared less strong in these procedures and correspondingly demonstrated less community engagement. For example, LINCS partner CSOs are required by LINCS to document meetings conducted with their constituencies before developing project proposals through constituency participation meetings to determine and demonstrate that the community and target beneficiaries support the project. This step was not evident for non-partner CSOs.

LINCS has developed procedures for rolling out the general capacity-building model. LINCS trains its staff, who then train and mentor partner CSOs in a variety of ways, including through their grant activities and grants management. The feedback loops are incomplete. To date, feedback on how CSOs work and implement activities after training or on the training modules themselves appear to have not fully been taken into account in revising trainings and manuals.

The activity foci of partner CSOs are broad and cover on a range of services from a prevalence of focus on education services (focused primarily on literacy training and vocational training) to HIV/AIDS awareness-raising. For example, as of September 2007 data, 12 out of 71 CSOs focus on peace-building and the selection of at least six CSOs that focus on peace-building in the north was earmarked in 2008.

²¹ A ‘one-person show’ means that, despite the existence of other individuals who could and should be contributing in the workplace, one person—typically the head of the organization—is over-extended and over-controlling.

²² The electronic file is called ‘LINCS Program Description-Final-5-10-08.doc’ and the document itself is dated as ‘Revised April 15 2008’. It would appear that Modification 7 of the Cooperative Agreement pertains to this revision of the Program description, although without all pages of the modification, it is difficult to ascertain.

Conclusions: LINCS staff engage in a long and ongoing series of exchanges with partner CSO staff. This time investment is important, but it requires substantial time and effort from both sides.

LINCS management of partner CSOs is impressive. As was clear from Program documents and from many of the interviews, LINCS and their partner CSOs' staff have built a solid system of training, mentoring, and monitoring to facilitate project development, design, and implementation. LINCS has developed strong procedures and routines to help train and mentor partner CSOs in organizational development and grants management. who have been appropriately trained and now are able to successfully mentor partner CSOs. Now many partners seem to be able to manage much more substantial grants to better meet vast community needs in the Program's targeted locations.

The camaraderie and warmth between LINCS and partner CSO staff came across repeatedly as the evaluation team along with LINCS staff visited the selected partner CSOs. The apparent closeness does not seem, however, to have clouded the ability of staff to monitor and manage sub-grants, including recommending and rapidly ending partnerships with the few CSOs that have mishandled grant funds, based on stories from and probing questions to staff on these instances.²³

MC LINCS has made impressive efforts in training, management, and mentoring of CSOs in Programming and grants management. The Program has done an impressive job of helping develop CSOs that are responsive to their community needs, have internal structures in place to manage the organization with community input, are able to design and implement community-based activities, and can responsibly manage Program resources. LINCS staff have strong positive relationships with their partners (and non-partners) that are being and can be leveraged in a multitude of anticipated and unanticipated ways—in civic engagement, networking, and work with donors and their communities.

LINCS has helped build community CSOs in an environment where many organizations' capacity is limited and in which there were almost no other resources available to address the needs of communities that were lacking in access to government services and means of communication with the outside world. LINCS has done an impressive job in helping build capable CSOs that are rooted in the needs of the community and form an integral part of the community. LINCS organizational development has been thoughtfully carried out to produce CSOs with robust community support, active engagement with local and traditional authorities, and the credibility and capacity to deliver more alongside their communities.

On the basis of the data from the MC LINCS Organizational Capacity Assessments using the Organizational Capacity Index, it would appear clear that the Program has achieved impressive outcomes in terms of partner CSO organizational development. Partner CSOs have and use institutional processes to ensure responsiveness and staff can articulate the ways in which their activities are founded on the outcomes of these processes.

Partner CSO responsiveness to their respective communities appears to be high and the activities and foci do not appear to be 'donor-driven'²⁴ or oriented around simply chasing grants in any area. This situation is unusual in the evaluators' experience, as in countries in which the team has worked, CSO personnel often simply look upward rather than downward for resources and accountability and have few mechanisms in place to actually engage their communities.

The partner CSOs visited by the evaluation team appear to be well prepared now to not only provide more services but also to develop and deliver a community-based/community-driven agenda to local and national governmental authorities. However, the 25-plus training modules focus on CSOs at a low level of development--which was likely appropriate at the outset of LINCS--but partner CSOs that have enhanced their level of development are in need of more advanced material if they are to continue to mature as organizations. In addition, the partner CSOs visited also still lack the fundamental resources required to address the many needs of their communities.

²³ Examples of terminated CSOs can be found in the LINCS March 2007 and 2008 Semi-Annual reports.

²⁴ That is, partner CSOs do not appear to simply focus on the varied agendas where funding becomes available from donors.

The implicit need for community-based CSOs that do all kinds of work led to a lowest-common denominator approach to capacity building that provides assistance that now may be too basic for stronger partners. While this level appears to have been appropriate at the outset, as a result of the good work and results of LINCS, the situation for CSOs is now different, and LINCS should meet these more varied needs with more varied support. LINCS needs to make sure that their procedures and policies help these CSOs develop rather than become impediments to further development through overly mechanical implementation of LINCS procedures and rules. This does not appear to have happened to date, but could become more potentially problematic over the last year and a half of the project.

LINCS, however, did not appear to start with a differentiated notion of stakeholders or much of an understanding of the diverse beneficiaries in the area where the project would work despite extensive CSO mapping. Largely, it appears to have been up to individual CSOs to adapt the LINCS training and build their own management and procedures to meet the needs of beneficiaries in their communities. The LINCS Program has been broad enough to allow CSOs to do so, but the level and types of support from LINCS have not been as flexible. It has been hard for CSO staff to adapt, lacking the capacity to do so, and develop the high-level skill set to adapt models and approaches to their own conditions.

Due to LINCS training, mentoring, and management, partner CSOs now have the capacity and experience to design, develop, and implement their own projects. They are now primed to do more now with larger grants—through LINCS and other donors. In addition, LINCS needs to consider how to help its community-based partner CSOs develop the overall national environment for civil society development, moving up from local- and state-level networks to the GOSS level.

A more differentiated training system, one that learns from experience and that is nimble enough to meet the different needs of partner CSOs and stakeholders across the diverse communities of Southern Sudan and the Three Areas would be an improvement.

The development of a systematic means of integrating staff and CSO ongoing training needs into all aspects of training, including training materials, resources, format, and access to external training opportunities could provide the type of structure now required. There are additional opportunities that should be seized to more tightly integrate radio Programs, CSO activities, civic education, and community outreach to better serve the community, develop CSOs, and strengthen the radios. These opportunities could include civic education Programs that are exclusively transmitted on radio. LINCS could weave civic education into broader CSO processes of community engagement to strengthen broad civic education (such as what voting means, and not simply how and where to vote), their relationships with other CSOs over the long term, and overall CSO/community relations. Civic education needs to be connected to real issues in communities and objectives and missions of CSOs.

Development of more adaptive models and training staff in their application to do more with varied partner CSOs by modifying this basic model to the diverse missions, objectives, capacity, foci, constituencies, and stakeholders of CSOs and communities is important. Now that the foundation has been built, capacity needs should be met in different ways for more specialized organizations. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, LINCS should help more advanced CSOs develop differently because the skills and techniques required for working on HIV/AIDS, for example, are different than those required in working on adult literacy.

Horizontal and Vertical Linkages

This section addresses:

- Objective 2--13 Civil Society Resource Centers will provide civil society groups with necessary structural support and inputs to facilitate interactive information/training opportunities and civic engagement space;
- Objective 3--Networking and issue-based coalitions are fostered to support the active social, economic, and political participation and leadership of women and/or other marginalized groups;
- Objective 4--Civic engagements of CSOs are strengthened through skills and trainings, dialogues and coalitions, on advocacy, media, elections, conflict mitigation and peace building, and representation

for both civil society organizations and governance stakeholders—to increase awareness and understanding of emerging political processes and enable a participatory and responsive society which will effectively avert potential conflict and address issues in a constructive and collaborative manner; and,

- Objective 5--Network of community radio stations provide sustainable access to information, foster active citizen engagement and responsive governance.

Overall Findings: There is evidence of some attempts to address synergies between Program elements and between the targeted stakeholders involved in LINCS—the beneficiaries (citizens), staff from partner CSOs, RCs and CRSs and local government personnel. For example, Community Radio Station staff and partner CSO staff co-manage listening groups and there is some evidence of outreach to CSOs by the CRSs and some lobbying by partner CSOs for access.

MC LINCS was unable to provide a strategy document that describes how the various Program elements are to work synergistically or how to support local stakeholders to support, embed and progressively manage potential synergies over time. For example, civic engagement is implemented as a program by LINCS and then activities cease. There is evidence that some Program elements are engaged with for purely instrumental purposes. For example, the Resource Centers are in great demand from partner CSOs, beneficiaries, and stakeholders, but at present, they are used for the instrumental purposes of a venue for training and carrying out other CSO community and local government processes and providing access to computers and the Internet.

Overall Conclusions: LINCS Program personnel have been very successful at establishing good working relationships with the partner organizations (CSOs, RCs and one CRS) and local government stakeholders. LINCS personnel are to be credited for the work carried out to date in an environment that is extremely difficult in many respects and with challenges that have emerged due to some Mercy Corps management challenges and constraints.

While there is some evidence that MC LINCS has built important links between some of its Program elements, more can and should be done. For example, CSOs have an impressive repertoire of ways to reach their communities that do not necessarily include using the broadcast media; LINCS should do more to encourage CSOs to have a wider footprint in the long-run, including through using radio stations as important tools to disseminate information about thematic and state-level coalitions. In this vein, CSOs have the potential to increase their collaboration with Internews radios to make community-based and community-relevant content in local languages, and they should be trained to use commercial and religious networks for messaging. However, expectations should be modest at present, because partner CSOs are already unable to meet the needs of their communities and, although they are more functional as organizations, there is little likelihood that their financial bases will improve to any extent after the Program ends. They, therefore, are not in a very strong position to meet any new demand. Overall, beneficiaries and stakeholders across Southern Sudan still have little access to information and there is potential for better support for and utilization of the role of radio and other forms of social media (such as Short Message Service—SMS) given the cellular phone penetration rates within and across communities.

CSOs should be able now to start developing a demand for government delivery of services in their constituencies and through state, regional, national, and international linkages. CSOs have begun integrating some support from local governments into their activities and this is a promising start that can be built upon in more systematic and substantial ways.

Resource Centers

Findings: 10 out of 13 Resource Centers have been constructed and equipped with computers, a printer, a conference room, a photocopy machine, radio²⁵, TV and VCR, and a satellite phone. The centers will house

²⁵ While there will be Codan radios accessible from the resource centers, currently in Southern Sudan, radio communication is under the supervision of the GoSS and unauthorized (i.e. non-NGO or official) communication

and take requests for electronic and hard copy of information resources, especially translated material. The program will stock particularly useful information, provide meeting space and access to computers and the Internet. RCs are currently staffed by MC LINCS personnel such as Outreach and Civic Engagement staff and Information and Communications Technology Officers. Task forces have recently been initiated which are intended to evolve into Boards that will run the RCs. Each RC visited by the team was operating at full capacity.

LINCS documentation notes that “Community boards will consist of six to ten members representing various community groups and other stakeholders. The boards will be created through a participatory and transparent process. The boards will ensure diverse representation of women and vulnerable groups and that the motivations and mission will accommodate the diverse groups needs. The LINCS team will phase in the creation of the community boards followed by trainings to manage the center programmatically, technically and financially. Cost recovery mechanisms for collecting funds from non-members for resource center services will be explored and implemented to ensure financial viability beginning 2009. LINCS will explore a membership for CSO partners, whereby they would be able to access services at no cost, while others interested in using the internet, computers or printers will have to pay a small fee. Nascent or emerging CSOs may also be given limited access on a no-fee basis, but this will be determined following the establishment of the centers. Of course, any and all fee structures will need to take into account any potentially negative impacts on existing businesses in the area (those providing internet services, for example).”²⁶ As of the beginning of the third quarter, FY 2010, these boards were only beginning to be ramped up.

Interviews with community members and other stakeholders and observations by the evaluation team during the course of the field work showed a high level of community appreciation of and interest in their RCs. Individuals interviewed about the Resource Centers noted that the demand for the venue and the resources provided (and training) far outstrips what the Resource Centers can provide and that the Centers lacked needed facilities such as lodging for overnight trips. Interviewees often noted that RCs were the only venue for training and the sole way to access information via the Internet in their county. In some communities, RCs are used by the local government to train officials.

Teachers, trainers, local government officials, and CSO staff interviewed (at RCs and elsewhere) noted that the key for further development and sustainability of civil society and local government was to find other opportunities for partnering and grants via the internet and networking and that RCs were critical in this regard. Most individual interviewed have limited knowledge and resources within communities to operate and maintain them.

Conclusions: RCs are highly valued by local government, local CSOs, and community individuals with whom the evaluation team spoke. The RCs are critical to the functioning of partner CSOs that typically lack access to information and communications technology (ICT). However, RCs are difficult institutions to build and sustain in any conditions, and in Southern Sudan, these challenges are exponentially multiplied. RCs could potentially have been designed and built with greater capacity to cope with the predictable demand and with more attention to sustainability considerations (including green technology). The RCs are easily overwhelmed by the demand given the small number of computers available, limited space for training and meetings and lack of overnight accommodation. Access to the RCs centers can also be daunting for some CSOs due to their distance from some communities and the lack of transportation.

With a greater emphasis on involving the community, partner CSOs and local stakeholders in the design and development of the RCs (a clear missed opportunity for civic engagement), LINCS perhaps could have had a larger pre-planned footprint for RCs and addressed sustainability from the start (perhaps through greener technology) and including a more complete picture of the full cost of RC operations. Addressing management, maintenance and costs at this late piece will have an undesirable impact on sustainability. While

can result in the authorities restricting access to the radio. NGOs have been advised not to allow non-NGO staff to use the radios. However, since this situation may change in the future, radios will be available at each site. (Modification #7)
²⁶ Taken from Mercy Corps LINCS Program Description (2008).

some user fees are possible, and further development of these sites can be accomplished with greater community input, the limited resources available—even with local government contributions—suggest a continued need for external donor support for these key institutions. The RCs could probably have been better utilized and have additional benefits for CSOs and their communities—such as, a more appropriate size of the facility including accommodation for trainees coming from afar and different services, had MC LINCS worked more closely with partner CSOs, beneficiaries, and stakeholders to explore ways. These are indicative of the kinds of issues the as yet to be established Community Action Boards will need to address.

Networks and Issue-Based Coalitions and Civic Engagements

Findings: Partner CSO staff and management praised LINCS engagement as being critical in helping them network and interact at levels above that of their community. LINCS has been able to bring together partner CSOs a number of CSO networking, cross-site dialogs, and state meetings. Partner CSOs noted repeatedly in interviews that: (1) the cross-site visits, CSO-government dialogues, election coalitions and CSO networks have resulted in links between organizations and with government and that these mechanisms play an important part in spreading new ideas and best practices for CSO work, information and, community participation and building relationships with government, including commissioners; (2) CSOs lack these connections themselves because their beneficiaries and stakeholders are predominantly found at the local level. Partner CSO staff noted that CSOs value the networking because, in communities that lack information, the CSOs benefit greatly from an awareness of how other CSOs operate in varied conditions and learn best practices from each other; and, (3) CSOs now recognize that their activities are inter-related. Individuals interviewed also noted the benefits of these events for helping to build shared goals, methods, and experiences as well as shared aspirations for the future and to lay a foundation for joint activities and issue-based coalitions.

Interviews with local authorities demonstrated that they are sometimes knowledgeable about the Program and the work of partner CSOs—if they have been exposed to LINCS and its activities. Newly appointed local government staff, sometimes in office only a week or two, have not had the opportunity to learn about LINCS and were correspondingly largely ignorant about CSOs and their activities in their communities. Some authorities interviewed with longer tenure had impressive skills and knowledge of both the LINCS Program and their communities, a detailed understanding of how LINCS was now able to assist them (including through the training of local officials), and high hopes for additional support from LINCS. Partner CSOs praised the role of LINCS in introducing them to county and higher-level authorities. They suggested repeatedly that the “cover” provided by an international organization was helpful for their overall work and in particular for their engagement with local authorities.

Commissioners and other county-level government officials in several different counties reported that without LINCS, they would hardly be talking with their constituents. They noted that citizens have such low expectations of government and their counties have few resources to address community needs. Both the local government officials and the LINCS staff who were interviewed noted that partner CSOs have been able to move from only working with community authorities to engaging with State level authorities, including substantial engagement with commissioners, who are key local officials.

These relationships also paid off for some partner CSOs and for ordinary citizens in specific ways, such land allocations and building materials for construction, chalk for schools, and verbal support for activities that those interviewed feel lends credibility to civil society and the CSOs. CSO beneficiaries often noted in interviews that local authorities had also contributed to community improvement initiatives but that they themselves had done more. The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC) apparently serves only as a monitor and gatekeeper, collecting information on the international community and CSOs, rather than providing any assistance.

CSO staff and management noted that the engagement with the community that they were already doing to understand and meet community needs in areas such as adult education carried over to other areas—their work in civic engagement was similar to the processes that they required for other activities, such as HIV/AIDS prevention.

Partner CSOs noted that they had participated in coalitions and were willing to participate again with Program support but the participation had now ended. In interviews, all partner CSO staff expressed the view

that civic engagement was part and parcel of their work with the community and that of course they would be engaged in voter education.²⁷ LINCS and partner CSO staff use training materials provided by National Democracy Institute (NDI) and conducted a series of one-off activities. During interviews, respondents noted that the LINCS emphasis regarding civic engagement to date has been on basic voter education focused simply on the process of voting. Staff stated that they are not willing to present information on the case for unity to their communities, since this would discredit them in the eyes of their people.

Conclusions: Vertical linkages (between partner CSOs and boma, payam²⁸ and county administrators and staff) have been established (in many cases) and strengthened (in all of the sites the team visited).. It is evident that LINCS has been able to help its own MC staff and partner CSOs and their beneficiaries as well as government stakeholders to work together in mutually beneficial ways and to build understanding of CSO capabilities and roles. LINCS has helped CSOs and local governments to develop important mutual relationships that support both sides and that are relatively robust, given the Sudanese context. The Program's efforts have assuaged local authorities' concerns about CSOs and has increased government's willingness to partner with CSOs. Maintaining and continuing to build these relationships will be important for the development of democratic governance in communities across Southern Sudan.

CSO networking opportunities provided through LINCS has helped in capacity building and in demonstrating to CSOs the similar challenges they face and exposing CSO staff to solutions to CSO organizational development issues. Community-based CSOs are doing good work across Southern Sudan and are developing positive relationships with other LINCS partners. To date, however, the connections among CSOs remain weak, and should be strengthened to foster a more favorable atmosphere for civil society development at the state and GOSS levels.

The work on coalitions overall appears to stand outside the mainstream of LINCS rather than being integrated into the Program's overall work with communities. Treatment of election coalitions appears to be temporary and shallow, with CSOs simply coming together around discrete activities funded by LINCS with little to no long-term connections or working relationships between coalition partners noted by informants. Helping partner CSOs and networks raise the level at which they interact with government to that of the state and GOSS through thematic and state-level coalitions is important on a number of fronts from advocacy to legitimacy to sustainability.

Civic engagement has not been elevated to a high enough level. Interviews demonstrated that partner CSO staff are not prepared to do broader civic engagement work relating to the referendum. In a conflict-affected environment, where elections have not been held in most people's lifetimes, this initial focus on the basics of voter education made sense. However, there is potential for broadening the civic and voter education work to cover issues beyond simply how to vote, perhaps focusing on the significance of voting for communities, and to endure beyond specific civic campaigns. Laying the foundation for CSO and community engagement in politics and policy as a continual process rather than as one-off activities is important. This will yield stronger results and help in addressing critical issues of accountability and responsibility. For example, helping partner CSOs that focus on HIV/AIDS education to be able to raise this topic as an issue in campaigns and elections. In the remaining one and one-half years, LINCS may get more traction from broader civic engagement information focused on roles and responsibilities of citizens as well as local government and officials; however, this is likely not possible until after the referendum.

The ramping up of the focus on conflict management and mitigation as part of peace building (beyond the original targeting of six of the 114 CSOs specifically) is a pressing programming area. Violence within and between communities could (and has, in the case of Abyei) destroy years of progress and set communities back. Now after substantial capacity development, adjustments need to be made to tailor the Program to

²⁷ This is a notable contrast with the situation encountered in other countries where the team has worked where CSOs sometimes avoid voter/civic education out of a fear that such activities could be seen as political and threatening to political parties and government.

²⁸ The terms, 'boma' and 'payam' are equivalent to the Western notion of village and a collection of a few villages (respectively).

specific CSO capacities and community needs—including critical peace building capacity needs, for the period prior to and after the referendum in January 2011—and to work in other areas such as local peace building. Integration of the existing work of partner CSOs in diverse project areas and augmenting this work with direct attention to targeted peace building and raising the status of women can help contribute to sustainability of Program benefits. For example, the tools of civil society engagement are similar in diverse areas LINCS staff should identify, integrate, and synthesize some of the existing lessons learned through partners in their activities and add explicit peace building methods to these approaches to increase overall Program results and start to have a positive impact on peace building as well as to ensure that CSO personnel are not put in jeopardy as a result of their work. While MC LINCS mentions conflict sensitivity including the use of the ‘Do No Harm’ approach to programming in a conflict-affected context, there was little evidence of the approach being put into practice.

Community Radio Stations Network²⁹

Findings: Internews has a sub-grant from Mercy Corps to has resulted in a large technical upgrade of five Community Radio Stations. The upgrade means that CRSs can now stay on the air longer, can record and broadcast better programming that conforms to international program mixes and can reach a wider audience—broadcast range is now in excess of 70 kilometers. The CRSs are the only form of media available in some of the LINCS target areas. The Community Radio Stations are connected to communities through the work of the Station managers and journalists and through their audience (including listening groups managed by staff and CSOs). CRSs are connected to the CSOs through some limited outreach to CSOs and through some lobbying of the CRSs by CSOs for access to the station.

A majority of LINCS partner CSOs work in communities with strong oral communication traditions and the CSOs have developed a variety of outreach methods, for example, conducting plays after church or on market days. Use of formal media has been somewhat limited since there are few radio stations or Programs that provide coverage of community issues. The Internews CRSs are sometimes the only form of broader communication available; in other communities, commercial radio or religious networks are available. Some partner CSOs have used radio programs to a limited extent to spread information as well as to gain information. Even though government stakeholders do not control the CRSs, they noted that they value them as assets.³⁰

Partner CSO staff noted that they use the CRSs to learn from and to get their messages out; however, they feel that to date there has been limited interaction with or benefits from community radio. Partner CSO staff feel they are already overstretched with meeting community needs in their existing work and would not ever be able to meet any additional demand that might be generated through greater radio exposure.

Conclusions: LINCS has been able to substantially expand the amount of information that reaches communities, which are often effectively cut off from the outside world. In the communities where they are located, the stations expand the amount of information that is available to CSOs, and help them expand their reach via regionally specific topics. The Internews Community Radio Stations are an important add-on to the Program, but they seem to sit somewhat outside the more ‘mainstream’ activities of LINCS.

Advertising about adult education programs, for example, would be problematic, because these programs are already oversubscribed and unable to meet the existing demand. But, as highly localized organizations, CSOs’ focus was usually on alternative methods of reaching their communities such as plays and posters rather than having a broader larger reach to other communities through radio.

²⁹ The evaluation team was only able to visit one Community Radio Station, which, consequently, limits the CRS personnel able to be interviewed and, consequently, the primary source data able to be collected. To try to compensate for the lack of access in the field, the team paid particular attention to Program documentation where it dealt with the network of CRSs.

³⁰ The information was gathered during interviews and field observations.

Cross-Cutting Issues—Women and Refugees/Returnees

Women

Findings: The LINCS Program design stipulates that 50 per cent of the partner CSOs are ‘women-led’. MC In 2007, MC developed a set of guidelines and criteria to help categorize applicant CSOs as being ‘women-led’ organizations.³¹ All the women-led partner CSOs target women and vulnerable constituencies. LINCS has been able to achieve this target; as 51% of the partner CSOs are women-led and/or specifically focus on gender equality and gender equity.³² MC LINCS personnel and LINCS documentation note that there have been issues with recruiting women-led CSOs that are able to be partners, however, and LINCS has broadened its criteria to include CSOs that have the potential to promote gender equity, not to just have women in management positions or target constituencies.

LINCS utilizes a number of strategies for addressing women’s needs, including a revision of the Gender and Vulnerable Groups training manual in FY 2009 and five gender trainings for 73 people in FY 2009. Other examples of activities meant to support females include: hosting quarterly meetings of women-led and focused CSOs in order to strengthen communities of practice, improve consensus among women’s CSOs on priorities for women’s empowerment in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas and increase knowledge sharing, and improved service delivery (initiated in the third quarter FY 2005); and, targeting well-established women’s networks to engage them in localizing their activities to adapt to factors in Sudan by establishing field offices, increasing their organizational capacity in those offices, expanding their partnership base (by helping to create a network structure and mission that is inclusive of emerging CSOs, transparent, and independent), and developing relations with emerging government structures.

Other types of activities focused on women include targeting female heads of households to holding a 2007 women’s leadership conference as one effort to increase the linkages of grass roots women activists with the women’s caucus of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly in order to increase and better coordinate their impact to promote gender equity. NDI provides trainings on the women’s guide to the constitution. Activities undertaken by partner CSOs include a public awareness campaign on gender-based violence in Unity State by the Community Association Against Women’s Abuse (CAAW) and a public awareness campaign about International Women’s Day in Wunrok that involved over 400 people including the commissioner. Another example of LINCS attention to women’s issues is found in the administration of the listenership survey for the Community Radio Stations to inform programming and radio access strategies. The survey was administered to women through female only workshops which provided data on the types of content in which women were interested.

Program data are disaggregated by sex. There is a consistent difference between the numbers of female and male participants in LINCS-sponsored events, with females typically being half or less of the participant group. LINCS has found that “women may be represented in the leadership structure but not necessarily participate in decision-making... (they) may hold a position and be a figurehead... the seeming motivation is to make the organization appear attractive for donor organizations... women typically hold the accountant position because they are seen as being more trustworthy”.³³ In FY 2009, around half of the beneficiaries reported on were female (6,238 out of 13,708). 5 of the 33 journalists associated with the CRSs who were trained are female. The CRS listenership survey data showed that 42 per cent of women and 71 per cent of men owned radios.

Program documents refer consistently to gender and women’s participation and issues are taken into consideration in a variety of dimensions. LINCS does not have an explicit gender strategy documented, nor does

³¹ The LINCS program defines the women led organization as the following: an organization whose management and oversight is primarily led by women, who play a major role in the decision making processes of the organization, including the organization’s strategy, program, and finances.

³² This was reported in the Mercy Corps LINCS March 2008 Semi-Annual Report.

³³ Taken from the Mercy Corps LINCS Civil Society Mapping Report (p. 25) that was produced in 2006.

there does not appear to have been a gender analysis undertaken., but. Gender considerations appear to only take females into account.

Refugees/Returnees

Findings: Sudan has an estimated 4.6 million displaced people, including around 550,000 refugees. An estimated 1.25 million people have gone home—60 per cent to Southern Sudan and 40 per cent to Abyei Area, BNS and SKS. Mercy Corps documentation indicate a clear understanding of where the greatest concentrations of refugees and internally displaced people who have returned home are located in the target states and the Three Areas and Program counties are targeted accordingly. Refugees and internally displaced persons, now returnees to their communities, are a substantial part of many of the communities the team visited. Refugees and returnees are also prominent in partner CSOs as managers, staff, and beneficiaries. Many partner CSOs, through LINCS or other grant support, implement activities to support refugee and displaced person returns. MC LINCS hosts quarterly meetings in each of the regional resource centers for CSOs active in promoting and supporting the active participation and leadership of marginalized groups including youth, orphans, the disabled and IDPs.

The team did not observe tensions between returnees and others in the community, but some partner CSOs that work with returnees noted that tensions exist in the communities because returnees are assisted by modest international programs, implemented by CSOs, even when they may not be the neediest people within those communities. There were no quantitative data available from the Program to enable an analysis of the refugee/returnee involvement and MC LINCS does not have any indicators specific to this group.

Conclusions: MC LINCS demonstrates a solid commitment and sensitivity to the needs and opportunities for women. The Program design prioritizes engagement with CSOs who have women as leaders and as staff and LINCS has been successful in achieving its 50 per cent women-led CSO target. Without this explicit targeting, it is unlikely that LINCS would have achieved as much in terms of capacity building for women and CSOs, particularly in a society where the roles of women are heavily proscribed. Based on interviews with partner CSO female personnel, it was clear that these women were in the community working within their CSOs and they demonstrated their ability to adapt women's empowerment to community norms – this was due in part to their engagement with the LINCS project. The civil society sector appears to be almost the only arena for women to participate in broader social life. Vulnerable groups, such as returnees and out of school youth, are also engaged in LINCS CSO sub-grantees, as participants, beneficiaries, and management staff.

The Program focuses on women rather than the broader and more inclusive (and contemporary) framework of 'gender' is problematic. A gender and development perspective does not mean that women cannot be targeted as a specific group and it means that the gender dynamics and institutional norms that so often marginalize women can also be addressed in a meaningful way. In some places, including Sudan, a women in development (WID) approach can further marginalize women by creating a perception of imbalanced treatment and, hence, stirring up jealousy and resentment unless the focus on females is handled carefully.

There appear to be consistent and focused efforts to ensure that a range of people from marginalized groups, including returnees, are taken into account in programming decisions and Program foci. The lack of available quantitative data on these individuals makes it difficult for the team to come to any specific conclusions on returnees (or other individuals from marginalized groups.)

Sustainability

With LINCS due to conclude in December 2011, there is little time remaining to make adjustments to the Program. USAID/Sudan's ability to make changes in the Program under a cooperative agreement is also limited. Nevertheless, even at this stage, there are a substantial number of changes that Mercy Corps should make to amplify the results of LINCS and ways that USAID/Sudan can facilitate these changes.

Findings: LINCS resources for grants are between US\$7000/SDG16,565 (\$8500/SDG20,115 in the case of peace-building CSOs) and US\$16,000/SDG37,864 *per annum*. There is an explicit expectation that local communities will try to provide in-kind and financial support as well. Partner CSO staff and partner CSO beneficiaries consistently noted the contributions of local or county government and beneficiaries to LINCS (and other) projects. The contributions included in-kind donations such as land for CSO facilities and

projects and building materials as well as cash (for example, up to US\$2/ SDP5 a month to those CSOs managing community schools). In some cases, community contributions exceed the size of LINCS grant support.

Many of those individuals interviewed noted that, at present, there are few other donors providing support to community-based CSOs and they are not ready to pick up and sustain these community CSOs. Beneficiaries said that their contributions can only sustain some CSOs and activities and that, overall, the funds raised are insufficient to meet the many needs of their communities. They noted that even with the combined resources of LINCS and communities, the resource envelope is still too limited. Beneficiaries and stakeholders mentioned repeatedly that they were trying to find additional funding from the GOSS and external donors. LINCS documentation stresses the challenges of establishing the Community Advisory Boards (CABs) for both the RCs and for the CRSs. For example, in Quarters 1 and 2, 2010, there was not training or grant distribution for RC CABs. In FY 2009, MC LINCS discussed a shift from its previous focus on pre-nascent/nascent CSOs to a focus on partnering with CSOs with medium to strong organizational and institutional backgrounds, including experience in service delivery, advocacy and networking. Though, as reported in the 2010 Semi-Annual report, newly added partner CSOs are pre-nascent/nascent.

Mercy Corps was expelled from Blue Nile State and South Kordofan State from March 2009 to January 2010 when the Chief of Party was able to re-enter the states and re-establish relationships with the partner CSOs. LINCS found that the more advanced partner CSOs (those that had reached a 'foundational' level on the OCI) had been able to complete the activities targeted in their grant proposals and were ready with new proposal ideas.

Conclusions: The temporary expulsion of Mercy Corps from Blue Nile and South Kordofan States, while certainly regrettable, is also interesting because it provided MC with a test case of what would happen when LINCS personnel were not available to provide support. It would appear that if MC LINCS is able to bring CSOs to a certain level of organizational development and staff capacity, the main constraint to sustainability is largely around finances and access to information that can then be turned into more programs.

Based on the teams' interviews, the impending end of the Program and its potential implications for their communities and the sustainability of all components of LINCS was of great concern to partner CSOs, beneficiaries and local government authorities. However, issues of sustainability appear to have been raised by MC LINCS within communities only recently. Poor communities do not have the resources to keep local CSOs, RCs and CRSs viable even at their current level of capacity and activities, let alone enabling these organizations to grow and provide additional help to communities. While many LINCS partners would likely be sustainable in different, more modest forms after 2011 by relying on community contributions, the cessation of support would minimize the impact of these CSOs at a crucial time when their work should instead be amplified. Establishment of functional CABs is vital for sustainability of the benefits being derived from the RCs and the CRSs.

Given the modest resources of communities in Southern Sudan, the few other donors in the civil society sector, and the ways the LINCS Program has developed, there should be correspondingly modest expectations about the sustainability of partner Civil Society Organizations, Resource Centers and Community Radio Stations at their current levels of activity. Leaving partner CSOs at this stage of development without additional capacity building and grants would be a disservice to the substantial investments already made, the communities, and the development of democracy in Southern Sudan. Expectations should be modest about adding in any additional foci or issues in any substantial way with just 18 months left in the Program.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Program Oversight and Organizational Structure

Findings: At the start of the Program, Mercy Corps was the prime implementing partner and the International Refugee Committee (IRC) was the sub-contracted partner. In March, 2008, as part of the revised Program description, Mercy Corps discontinued the sub-grant to IRC³⁴ and, as of October 1, 2008, Internews became a sub-grantee with the responsibility (until December, 2011) to provide a range of services that would ensure that quality community radio stations are fully operational – both technically and in terms of staff media capacity – and serve the programming and broadcast needs of selected communities in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

At the beginning of FY 2009, Mercy Corps Sudan changed its operational structure, dividing the country program in “relatively independent operational units with one operations manager heading each of those units. Roving logistics officers travel to field sites on a regular basis to support program implementation”. According to MC LINCS documentation, “This system has decreased procurement turnaround times and significantly increased the smooth implementation of (MC) programs and (MC) ability to provide support to (MC) CSO partners”.³⁵

LINCS staff noted that they have to compete with other the staff of other Mercy Corps projects and with staff outside the LINCS Program (from operations and budget) to secure the resources they need to do their jobs. These delays hampered partner CSOs’ projects and reduced the amount of time—and even the overall amount of funding available—for implementation.

LINCS staff consistently expressed concerns about their ability to plan and implement their Program with necessary assets (i.e. transportation, office equipment, telecommunications) they need to use under the direct management of operations, which does not necessarily prioritize LINCS needs. LINCS staff reported having to cancel or postpone important Program activities due to constraints from operations, such as a lack of transportation.

Conclusions: There are several critical management areas in which Mercy Corps has been deficient in rectifying, to the detriment of LINCS Program implementation and potential Program effects. Several of these areas-- communications with LINCS staff, inefficiencies arising because of lack of access to operational supports (transport, etc.) and to key financial information--appear to stem from the overall Mercy Corps Sudan organizational structure into which the LINCS Program is slotted.

Effectiveness and efficiency of activity implementation also appears to have been compromised in numerous cases due to Program financing issues out of the control of the LINCS personnel, but under the control of Mercy Corps Sudan.

Program needs should drive operations rather than the reverse, which LINCS staff felt often happened. Given communications challenges and limited national staff capacity, a simpler, more direct management system is required ensure clear and timely back-and-forth communications and support for field staff. Mercy Corps has a lean organizational structure without room for cutbacks and which needs to be better managed to maximize Program achievements.

Given the focus on LINCS and the limited time and access the evaluation team had to the overall MC country Program, operations, and budget, the team is not in a position to recommend a specific management model for country operations and budget. It is clear, however, that the absence of a detailed, clear and transparent project and financial budgets and pipelines for LINCS that allow senior Program staff to track and manage the costs of project activities and better manage for results. Program staff at all levels need budgetary information to better understand Programmatic inputs, management, and sustainability, and this knowledge needs to be shared with RCs and Community Radio Station task forces and their future boards.

³⁴ Modification #01 (16-July-08)

³⁵ Taken from Mercy Corps LINCS Annual Report FY 2009, p. 62.

Financial Management

Findings: In FY 2009, LINCS introduced a performance-based grant allocation and management mechanism called, ‘Enhanced-Organizational Capacity Assessment’ (E-OCA). After the E-OCA is administered, the resulting ‘Enhanced-Organizational Capacity Index’ (E-OCI) is contrasted with the existing OCI and a list of red flags are raised if there are problems such as missing financial reports from a given partner CSO.³⁶ The number of red flags indicates the level of action that LINCS personnel need to take, from a meeting to a warning to termination of the partnership.

Some partner CSO staff noted delays in grant approvals that were due to both MC LINCS as well as their own organizations’ issues. They also noted that MC LINCS staff sometimes lacked the funds that were promised to a sub-grantee on a certain date. LINCS staff interviewed noted that the delays in the availability of funds were due to MC’s budget office not having the funds available at the time required. In some cases, disbursements of LINCS grants to partners have been delayed due to the unavailability of funds which has in turn delayed partner Programs, forced revisions to their plans, and has even led to smaller overall grants than agreed upon as the limited period of time for the award runs out.

For example, one site found that their overall Program and operations budget, which was supposed to be adequate for LINCS implementation until close at the end of 2011, was almost expended by June 2010. Uncertainty about how this problem would be resolved impeded LINCS staff and Program implementation at this site over the several months it took MC to find a resolution.

There is some evidence of mishandling of sub-grant funds by a handful of partner CSOs since 2005. When mishandling occurs, MC LINCS rapidly terminate the partnership.

Conclusions: The introduction of the E-OCA/E-OCI system as part of the redesign of the LINCS monitoring and evaluation system appears to have been helpful in keeping partner CSOs on target and LINCS is to be congratulated for the progress on reducing problems in managing the partnerships with CSOs.

The inability of LINCS Program staff (including management personnel) to access information needed to keep a firm handle on the Program pipeline and to keep control of the budget appears to be a serious issue from the perspective of a number of staff. Because the budget is managed separately and so many costs of operations are outside of the management and control of LINCS key personnel, the staff do not fully know their own cost structure. This situation makes it impossible for them to manage for results across Program components and activities (and to focus on sustainability). For example, LINCS staff (and, consequently, Mercy Corps itself) cannot monitor whether or determine if resources are most effectively used to build CSO capacity through training or through networking, since staff cannot include the costs of activities in their cost-benefit estimates. The absence of this critical financial data also means that LINCS staff are not fully aware of the budgetary implications of changes in the work plan and are not able suggest changes to implementation that might provide cost savings while meeting Program objectives.

Human Resource Management and Development—LINCS Personnel

Findings: MC LINCS has a documented commitment to hiring, training and promoting Sudanese staff while at the same time phasing out expatriate personnel. For example, MC has promoted two national staff to positions of deputy Project Manager and other staff to technical support staff (senior Outreach and Civic Engagement Officer and Capacity Building Coordinators) and phased out one expatriate position (Information and Communication Officer). Most of the LINCS local staff do not have more than a primary school education; in fact, many LINCS national staff described themselves as ‘late-school leavers’ who lacked skills in management and capacity building including training and mentoring.

Because of this skill gap, LINCS has devoted time and resources to training (on-the-job training, practice and mentoring) of its own Sudanese national staff. Staff development was made an explicit outcome of the Program (a move approved by USAID/Sudan). Recruitment and placement of Sudanese personnel are

³⁶ Taken from Mercy Corps LINCS Annual Report (2009).

affected by conditions put in place by the SSRRC and, occasionally by country commissioners' offices, due to a preference on the part of these bodies to have people hired who are from individuals' respective tribes or clans. LINCS has also had difficulties with staff retention. For example, Mercy Corps undertook a countrywide salary review in early FY 2009 and subsequently increased salaries and benefits. Unfortunately, the adjustments did not come quickly enough to prevent 12 local staff leaving to join other international organizations. There was similar trend among expatriates.

In numerous informal conversations and in the formal interviews, national staff expressed their dedication and willingness to live and work in extremely difficult conditions across Southern Sudan and the Three Areas. They also consistently mentioned their desire to improve job-related skills and abilities. Many staff now seek (or have sought out) additional training in specialized areas in which partner CSOs need technical input. They suggested that advanced training that follows on the 25 basic training modules within LINCS and the opportunity to enroll in formal degree programs, possibly by distance education, would not only provide much-sought-after credentials but also would improve current performance. Some staff are only a little ahead of the stronger partner CSO staff in terms of skills and knowledge--a situation that poses credibility and implementation challenges for LINCS staff in some cases. The training staff are responsible for adapting the training manuals to the level of the partners. Interviews with staff indicated that this task is too demanding for some individuals. Some LINCS staff indicated that they were uncomfortable at work given their current level of training and experience, which was often at the same level or only a few steps above that of the partner CSOs that they train and mentor.

Some staff were somewhat demoralized by what they perceived to be the lack of responsiveness of MC and LINCS senior staff to their needs. The issues raised consistently during interviews focused on concerns about how to do their own work better including additional training to improve LINCS implementation and Program effects, how to gain more control over their budget and operations and how to improve communication with and oversight by Mercy Corps Sudan in Juba and, to a lesser extent, salaries and benefits.

Staff often felt that MC management had a "command and control" approach, not a customer service approach based on helping Program staff accomplish their work successfully. No national staff are among top LINCS management and some staff felt that national staff concerns were thus not taken seriously by project management. They reported a pattern of requests to LINCS and MC management going unanswered and felt that this pattern resulted in dissatisfaction and rifts within MC, between national and international staff, and between senior and other staff. Staff at LINCS sites are sometimes unclear about the demands placed on them from Juba and who is responsible for what, at various levels, in MC and LINCS.

"Management by e-mail," as some staff called it, does not work for national staff because of capacity limitations and difficulties with telecommunications. The most poignant example was staff noting that management would communicate with them from Juba using the chat function of Skype, but as field staff tried to answer one English-language question with two-fingered typing, they would see the pencil light up and find that management had already asked them 10 more questions from Juba.

Conclusions: Trained personnel are critical to any project implementation and MC LINCS has done a commendable job in training national staff as part of the overall capacity development agenda of the Program. The issues raised consistently by MC LINCS staff focused on concerns about how to do their own work better including additional training to improve LINCS implementation and Program effects, how to gain more control over their budget and operations and how to improve communication with and oversight by Mercy Corps Sudan in Juba--even over increased salaries and benefits—which demonstrates the magnitude of these issues for them.

The current training modules and types of training limit the staff's ability to provide different and additional approaches to support partner CSOs' development and activities. LINCS staff need additional training to benefit both Objective 1 and the entire Program. Differentiated training manuals produced by individuals with experience and expertise in producing graded organizational development and individual capacity development materials would benefit the Program overall and enable LINCS to continue to help partner CSOs to mature. It was unrealistic of Mercy Corps Sudan to expect LINCS personnel who were in many cases only learning the content of the existing 25 modules to have the expertise needed to adapt this core set of materials; yet this is what has been expected to date. This situation, along with the three-tiered cascade-

training model, has potentially resulted in a lower transmission of targeted skills and knowledge than would have been the case without these limitations.

After four years of Program implementation that included an appropriate and necessary emphasis on LINCS staff development, one would expect that some staff should at this point in time be ready to lead implementation at senior levels in LINCS. A clearly articulated, individualized professional development structure initiated early on could have helped LINCS staff progress more quickly and avoid the situation of an emerging gap in professional credibility that is now beginning to appear as well as the lack of Sudanese personnel in more senior positions to date.

IV. PROGRAM DESIGN AND ASSUMPTIONS

This section addresses the following MTE questions. The analysis is based on the design as described in the Cooperative Agreement (dated September 1, 2005) and the alignment of the Program under new USAID strategic objectives and intermediate results.

Are there any issues with respect to project design and assumptions (documented or implied) that should be reconsidered based on experience to date? Do project objectives remain feasible in light of political, security, logistics and staffing challenges?

USAID/Sudan elected to emphasize working directly with local and nascent CSOs. Has this strategy proved to be productive in terms of project goal and objectives?

Has the significant programmatic and geographic expansion resulted in any challenges to implementation or to product quality?

Development Hypothesis

The Program's development hypothesis is thus:

By addressing the gaps in the capacity of individual civil society organizations and by strengthening the enabling environment through improving the capacity, reach and power of coalitions and networks, improving the interface between levels of the civil society sector, and improving citizens' access to information, LINCS will contribute to "More Responsive and Participatory Governance" (2005) and, as of 2008, "Avert and Resolve Conflict".

Self-reliance and independence are dependent upon more than the organizational development of the CSO and many factors that affect CSO functionality and performance are by and large, beyond the control of the CSO, in particular funding and the institutional environment. Mercy Corps and most other development organizations bump into the 'relief mentality' again and again. The limitations and pervasiveness of this mentality and the length of time that will likely be needed to change it have perhaps not been taken into account seriously enough. The result is an assumption about possible achievements that is overly-ambitious for the context as it manifests at this point in time.

Objectives

Quality Considerations

The original design proposal apparently included a logical framework developed by Mercy Corps (although this was not required in the Request for Proposal documentation). However, the annex including the LogFrame was not part of the Cooperative Agreement documentation, so the evaluation team is unable to provide a critique of the inherent vertical and horizontal logic (including the assumptions identified as part of the Program logic) underpinning the initial Program design. A table that is described as being a Logical Framework is found in the September 2008 Program Description but it does not conform to standard Logical Framework practice. For example, there are no assumptions identified and there are no objectively verifiable indicators or means of verification included for the USAID Strategic Objectives and Intermediate Results. There is also no overarching goal level objective (that would typically be a development goal), although the actual development goal is embedded within Objective 1. It does not appear that the original LogFrame or the 2008 LogFrame was revisited for a quality assessment either by USAID or Mercy Corps at the points in time when the Program was being expanded substantially. As the Program currently is framed, five objectives and program effects comprise the skeleton of the Program. While the intentions underpinning the objectives is not problematic per se, there are a number of issues that will prevent a sound analysis of and perspective on the Program post-implementation.

First, it is not clear what the purpose of the Program is at this point in time. The original purpose was, "56 CSOs with capacity to actively and effectively support their constituencies made up of marginalized groups". While there are some issues with this purpose level objective (for example, 'actively and effectively' are not defined and therefore will be difficult to measure), it makes it quite clear what the intent of the Program is

and what Mercy Corps can reasonably be expected to have within its sphere of control. The lack of a good quality LogFrame that has followed the Program expansions through and been modified accordingly while still testing to ensure that the logic of the Program is still intact has not occurred. Another drawback is that it is not clear how the ‘program effects’ are linked to the USAID Strategic Objectives and Intermediate Results—indicators that would enable measurement of the effects are lacking—or what development goal is being contributed to by the Program.

The Program structure now consists of five objectives that seem overly-complex and that give no indication of the type of objective they are (are they goal level objectives, purpose level objectives or component level objectives?) The distinction is important because the level of the objective determines the objectively verifiable indicators that are identified and the differences between such indicators is significant.

In addition, standard practice in the development of a project objective (those things that an implementing agency can be reasonably assumed to have control over) is that an objective should not include prepositions. The inclusion of prepositions makes it difficult to identify what part of the objective (the first part or the second part) should be measured. In all cases, both the objectives and the related program effects are constructed in such a way that it would be exceedingly difficult to identify a way and means of monitoring progress over time and evaluating achievements (or lack thereof).

Some of the objectives are so complex that it is difficult to identify the core of the objective, for example, Objective 3, “Civic engagements of CSOs are strengthened through skills and trainings, dialogues and coalitions, on advocacy, media, elections, conflict mitigation and peace building, and representation for both civil society organizations and governance stakeholders—to increase awareness and understanding of emerging political processes and enable a participatory and responsive society which will effectively avert potential conflict and address issues in a constructive and collaborative manner.”

Second, the link between the various intentions of the objectives and objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) is lacking. For example, Objective 1 intends that 114 CSOs will improve their organizational ability to promote and support active social, economic and political participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan. While the indicators reported against—such as the number of CSOs partnering with LINCS and the movement upwards on the OCA—enable some reporting at the output level, neither of these can be used to verify the CSOs’ success in promoting and supporting active social, economic and political participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups. In addition, ‘active social, economic and political participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups would probably be the goal level objective of the Program (To improve the social, economic and political participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups) and, as such, would need a different type of indicator than the ones currently being used. OVI’s could be developed for most of the program effects and reported at the purpose level.

Assumptions and Feasibility

The foci of the objectives and the design itself are feasible in this context. The overall original Program design takes account of and addresses several critical issues in Sudan, including the lack of government services, the tremendous needs of local communities, the rudimentary state of civil society, and the need to develop productive relationships between CSOs and local authorities. The Program is focused at the grassroots level with the underlying assumption that even poor, uneducated beneficiaries can participate with CSOs to address community needs.

- The overarching unstated, but implicit, assumption underpinning the LINCS design is that: it is possible and realistic to expect that LINCS can make a contribution to two USAID Strategic Objectives (which changed between 2005 and 2008) in a country that (1) is emerging from 40 years of vertical conflict, (2) continues to deal with historical ongoing horizontal conflicts (inter-tribal, pastoralist-nomadic, etc.), and (3) has not yet clearly defined the post-war role of civil society (which must rework its previous alignment with political movements and rebel factions).

The MTE bears out the validity of this assumption—change can happen if gone about in a sensible manner and can make a difference in people’s lives. However, there is also evidence that

interventions of this type can cause harm. Note the arrest of three people (an Internews journalist and two callers) because they discussed the burning down of some shops in Leer as a topic on the air.

- A second unstated assumption is that the best entry point for contributing to the achievement of the USAID SO is the civil society organization.

The level of interest, the accomplishments of LINCS thus far and the significant potential for good that can be derived from a well-functioning CSO, particularly in an environment that has such extreme needs, bears out the validity of this assumption.

- A third assumption is that, out of CSOs present in the target areas, it is sensible to target the most immature CSOs (pre-nascent/nascent using Mercy Corps terminology or immature using more standard organizational development terminology).

While this assumption may be valid if these organizations are targeted very early on, so as to allow maximum time during the life of the Program for nurturing, Mercy Corps is nervous about this type of organization being able to reach a level of independence during the life of the Program. In 2009, with two years of implementation time remaining, Mercy Corps discussed shifting the focus from immature CSOs to medium to strong CSOs. This was not realized, as CSOs added in 2010 fell within the nascent/pre-nascent category.

- A fourth assumption is that these targeted CSOs will be able to move from a ‘relief mentality’ to an organizational ethic of self-reliance and independence.

The legacy of four decades of civil war and humanitarian assistance needs to be recognized, along with the acknowledgement that transitioning from a the relief mentality to an ethic of self-sufficiency and independence will take place as a generational shift occurs. Current literature on capacity building encourages a 10-20 year span of engagement (for activities in contexts that have not been conflict-affected).

In Southern Sudan, substantial and explicit work is needed to build conflict management skills, connections within communities, and methods to address disputes between communities, because the GOSS and the traditional structures that are supposed to manage conflict appear to be weak. Peace-building work through LINCS will have limits--working with community-based CSOs and networks cannot address North-South or international issues. Local peace building is critical in communities and between communities, as many people anticipate additional South-South conflicts and problems with greater GOSS authority, concerns about Dinka domination of the SPLM and local authorities, and challenges for other tribes/communities in working with the SPLM and GOSS.³⁷

A risk mitigation/management matrix could have helped make these assumptions explicit along with grading the likelihood of the risk and its level of impact and identifying clear and appropriate risk mitigation strategies.

Programmatic and Geographic Expansion

The geographic expansion, while it did contribute to the operational demands and the cost, was likely not particularly problematic given the existence of a number of Program offices and the demand for the Program prior to the expansion. But the programmatic expansion--that resulted in the more than doubling of the targeted CSOs (which included a mandated focus on immature CSOs), the introduction of the Resource Centers and the Community Radio Stations in particular as well as an increased focus on local government

³⁷ For additional information on conflict risks, see the excellent recent assessment commissioned by Pact Sudan for the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development. Schomerus, Mareike et al. (2010) Southern Sudan at Odds with Itself: Dynamics of Conflict and Predicaments of Peace. London: London School of Economics and Political Science Development Studies Institute, 2010.
http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/PDFs/10_0453%20Sudan%20Report08_forweb.pdf.

and coalitions)—will most likely have an impact on the capacity of Mercy Corps to focus on sustainability aspects to the extent required in this context, particularly with respect to the Community Advisory Boards for the RCs and the CRSs and for the financial viability of the CSOs, the RCs and the CRSs. Had a ‘mini-evaluation’ been undertaken of LINCS prior to substantial programmatic expansion, some of the issues identified in this evaluation might have been avoided.

The fragility and volatility of the context and the legacy of humanitarian assistance needs to be taken much more seriously with respect to time frames and expansion. In addition, the potential for harm that can manifest due to the presence of the Program and the activities and empowerment it is espousing needs to be emphasized, monitored and mitigated.

V. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

For Mercy Corps:

Management³⁸

1. Examine and rectify organizational structures, processes and budget practices that do not lend themselves to effective and efficient Program management and implementation.

In particular, the disconnect between operations and technical programming needs immediate attention as does a realignment of the Program budget and pipeline management so that LINCS staff have a full understanding of and are able to control implementation of their own Program. Build inflation into grant procedures and potentially be more flexible about costs, which vary across Southern Sudan.

2. Introduce improved human resource management and development processes to: (1) bridge the gulf in communication between Mercy Corps Sudan and LINCS management personnel and field staff; (2) offer an improved approach to individual staff development; and (3) empower Sudanese staff to take on greater responsibility for Program management and implementation.

Recruitment and retention of Sudanese nationals for senior management positions may help ensure that the concerns and perspectives of national staff are fully represented at the senior management level.

As LINCS ratchets up the roles of local staff and size of grants, LINCS staff should collaboratively develop codes of conduct to step up the *esprit de corps* to help them manage the increased roles, responsibilities, and funds in their relationships with partner CSOs and communities.

LINCS personnel should also introduce a code of conduct to help ensure that there is no abuse of power.

Programming

3. Address peace building over the last year and a half of the Program in a comprehensive, integrated way across all Program objectives.

As part of a larger, more direct effort, the initial phases should enlist stakeholders into facilitated processes that allow them to draw out and expand upon the outcomes of LINCS activities that are peripherally related to peace building. Substantial training, grants, and networking should then be developed that directly develop peace-building capacity and activities for staff, partner CSOs, and beneficiaries/stakeholders.

Cross-site visits and dialogs can also help spread knowledge and experience in this area, as CSOs take advantage of their local knowledge and connections to develop some of their own activities and approaches following training and targeted grants.

4. As a matter of urgency, develop and begin to implement a sustainability strategy that includes a clear exit approach.

As part of building the prospects for sustainability in the future, increase efforts to incorporate beneficiary and stakeholder contributions into every aspect of CSO and project activities, recognizing that the success and expansion of these efforts will still largely be funded by donor contributions for

³⁸ While the nature of the agreement with MC LINCS potentially limits the ability of USAID to directly enforce changes in financial and operations management, it is the intent of the MTE team to raise these issues and promote a dialogue between USAID and MC on these issues. This is also raised in recommendation number two for USAID.

years to come. LINCS should immediately address and attempt to resolve the issues relating to the establishment of Community Advisory Boards for the Resource Centers and Community Radio Stations.

With the Program's more advanced partner CSOs, a more flexible, less management-intensive, type of engagement that takes advantage of the CSOs' increased capacity can also be an aspect of a sustainability strategy.

Differentiated, upgraded training that includes certifications for on-the-job training and performance and provide ways for staff to combine work and continuing education to further their professional development for LINCS staff and partner CSOs at various levels of capacity can help contribute to sustainability of the Program benefits and contributes to workforce development in Sudan more broadly.

5. Continue to build and strengthen CSO networks and coalitions around geographic and thematic areas of mutual interest and increase their reach to the state, regional, national, and international levels.

6. Improve the materials and the 'one-size fits all' approach used for the organizational development of the Civil Society Organizations, particularly review, enhance and expand the differentiation of the current modules used for CSO staff training (including formulation of a process for CSOs to develop into learning organizations capable of continuing to mature in the absence of a donor or project)..

In the view of the evaluation team, addressing this recommendation will likely take substantial effort from a consultant with demonstrated skills and experience in organizational development and in capacity building of individuals (including experience in adult education and training). This individual should also be able to assist in improving the manner in which the professional development to LINCS personnel is undertaken.

7. Continue to work with stakeholders on community input and management of the RCs and, when and where possible, increase the size and capacity of RCs to meet stakeholder needs for training, information, and meeting space.

8. Continue to support the five Community Radio Stations, including expanding efforts to reach people across Southern Sudan through existing radio stations, whether community based on not, and develop other social networking methods to broaden the number of beneficiaries that hear of CSOs and their work through their outreach.

9. Establish a formal process to promote and support synergies between and across Program elements in order to realize broader Program benefits.

The approach should also include integrating Internews and NDI more strongly into the Program and develop more differentiated support to LINCS CSO sub-grantees in civic education and to promote the use of the radios as a tool for CSOs.

Greater interaction between CSOs and radio stations in general, including community radios, where feasible should be part of the approach. As part of greater use of communications media, LINCS should encourage CSOs to integrate the use of radio as a tool to achieve their goals and expand their constituencies.

10. Continue to build the understanding of the roles of CSOs as partners and in advocacy to government at the boma, payam, and state levels and expand this discussion to the national level.

For USAID:

1. Consider funding a substantial follow-on activity to LINCS that build on the solid base of community CSOs that LINCS has supported and increase its investment in civil society development to other states and counties after the referenda.

Any future program should be solidly and explicitly grounded in Conflict Management and Mitigation including peace building, particularly at the community level.

A gap between LINCS and any follow-on activity should be avoided, if at all possible; however, any subsequent program design should be informed by a sound, critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the former activity.

2. Engage in a dialogue with Mercy Corps Sudan management about the challenges associated with operational and budgetary control and ensure that LINCS management and the MC country office come to some agreement that provides greater control of operational assets and budget to the Program, which is needed to strengthen Program implementation and to improve the sustainability of LINCS achievements.

3. Future programming should consider the feasibility of supporting a greater diversification of CSO projects to respond to a broader array of community needs (for example, a wider variety of sizes, foci, and types of grants to CSO parties based on their capacity and community needs and priorities).

4. Consider expanding efforts to reach people across Southern Sudan through existing radio stations, whether community-based or not, and develop other social networking methods to broaden the number of beneficiaries that hear of CSOs and their work through their outreach.

5. Continue to prioritize women's issues as core community issues, both as part of and the ongoing process of addressing the unique challenges of women, and articulate a gender-sensitive analysis that considers both females and males.

This appears the only possible avenue to push the agenda of women's empowerment across Southern Sudan. LINCS is well placed to work with CSOs to address women's roles in the community as a community agenda. For example, water, sanitation, and health (WASH) issues directly affect women, but not only women; an approach to these general WASH problems at the level of the village can help bring women into the mainstream of community life, rather than marginalizing them. Young people should also be explicitly targeted and incorporated into CSO and LINCS activities, especially peace building activities.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: SCOPE OF WORK

Management Systems International (MSI) SUPPORT Program with USAID/Sudan/Sudan³⁹
Mid-Term Evaluation of
Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS)
(Start and End Dates: June 17-July 16, 2010)

1. Program to be Evaluated

Program Identification:

Officially: Institutional Strengthening in Southern Sudan,
From proposal, and more popularly: “Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS)”
Cooperative Agreement No. 623-A-00-05-00323-00

Program Funding:

Initially \$ 8,400,000 from USAID/Sudan with \$150,000 from Mercy Corps; expanded to \$30,650,000 in USG funding.

Program Beginning/End dates:

Initially from 1 September 2005 to 31-August 2011; End date extended to September 2011

Key Agreement/ Contract Modifications:

Modification 1 (7-Mar-06): Included a number of USAID/Sudan standard provisions.
Modification 2 (27-Sep-06): Increase funding by \$1,500,000 to a total of \$9,900,000 and increase the number of Resource Centers
Modification 3 (19-Sep-06): Incremental funding
Modification 4 (16-Mar-07): Increase funding by \$750,000, to a total of \$10,650,000
Modification 5: (25-Sep-07): Increased funding by \$10,000,000; for a total of \$20,650,000
Modification 6 (15-Dec-08): Merge CMM funds into Program and expand work to the Three Areas.
Modification 7 (30-Sep-08): Increase funding by \$10,000,000 to \$30,650,000 and expand assistance to new geographical areas and organizations.

Implementing Partners(s):

Initially, Mercy Corps (Prime) with International Rescue Committee (IRC). Subsequently, Internews was added via sub-contract to Mercy Corps.

USAID/ Sudan/ Sudan Technical Office:

Governing Justly and Democratically, aka “D&G Office”

AOTR:

³⁹ MSI holds a 3-year contract to provide Mission-wide support to USAID/Sudan/Sudan in Program and project evaluation and designs, MIS management, translation services, logistics support, facilities management, VIP hosting, and research. An in-country team, based in Juba, provides these services, supplemented by short-term technical assistance.

2. Evaluation Purposes

The results of this evaluation will serve two purposes, listed in order of importance to the Mission:

1. Provide an important data-based understanding of what seems to work, and what doesn't in promoting civic participation in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas. This information gained from studying the LINCS model will serve as a vital input as USAID/Sudan/Sudan plans its strategic approach to promoting civic participation for the period beginning in 2011.
2. Provide information to help the Implementing Partners and USAID/Sudan modify implementation to improve potential impact in the time remaining in LINCS.

3. Background

A. Country Context

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, borders nine countries, and has a population estimated at 40 million. Since independence in 1956, Sudan has suffered from civil war, with only a decade of troubled peace from 1972 to 1983.

Southern Sudan and the critical border areas (consisting of the northern states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, plus Abyei—commonly referred to as the Three Areas) are characterized by years of underdevelopment, war, famine, drought and flood, producing a crisis of enormous proportions across the region and resulting in the devastation of economic, political and social structures. In addition to the loss of lives, opportunities and infrastructure, the war displaced families and divided communities. In consequence, the health, education and infrastructure status of the Sudanese people are among the poorest globally.

After decades of civil war, Sudan's warring parties signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January of 2005. Since that time the country has taken steps toward peace, reconciliation and good governance, although the pace has been slower than expected or desired.

Despite the signing of the CPA, Sudan remains a vulnerable state. Its children, many of whom are orphans, returning refugees and ex-combatants, are particularly at risk—especially in the “hot spots” of the Three Areas. It is essential that displaced and other affected people, particularly orphans and ex-combatant youth, be safely reintegrated into their communities. In the case of the youth affected by the many conflicts and tensions during the past 21 years, the provision of basic education is critical to providing a solid foundation upon which their future success and contribution to society can be based. The provision of education can also be seen as a tangible result of the “peace dividends” expected by Sudanese citizens and, in turn, will contribute to stabilization in the region. Durable stability is contingent upon demonstrative and observable change “on the ground,” and education, highly valued by the Sudanese, is both a necessary and visible symbol of that change.

In many areas, primary health and education services have been almost exclusively externally funded. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and multilateral and bilateral aid agencies offering humanitarian relief became the prime providers of an array of much needed services. As peace is consolidated, USAID/Sudan will continue to support a responsible transition from emergency to development assistance that seeks to improve access to and quality of basic education. Education and health activities are reinforced by investment in other essential services, such as water and sanitation, in an effort to rebuild local communities, reduce tensions, and provide the much-sought-after peace dividends.

B. Sector Context

The following is an excerpt from Mercy Corps' civil society mapping paper.⁴⁰

Contemporary civil society in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas is a vulnerable and contested space due to factors including the country's legacy of civil war, militarization of society, nascent governance structures and the fragility of peace.

Activism and mobilization rallied against "occupation" efforts and for fair and equal political representation and development for the south. This activism and mobilization initially occurred at the individual and citizen level, giving way to tribal and clan responses, regional organization, and finally coalescing into an organized military response, eventually being led primarily by the SPLA. Throughout the civil war, for many who remained in Sudan, they assumed dual roles: one as a community member and second as an active member of the SPLA, with the latter defining their self-identity and primary role in society.

The SPLM evolved as the social engagement and corresponding political movement of the SPLA, and remains closely linked to the SPLA. During the civil war, community groups formed to support themselves and provide for immediate needs and services that is traditionally the role of the local government. These groups existed to support the SPLM/A, and positioned themselves politically close to the movement and its struggles. Often, these groups, such as the Twic County Women's Association and New Sudan Youth Association (NYSYA), became integrated into the local governance structures, and were mandated to address the needs of the various constituents, such as women, youth, widows, orphans, and wounded heroes. These organizations are referred to as governmental non-governmental organizations (GONGOs), and enjoy a varying level of independence from the government, with government representatives playing a varied role in the decision-making process within the organization.

Ironically, civil society's origins in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas are rooted in the people's responses to the challenges that accompanied the civil war. In tandem with the evolution of a nationalist movement for South Sudan, both naturally- and politically-induced emergencies have necessitated, or at least provoked, the international community to assume a significant role in the provision of humanitarian relief. As these humanitarian aid efforts increased and scaled up, local organizations emerged to assist with service delivery, primarily motivated by the demand for increased services.

Simultaneously, during the eighties, the Sudanese Diaspora increased their efforts at advocacy by mobilizing to form organizations that are currently major players in the civil society landscape of Sudan. The umbrella group of Sudanese Indigenous NGOs Network (NESI network), for example, is comprised of many of these Diaspora-led organizations that have been active in the negotiation of the current peace agreement and the provision of relief. Improvements in Internet and communication technology, as well as increased academic and media interest in Southern Sudan have further facilitated increased involvement and impact of the Sudanese Diaspora on civil society within Sudan.

Other civil society institutions developed around professional and trade interests, though such developments are limited to the larger towns in the south—primarily Juba, Wau and Malakal. Though many of the participants in these institutions have gone on to form the nuclei of many southern political groups, the professional and trade organizations themselves have largely fallen into disarray. Religious organizations have fared best due to the scope and reach of their pre-war activities and to their links to constituencies outside of Sudan, from which they have obtained moral if not financial and technical support.

Despite these nascent beginnings, given the militarized nature of the independence movement, the concept of citizens playing a role or filling a space intended to be separate and independent from the local government, and to hold the local government accountable, is not inherent in Sudan's conceptualization of society.

However, with the signing of the CPA, the roles of government and civil society in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas are both nascent and simultaneously emerging in the post-conflict environment.

⁴⁰ Mercy Corps (2006). Civil Society Mapping Report. Juba, Southern Sudan: Mercy Corps.

As part of the state building efforts in the post-civil war era, defined by the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (ICSS), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/SPLA) is reorganizing to form formal governance structures. Former military members are now occupying government positions in a system that is designed to be democratic and representative. Social, defense, and governance systems and actors are struggling to define their roles and responsibilities in post-conflict Sudanese society and to determine the rules of engagement during peacetime.

Similarly, former members of the SPLM/SPLA are now “ordinary” citizens and active leaders of civil society. Like the government, civil society is trying to define its roles and responsibilities, challenged with creating the balance between the new concept of separation of state and civil society, while trying to find a balance between this separation and collaboration with their former compatriots.

Civil society organizations have the potential to play a key role in supporting the implementation of the CPA, through service provision, representation, advocacy and serve as independent election monitors. These organizations can also play a prominent role in the reintegration of returnees and former combatants into the community.

As the SPLM/SPLA reorganize to form governance structures, large lacunae for governance and service delivery emerge. While the nascent government adjusts to locate its own roles, responsibilities and resources to address the provision of public goods and ensure that peace is localized, civil society groups are stepping in to help provide basic needs where they are yet unmet, helping to secure the peace dividend and raise the visibility of the peace.

The increasing presence of both international and “indigenous” NGOs has fostered the emergence of more local community groups in Sudan, but a need exists for further strengthening the organizational capacity and community mobilization abilities of most CSOs in Sudan. Sudanese CSOs require more experience in small-project delivery to establish a track record of competence that will attract the confidence of their communities and government partners. Further, CSOs in Sudan widely lack a mutual understanding with government agencies about the actual and potential nature of partnerships and how to achieve them, requiring increased dialogue between the two sectors to bridge this gap and allow both parties to own the partnership process. Civil society organizations will also benefit from information- and skill-sharing through the establishment or strengthening of relationships and networks among CSOs that engage in similar or complementary services.

Efforts to regulate and coordinate the activities of CSOs in Sudan have been hampered by the absence of a widespread enabling legal framework for their registration and operation, as well as a general confusion among local authorities on the ground, who are often unaware of national regulations or have poor information about regional regulations. These obstacles are further compounded by the inability of some CSOs to pay mandatory registration fees, suggesting that the independence of civil society is far from ensured and that this space remains contested.

While post-conflict Southern Sudan possesses the seeds to grow an effective and independent civil society, a culture of dependence has resulted from decades of reliance on outside entities for the provision of services. The evolution of the civil society sector to one in which government officials and market entities are held accountable for delivery of public goods and services and for just representation and fair treatment of the citizenry will be an incremental process that, if it is to be sustainable, must be owned by the participants.

C. Program Description

LINCS posits that by and through strengthening civil society organizations it can have a significant impact on averting and reducing conflict in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas. The Program aims to have an impact on the development of civil society by focusing on the following areas:

- The *space* that civil society as a sector occupies -The space refers to the dynamics of the interactions and relationships among the community, CSOs, and government;
- *Orientation and impact* of civil society—Orientation/impact refers to the collective orientation and impact of the civil society sector in terms of programming, perceptions and relationships with the constituency, service delivery, constituency representation and advocacy/public education;

- *Infrastructure* that exists to support civil society, i.e., the financial inputs, human resources, and intermediary services that support the development of the civil society sector;
- The *legal environment* that regulates how the key actors of civil society operate; refers to the legal framework which regulates the civil society sector and the relative freedom of expression; and
- The *organizational viability* of the civil society organizations; the organization’s potential for effective functioning, management and sustainability looking at funding, management, and strategic planning; and
- The *use and development of community media* by key community stakeholders.

It emphasizes peace building and conflict mitigation in the three transitional areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile State as well as on networking between civil society organizations in support of elections related to civic education and engagement. LINCS supports development and operation of Resource Centers; provides training in leadership, conflict mitigation, civics, advocacy, media, a wide range of management and organizational themes, and many other topics; strengthens a network of radio stations to support community media; provides grants; supports formal dialogues, cross-site networking exchanges, state capital visits, and conferences; and institutes a range of issues related to elections. LINCS also attempts to use many of these activities to engage more fully women, refugees/returnees and other disadvantaged people into society, governance, and civic participation.

The Program has more than tripled in funding since it began in 2005, with an associated expansion of geographic and organizational scope. The IPs have taken on a considerable management challenge, delivering diverse services to a broad range of organizations in a large geographic area in a very challenging operating environment.

D. Linkage to USAID/Sudan Strategy and USG Foreign Assistance Framework

LINCS is expected to contribute to the following USAID/Sudan strategy in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas:

SO 9: Avert and Resolve Conflict

IR 9.2: South-South tensions reduced

IR 9.3: Implementation of the Protocols for the Three Areas Advanced.

LINCS is further intended to support the U.S. Government Foreign Assistance Framework under the objective “Governing Justly and Democratically.” Accordingly, it supports the following Program Areas and Program Elements:

Program Area	Program Element
Civil Society	Civic Participation
	Media Freedom and Freedom of Expression
Political Competition and Consensus Building	Consensus Building Processes
	Elections and Political Processes

E. Program Strategic Summary

To support these Program Areas, LINCS pursues the following “Objectives” to achieve the following “Program Effects”:

Program Area: Civil Society

Objective 1: 114 CSOs ranging from pre-nascent to nascent in organizational ability will improve their organizational capacity to promote and support active social, economic and political participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Program Effect: 114 CSOs improve their organizational capacity to promote and support active social, economic, and political participation and leadership of women and/or other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Objective 2: 13 Civil Society Resource Centers will provide civil society groups with necessary structural support and inputs to facilitate interactive information/ training opportunities and civic engagement space.

Program Effect: Local civil society-led community boards direct and lead civil society resource centers providing communities with access to trainings, access to information and forums for civic engagement.

Objective 3: Networking and issue-based coalitions are fostered to support the active social, economic, and political participation and leadership of women and/or other marginalized groups.

Program Effect: Networking and issue-based coalitions are utilized to support the public education, advocacy and active social, economic, and political participation and leadership of women and/or other marginalized groups in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas.

Objective 5: Network of community radio stations provide sustainable access to information, foster active citizen engagement and responsive governance

Program Effect: Civil society, the business sector, local government and other community stakeholders understand the role community radio plays in development and are able to provide citizens with reliable, objective and accurate information to help them make informed decisions on matters that affect their lives.

Program Area: Political Competition and Consensus Building

Objective 4: Civic engagements of CSOs are strengthened through skills and trainings, dialogues and coalitions, on advocacy, media, elections, conflict mitigation and peace building, and representation for both civil society organizations and governance stakeholders—to increase awareness and understanding of emerging political processes and enable a participatory and responsive society which will effectively avert potential conflict and address issues in a constructive and collaborative manner.

Program Effect: Civil society groups and local governance stakeholders effectively utilize trainings and forums to support information exchange, advocacy and coordination to address community issues especially the needs of women and vulnerable groups and mitigate local conflicts through dialogues and consensus building processes.

Civil society, local government and other community stakeholders understand the election law, voter registration and voting processes and role of domestic election monitoring, to help them make informed decision and increase turnout

Cross-Cutting issues include:

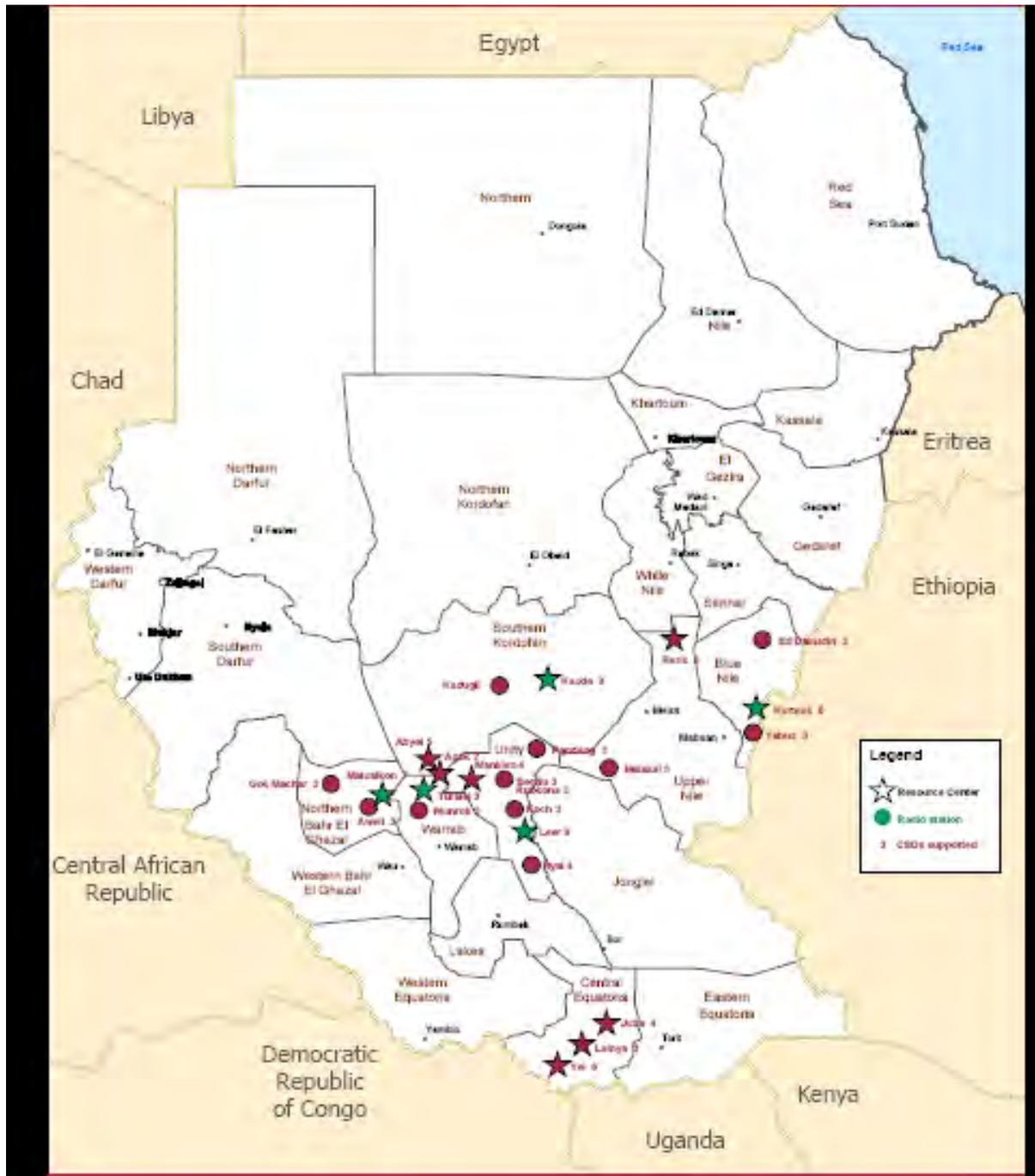
- Women
- Refugees/Returnees

F. Geographic Orientation

The following map, produced by LINCS, will help provide geographic orientation for Program activities in the Three Areas (Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Abyei) as well as five other states in Southern Sudan: Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Warrap, Unity, Upper Nile, and Central Equatoria.

Figure 1: Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS)—Program Location Map

(As of 2009)



4. Available Information to Support the Evaluation

The following information will be provided to the evaluation team in advance of its arrival in Juba.

1. Agreement (including Program Description), with modifications
2. All available performance monitoring data as of the most recent available date
3. Semi-Annual Reports for the entire project period
4. LINCS “Logical Framework” as of September 5, 2008 (although it is not consistent in format with conventional Log frames);
5. LINCS Program Description, as of September 2008;
6. LINCS work plans for FY 2007–2008 and for FY 2009;
7. LINCS project document “Emerging Space for Civil Society: Findings from an Assessment of the Civil Society Environment Across Southern Sudan and the Three Areas,” June 2006
8. Baseline and current information on progress in institutional capacity building for all assisted organizations;
9. USAID/Sudan Fragile States Framework
10. MSI Evaluation and Special Study Guide

5. Evaluation Focus and Questions

The main focus of the evaluation is as follows:

The following questions must be addressed by the evaluation team, in light of the purposes described above:

Program design

- 1) Are there any issues with respect to project design and assumptions (documented or implied) that should be reconsidered based on experience to date? Do project objectives remain feasible in light of political, security, logistics, and staffing challenges?
- 2) USAID/Sudan/Sudan elected to emphasize working directly with local and nascent CSOs, has this strategy proved to be productive in terms of project goal and objectives?

Program implementation

- 3) Has the significant programmatic and geographic expansion resulted in any challenges to implementation or to product quality?
- 4) In what ways could the efficiency and effectiveness of LINCS be improved (using the following components as potential lenses)?
 - a. Mercy Corps management
 - b. CSO capacity building
 - c. Resource centers
 - d. Civic engagement
 - e. Media

Program impact to date

- 5) What has been the impact of LINCS (using the project objectives as potential lenses)?
 - a. CSO and staff capacity building
 - b. Resource centers and access to information
 - c. Civic participation and networking

- d. Access and use of media
- 6) Which elements (or synergies between elements) of LINCS represent the most productive investment to create the foundation for a vibrant civil society?
- 7) How have design and/or implementation issues/challenges affected project impact to date?

Sustainability

- 8) How is LINCS addressing sustainability for:
 - a. CSO and staff capacity building
 - b. Resource centers and access to information
 - c. Civic participation and networking
 - d. Access and use of media

6. Evaluation Methods and Procedures

The External Evaluators will be provided the information provided in Section 3, above, before arriving in Sudan. They will be expected to be familiar with this information prior to arriving in Juba.

A Team Planning Meeting (TPM) will be held upon arrival in Juba to agree on how team members will work together, how they will interact with the client and other stakeholders, and to develop a work plan and finalize a Travel Schedule, if needed.

During the TPM the team will finalize the methodology to be used and produce the evaluative instruments to be employed. The team will use the “Getting to Answers” approach detailed in Annex II of the *MSI Evaluation and Special Study Guide* to develop detailed methodological approaches to meeting the terms of this Scope of Work.

We expect that, in addition to basing the evaluation’s findings on interviews and review of project documents, the team will also utilize the following simple approaches:

- Development of an interview guide to ensure that the correct evaluation questions are being addressed the appropriate individuals and that they are being posed and recorded consistently.
- Surveys of client satisfaction, using a sample of the 114 client CSOs assisted by LINCS, and possibly including analysis of any Resource Center utilization data;
- Analysis of Internews radio survey information;
- Using cross tabs to gain a preliminary understanding of the relative gains in civic participation from Information Centers, radio stations, and NGO strengthening.

Once the methodology has been finalized at the TPM it will shared with USAID/Sudan as part of the work plan approval process.

7. Team Composition and Participation

Team Composition

USAID/Sudan/Sudan is conducting the Mid-Term Review in a collaborative manner to maximize USAID/Sudan and Implementing Partner learning opportunities. Accordingly, the team will be comprised as follows:

- Two external evaluators (skill sets detailed below), provided by MSI
- One representative of USAID/Sudan

- One representative of Implementing Partners

Additional inputs may come from other staff from these agencies, as needed, and as coordinated by the respective team member.

USAID/Sudan's representative may be a person from the Sudan Governing Justly and Democratically Team. The Implementing Partner (IP) may choose its representative as it sees fit, but persons selected should have experience with similar projects in Sudan. Given the significant contributions to the team expected from each team member, all are expected to be available to participate throughout the evaluation period.

Team Member Roles and Responsibilities

USAID/Sudan and IP team members will provide historical, contextual and programmatic background information that will inform the assessment. They will be expected to participate in the Team Planning Meeting (TPM), field visits, interviews, brainstorming on findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and in the frequent reflections on evaluation learning, often occurring after a long day of interviews and traveling. These individuals participate as representatives of their respective organizations and are expected to share their learning with their home organizations so that both key organizations are kept abreast of progress. It may well happen that the external evaluators will ask USAID/Sudan or IP representatives to be excluded from certain portions of interviews in order to ensure candid responses.

The external evaluators will take the lead in conducting the evaluation, leading interviews, framing the analysis, facilitating group discussion and consensus, preparing for the debriefing, and drafting the evaluation report. One of the external evaluators will serve as the overall evaluation team leader. The evaluation 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/Sudan. Precise division of labor among the two external evaluators will be determined at the TPM. Between the two external evaluators, the following capacities must be brought to the team:

1. Strong skills in assessment and analysis of USAID/Sudan projects, especially with respect to civil society development;
2. Extensive experience working in Africa, Sudan, and/or similar post conflict environments;
3. Facilitation experience, experience leading participatory evaluations, or at least evaluations where evaluation teams include critical stakeholders as active participants; and
4. Experience arranging meetings, setting up travel schedules for field visits, reporting on meeting outcomes, and generally managing the logistics of the evaluation (although significant logistical assistance will be provided by the SUPPORT team in Juba).
5. Experience in implementing, or evaluating the implementation of:
 - a. Complex field-based projects or in the evaluation of such projects;
 - b. Civil society strengthening projects;
 - c. Radio projects;
 - d. Election promotion projects;
 - e. Advocacy projects; and
 - f. Social inclusion projects.

The Team Leader will be the formal representative of the team and will arrange for updates regarding progress against the evaluation work plan to the AOTR (or his/her delegate) and MSI's Chief of Party (COP) or Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (AME), as determined at the TPM.

8. Activities, Logistics, and Timing

Prior to arriving in Juba, the external evaluators will have familiarized themselves with the background material provided to them, as referenced in Section 3, above.

All team members should be present for the TPM and for initial briefings and discussions with USAID/Sudan's Technical Office and other mission officers, as well as IPs and GOSS officials. A work plan and travel program for the in-country visit as well as the subsequent report writing period will be submitted to USAID/Sudan for approval during the first few days of work in Juba. The work plan will also include a schedule for periodic MSI and USAID/Sudan progress reports and possible submissions of specific work products, as determined by the parties.

Approximately four days prior to departure the evaluation team will present to USAID/Sudan and the Implementing Partner an out-briefing, with supporting documents. The Draft Evaluation Report will be submitted prior to the External Evaluators' departure from Juba.

The Draft Final Report will be submitted to USAID/Sudan 10 work days after the Team Leader's receipt of USAID/Sudan's and the IPs' final written comments on the draft.

It is envisioned that the external evaluators will be in Sudan the entire duration of the evaluation's in-country component (six-day work weeks are authorized), including the TPM, a debriefing, and submission of a draft report to MSI's COP or AME prior to departure from Sudan. In addition to travel days, additional days are provided for the external evaluators to complete reading and processing all background information prior to departure for Sudan. Additional days are provided to finalize the report. (See table in Section 9, below.)

In addition to Juba, the team is expected to travel to one or more of the following potential areas, as determined during the TPM:

- The Three Areas
- Unity
- Northern Bahr el Ghazal
- Warrap
- Central Equatoria
- Upper Nile

MSI's field office in Juba will be responsible for travel arrangements (travel, housing in the field, etc.) for the USAID/Sudan team members.⁴¹ MSI will also be responsible for providing translation services for the Dinka, Nuer, and Arabic languages. The translator(s) selected will travel with the evaluation team, and MSI will be responsible for the associated travel costs. MSI and the Implementing Partners will jointly arrange all meetings for the team. The team will be provided office and meeting space, as needed, at SUPPORT's Juba Office Compound.

⁴¹ If the USAID/Sudan representative is an Institutionally-Contracted Staff member provided by MSI, his/her travel costs will be provided by MSI separately.

9. Programmed Level of Effort (LOE) and Timeline

Tasks (Both External Evaluators, unless otherwise noted)	Work Days (6-day weeks in Sudan; 5 in USA)
Initial Preparation Review advance background documents and SUPPORT Program’s Evaluation and Special Study Guide, make travel preparations, and travel days to Juba.	5
In-Country Evaluation Initial briefings, TPM, meetings, field visits, draft report preparation and debriefings.	25
Return Travel	2
Final Report Preparation in U.S. Incorporate collective Sudan feedback, complete final report, and submit to MSI.	1 each, plus 3 additional for Team Leader
Total for each Evaluation Team Member	33
Total for Evaluation Team Leader (3 additional days)	36

10. Report Production and Format

The team will present for approval by USAID/Sudan a draft outline of the report during its first week in country. The report must:

- Distinguish clearly between findings, conclusions (based strictly on findings), and recommendations (based clearly on the reports findings and conclusions);
- Comply with all instructions of the SUPPORT Program’s “Evaluation/Special Study Quality Management Guide” and meet the specific requirements of the “Evaluation Report Review—Score Sheet” contained therein;
- Include a Table of Contents; a list of acronyms, an executive summary of no more than two pages; a section describing the project to be evaluated and purpose of the evaluation; a section on the methodology employed, including relevant skill sets of the evaluators;
- Include any annexes the team considers useful to the reader; and
- A copy of this SOW as an Annex.

A formal debriefing will be provided to USAID/Sudan and the IPs, as scheduled during the TPM and recorded in the evaluation work plan. The team will present key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations for comment from the stakeholders. The team will record all relevant feedback from the meeting and will respond to all comments in completing its draft reports. The External Evaluators need not include all suggestions in the report, but must consider such suggestions in finalizing the Draft Report.

An electronic (in MS Word) version of the Draft Report will be presented to the IPs and USAID/Sudan in Juba with four hard copies being provided to the USAID/Sudan/Sudan Mission and one hard copy to the IPs prior to the departure of the Team Leader. The document will not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes and Executive Summary.

The Mission and the IP will each submit their respective comments on the draft report *electronically* to MSI's COP—using the “track changes” and “comments” functions in MS WORD as much as possible. Each organization will combine internal comments, resulting in a unified set of comments from USAID/Sudan and a unified set of comments from the Prime IP, Mercy Corps. The Mission will receive ten paper copies of the final report as well as an electronic version, once the Mission has accepted the product.

II. DELIVERABLES

- A draft work plan, ensuring that all aspects of Getting to Answers (from the TPM) are addressed
- A schedule of travel and key activities
- Interim progress briefings to MSI and the Mission, as determined during the TPM
- Preliminary report outline
- Draft Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations to MSI prior to completion of the first Draft Report
- Out-briefing, with supporting documents
- Draft report
- Final report

12. COMPLIANCE TO USAID/SUDAN REGULATIONS

The Evaluation Team will ensure that the evaluation is fully compliant with the terms for Program Evaluations contained in the USAID/Sudan Automated Directives System (ADS) Series 203 and other relevant regulatory requirements, as may be determined by USAID/Sudan. Additionally, the Team will utilize MSI's SUPPORT Program's “Evaluation/Special Study Quality Management Guide.” The Guide will be presented to the team members prior to their initial TPM.

ANNEX 2: LINCS MTE MISSION SCHEDULE

TABLE 1: LINCS MTE MISSION SCHEDULE, JUNE 17—JULY 16, 2010

DAY	DATE	LOCATION/TASKS
JUNE		
Thursday	17	Travel to Juba
Friday	18	Travel to Juba/Arrival in Juba
Saturday	19	Juba-Team Planning Meeting
Sunday	20	Juba – N/A
Monday	21	Juba-Team Planning Meeting
Tuesday	22	Visit/meet: Mercy Corps(MC) staff (COP, DCOP, Capacity Building Advisor, Former COP, M&E Advisor); Internews staff.
Wednesday	23	Visit/meet: Juba Civic Engagement Center staff; Mercy Corps staff; Partner CSO—NICODO
Thursday	24	Drive to Yei (7am-12pm) Visit/meet: SSRC; CSOs—CAFT and ISED
Friday	25	Yei and Mugwo—Site visits. Mugwo 20 minutes from Yei Visit/meet: MC and LINCS staff; CSOs in partners in Mugwo: PASS and MUYA. MCDF—non-partner beneficiary in Mugwo
Saturday	26	Drive from Yei to Lainya—Site visits—Drive from Lainya to Juba (3 hours) Visit/meet: partner CSO CEP—on way to Lainya from Yei. LINCS staff Lainya. Resource Center beneficiaries. Lainya Commissioner—Soba Samuel. Task Force for the Resource Center
Sunday	27	Juba—N/A
Monday	28	Fly Juba—Wau—Agok) Visit/meet: Mercy Corps and LINCS staff
Tuesday	29	Agok—Visit/meet: _SSRC—get a travel permit to travel to Malualkon. Traditional authorities. 2 CSOs—one from First Round, one from Third Round
Wednesday	30	Agok—Abyei—Agok (1 hour drive Agok—Abyei) Site visits in Abyei Visit/meet: Padang Women CSO. Abyei Roots Group. Resource Center. SSRC
JULY		
Thursday	1	Drive from Agok—Malualkon (7am-12pm) Malualkon site visits visit/meet: Resource Center staff. Mercy Corps and LINCS staff: SSRC. Commissioner
Friday	2	Malualkon—Visit/meet: Radio Station. CSOs partners Youth Sports Development Organization, Aweil East Youth Progressive Association)
Saturday	3	Malualkon to Aweil North to Malualkon (approx. 2 ½ hour drive)— Visit/meet: 2 CSOs in Aweil North
Sunday	4	Malualkon—N/A
Monday	5	Drive Malualkon to Aweil Town (45 min. drive)— Visit/meet: partner CSOs Women Fighting HIV/AIDS; others, SSRC
Tuesday	6	Aweil Town--Visit/Meet: MC and LINCS staff ; State Conference

		(Aweil Town) was cancelled.
Wednesday	7	Drive Malualkon to Aweil Town. Fly Aweil—Wau—Juba
Thursday	8	Juba--Visit/meet: MC and LINCS Staff
Friday	9	Juba--FCR Workshop with MSI staff. Visit/meet: MC and NDI staff
Saturday	10	Juba—Report drafting, prepare for presentation and debrief
Sunday	11	Juba—N/A
Monday	12	Juba--Handover workshop with Civic Participation Assessment team
Tuesday	13	Juba--Presentation; Debrief; Report Drafting
Wednesday	14	Juba--Meet USAID/Sudan DG team
Thursday	15	Juba—Report Drafting; Interview MC Country Director; Deliver draft Report and annexes to MSI
Friday	16	Juba-Departure
Saturday	17	Travel

ANNEX 3: ORGANIZATIONS VISITED

TABLE 1: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS VISITED

Name	Town/County	State	Staff Interviewed Male:Female	Beneficiaries/Members Interviewed
1. USAID/Sudan	Juba	CES		
2. Internews	Juba	CES		
3. Mercy Corps	Juba	CES		
4. National Democratic Institute	Juba	CES		
5. County Commissioners				
6. Ministry of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Mitigation and Management (former SSRC)	Juba	CES		
7. Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRC)	Juba	CES		
8. Abethok New Generation Youth Association			4:0	3:1
9. Abyei Human Rights Society	Abyei	Abyei Area	4:1	0:1
10. Aweil Community Women's Organization (ACWO)	Aweil	NBeG	4:1	0:0
11. Aweil East Progressive Youth Association (ACDF)	Aweil	NBeG	3:0	0:0
12. Aweil Window of Opportunities and Development Alternatives (AWODA)	Aweil	NBeG	4:0	0:0
13. Center for the Resolution of	Yei	CES	4:1	0:0

Disputes (CEFORD)				
14. Community Alternatives for Transformation (CAFT)	Yei	CES	5:0	0:0
15. Community Empowerment Program (CEP)	Lainya	CES	6:1	6:5
16. Dot Baai Women's Association	Abyei	Abyei Area	2:2	0:7
17. Initiative for Social and Economic Development (ISED)			5:0	1:1
18. Mangok Youth Sports Development Organization (MYSDO)	Aweil East	NBG	4:2	19:14
19. Nile Community Development Agency (NICODO)	Juba	CES	4:0	3:6
20. Pandang Women's Group			1:4	0:7
21. Payawa Scholarship Scheme (PASS)			5:3	12:8
22. Rol Ngut Active Development Group (RADG)	Aweil North	NBG	3:0	4:0
23. Women Fighting HIV/AIDS			2:5	0:0
TOTAL			80 (60M/20F)	98 (48M/50F)

ANNEX 4: EXPANDED DISCUSSION OF THE METHODOLOGY APPROACH AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The Mid-Term Evaluation was an evaluation study that utilized a collaborative approach⁴² guided by the two external evaluators with the input of representatives from the three key organizations involved in LINCS: GoSS, USG-USAID, and Mercy Corps. The collaborative nature of the evaluation was an intentional decision made on the basis of enhancing stakeholder understanding and ownership of the MTE findings and conclusions as well as the commitment to implementing the proposed recommendations.

Process

Before arriving in country, the external evaluators reviewed background documentation (see Annex ??: LINCS Documents Reviewed) and began to develop ideas about where the team might most effectively spend its time in the field. Using criteria to sample CSOs developed by the team, the USAID/Sudan Democracy and Governance (DG) team and SUPPORT team, in partnership with Mercy Corps, selected the sites for field visits.

Immediately upon arrival, a Team Planning Meeting was facilitated for the entire team by the SUPPORT assessment, monitoring, and evaluation advisors. MSI provided an important framework, the Getting to Answers matrix, for quickly and effectively identifying (a) a range of appropriate stakeholders; (b) interview questions that reflected the Programmatic objectives; (c) the means of interviewing the stakeholders; and (d) the overall framework for collecting the needed documentation and information (see Appendix C: Getting to Answers). The team completed the Getting to Answers matrix during the team-planning meeting. This team-planning meeting initiated a process of developing evaluation instruments, finalizing work plans, and an agreed-upon reporting outline (Appendix I: Draft Outline).

As part of the team-planning meeting, the evaluation team developed semi-structured interview protocols to guide meetings and interviews with key stakeholders. Separate interview protocols were developed for different types of interviewees. Meetings were held with LINCS staff in small groups at each site visited, using the guide to start discussions (Appendix D: Mercy Corps and LINCS Staff Interview Guide). Individual follow-up discussions—at the initiative of LINCS staff—allowed team members to learn more about LINCS from staff who had unique perspectives on the Program, including some whom had been with LINCS since 2005. A different protocol was used to discuss LINCS with partner and non-partner CSOs (Appendix E: CSO Interview Guide). Finally, the team developed a third interview protocol for interviews with government stakeholders (Appendix F: Local Government Interview Guide).

Informants were assured that the conversation would remain anonymous and that nothing that respondents said would be attributed to individuals, organizations, or even geographic locations—practices that we have adhered to in the writing of this report. The team hired and used our own interpreters brought from outside these the states to ensure that informants did not feel any community pressures through the interpreter. When possible, we asked CSO management and staff to leave us alone in their offices on project sites with their beneficiaries so that they too would feel as comfortable as possible with talking about their engagement with the CSO and the results of their work.

Site Selection

Representativeness of the Locations Targeted

USAID/Sudan, MSI-SUPPORT, and LINCS staff met to determine the sites for site visits. Out of the five states and each of the Three Areas in which Mercy Corps is implementing the LINCS Program, three states

⁴² A collaborative evaluation “implies a varying level of involvement that considers the extent to which program staff and other stakeholders should be included as part of the evaluation team . . . is often empowering to participants . . . (and) enhances their understanding of evaluation so they gain new skills . . . promotes utilization of evaluation findings.” (O’Sullivan, 2004)

(Central Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap) and one of the Three Areas (Abyei) were selected for the site visits.

Representativeness of the CSOs

16 CSOs were selected for visits. To ensure that the sample set was as representative as possible, the following criteria were used to determine the selection of a group of CSOs:

1. Time and level of involvement in LINCS

- Selected and non-selected CSOs from each of the 3 selection rounds

2. Location:

Towns with:

- Large populations
- Small population

Counties with:

- Greater or lesser evidence of conflict or conflict-risk
- Greater or lesser tribal and socio-economic diversity
- Stronger or weaker local governments

3. CSO Organizational Capacity:⁴³

- Pre-nascent
- Nascent
- Foundational

4. Sex of CSO Leadership

- Female
- Male

5. Co-Location with LINCS resource centers and community radio stations

6. Accessibility

(Some locations and therefore CSOs were excluded due to issues with travel, including lack of security.)

Confidentiality

Informants were assured that conversations would remain anonymous and not be attributed to individuals, organizations, or even geographic locations—practices that the evaluation team has adhered to in writing this report. The team hired and used independent interpreters brought from outside these the states to ensure that informants did not feel any community pressures through the interpreter. When possible, CSO management and staff were asked to be leave during meetings with their beneficiaries so that these individuals would feel as comfortable as possible speaking about their engagement with the CSO and the results of their work.

Data Quality

Efforts were made to triangulate the data collected and to balance the input of staff from selected and non-selected CSOs and Mercy corps personnel.

⁴³ As determined by the LINCS Organizational Capacity Index (OCI).

Data Sources

The Team canvassed a wide range of LINCS stakeholders and direct and indirect beneficiaries in the course of the MTE.

While on field visits, the team observed RCs in action, MC, and LINCS staff undertaking their regular work, and one community radio in operation. The team met with LINCS staff, the management and staff from 16 different partner and non-partner CSOs, beneficiaries from many of these organizations, and a range of other stakeholders from local government and traditional authorities (see Organizations Visited in this Annex).

During the course of the evaluation, the external evaluators requested further documentation of the LINCS Program. Mercy Corps was responsive in providing additional documentation as requested and needed, including financial reports, budget data, organization staff charts, training-of-trainer materials and training manuals, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

The evaluation team also engaged in some limited outside research, locating outside information from scholars, other donors, and organizations that helped enhance the team's overall understanding of Southern Sudan. Any documents used directly to support the evaluation are cited in footnotes below. USAID/Sudan, through MSI-SUPPORT, provided additional materials that were instrumental to the midterm evaluation team and in the overall process. Those materials included documentation on reporting frameworks for Democracy and Governance programming; reporting standards for programming in fragile states; and a previous audit of the USAID/Sudan civil society program.⁴⁴

Limitations of the Field Work

The final schedule included a state meeting that was ultimately cancelled as the newly appointed state government was called to Juba for consultations with the Government of Southern Sudan. Although the cancellation was beyond the control of Mercy Corps and USAID/Sudan, this meeting would have been a valuable aspect of the overall evaluation process. The team was able to address this gap by meeting with additional government authorities during site visits. (see LINCS Evaluation Schedule in this Annex).

In addition, certain areas – particularly in the Three Areas – were restricted due to security and weather concerns. Also, the team was only able to visit one CRS.

⁴⁴ Office of the Inspector General. Audit of USAID/Sudan/Sudan's Civil Society Program. Audit Report No. 4-650-09-006-P. May 21, 2009. Pretoria: USAID/Sudan.

Instruments

TABLE I: GETTING TO ANSWERS MATRIX

Evaluation Questions	Type of Answer/Evidence Needed (description; comparison; cause and effect) and notes on special requirements or sources of data	Methods for Data Collection		Sampling or Selection Approach (if applicable)	Data Analysis Methods (e.g., frequency distributions, trend analysis, cross-tabulations, content analysis)
		Data Source	Method		
Program Design					
1. Are there any issues with respect to project design and assumptions (documented or implied) that should be reconsidered based on experience to date?	<p>Story on origins, design and how understood/acted on by staff (LINCS?)</p> <p>Stakeholder views on what project supposed to do vs. actually did</p>	<p>06 assessment MC staff USAID/Sudan CA Program documents CSOs/government involved since beginning Resource centers</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Simple stratified sample of some:</p> <p>Round 1, round 2, round 3 partners—and some non-partner CSOs</p> <p>CSOs in larger towns and some in smaller ones</p> <p>CSOs in counties with more and less conflict</p> <p>CSOs in counties with less diversity and others with more</p> <p>CSOs in counties with stronger and weaker local governments</p> <p>some CSOs in each</p>	<p>Frequency distributions</p> <p>Trend analysis</p> <p>Content pattern analysis</p>

		Methods for Data Collection			
				category of focus in their activity CSOs that are women-led and others that are not CSOs that are pre-nascent, nascent, and foundational on the OCI	
a. Do project objectives remain feasible in light of political, security, logistics, and staffing challenges?	<p>Descriptions of political situation and effect on project (cause and effect)</p> <p>U.S. Embassy perception of future of South Sudan</p> <p>Description of recent conflict issues</p> <p>Perception of political, security, logistics, staffing challenges effect on CSO operations</p>	<p>SAR Sept. 09</p> <p>US Embassy political officer</p> <p>Program documents</p> <p>UNHCR mapping for South Sudan(?)</p> <p>UN Habitat report on CSO capacity by state</p> <p>CSOs, resource centers</p> <p>MC staff</p> <p>RSO</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Document review</p>		<p>Content pattern analysis</p> <p>Trend analysis</p> <p>Cause and effect</p>
9) USAID/Sudan/Sudan elected to emphasize working directly with local and nascent CSOs.	<p>Description of tradeoffs—comparisons of options?</p> <p>Data on how tradeoffs determined (if</p>	<p>CSOs supported by LINCS (various levels?) and not supported by LINCS</p>	<p>Semi-structured Interviews</p> <p>Document</p>		<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Trend analysis</p>

		Methods for Data Collection			
Has this strategy proved to be productive in terms of project goal and objectives?	existing) Evidence of problems/successes with CSOs	SARs, other project documents USAID/Sudan MCS LINCS Resource centers	review		
Program Implementation					
10) Has the significant programmatic and geographic expansion resulted in any challenges to implementation or to product quality?	Comparison of progress in original geographic area to progress in new areas Description of any challenges due to expansion (cause and effect)	SARs, other project documents USAID/Sudan MCS LINCS Beneficiary CSOs CSOs' clients GOSS Resource centers	Document review Semi-structured interviews		Content pattern analysis Trend analysis Cause and effect
11) In what ways could efficiency and effectiveness of LINCS be improved (using the following components as potential lenses):	Ideas and projected effects of potential modifications Description of lessons learned	SARs, other documents USAID/Sudan MCS LINCS Beneficiary CSOs CSO's clients	Semi-structured interviews Document review		Content pattern analysis Trend analysis Comparison

		Methods for Data Collection			
a. Mercy Corps management?		GOSS and local government representatives			
b. CSO capacity building?		Other donor projects			
c. Resource centers?		Resource centers			
d. Civic engagement?					
e. Media?					
12) 5) What has been the impact of LINCS (using the Program objectives as potential lenses)?	Further explanation of objectives in each Discussion of project outputs Discussion of project outcomes (effects)	SARs, other project documents PMP data (indicators/targets?) USAID/Sudan MCS LINCS Beneficiary/non-beneficiary CSOs GOSS/local government Any other stakeholders? (INGOs) Listening groups RC and CSO clients	Semi-structured interviews Document review		Content pattern analysis Trend analysis Cause and effect Comparison
a. CSO and staff capacity building					
b. Resource centers and access to information					
c. Civic participation and networking					
d. Access and use of media					

		Methods for Data Collection			
		Radio stations Internews Resource centers			
13) Which elements (or synergies between elements) of LINCS represent the most productive investment to create the foundation for a vibrant civil society?	Comparison of previous findings with respect to various project components Stakeholders' opinions on effectiveness of project components	SARs, other project documents PMP data (indicators/targets?) USAID/Sudan MCS LINCS Beneficiary CSOs GOSS/local gov Any other stakeholders? Radio stations Internews CSOs' clients Resource centers	Semi-structured interviews Document review Data mining		Content pattern analysis Trend analysis Cause and effect Constant comparison

		Methods for Data Collection			
Program Implementation					
14) How have design and/or implementation issues/challenges affected Program impact to date	<p>Description of issues which affect impact—how?</p> <p>Comparison of perspectives—beneficiary vs. non-beneficiary CSOs on needs and value of project</p>	<p>SARs, other project reports</p> <p>PMP data (indicators/targets?)</p> <p>USAID/Sudan</p> <p>MCS LINCS</p> <p>Beneficiary/non-beneficiary CSOs</p> <p>GOSS</p> <p>Resource centers</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Document review</p>		<p>Content pattern analysis</p> <p>Comparison</p> <p>Cause and effect</p>
<p>15) How is LINCS addressing sustainability for:</p> <p>a. CSO and staff capacity building?</p> <p>b. Resource centers and access to information?</p> <p>c. Civic participation and networking?</p> <p>d. Access and use of media ?</p>	<p>Description of plans and actions</p> <p>Constituents' perception of what will happen and what should happen</p> <p>Information on other CSOs working at community level in the region—how they dealt with sustainability</p>	<p>SARs, other project documents</p> <p>MCS LINCS</p> <p>USAID/Sudan</p> <p>CSO clients (constituents)</p> <p>GOSS</p> <p>Beneficiary CSOs</p> <p>USAID/Sudan website & professional knowledge/past</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Document review</p>		<p>Content pattern analysis</p> <p>Comparison</p>

		Methods for Data Collection			
		experience			
		Resource centers			
16) Have the various components of the LINCS Program been effectively synergized?	Description of Programmatic activities and work plan for the past and future	MC LINCS documents, beneficiaries'	Semi-structured interviews Document Review		Content pattern analysis
17) How has the Mercy Corps and LINCS management of the budgetary/programmatic pipelines impacted the programmatic deliverables?	Description of the budgetary management process and oversight Description of how budgetary decisions are made regarding the distribution of needed resources for effective Programmatic implementation	Document review; Pipeline review	Semi structured interviews		Content pattern

Instruments

A. Mercy Corps and LINCS Staff Interview Guide

Date	
Time	
Organization	
Name of Respondent	
Position	
Interviewer	

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. This interview should take about an hour. We are evaluating the Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Sudan), implemented by Mercy Corps. Our discussion provides data for that evaluation and will contribute to learning and improvements in LINCS and USAID/Sudan’s civil society work in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas in the future. To make the evaluation as useful as possible, we would appreciate frank and direct answers to the interview questions. Do you have any questions before we begin?

General Profile

1. Please describe your position, principal functions, and responsibilities.
How long have you worked with LINCS?

Program Design

1. In your own words, what are the primary Programmatic objectives of LINCS?
2. Based on your experience, are there aspects of the project that should be reconsidered?
 - a. Problems/challenges—political, security, staffing, etc.

Program Implementation

1. What do you see as your main accomplishments in working with CSOs in:
 - a. Organizational development
 - b. Program development, design, and implementation
 - c. Responsiveness to population/membership
 - d. Use of resource centers
 - e. Ensuring project components are integrated and synergized
 - f. Civic engagement
 - g. Use of the media
2. What challenges do you face in working with CSOs in:
 - a. Organizational development
 - b. Program development, design, and implementation
 - c. Responsiveness to population/membership
 - d. Use of resource centers
 - e. Civic engagement
 - f. Use of the media

3. In what ways could the efficiency and effectiveness of the LINCS project be improved?
 - a. How could your idea be implemented?
 - b. How would that impact the budget?

Program Impact to Date

1. Are there any design or implementation issues that seem to reduce impact?
2. How are you tracking LINCS impact?
3. How do you ensure effective budgetary/Programmatic pipeline management and expenditures?
4. How is LINCS working with marginalized populations (women, youth, etc.)? Can you share a few examples?

Sustainability

1. What do you think could/should be done to help support the future sustainability of:
 - a. CSOs
 - b. Resource Centers
 - c. Community Radio

CSO Interview Guide

Date	
Time	
Organization	
Name of Respondent	
Position	
Interviewer	

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. This interview should take about an hour. We are evaluating the Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Sudan), implemented by Mercy Corps. Our discussion provides data for that evaluation and will contribute to learning and improvements in LINCS and USAID/Sudan’s civil society work in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas in the future. To make the evaluation as useful as possible, we would appreciate frank and direct answers to the interview questions. Do you have any questions before we begin?

General Profile

2. Please describe your position, principal functions, and responsibilities at _____.
How long have you worked with LINCS, what do you focus on, population
3. Are any of your projects targeted to women, youth, the disabled, former combatants, etc.?
4. Describe your membership—change over time, men/women, how does someone become a member?

Program Design

3. What changes have been made within your organization over the last five years?

- a. Why have you made these changes?
4. What problems have you had in the development of your organization over the last five years?
 - a. How has your organization addressed these problems?
 - b. Who else has provided support?
5. How has the LINCS project worked with your organization in:?
 - a. Organizational development
 - b. Program development, design, and implementation
 - c. Responsiveness to population/membership
 - d. Use of resource centers
 - e. Civic engagement
 - f. Use of the media
 - g. Linking the activities of Coalitions and Networks to your CSO activities
6. What are the priority needs for assistance to your organization now and in the future?
 - a. Are there ways that LINCS could improve its assistance to you?

Program Implementation

5. What can you tell us about the value of the technical assistance you have received from Mercy Corps. How would you rate this assistance (good, average, poor)? Why?
6. Can you share any examples of LINCS assistance?

Program Impact to Date

1. Has your organization been able to:
 - a. Work with government?
 - b. Engage in staff development?
 - c. Work with networks?
 - d. Use resource centers?

Can you share examples? What has been LINCS' role in these developments?
7. How has the training and grants from LINCS contributed to the development and work of your organization?
8. Have you worked together with other Programs, projects, and organizations? What have done together?
9. What else would be beneficial to meet your organization's goals?
 - a. What resources would you need to carry out these activities?
 - b. Why haven't you done this to date?

Sustainability

2. What are your organization's long-term plans to continue your activities and organizational development?

Local Government Interview Guide

Date	
Time	
Organization	
Name of Respondent	
Position	
Interviewer	

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. This interview should take about an hour. We are evaluating the Localizing Institutional Capacity in Sudan (LINCS) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Sudan), implemented by Mercy Corps. Our discussion provides data for that evaluation and will contribute to learning and improvements in LINCS and USAID/Sudan's civil society work in Southern Sudan and the Three Areas in the future. To make the evaluation as useful as possible, we would appreciate frank and direct answers to the interview questions. Do you have any questions before we begin?

General Profile

1. Please describe your position, principal functions, and responsibilities at _____.

Program Design

7. What kinds of relationships do you have with CSOs? Can you share a few examples?
8. How have these relationships changed over time?
9. What could be done to help civil society organizations become better partners for GoSS?
10. Have you had any interaction with the LINCS project?
 - a. What kind? Please describe.

Program Implementation

1. What is your impression of the LINCS project?
 - a. CSOs
 - b. resource centers
 - c. community radio

Program Impact to Date

1. How can CSOs help you support women, youth, and the disabled in your community?

Sustainability

3. What do you think could/should be done to help support the sustainability of CSOs in the future?

ANNEX 5: LINCS PROGRAM DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

DOCUMENT

1. Cooperative Agreement

- a. Mercy Corps proposal
- b. Modification 1
- c. Modification 2
- d. Modification 3
- e. Modification 4
- f. Modification 5
- g. Modification 6
- h. Modification 7

2. Performance monitoring plan and data

3. Semi-annual reports for Sept. 2005 to present

- a. Sept. 05-Feb. 06
- b. Mar. 06-Aug. 06
- c. Sept. 06-Feb. 07
- d. March 07-Sept. 07
- e. Sept. 07-Mar. 08
- f. Apr. 08-Sept. 08
- g. Sept. 08-Mar. 09
- h. Apr. 09-Sept. 09
- h. Sept. 09-Mar. 10

4. LINCS Logical Framework

5. LINCS Program Description

6. LINCS work plans

- a. FY 2007–2008
- b. FY 2009
- c. FY 2010

7. LINCS project document “Emerging Space for Civil Society: Findings from an Assessment of the Civil Society Environment Across Southern Sudan and the Three Areas,” June 2006

8. Sampling of baseline and current information on progress in institutional capacity building for partner CSOs

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GLOSSARY⁴⁵

Term	Definition
Boundary Partners	“ . . . those individuals, groups, and organizations with whom the Program interacts directly and with whom the Program anticipates opportunities for influence.” ⁴⁶
Capability	“ . . . the collective skill or aptitude of an organization or system to carry out a particular function or process either inside or outside the system. Capabilities enable an organization to do things and to sustain itself.” ⁴⁷
Capacity	“That emergent combination of individual competencies, collective capabilities, assets and relationships that enables a human system to create value.” ⁴⁸
Capacity Development	Different organizations use different definitions for capacity development. According to the OECD-DAC Network on Governance, capacity development is the process whereby people, organizations and societies as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. Recent research (OED 2005) shows that capacity development is more likely to be effective when (1) capacity development is treated as a goal in its own right, and increased efforts are made to identify the objectives it seeks to achieve (“Capacity development for what?”); (2) support for capacity development addresses three dimensions: human capacity, organizational capacity and broader institutional capacity; and, (3) capacity development is country-owned rather than donor driven. ⁴⁹ Also referred to as ‘capacity enhancement’ and ‘capacity building.’
Civic Society	Mercy Corps defines civil society as “the space between the market and the state”. ⁵⁰
Civil Society/Civil Society Organization	<p>Mercy Corps defines CSOs as “any group which is non-political and not-for-profit, and which has formed to work on a particular cause. In the Southern Sudan context, this is likely to include-but is not limited to-established and emerging Community Based Organizations (CBOs), local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Diaspora (largely Nairobi-based) NGOs, village-based groups, religious groups, chambers of commerce, and cooperatives.”⁵¹</p> <p>“ . . . there is no universally accepted definition of either civil society or the related notions of a civic culture and social capital. In one of the best brief attempts to sort through all the definitions, the British Library [1] included the following characteristics:</p> <p>All observers agree that civil society refers to voluntary participation by average citizens and thus does not include behavior imposed or even coerced by the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For some observers, it only includes political activity engaged in through nonprofit organizations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At

⁴⁵ A number of these definitions, including those for effectiveness, efficiency, impact, lessons learned and sustainability, are taken from Ausguide. Canberra: AUSAID/Sudan.

⁴⁶ Earl, S., Carden, F. and Smutylo, T. (2002).

⁴⁷ Baser, Heather and Morgan, Peter (2008).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1997).

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 Accessed 10pm on July 12, 2010 from Sydney, Australia.

⁵⁰ USAID/Sudan Cooperative Agreement No. 623-A-00-05-00323-00 (September 1, 2005), page 11.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Term	Definition
	<p>the other end of the spectrum, some observers include all forms of voluntary participation, whether in the public or private sector, political or apolitical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society includes not just the individuals who participate, but the institutions they participate in--sometimes called "civil society organizations" or "CSOs." Thus, civil society is strong to the degree that those CSOs are large and powerful. • A civic culture is one in which most people think their government is legitimate and that their institutions (if not the leaders at any particular moment) can be trusted. • Social capital is the human equivalent of economic capital. It is an intangible resource accumulated by civil society that can be expended when a society finds itself in crisis."⁵²
Collaborative Evaluation	A collaborative evaluation "implies a varying level of involvement that considers the extent to which Program staff and other stakeholders should be included as part of the evaluation team . . . [It] is often empowering to participants . . . (and) enhances their understanding of evaluation so they gain new skills . . . [and it] promotes utilization of evaluation findings" ⁵³
Conflict (Sensitive) Analysis	"Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict. It helps development, humanitarian, and peace-building organizations to gain a better understanding of the context in which they work and their role in that context. . . . conflict analysis is the foundation of conflict sensitivity and without a good understanding of the context in which interventions are situated, organizations that support or directly implement them may unintentionally help to fuel violent conflict or to exacerbate existing tensions. Conflict analysis helps organizations move towards a better understanding of the context in which they work and a conflict-sensitive approach." ⁵⁴
Conflict Sensitivity	". . . the ability of an organization to develop and use the sum of its human and organizational capital to minimize negative and maximize positive impacts on the conflict dynamics of the environment(s) where it works. This means an awareness of the causes of historical, actual, or potential conflict and the likelihood of further conflict, and its likely severity; and the capacity to work with all parties to minimize the risk of further conflict." ⁵⁵
Counterpart or Counterpart Relationship	"A counterpart is an individual or a collectivity (e.g., a group or even an organization) who contributes to a relationship designed to exchange knowledge and support as part of a deliberate effort to induce development results in a partner country." ⁵⁶
Direct Beneficiary	The people with whom the project will work to effect change. Also called 'primary beneficiaries' or 'boundary partners.'
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Progress in achieving objectives, standard of outputs, and benefit to the target population.

⁵² Taken from Beyond Intractability. http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/civil_society/ Accessed on October 11 at 3:03pm from Juba, Southern Sudan.

⁵³ O'Sullivan, Rita M. (2008).

⁵⁴ Conflict Sensitivity Organization (no date provided).

http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack/chapter_2__266.pdf Accessed 10am July 18 2010 from Sydney Australia.

⁵⁵ Waqo, Halakhe and Onyango, Rachael (2008).

⁵⁶ Morgan, Peter (2008).

Term	Definition
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results, taking into account the timeliness and appropriateness of the preparation and implementation processes, including appraisal and peer review; standard of the contract and activity implementation by the contractor; strength of partner government support and the value of dialogue in country; USAID/Sudan management including risk management and use of external expertise; activity monitoring and communication.
Endogenous Processes	Capacity processes that appear to be internally driven (by the organization), and not driven by the concerns of an external donor.
Evaluation	A social science activity directed at collecting, analyzing, interpreting and communicating information about the workings and effectiveness of social Programs. According to the United Nations Development Fund, evaluation is a rigorous and independent assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision making. ⁵⁷
Gender	Gender is a social construct that assigns roles and responsibilities to males and females in the management of society.
Gender Equality	Gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same status. Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play. ⁵⁸
Gender Equity	Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality. ⁵⁹ The MoEST draft (4) Education Act 2008 states “Gender equity refers to a state where there is no discrimination in education based on sex and where there is equitable opportunity for all persons.”
Gender Parity Index	The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is the ratio of the number of female students (regardless of age) enrolled to the number of male students. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between the sexes; a GPI that varies between 0-1 indicates a disparity in favor of males; whereas a GPI greater than 1 indicates disparity in favor of females.
Gender-Responsive Budget	Gender-responsive budgets are not separate budgets for women but are instead general budgets that are planned, approved, executed, monitored, and audited in a gender-sensitive way. The ultimate goal of gender budgeting is gender equality and gender equity. ⁶⁰
Gender (Sensitive) Analysis	“During Program and project design, gender analysis is the process of assessing the impact that a development activity may have on females and males, and on gender relations (the economic and social relationships between males and females which are constructed and reinforced by social institutions). It can be used to ensure that men

⁵⁷ UNDP (2009).

⁵⁸ Status of Women-Canada (1996)

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Schneider, K. (2007)

Term	Definition
	and women are not disadvantaged by development activities, to enhance the sustainability of activities, or to identify priority areas for action to promote equality between women and men. During implementation, monitoring and evaluation, gender analysis assists to assess differences in participation, benefits and impacts between males and females, including progress towards gender equality and changes in gender relations. Gender analysis can also be used to assess and build capacity and commitment to gender sensitive planning and Programming in donor and partner organizations; and to identify gender equality issues and strategies at country, sectoral or thematic Programming levels.” ⁶¹
Impact	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended—inter alia, impacts may be economic, institutional, technological, environmental, socio-cultural, or gender-related; measurement of extent of impacts (if possible, a cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken).
Indicator	An indicator “is the unit of measurement (or pointer) that is used to monitor or evaluate the achievement of project objectives over time. Indicators can include specification of quantifiable targets and measures of quality.” ⁶²
Institution	Institutions are humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. They are the ‘rules of the game’ in a society, the rules that facilitate human interaction and societal life. They are the arrangements humans have made for governing their lives . . . They may be formal arrangements, such as legal systems and property rights, or informal arrangements, like moral standards. In some cases, they take the form of implicit work views or mental maps, i.e., cognitive frameworks for looking at the world around you. These arrangements or institutions operate at different levels, ranging from an international level (such as trade arrangements) to community and individual levels (for instance, the values that determine the way in which people interact with each other). ⁶³
Institutional Development	Institutional development is the process by which institutions evolve and perish, i.e., ongoing endogenous and autonomous processes in society. ⁶⁴
Lessons Learned	Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with activities, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons learned highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact.
Mass Media	Mass media denotes a section of the media specifically designed to reach a large audience. The term was coined in the 1920s with the advent of nationwide radio networks, mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. ⁶⁵
Monitoring	“Monitoring can be defined as the ongoing process by which stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards achieving their goals and

⁶¹ Hunt, J. (2004).

⁶²Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) (formerly Cardno Acil). www.acil.com.au/glossary.htm

⁶³ European Center for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) (no date provided).

⁶⁴ Ibid. Also, for an excellent historical perspective on Organizational Development and Institutional Development, see Van der Velden, Fons and Leenknecht, Anne-Marie (2006) Facilitation of Organizational Change: Beyond Organizational and Institutional Development. Contextuals No. 5 December. <http://contextinternationalcooperation.files.wordpress.com/2007/12/contextuals-no-5.pdf> Accessed from Lae, Papua New Guinea at 10:50am August 7, 2009.

⁶⁵ Definition taken from <http://www.google.com.au/search?hl=en&safe=off&defl=en&q=define:The+media&sa=X&ci=Lb-wTPbxLp6O4gac3JCNBq&ved=0CB0QkAE> Accessed on October 9, 2010 at 10:18pm, Juba Southern Sudan.

Term	Definition
	objectives. 'Are we taking the actions we said we would take?' . . . 'Are we making progress on achieving the results that we said we wanted to achieve?'" ⁶⁶
Media	In communication, media (singular medium) are the storage and transmission channels or tools used to store and deliver information or data. It is often referred to as synonymous with mass media or news media, but may refer to a single medium used to communicate any data for any purpose. ⁶⁷
Objective	A concrete statement describing what the project is trying to achieve. The objective should be written at a basic level so that it can be evaluated at the conclusion of a project to see whether it was achieved or not. A well-worded objective will be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART). ⁶⁸
Organization(al) Development	"The practice of changing people and organizations for positive growth which can take on many forms, including, but not exclusively, team-building, organizational assessments, career development, training, e-learning, coaching, innovation, leadership development, talent management, and change management." ⁶⁹
Outcome	An outcome is a short or medium-term result that is the logical consequence of the intervention achieving a combination of outputs. For instance, an outcome might be the application of new knowledge and skills by participants following their training course. Outcomes may take one to five years to achieve.
Output	An output is the most immediate, tangible result of an activity. An output could be, for example, the number of persons trained in a course. Outputs can usually be achieved within the period of a month to a year.
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities, and partner and donor policies—relevance of the activity's objectives (i.e., were they clear, realistic and measurable?); adequacy of documented activity design to achieve objectives.
Stakeholder	Specific people or groups who have a stake in the outcome of the project. Normally stakeholders are from within the company and could include internal clients, management, employees, administrators, etc. A project may also have external stakeholders, including suppliers, investors, community groups and government organizations. ⁷⁰
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed—sustainability of benefits (technological, social, environmental, gender); sustainability of institutional capacity; maintenance of future recurrent budget (financial sustainability).
Technical Cooperation	Technical cooperation (also commonly referred to as 'technical assistance') is the provision of know-how in the form of personnel, training, research, and associated costs. (OECD DAC Statistical Reporting Directives 36–39). It comprises donor-financed (1) activities that augment the level of knowledge, skills, technical know-how

⁶⁶ UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. NY: UNDP.

⁶⁷ Definition taken from <http://www.google.com.au/search?hl=en&safe=off&defl=en&q=define:The+media&sa=X&ei=Lb-wTPbxLp6O4gac3JCNBg&ved=0CBoQkAE>. Accessed on October 9, 2010 at 10:18pm, Juba Southern Sudan.

⁶⁸ <http://www.tenstep.com/open/miscpages/94.3Glossary.html>

⁶⁹ <http://www.odportal.com/OD/whatisod.htm> Accessed from Sydney, Australia at 9:00am July 16, 2009.

⁷⁰ <http://www.tenstep.com/open/miscpages/94.3Glossary.html>

Term	Definition
	<p>or productive aptitudes of people in developing countries; and (2) services such as consultancies, technical support, or the provision of know-how that contributes to the execution of a capital project.</p> <p>Technical cooperation includes both freestanding technical cooperation and technical cooperation that is embedded in investment Programs (or included in Program-based approaches). In order to report against this question, donors are invited to review their portfolio of projects and Programs and estimate the share of technical assistance/cooperation.⁷¹</p>
Ultimate Beneficiary	The individuals, groups, or organizations that will ultimately benefit from the implementation of a project.

⁷¹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). http://www.oecd.org/document/19/0,3343,en_21571361_39494699_39503763_1_1_1_1,00&&en-USS_01DBC.html Accessed 10pm on July 12, 2010 from Sydney, Australia.