

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

**STABILITY FOR ETHIOPIA'S LOWLAND  
MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES  
(SELAM-C)**

August 26, 2005 – December 31, 2008

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AI</b>	<b>Appreciative Inquiry</b>
<b>ERC</b>	<b>Ethnicities Reconciling Conflict</b>
<b>GoE</b>	<b>Government of Ethiopia</b>
<b>JSO</b>	<b>Justice and Security Office</b>
<b>MERL</b>	<b>Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning</b>
<b>MNP</b>	<b>Mago National Park</b>
<b>PMP</b>	<b>Performance Management Plan</b>
<b>SELAM-C</b>	<b>Stability for Ethiopia's Lowland and Marginalized Communities</b>
<b>SNNPR</b>	<b>Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Region</b>
<b>SOZ</b>	<b>South Omo Zone</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>

## I. Project Overview:

### Project Brief

The *Stability for Ethiopia's Lowland and Marginalized Communities (SELAM-C)* was a USAID-funded conflict resolution project implemented by Pact Ethiopia from August 2005 to the end of December 2008.

SELAM-C was designed to address conflict and its various root causes in the highly diverse and marginalized pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of southwest Ethiopia in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNPR) Regional State. The project initially operated in the three zones, Bench Maji, Sheka, and South Omo. In January 1, 2007 the project reduced its focus to South Omo Zone (SOZ) in order to deepen its interventions and increase impact.

### Project Description

South Omo Zone, is an arid and semi-arid region nestled in the southwestern corner of Ethiopia between the Sudanese and Kenyan borders. It is bounded on its northwest corner by the Omo River which divides South Omo Zone from Bench Maji Zone (see Diagram 1). The area is home to 17 ethnic groups with primarily pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood systems and the 2162 sq. km Mago National Park (MNP) which encompasses some of the most valuable natural resources in the Zone.

SELAM-C addressed two types of conflict evident in South Omo Zone: conflict among ethnic groups, and a community-government and inter-governmental conflict surrounding the management of MNP. In each case the conflict was layered and multi-dimensional. The root causes of both conflicts included to varying degrees natural resource scarcity, environmental degradation, socio-cultural traditions and nascent and changing governance systems.

First, a diminished resource base for supporting local livelihoods including degraded rangelands and agricultural areas and diminishing water sources had squeezed communities into the few remaining viable terrains and increased competition over key resources. Second, a range of customary practices including revenge-killing, cattle-raiding and wildlife hunting for ceremonial reasons and to gain hero status within one's community significantly contributed to inter-ethnic rivalry and conflict with park management. Third, weak governance structures significantly exacerbated conflict in South Omo. While the remote territories of South Omo Zone had recently been prioritized for development by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) after a long period of neglect, continued biases against pastoralism as a viable means of economic growth resulted in a lack of participatory planning and inappropriate top-down policy-making. Local government in South Omo at the zone and woreda-levels suffered alternatively from a) pressure by national and regional policy to implement settlement-oriented policy and promote rapid large-scale industry expansion over sustainable development, b) lack of a community-driven and market-oriented development framework, c) limited technical capacity for harmonizing pastoralist and biodiversity needs, and d) alignment of government employees with ethnically-based rather than zonal peace-building and development priorities. In addition, lack of participatory planning has resulted in weakened traditional institutions for managing resources and conflict among the ethnic groups.

The inter-ethnic conflict dynamics in the zone can be grouped into two clusters, one to the northeast and one to the southeast of MNP. The conflict dynamics can be further differentiated by whether the conflict exists between pastoralists (with a common livelihood system and frequent competition over limited natural resources), or between pastoralists and agro-pastoralists (where resource-related conflict is often considerably exacerbated, and sometimes exclusively driven by negative socio-cultural perceptions between the different communities). At the outset of the project, in the northeast cluster, pastoralist-pastoralist conflict existed between the Mursi and Bodi ethnic groups, while the Bodi and Mursi were in conflict with their agro-pastoralist neighbors the Konso, Dime and Ari. In the southern cluster, where land for agriculture is less accessible, conflicts existed primarily among pastoralists: the Gngangatom and Hamer, the Gngangatom and Kara, the Hamer and Dassenech, and the Gngangatom and Dassenech. Conflicts among these group also spanned across zonal and international borders, as the Gngangatom were also in conflict with the Suri of Bench Maji Zone and the Turkana of northern Kenya.

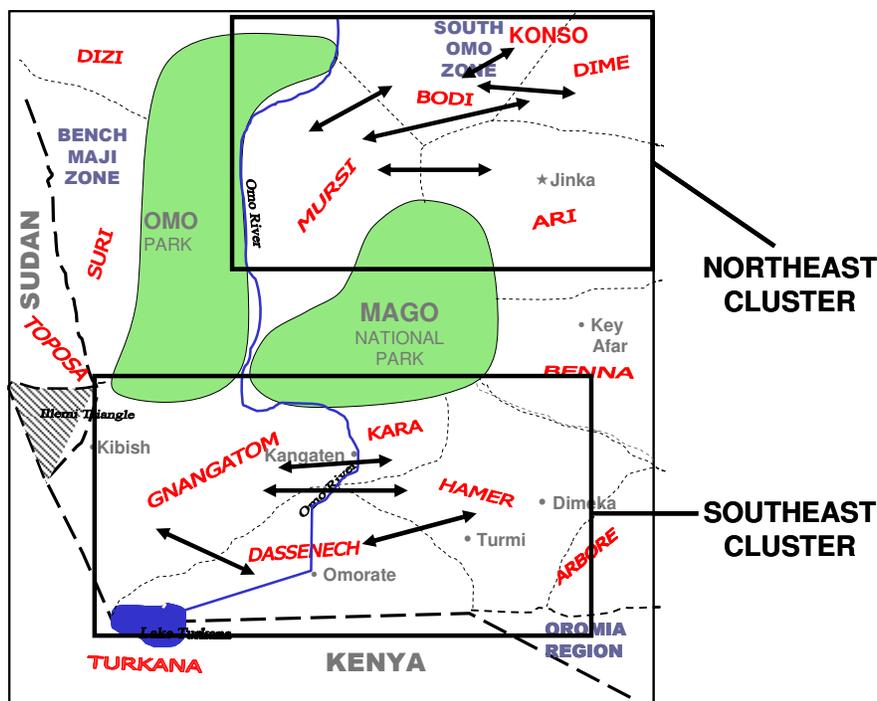


Diagram 1: Map of South Omo Zone and border areas, illustrating conflict between ethnic groups

The inter-governmental conflict surrounding MNP was between authorities at the local government level who were charged with responding to problems facing the park without a budget or formal mandate and the regional government authorities where park management was housed, who generally perceived that local administrators supported community opposition to the existence of the park. Government-community conflicts existed between local authorities and the ethnic groups bordering MNP, who traditionally used the Park's natural resources for a variety of livelihood and socio-cultural related reasons including dry season grazing and watering of animals, hunting prized animals for status, and beekeeping and honey collecting (see Diagram 2). The Mursi and Hamer were in conflict with park authorities due to encroachment of their cattle during the dry season, the Benna and Ari for their beekeeping, and the Benna and Kara for poaching.

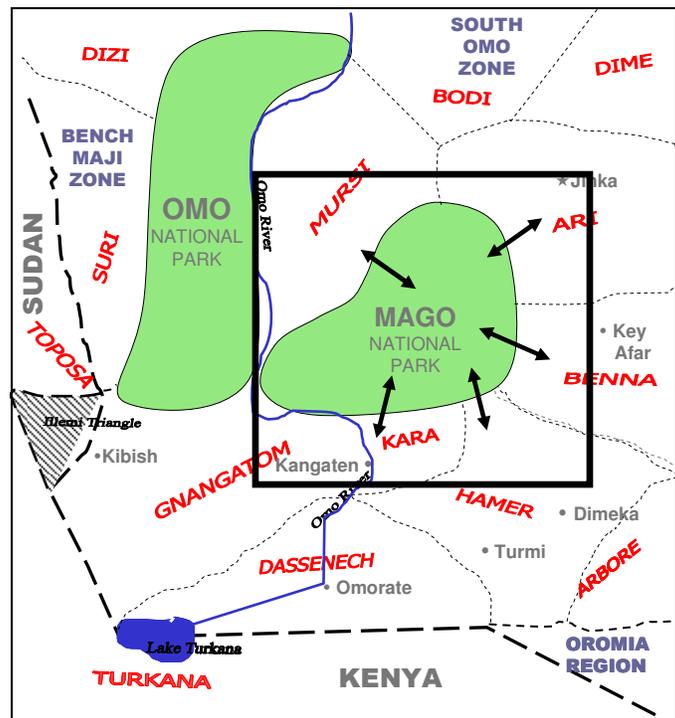


Diagram 2: South Omo Zone map illustrating conflict between Mago National Park and surrounding ethnic groups.

### Project Goals, Objectives and Activities

SELAM-C focused on four key areas that addressed the various dimensions of conflict in SOZ in a holistic manner. These were: 1) inter-ethnic dialogue and socio-cultural strengthening, 2) sustainable natural resource management for pastoral areas, 3) alternative livelihoods for pastoral areas, and 4) park co-management. Together, these supported the project's overall goal of mitigating the impact of violent conflict among pastoralist and agro-pastoralists and creating enabling conditions for development. Each focus area corresponded to one of the project's core objectives with a related set of project activities. These are outlined below:

**Objective 1:** Community, local government and civil society organizations will demonstrate increased use of effective community driven approaches towards peace building processes.

- Consultative government workshops
- Appreciative inquiry dialogues
- Socio-cultural exchange

**Objective 2:** Participatory management of Mago National Park enhanced by increasing collaboration amongst community, local government and regional government stakeholders.

- Inter-governmental consultative meetings
- Local government capacity-building workshops for community engagement

**Objective 3:** Target communities have adapted viable alternative livelihood strategies.

- Technical support and capacity-building for community tourism

**Objective 4:** Sustainable management of rangeland and water resource improved among target pastoral communities.

- Rangeland Rehabilitation
- Water-point management and rehabilitation

The overall strategy of the project was to support a bottom-up, context-responsive, process-oriented approach that was community-driven, supported by government and civil society partnership and underpinned by capacity-building with all target stakeholders. It was expected that through adaptive management, on-going reflection, and implementation of activities based on best-practices witnessed and learned, local actors would be able to replicate the project's peace-building processes independently in the future.

## II. Project Approaches and Activities

The activities accomplished under each objective took on an iterative, process-oriented, adaptive management approach. While focusing on the project goal, objectives and plan, program activities to a large extent capitalized on achievements, information and lessons learned from stakeholders (communities, government and civil society), that stemmed from preceding activities. This approach ensured that each and every activity of the project was owned by local stakeholders and responded to their changing realities and needs as they moved through project implementation together with Pact Ethiopia. The activity processes related to each peace-building objective are outlined in detail below. Please refer to Section “IV. Results” for a detailed description of the project’s output, outcome and results.

### Peace Processes

**Objective 1:** Community, local government and civil society organizations will demonstrate increased use of effective community driven approaches towards peace building processes.

Activities under Objective 1 aimed to support rapid response in critical conflict situations and simultaneously elicit and address the deeper root causes driving these conflicts. The steps of the activity process are outlined below.

- *Community level discussion:* Community-level discussions served as the entry-point to engage communities in a peace process. These were internal meetings within a single community facing conflict which helped that community to analyze the reasons for conflict, how it positively and negatively affected the community’s well-being, and what options they might propose as a long-term course of action. The meetings were also an opportunity to get the community’s buy-in to an inter-communal peace process.
- *Consultative meeting with government stakeholders:* Consultative meetings with government stakeholders brought together government officials from different woredas experiencing community conflict to obtain their buy-in to a peace process. The meetings were typically between two woredas and the zone but in general represented all government officials in charge of a particular conflict dynamic. The meetings were an opportunity for the officials to examine the causes and effects of community-level conflict, analyze what had worked and what had not in past conflict resolution experience and determine a common action plan for how to resolve the community conflicts in the future. Most importantly, the meetings provided a venue for woreda officials to work out their own latent conflicts which posed an obstacle to community-level conflict resolution.
- *Community mobilization:* Once buy-in was obtained from both the communities and government, both parties were involved in a process of community mobilization for a peace dialogue. The critical aspect of community mobilization was participant selection, ensuring that the right individuals who had the ability to influence community decisions and carry forward the implementation of those decisions were present at the dialogues. It was also critical that various sectors of the community were represented. Communities were in charge of selecting their own participants, while government would follow-up to ensure communities were aware of the upcoming meetings and that participants were selected and ready on the appropriate day.

- *Community peace dialogue(s)*: The community peace dialogue was an opportunity for two rival ethnic groups to come together in the presence of a neutral facilitator and in a neutral environment to discuss the conflict between them. The dialogue usually examined the experience of conflict among the ethnic groups, the drivers of conflict, and how conflict had affected the communities. A constructive dialogue process required that communities voice their anger, accusations and the pain conflict had caused them. At the same time, employing an appreciative inquiry approach,<sup>1</sup> the dialogues guided communities to remember and reflect on their moments of peace, what defined those moments and how they could be recreated. Often such sensitive and emotional discussions were a prerequisite for genuine reconciliation. Ultimately peace dialogues ended in resolutions that defined how peace could be reinstated and maintained in the future.



The Kara and Gngatom communities negotiate a land management agreement in their fifth and final dialogue that led to a traditional peace ceremony.

- *Dissemination of peace agreements and reflection at grassroots level*: The next step in the activity process was the dissemination of peace resolutions passed at the community and government levels. Key elders and government officials were in charge of carrying out the dissemination while local government would report on the progress of dissemination to the SELAM-C team. Where necessary project officers would intervene to support communities and government to hold follow-up peace meetings if resolutions were broken or if issues

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<sup>1</sup> AI is a participatory approach to change that builds capacity by focusing on strengths and assets and identifies collective hopes and dreams to create an empowering vision of the future that leads to action for organizations, groups and communities. It was developed by Professor David Cooperrider of Case Western University and has been used with donors, NGOs and community organizations in over 60 countries world wide.

remained unclear. The reflection processes and reconvening of meetings would continue until both communities were confident that sufficient grounds existed for peace to prevail, as evidenced through tangible changes in attitudes and behaviors.

- *Strengthening of a peace process through youth-driven cultural exchange activities:* Once tensions were sufficiently reduced and the communities were at the least prepared to interact with one another, SELAM-C supported cultural exchanges among youth. Cultural exchange activities began by building the capacity of youth from pastoral areas who resided in the Jinka Boarding School and those who attended the Jinka High School to become activists for peace within their communities. These youth linked with their village-level counterparts, or those village youngsters who often stood on the front-line of conflict, in order to convince elders to allow for a cultural exchange to take place. This meant allowing youth from rival ethnic groups to enter and be hosted within their villages. The youth-driven cultural exchange took place on a cluster basis, uniting over 100 participants from four ethnic groups within a single cluster. The participants traveled together from one ethnic territory to another visiting one another's villages, where the hosting communities were responsible for food and sleeping arrangements as well as traditional celebrations to host the multi-cultural caravan. SELAM-C held three cultural exchanges: two in the southeast cluster, and one in the northeast cluster over the course of the project.



A dance held in Gngangatom as part of the hosting ceremony for youth from the Kara, Dassenech and Hamar communities who stayed two days in a Gngangatom village as part of a youth cultural exchange.

- *Traditional peace ceremony:* At the point of reconciliation which typically followed admission of guilt by the main perpetrator, agreement of compensation to be paid and the passing of a peace agreement that convinced all parties how peace would be realistically maintained, two ethnic groups would decide to hold a traditional peace ceremony. The peace ceremony was repeated twice: once in each participant community. In both cases it was led by a traditional peacemaker who guaranteed lasting peace at the threat of a curse coming to

his family should conflict resume. Following a traditional peace ceremony, communities would often begin to freely interact socially and economically, exchanges that further reinforced the peace made between them.

The SELAM-C project applied this process to the following conflict groups: the Konso-Bodi-Dime and the Mursi-Ari in the northeast cluster, and the Hamer-Dassenech, Hamer-Gnangatom, Kara-Gnangatom, Gnangatom-Dassenech and Suri-Gnangatom in the southeast cluster (see Diagram 3)

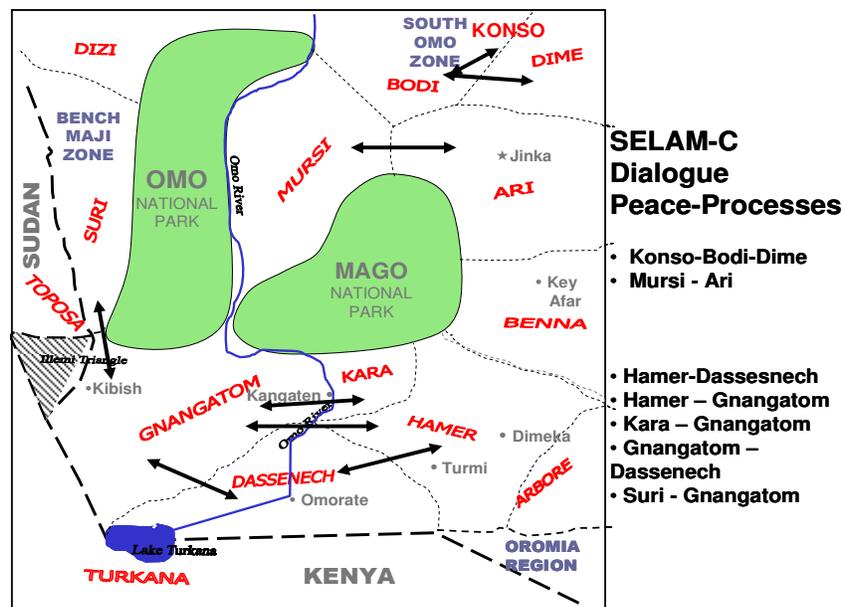


Diagram 3: Map of conflicts that benefited from Pact Ethiopia’s interventions, based on the SELAM-C peace activity process.

While nearly all peace processes followed a similar trajectory of activities to those outlined above, the specific implementation of the described activities including order and emphasis was tailored to the driving factors of a given conflict situation. Some conflicts required greater focus on inter-governmental conflict resolution via consultative meetings, while others required repeated community level peace dialogues. Others still were most significantly transformed by the youth-driven cultural exchange. However, only a tailored approach with the appropriate combination and continuity of interventions was effective in supporting the achievement of the objective.

### National Park Co-Management

**Objective 2:** Participatory management of Mago Park enhanced by increasing collaboration amongst community, local government and regional government stakeholders.

In order to achieve Objective 2, SELAM-C focused on first creating linkages among regional and local government for improved collaboration and cooperation in MNP management and second on strengthening the capacity of these stakeholders to engage communities in the conservation of MNP resources. The activities implemented included the following:

- *Consultative Workshop for Mago National Park Government Stakeholders:* The MNP management capacity-enhancement process began with a consultative meeting involving regional, zonal and woreda government stakeholders. The meeting was an opportunity for all actors to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the future of Mago National Park, to prioritize areas for future investment and to develop an action plan for the way forward. Through careful facilitation, the officials were able to resolve misunderstandings about one another's approaches to park management that were perceived to be the source of the park's problems and develop a common vision for the future.
- *Mago Park Woreda Task Force and Mago Park Management Follow-up Consultative Meeting:* It was agreed at the consultative meeting that SELAM-C would support capacity building of MNP woreda and zonal level task forces as well as the MNP wardens and scouts. The task forces were established at the consultative workshop and given a formal mandate and budget by the regional government to collaborate with and act on behalf of MNP in areas related to community awareness-raising and park security. SELAM-C supported a follow-up coordination meeting with the MNP woreda-level task forces to enhance joint-planning and decision-making and to detail a common course of action at the local level.
- *Training for Mago Park Woreda Task Forces and Mago Park Management in Participatory Techniques to Community Awareness-Raising:* SELAM-C also provided MNP woreda task forces, management officials and scouts with training on participatory techniques for community awareness-raising. Such techniques were identified as critical to enhancing co-management, as appropriate methodologies for approaching communities and gaining support for conservation were effectively absent. SELAM-C then provided a practical training for community awareness raising, drawing on primarily visual and diagramming PLA tools that were adjusted for the purpose of conservation awareness-raising. The tools were specifically designed to raise the community's consciousness on how their behavior can negatively impact natural resources and how resource degradation could affect their well-being.



Woreda officials examine and discuss a map of Mago National Park, which they created as part of a training in Participatory Techniques to Community-Awareness Raising in Park Conservation.

## Alternative Livelihoods

**Objective 3:** Target communities have adapted viable alternative livelihood strategies.

The primary investment in alternative livelihood was with the Kara community of Korcho kebele, around the development of a community-owned eco-tourism site. Described below is the step-by-step process that SELAM-C followed to help the community gain a better understanding of a tourism industry and support them in the development of a community-owned and managed pilot tourism site in SOZ.

- *Community Reflection Meeting on concept/past experience:* A large-scale community reflection meeting was facilitated at the outset of the community-tourism site development process. The meeting allowed the community to express their understanding of and experience with tourism, its benefits and drawbacks, and discuss how a community-owned enterprise could enhance their well-being.
- *Exposure visit to Community-Tourism Site:* In order to introduce the Kara to best-practices in community-based tourism, the project supported an exchange visit for eight participants from their community to a world renowned community-tourism site in northern Ethiopia. During the visit, the Kara experienced tourism from the tourist's rather than the host's perspective and learned about the range and quality of services that could be provided.
- *Community Reflection Meeting on Exposure Visit:* Following the community tourism exposure visit, SELAM-C facilitated a community meeting during which the exposure visit participants reflected upon their exposure visit experience. The meeting also allowed the community to brainstorm about how they could adapt what was reflected back to them to their local context and make it a reality in their village.
- *Pastoral Resource Mapping and Community action plan development:* A pastoral resource mapping, problem prioritization, and community action planning exercise followed the reflection meeting. This activity allowed the community to map out their various resources, and carefully consider what type of tourism development would be most appropriate for their context. Based on the map and corresponding problem prioritization, the community developed an action plan for developing a community tourism site that could help address many of the problems they faced.
- *Selection and orientation for community mobilizer:* Following mapping and action planning, SELAM-C facilitated a process by which the community selected a community mobilizer. The mobilizer's responsibilities included: the preparation and co-facilitation of all community meetings related to the site development; communicating all activities taking place at the Jinka-level to support site development to the community and vice-versa; and supporting organizational development at the community-level. The mobilizer was a trusted member of the community, who served as a link between the community he represented, Pact Ethiopia and when appropriate local government.
- *Organizational support for cooperative development (linking with woreda):* SELAM-C subsequently worked with the community mobilizer and facilitated his connection with the woreda cooperative office to help the Kara community form a business cooperative. The

community mobilizer with Pact’s assistance held organizational development meetings with the community to help them organize and register into a business cooperative, and orient them on procedures and corresponding government bylaws.

- *In-kind grant development and technical support:* In partnership with the community mobilizer and leaders of the cooperative, SELAM-C supported the community to develop an in-kind grant and secure technical support for site development. SELAM-C hired a technical expert who could reinforce local capacities, and ensure site development reflected local architecture and customs while meeting the needs of tourists.
- *Site construction and on-site mentoring:* Site construction was a five month process which involved the on-going presence of the technical expert in the field, who worked side-by-side with twenty selected community members in site-design, securing materials for site construction and mentoring them in site construction and maintenance. The design and development of the site included a kitchen, a gift shop, a store for food, an information desk, and three look out points.
- *Organizational Development Participatory Training:* Following the construction of the site, the community engaged in organizational development meetings led by SELAM-C staff. The participatory training consisted of a discussion on the components of the site, various services related to those components, and the management structure that would be required to provide those services. At the end of the training, the community had also selected the governance structure for the management of the site and cooperative, including the Board and managers.



Community members engage in a pile sorting exercise – assigning roles and responsibilities to the tourism site – as part of an organizational development training in Kara.

- *Finance, Management and Business Cooperative Skills Training:* The final step in the community tourism development process was a training in finance management, tourism site management and business cooperative skills, which helped build the capacity of the cooperative executive board, the financial managers and accountants and a number of individuals who had been selected to work in the tourism site.

**Objective 4:** Sustainable management of rangeland and water resource improved among target pastoral communities.

Objective four focused on two broad areas of pastoral resource rehabilitation: rangeland rehabilitation and water-point rehabilitation. Rangeland rehabilitation was carried out among the Hamer people and water rehabilitation among the Mursi community, where rangeland degradation and lack of access to water, respectively, were the primary factors driving these communities into conflict with MNP and surrounding ethnic groups. The process of activities related to each broad area of sustainable resource management is documented below.

### Sustainable Natural Resource Management

#### **Hamer Rangeland Rehabilitation**

- *Community institutional analysis:* The activity process began with an analysis of the various institutions for managing natural resources within the local community. This ensured SELAM-C would work with the appropriate community actors and decision-makers to obtain the maximum buy-in of the community in the rangeland rehabilitation process.
- *Pastoral Resource Mapping and problem prioritization with eight kebeles:* Based on the institutional analysis, communities selected participants who were key informants in the area of natural resource management to map out the natural resources within the Hamer community as well as patterns of resource change and their causes and effects. This led to a problem prioritization exercise where the Hamer identified shortage of grazing land as the number one problem affecting their livelihood and leading them into conflict. Rangeland rehabilitation was identified as a key strategy to improve these conditions in the action plan.
- *Pilot rangeland rehabilitation projects through in-kind grants in three kebeles:* Following the resource mapping, the communities identified three pilot sites for implementing rangeland rehabilitation as a strategy towards alleviating grassland shortage. The process of developing the in-kind grant for rangeland rehabilitation included a) discussion with the woreda Pastoral Development Office (PDO) on woreda-community partnership and how the PDO could technically support the community in the process, b) the participatory selection of a community management committee to oversee the process, and 3) connecting the woreda and community institutions for grant implementation, and selection of the specific land area for rehabilitation.
- *Organizational development and on-site technical support:* As the community began to implement the rangeland rehabilitation activity, the local woreda office provided technical guidance in collecting an indigenous plant inventory of the selected site and mentoring in rangeland rehabilitation techniques for the selected plot of land. The community then carried out the required bush clearing, fencing and soil and water conservation work. Throughout

the process, SELAM-C supported meetings among the management committee and the community to discuss how the site would be sustainability managed in the long-term once grasses were rehabilitated.



The Hamer engage in soil and water conservation on one of the degraded plots of land selected for rehabilitation.

- *Woreda-level reflection and learning workshop:* Following the termination of the original grant period for fencing and clearing the selected sites, SELAM-C supported a reflection meeting on rangeland rehabilitation at the local government level. The meeting allowed local government representatives involved in the process of rangeland rehabilitation, including the Pastoral Development Office representatives and extension agents, to reflect on its strengths and challenges. During action planning, the group mapped out how to consolidate best-practices for the future and eliminate what had not worked in the past. The government partners agreed that a similar learning and reflection session must be held with the community and that such a process would be most effective if carried out as an experience sharing among the Hamer kebeles who were involved in the original Pastoral Resource Mapping.
- *Community mobilization meetings:* Based on the action plan that resulted from the reflection meeting, SELAM-C supported the development agents and PDO representatives to mobilize the communities for an internal exposure visit and experience-sharing on rangeland rehabilitation. All eight kebeles involved in the original resource mapping were invited to participate, while the one kebele that demonstrated the greatest achievements in rangeland rehabilitation based on SELAM-C grant was mobilized to host the event.
- *NRM field day and experience sharing with 8 kebeles and local government:* The experience sharing and exposure visit among eight kebeles of Hamer woreda involved a reflection workshop and site visit. During the site visit, participants observed the progress made by the SELAM-C pilot site that had the greatest success following in-kind grant implementation.

The reflection workshop component discussed challenges, best-practices and lessons-learned, and further motivated participants towards enhancing or beginning rangeland rehabilitation efforts in their own communities. Communities developed action plans for either revising old grant agreements to scale-up their work or to develop new ones for new sites.

- *Community grants to four new kebeles and strengthening of three old sites:* Following the NRM workshop SELAM-C supported four new kebeles to develop grants for rangeland rehabilitation based on the action plans they had developed in the NRM field day. SELAM-C also supported the communities who received the three original grants to revise their action plans, implement better practices in rangeland rehabilitation, and scale-up their work.
- *Organizational development and on-site technical support:* Organizational development meetings allowed communities to organize themselves for grant implementation and on-site technical support was provided by the woreda pastoral development office in bush clearing, fencing, and soil and water conservation.
- *Institutional Analysis and reflection meetings for scale-up and sustainability:* The final activity in the process was working with the communities to identify existing institutional arrangements that could support the management of the rehabilitated sites for the equitable benefit of the community in the long-term based on the tangible results witnessed. Such meetings led the Hamar to draw upon their existing communal work system for scaling-up the process of communal rangeland rehabilitation without outside funding support.

### **Mursi Waterpoint Rehabilitation**

- *Problem identification and prioritization with community:* The Mursi waterpoint rehabilitation and management activity process began with a large-scale community meeting focused on problem identification, prioritization and action planning. During the meeting the community identified shortage of water as their greatest livelihood constraint and the primary factor driving them into conflict with their neighbors and Mago National Park.
- *Government-community consultative workshop on water development:* A consultative workshop on water development with government and community actors was another key opening step to move forward with water rehabilitation. This was because water-point rehabilitation and development is a complex, highly technical process with a history of many failed investments by the South Omo Zone government and community stakeholders. During the meeting, both technical experts of the woreda and zone water offices as well as the communities reflected on what, historically, were the barriers to effective waterpoint rehabilitation and proposed feasible technical solutions. Restoration of hand-dug and bore wells as well as the construction of cattle troughs were determined to be the first priorities followed by small-scale ponds.
- *Participatory selection of community mobilizers and water committee members:* The discussion and decisions of the consultative meeting were reflected back to the community via a large-scale meeting where community members were also led through a process of selecting a water committee and community mobilizers. The water committee was charged with assisting the entire process of water-point rehabilitation, while the mobilizers were

charged with their oversight and mobilizing the community on a larger scale around the activity where appropriate.

- *In-kind grant development and provision of technical support:* The following step in the activity process included the development of an in-kind grant, and selecting the appropriate technical support person from the Zone Water Office who would engage and work with the water committees, the community mobilizers and the rest of the community and mentor them through the technical process of restoring the water points.
- *On-site mentoring and rehabilitation of borewells, handdug wells and cattle troughs:* The core of the activity included rehabilitating the water points and constructing of cattle troughs and fences around them. The work was carried out by a technical team from the Zone and the water committees. The bulk of the process included on-site mentoring to the water committees, allowing them to learn how to rehabilitate the waterpoints by observing and assisting the technical team.



Members of the Mursi Community Water Committee demonstrate how to repair a hand-dug well, following on-site mentoring and a formal training.

- *Formal training and hand-over of tools to community:* Following the construction of seven of the eight water points, the installation of the final well served as a formal training in how to install, maintain and repair hand-dug and bore wells. The training was highly comprehensible to the water committees and was based on the on-site mentoring process they had just experienced. During the training, the water committee members were confident that they could assemble the well. They quickly took over the training process and demonstrated their abilities to the technical team. Following the training, SELAM-C handed over a set of tools for the community for the ongoing maintenance of the wells.

### III. Monitoring and Evaluation

#### Results Measured:

Combining the indicators agreed upon with USAID with Pact Ethiopia's internal monitoring plan supported by the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) Unit, SELAM-C measured the following levels of results:

- *The project's quantitative output* based activities conducted.
- *The medium-term outcome and longer-term impact* of SELAM-C's output, given the project's goal and objectives. SELAM-C measured its success based on how extensively it had supported the reduction of violent conflict in South Omo Zone and the creation of enabling conditions for development. The project also evaluated itself based on how well it was contributing to:
  - The enhancement of capacity among local government, civil society and communities in increasing the use of community-driven approaches in peace processes.
  - The enhancement of co-management between communities and government of MNP resources.
  - The extent to which target communities had adapted viable alternative livelihood strategies.
  - The extent to which sustainable natural resource management of key pastoral rangeland and water resources among key target communities was improved.
- *The sustainability of outcomes and impacts* against the goal and objectives, including the long-term adoption of processes that effectively contributed to these outcomes and impacts by local government, communities and civil society.
- *The efficacy of project processes, approaches and strategies* during activity implementation, based on how effectively they contributed to the outcomes, impact, and sustainability.

#### Mechanisms for measuring results

The project measured the four levels of results as described above through the following mechanisms:

- *Collection of quarterly quantitative data against USAID indicators* and reporting results against the corresponding target numbers for each indicator, as submitted to USAID.
- *On-going reflection and consultation* on project process and achievements with target stakeholders, including community and government, based on learning questions developed as part of Pact's internal Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP).
- *Formal, periodic programmatic reviews* by Pact Ethiopia and the SELAM-C team.
- *Scheduled USAID and regional government signatory office field visits*, which measured results primarily through key informant interviews
- *Two final evaluations* of the project - by an external consultant combined with USAID staff, and a regional government signatory office evaluation.

### *USAID Indicators*

On a quarterly basis, the SELAM-C project compiled the data from each activity based on a data collection system created by Pact Ethiopia's MERL Unit. Each activity was assigned a USAID indicator which that particular activity supported. Every quarter the data forms were compiled by the project manager and submitted to USAID in a quarterly report and reported again on a bi-annual basis in the Semi Annual Report. The reporting process helped SELAM-C measure concrete outputs, and monitor efficiency of the pipeline.

### *On-going Consultation and Reflection*

As part of its internal MERL protocol and PMP, the SELAM-C project developed a series of learning questions which guided discussion and consultation with key informants on an on-going basis during the process of activity implementation. Reflection and consultation occurred during formal and informal discussions with stakeholders and were a key component of the SELAM-C activity process. Reflection and consultation included a discussion on challenges and strengths of the activity and refining priorities for the future based on progress assessed.

### *USAID and Regional Government Monitoring Field Visits*

USAID visited the SELAM-C project field sites on three occasions, in February 2007 and in November 2007 for monitoring visits, and in November 2008 for the project final evaluation. The regional government visited the project in August 2008 for a monitoring visit and in December 2008 for the government's final evaluation. In each case the monitoring visits coincided with requests for no-cost or cost extensions.

During visits to field sites the USAID and regional government field teams conducted group and key informant interviews with communities, local government and civil society representatives. These interviews provided Pact Ethiopia, USAID and the government representatives with additional insight into the project's changing context, the effectiveness of the project's strategy progress of activities relative to this context and results attained.

### *Project Review and Revisions*

Initially on a semi-annual and subsequently on quarterly basis, SELAM-C went through a series of internal review and revision workshops. These reviews allowed the project to assess accomplishments against the workplan and budget, review the implementation context, evaluate progress towards sustainability, consolidate lessons-learned and recommend any necessary revisions. The most substantive revision occurred in December 2006 under new management, where the project remapped its operational area and objectives to better target achievement of the goal and for more manageable and cost-effective operation. The revision materialized into a 10-month cost-extension in April 2007. Based on substantial short-term results, the cost-extension was followed by three more project extensions (two non-cost and one cost extension).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In February 2008, the SELAM-C project received a four-month cost extension, based on a determination that delays in processing the cost-extension modification had significantly delayed project activities, and the project required until June 2008 to achieve the 10-month cost-extension workplan. In June, USAID provided the SELAM-C project with additional funds for four months, until October 2008, based on a determination that the project had achieved superior results under the revised objectives

### *Final Evaluations*

Final evaluations of the SELAM-C project were conducted in November 2008, by a team consisting of an external consultant and USAID staff member, and in December 2008 by the regional government. Both external and regional evaluators visited Jinka and surrounding field communities over the course of 10 days, with the external/USAID evaluation team visiting nearly every SELAM-C project site. The regional government in addition visited Bench Maji and Sheka Zone's, the project's previous implementation sites outside of South Omo Zone. This extensive review allowed the teams to learn about the full scope of project activities directly from the beneficiaries, and what impact was achieved. Both evaluations in English are available from Pact Ethiopia.

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and workplan. Finally, USAID made a final determination to extend the project until December 31, 2008, to allow sufficient time for a final project evaluation and close-out.

#### IV. Project Results

##### Quantitative Output reported against USAID indicators

Below is the summary of SELAM-C performance against USAID indicators:

Indicators	Performance	
	LoP Target	LOP Accomplishment
# of local peace dialogues and/or community processes facilitated	67	79
# of GoE and civil society representatives participating in local peace dialogues	4616	16892
# of local structures formed (peace committees, associations, etc..) to assist in conflict mitigation and response efforts	30	43
# of partners (formal and non formal) receiving grants to respond to conflict or to address livelihood constraints	8	23

##### Summary of Output and Outcome based on Objective:

The areas of impact, as outlined in the previous section, can be summarized into tangible and concrete results under each objective:

**Objective 1:** Community, local government and civil society organizations will demonstrate increased use of effective community driven approaches towards peace building processes.

Ethnic Groups	Output	Outcome
Hamer-Gngatom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace dialogue process</li> <li>Youth socio-cultural exchanges</li> <li>Traditional peace ceremony conducted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace agreement honored</li> <li>Renewal of sorghum and cattle trade between the communities</li> <li>Community self-initiated the independent construction of road to support trade between communities</li> <li>Frequent social interaction and appearance of ethnic groups in each others key towns and markets.</li> </ul>
Hamer-Dassenech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace dialogue process</li> <li>Youth socio-cultural exchanges</li> <li>Traditional peace ceremony conducted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace agreement honored</li> <li>Renewal of trading of sorghum and cattle between communities</li> <li>Resumption of common grazing in dry season areas</li> <li>Invitation of other ethnic group to each other's cultural ceremonies</li> </ul>

Kara-Gnangatom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace dialogue process</li> <li>• Youth socio-cultural exchanges</li> <li>• Historic traditional peace ceremony conducted</li> <li>• First inter-community land utilization agreement reached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kara lent land for agriculture to Gnangatom neighbors during dry season</li> <li>• Communities frequently seen interacting in each other's villages</li> <li>• Renewed cooperation between woreda officials to support conflict transformation between communities</li> </ul>
Gnangatom-Dassenech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace dialogue process</li> <li>• Youth socio-cultural exchanges</li> <li>• Cattle compensation agreement reached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewed cooperation among woredas on community peace process</li> <li>• Cease-fire maintained between communities</li> </ul>
Konso-Bodi-Dime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace dialogue process</li> <li>• Socio-cultural exchange</li> <li>• Community resolution passed agreeing to hand-over violators of peace agreement to local police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reopening of school and markets following dialogue</li> <li>• Positive socio-cultural interaction among pastoralist and agro-pastoralists at village-level during cultural exchange following dialogue</li> </ul>
Mursi-Ari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace dialogue process</li> <li>• First dialogue agreement between Mursi and Ari to pay cattle retribution for any violators of peace agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement to Traditional Peace Ceremony</li> <li>• Government agreement to conduct all follow-up work</li> </ul>

**Objective 2:** Participatory management of Mago Park enhanced by increasing collaboration amongst community, local government and regional government stakeholders.

*Government Consultative Workshop:*

- Local-Zone-Regional Task Forces created with clear action plans
- Budget partially redistributed from region to woreda governments surrounding MNP
- Local government given clear mandate and empowered for action
- Additional scouts and para-scouts hired directly from communities bordering Mago Park to create linkages between communities and park

*Community Awareness-raising Activities*

- Local government and scouts replicated techniques at community-level
- Greatest shift in “pro-conservation” behavior demonstrated by community who had previously the most opposition to the park.

**Objective 3:** Target communities have adapted viable alternative livelihood strategies.

*Kara Community Tourism Site*

- Community tourism restaurant, gift shop, food store and look out points constructed.
- Community revenue-generation increased
- Additional livelihood for Kara community contributed to land-sharing agreement between Kara and Gnangatom
- Pilot site for appropriate practice in community tourism created

**Objective 4:** Sustainable management of rangeland and water resource improved among target pastoral communities.

#### *Rangeland Rehabilitation*

- 380 hectares of rangeland placed under improved management
- Seven kebeles organized into rangeland management committees
- 6120 meters of soil and water conservation carried out
- Community adopting rangeland rehabilitation techniques at individual-level
- Local government and NGOs using the sites as demonstration areas, disseminating practices
- Local government using approaches with other programs: PCDP, safety net

#### *Mursi Water Development*

- Eight borewells and hand dug well rehabilitated and eight cattle troughs constructed
- 22 community members organized into water committees and trained in future waterpoint maintenance and rehabilitation
- 300+ households distributed among two kebeles have access to improved water sources.
- Water committees organized and capacitated for maintenance of hand dug wells and bore wells.

#### Qualitative Outcome and Impact on Project-level

Based on the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms described in section III, Pact Ethiopia documented key impacts resulting from the combination of activities implemented under all four objectives and the approaches related to these activities. The final external evaluation confirmed and simultaneously qualified the following results:

#### *Reduction of violence in South Omo Zone:*

The final evaluation most clearly comments on this success by stating:

Pact has achieved its overall goal (as stated in the Team’s SOW) “to mitigate the negative impact of violent conflict among pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, and to create enabling conditions for development by enhancing governance in conflict zones.” ..... According to all reports, there has been an improvement in the peace over the past several years, specifically in 2007/08, whereas in 2005/06 there was less of a noticeable reduction in violence. People attribute this in large part to the efforts of Pact – an extremely notable success (9).

A cultural bazaar and award ceremony held in November 2007 by the South Omo Zone Justice and Security Office (JSO) was already an indicator of this success. The Bazaar recognized local government, civil society, and community actors who had contributed to the substantial reduction of violence in South Omo. The two key civil society organizations primarily recognized for their contribution to this success were Pact Ethiopia and its partner and grantee EPaRDA. The reduction of violence was also confirmed in numerous direct conversations with local *woreda* government representatives and community members, who expressed an improved climate for development.

*Improved access to key resources and livelihood options among target communities:*

During a number of workshops and consultative meetings with the Hamar and the Mursi communities, where SELAM-C worked on rangeland rehabilitation and waterpoint rehabilitation respectively, communities and local government communicated significant improvement in natural resource conditions. Specifically, the Mursi expressed that the rehabilitation of wells had significantly eased their constraints in accessing drinking water and water for weaker animals and milking cows, which graze closer to the homestead. Similarly among the Hamar community rangeland rehabilitation efforts significantly improved access to grasses for milking cows and weaker animals around the homestead in the dry season. Local villages had also organized themselves for cutting and selling the grass in critical times as an alternative income generating activity. These findings were confirmed by the final external evaluation:

[The natural resource activities] demonstrably and positively contributed to improving natural resource conditions and management. The demonstration plots are providing valuable sources of grasses for grazing and thatching as well as sources for beekeeping and potentially other future cash crops, while the waterpoints are significantly reducing the distances for suitable water (13).

Additionally, as learned in the course of the evaluation, the rangeland plots served as an invaluable short-term “safety net” during last year’s drought in the Hamar area, during which time community-selected vulnerable cattle were identified for special grazing in the protected area. Utilization of the area for vulnerable or weak animals not only supported protecting Hamar livelihoods, but also provides evidence of successful management. During the drought, the rangeland management committee and community members worked together to allow for use of the land and to select cattle to be allowed to graze, a clear indicator of success (ibid).

*Improved cooperation among communities and Mago National Park regarding biodiversity conservation.*

Despite the relatively few activities conducted around the co-management Mago National Park, the processes that were carried out had significant results. The evaluation reflected that:

Mago Park-related activities did enhance the participatory management of the Park, and there’s evidence that this has led to a reduction in conflict – the degree to which is difficult to say – between the Park management/GoE and surrounding communities. As confirmed through the Team’s interviews, the Project’s efforts (approximately 2% to 5% of funds) have created a greater degree of awareness and collaboration between the Park management and surrounding communities, as evidenced by, *inter alia*, the provision by some of those communities of Assistant Scouts to serve as a liaison between the two parties, and awareness training and workshops. The decision by the government to re-assign budgetary funds to be spent directly by woredas also proves their commitment to this process and is a major indication of success (16).

## Project Results Contributing to Sustainability of Outcomes and Impact

### *Underlying causes of conflict addressed in key areas:*

SELAM-C facilitated peace processes at the community level enabled carefully tailored interventions which addressed the underlying conflict dynamics between populations. As discussed by the final external evaluation:

Traditionally, kebele and woreda-level CR techniques have been focused on addressing the spark of violence, rather than the underlying causes of tension. For example, the theft of some food stocks or the killing of a community member would result in a reconciliation ceremony that involved restitution and perhaps punishment. But the broader issues of pastoralists' animals invading the farming or grazing lands of another ethnic group would not be dealt with. Pact, however, has demonstrated "modern" methodologies to better understand underlying problems and, as a result, develop solutions for a more comprehensive, potentially longer lasting peace (10).

Once a peace agreement was reached, it was in many cases more likely to be sustainable, given the extensive processes communities engaged in to reflect on the issues above.

### *Attitudinal shift among local communities in relation to other ethnic groups and natural resource management*

SELAM-C supported a shift in mindset among the ethnic groups through community peace dialogues and especially through youth-driven cultural exchanges at Jinka and at the village-levels. As noted by the final evaluation:

Another notable success was the youth cultural exchange, which was applauded by all interviewees with whom the Team met. Community members indicated their increased understanding of other ethnic groups as a result of the exchange and youth increased their inclinations towards peace and built relationships with youth from other ethnic groups. Relationships formed through the exchange can be the base for future dialogue and support to peace-building between communities. In addition, a main contributor to conflict in South Omo relates to identity and perceptions of "others." By breaking down these biases and negative perceptions, Pact began the work of building up more positive perceptions among communities (20).

Following the cultural exchange events, communities expressed that they witnessed the similarities rather than differences between themselves and their ethnic neighbors as they ate, slept and drank together over the course of 10 days. Elders proclaimed that they would reflect the message of the peaceful co-existence witnessed back to their communities.

Natural resource-related and alternative livelihood activities similarly shifted the communities' attitude towards their ability to influence their own development, and especially natural resource conditions. Previously, communities had told SELAM-C staff that nothing could be done about resource degradation as this all depended on the rain. Following implementation they had witnessed "disappeared grasses coming back" and believed that they could maintain and restore their water wells in the future without external intervention.

### *Community institutions empowered and capacitated for future action*

Upon witnessing tangible results from project activities, community members took initiative to continue or scale-up successful practices on their own. Community members from Hamer began replicating rangeland rehabilitation techniques on their own individual plots of land. The evaluation noted: “The fact that the rangeland sites have been protected and expanded by the communities is evidence of solid management (22).” In the Kara community tourism site, the youth self-organized into a cooperative for generating revenue from photos using a more constructive approach than previously implemented by the community. The community also used income from the tourism business to purchase products from town and to sell them in their local shop. In relation to peace activities, the Mursi punished trespassers of a peace agreement within their own community. The Kara and Gngangatom independently organized a follow-up negotiation meeting after a SELAM-C-supported traditional peace ceremony, in order to more clearly define the terms of a land management agreement for the upcoming agricultural season.

### *Local government institutions empowered and capacitated for future action:*

Local government replicated a number of successful approaches implemented by the SELAM-C project. The Zone government initiated independent community meetings at the grassroots level following the outbreak of violent conflict among the Konso, Bodi and Dime ethnic groups, and subsequently organized and facilitated a dialogue among the groups using SELAM-C approaches. Gngangatom woreda officials organized a peace dialogue between their community and the Suri ethnic group of Bench Maji Zone, requesting only financial and logistical support from Pact. Based on such initiatives, the external evaluators concluded:

Consequently, it is felt by many that Pact has now equipped the many ethnic groups, the related woreda officials, and zonal administrators with the CR tools to address their future issues and conflicts (10).

In relation to park activities, the inter-governmental consultative workshop resulted in the redistribution of budget to woreda task forces who gained a new mandate to work on park activities.

### *Attitudinal shift among local government towards community institutions*

An attitudinal shift among local government regarding their community constituents contributed to sustainability of project outcomes. After witnessing the effectiveness of community-based approaches in positively shifting the communities’ mindset towards conflict, natural resource management and development, local government adopted these practices. After witnessing the power of holding dialogues in a village rather than town setting, the Office of the Police instructed other civil society organizations to implement this approach in their activities. Field notes from the final evaluation emphasized that local officials admitted moving from a “police” approach to conflict resolution, to one that was more “modern” – community-oriented and rooted in community institutions. The field notes also described statements by local officials that they learned to be more effective by going to the community, rather than bringing communities to them. The increasing leadership of local communities was noted by the evaluators:

Special recognition should also be made of the existence and vital role that traditional community “peace makers” are playing in some communities in the CR process – they are providing essential, quick-response first-tier assistance at some community and woreda levels (11).

Understanding participatory approaches also allowed government to address conflict in a more holistic and contextually appropriate manner. As quoted previously from the evaluation:

The methods introduced by Pact (including appreciative inquiry training, youth cultural exchanges, cross-border peace dialogues, justice and security meetings, and the Jinka Peace Festival) allowed communities and government officials a new way to view violence, as part of a broader socio-economic context that needs to be addressed. Clearly this approach resonated strongly across the board as communities and government officials were receptive to taking on the new approaches, were highly engaged in the processes, demonstrated self-initiation and replication in other communities, and clearly pointed towards these methods as substantially helping to reduce the level of violent conflict (16).

## V. Success Factors, Challenges and Lessons-Learned

### Success Factors

#### Internal Factors

- *Process-oriented approach:* SELAM-C's core success factor was a process-oriented approach that allowed for full, meaningful participation and buy-in from all local stakeholders, permitted specific priorities to be identified locally, and most importantly, created an environment for learning-by-doing and on-site capacity-building (see Diagram 4). As noted by the project's final evaluation:

The Team received very positive feedback from all interviewees on Pact's performance, both in terms of on-the-ground implementation performance and their very collaborative/participatory approach, as detailed in SELAM-C's "Activity Process Cycle (9)."

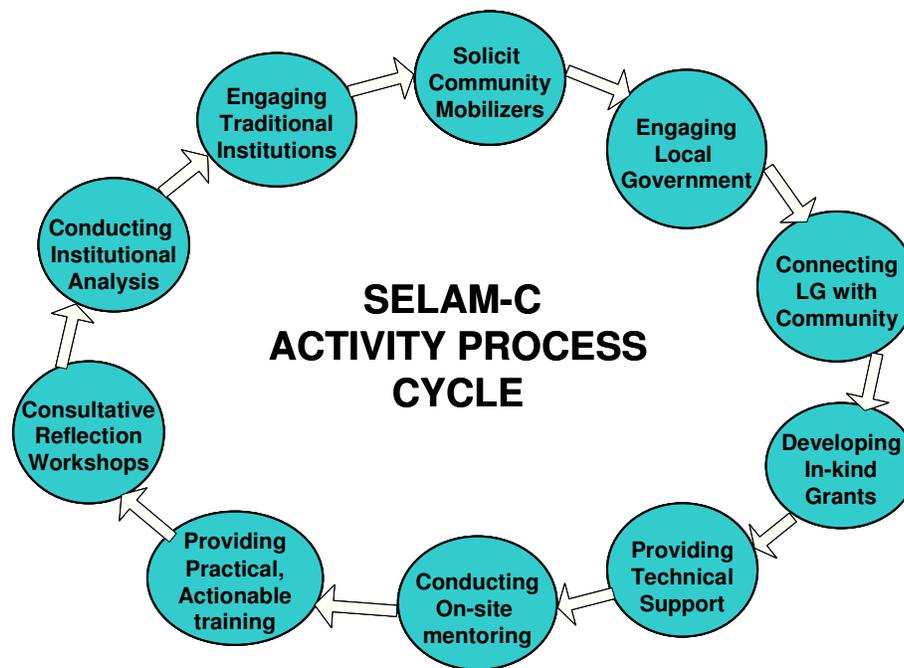


Diagram 4: SELAM-C Activity Process Cycle

- *Emphasis on participation, local stakeholder ownership and bottom-approach:* Extensive, at time laborious legwork was done by SELAM-C staff in facilitating processes from the bottom-up to obtain buy-in from local leaders. Activities and the workplan were reframed according to the direction set by local communities. This greatly facilitated the adoption of methodologies that were at first thought of as "external" and "modern" and therefore may not have been quickly accepted.
- *Timeliness, responsiveness and follow through:* The final evaluation report remarked on the "speed" within which Pact accomplished its numerous activities. SELAM-C responded to conflict dynamics immediately, before tensions escalated between communities. The project

also responded to various community and local government requests to support peace dialogues in a timely manner, promoting trust between local stakeholders and Pact Ethiopia. Timeliness and responsiveness were coupled with follow-through. SELAM-C allowed government and communities to take their time in peace processes and rescheduled follow-up interventions as requested. Dialogues were followed-up with cultural exchange.

- *Innovative Methodologies:* Successful methodologies employed in activity facilitation included:
  1. **Capacity-building and internal conflict resolution with local government**, via government consultative meetings served three major purposes: a) obtaining buy-in from local government into the peace process, b) building local government capacity for appropriately mobilizing communities for a peace dialogue, and c) resolving inter-governmental conflicts.
  2. **Local government mobilization and co-facilitation for community-dialogues** helped to bridge gaps between communities and local government and significantly strengthened the capacity of government in conflict resolution through on-site experiential learning.
  3. **Capacity-building through on-site mentoring and learning vs. formalized training**, ensured that new skills became immediately used and relevant and produced practical results. This facilitated the adoption of new ideas, enhanced understanding for how the skills could be applied in the future by the local stakeholders, and empowered the stakeholders for action.
  4. **Learning and reflection workshops mid-way through activity processes with local communities and stakeholders**, provided a powerful mechanism for stakeholders to analyze the progress of activities, the strengths and challenges related to this progress, and thus adjust their action plans. Reflection and consultation not only consolidated learning but allowed all actors to clear misunderstandings that often arose in the course of implementation and to come to a common agreement on the way forward.
  5. **Use of community mobilizers, especially youth**, proved to be a powerful tool in building ownership and capacity of communities in activity processes. By placing individuals from the community at the front line of organizing activities, the communities were not in a position to “bargain” with NGOs or government for hand-outs, community ideas were easily incorporated in the course of activity implementation, and local leadership perceived that innovative methodologies came from within the community.
  6. **Conducting workshops, trainings and dialogues at the village-level** ensured that communities felt that the activities were directly serving the communities’ purpose, that they were rooted in community traditions, and were respectful of local culture and ideology. Village-level activities justifiably eliminated the need for per diem payments, and community members were not distracted by outside influences that were common in town, especially by alcohol.
  7. **Appreciative Inquiry facilitation approach to conflict resolution** was a critical tool for mitigating some of the greatest tensions between communities in South Omo Zone. The tool helped rival communities and government to refocus on the moments of peace that had existed between them and how to recreate them.
  8. **Socio-Cultural exchange events**, proved to be some of the most powerful activities in achieving relationship strengthening and longer-term impact in conflict resolution. SELAM-C creatively supported rival ethnic groups to interact with each other according

to their own social norms and customs in their local village environment and in Jinka town through the Jinka Peace Concert.

- *Revision of activity planning, budget use and extension of funding:* USAID's cooperation in terms of workplan and budget revisions supported the success of the project in three significant ways. First, it enabled responsiveness to shifting conflict dynamics and prioritization of interventions as they were ratified by local stakeholders through participatory processes. Second, approval of budget realignments permitted the project staff to offer the full range of technical support required for effective completion and sustainability of grant activities. Third, the provision of project extensions in a timely and responsive manner allowed the project to quickly and continuously capitalize on best-practices and lessons-learned, replicate them in other conflict prone areas of South Omo Zone, and bring greater sustainability to existing interventions.
- *Neutrality:* A key success factor noted by the final evaluation was Pact Ethiopia's role as a neutral actor in the project area, which made it an effective mediator and facilitator in peace processes. To quote from the evaluation: "Pact's major successes were due to the independence/neutrality which they brought to the negotiations table."

#### **External Factors:**

- *Community readiness:* While most communities required extended and on-going support in peace processes due to deep-rooted issues, other communities who had experienced years of violence that had a substantial toll on their well-being indicated a readiness for peace. This readiness considerably expedited a few peace agreements and set a model and catalyst for others. Communities that had made peace relatively quickly became hosts and facilitators for dialogues where conflict dynamics were more severe and complex.
- *Government responsiveness:* The GoE poses some constraints to effective peace-building in that government approaches are often rigid, police and security-oriented, lacking in process driven community-oriented approaches, and biased against pastoralists. The local government of South Omo Zone was nonetheless open and responsive to SELAM-C's approaches possibly because the South Omo Zone government is relatively new, operates in a remote context with limited oversight from the region and federal government, and its officials are largely from the constituent ethnic groups. Provided external actors are working effectively, it is receptive to ideas and support.

#### Challenges

Despite numerous successes, SELAM-C faced considerable challenges in implementation, The majority of challenges were based on the operational context of the project, while a few were linked to internal decisions of the project and its donor. The most salient challenges to the project are detailed below:

## Contextual Challenges Affecting Outputs, Impact and Sustainability

- *Vast, remote, multi-dimensional landscape:* The vast, remote, multi-ethnic, and difficult terrain which comprised SELAM-C's operating context prevented local government and communities from following-up and replicating some activities independently. It also posed a challenge for SELAM-C staff to receive messages from community and government, reach all areas and persistently follow every step of activities in a timely manner.
- *Balancing immediate conflict response with longer-term conflict prevention and transformation planning:* Based on the reputation Pact Ethiopia had developed in a few focal dialogue processes, its field team was quickly asked to respond to almost every outbreak of violence throughout South Omo Zone. It became evident that stabilization was the first priority of communities and government over other project activities. SELAM-C had to carefully strategize on how to build sustainability into established peace conditions, by carefully introducing capacity-building and development interventions that address root causes, while continuing to engage in crisis response planning.
- *Conflict dynamics spanning beyond SELAM-C's immediate intervention area:* Due to the nature of its agreement with donor and government, SELAM-C was unable to respond to conflicts that affected internal stability in South Omo Zone but reached across zonal, regional, or national boundaries. The inability to address the full-range of conflict threats to the Zone limited the impact and long-term sustainability of the SELAM-C project.
- *Balancing breadth v. depth:* The SELAM-C project faced a challenge in determining whether peace interventions should address the full range of inter-ethnic conflicts in South Omo Zone, thus mitigate violence more broadly, or address only a few conflicts but intervene deeply through cross-community socio-economic development projects, which required more investment and sustained intervention. Ultimately the project took a middle line addressing more complex, multi-dimensional conflicts more holistically while still responding to outbreaks of violence to mitigate crises.
- *Comprehensive inclusion of women:* SELAM-C primarily focused on mitigating violence and stabilizing peace conditions. This meant a critical mass of traditional leadership who held the negotiating and decision-making power in peace agreements had to be present at peace dialogues. These dialogue processes absorbed the vast majority of project time and resources, and left limited time to run parallel processes with women, who have a greater role in peace maintenance and conflict prevention, and therefore sustainability of peace agreements.
- *Limited coordination of activities among South Omo Civil Society Actors:* While there were few civil society actors in South Omo Zone working in peace, numerous uncoordinated initiatives were taking place in the areas of livelihoods and natural resource management. This contributed to competition among organizations, duplication of effort, dependency syndrome among communities, as well as poor implementation practices. Pact Ethiopia was forced to invest considerable project resources to establish meaningful, collaborative partnerships with civil society actors for complementary implementation.

- *Difficulty in lifting dependency syndrome:* Recent trends among donor and implementing organizations who desire to bring rapid and immediate development to the highly marginalized South Omo Zone have substantially contributed to an expectation of hand-outs by local actors and the perception that external civil society actors are in the area for their own business. While the project put substantial efforts into lifting the spirit of self-help with considerable success, this required a significant investment in terms of staff time during project activities. The dependency syndrome also affects the sustainability of the project's impact.
- *Communicating the institutional environment of USAID and Pact Ethiopia to the beneficiary stakeholders:* Communicating the meaning of a civil society organization and its donor to communities was a challenge as the "global" development environment is simply unknown by most local people. Furthermore, historical ineffectiveness of government and NGOs has meant that local communities are mistrustful of external institutions and prefer to trust individuals who demonstrate results. The project faced a challenge in gaining understanding for Pact as an institution, rather than the individuals that implemented and drove its activities.
- *Limited financial resources of local government:* Local government in Ethiopia, and especially in marginalized areas like South Omo is notoriously under-funded and under-staffed, which constrains its ability to apply best-practices for conflict mitigation without outside support. As noted by the final evaluation:

Regarding woredas' engagement in the peace reconciliation process, it should be noted that there has been, and seemingly will continue to be, significant transportation, communication and daily allowances constraints which will seriously inhibit their ability to address new conflicts in a timely and effective manner (12).

- *High Staff Turnover of Local Government:* High government staff turnover results from GoE annual performance evaluations and needs assessment at zone and woreda levels. Expectation of turnover in itself limits performance and results in loss of institutional memory when a change in government post occurs. New officials often govern based on their own knowledge and experience rather than based on the experience of their new office. Reintroduction of the project and building of new relationships on an on-going basis required project time and money, and affects the potential for long-term sustainability.
- *Necessity of Neutrality:* Conflict resolution inherently requires a neutral mediator. Since most government officials are members of one of the conflicting ethnic groups and often experience conflict among themselves, they cannot always undertake an effective mediation role. Ethiopian nationals from outside of the local ethnic groups are perceived as members of the "colonizing" government by local communities, and must prove themselves to the communities before gaining their trust. The need for a trusted, external mediating presence poses a challenge for sustainability of conflict management capacity in the Zone.

### **Challenges based on structure of project**

- *Logistical and Staff Capacities Stretched:* Given the vast, remote and complex environment described above the project logistical and staff resources were constantly stretched. The project's single vehicle was insufficient to cover the area, and SELAM-C spent considerable

funds on car rental. Staff time was also constantly stretched to meet community and government demands and ensure comprehensive and consistent follow-up.

- *Multiple, short-term extensions, and limited funds related to the extensions:* Except for the 10-month cost extension granted in May 2007, subsequent project extensions ranged from two to four months. This significantly limited longer-term planning and implementation of activities that would have enhanced sustainability but necessitated a longer time frame. These included activities related to governance and institutional enhancement.
- *Limited funding to address various dimensions and root causes of conflict holistically:* As the project developed best-practices and could easily replicate them, it became evident that funds were too limited to appropriately scale-up the interventions. In addition, funds were too limited to address root causes of conflict holistically. For example, the project did not ultimately have enough funds to provide ponds for the Mursi community, which required a \$60,000 investment.
- *Project not structured to tackle wider institutional, systemic and structural issues to prevent conflict:* The funds and time frame of the project, combined with the necessity to stabilize peace conditions in South Omo Zone, prevented SELAM-C from focusing on the structural, governance-related dimensions of conflict. The project was focused on piloting best-practices among various conflict communities and their government, but it remained impossible to holistically inform the wider institutional framework based on lessons-learned.

#### Lessons-Learned for peace programming in South Omo Zone

The most salient lessons-learned are elaborated below:

- *Addressing Conflict Issues between communities is most benefited by, and often requires a parallel process with government stakeholders:* Demarcation of woreda boundaries along ethnic lines and the assignment of political posts based on ethnicity has politicized inter-community conflict in South Omo Zone. For example, the Kara-Gnangatom community-level peace process was significantly hindered by inter-woreda conflict. Officials resisted raising the land issue underlying the conflict because it affected woreda demarcation and accused each other of provoking community members to fight for their own interests. A government consultative meeting was a powerful tool in helping officials clear misunderstandings and create a common, collaborative action plan for community peace-making.
- *A Forum for Collaboration among NGOs is critical for efficiency and long-term efficacy of project efforts:* The numerous civil society initiatives in South Omo Zone working in similar sectors without an effective coordination and communication mechanism posed considerable project implementation challenges. For example, a UNHCR funded mass pastoralist gathering for peace was organized as a one time event without local consultation, and caused confusion among communities on the authenticity of peace processes. A forum for joint planning, coordination, and a common approach is critical for ensuring that various peace and development initiatives “do no harm,” complement each other, and thus maximize benefits for local communities.

- *In a conflict setting, natural resource management and livelihood projects must involve the participation of rival ethnic groups equitably:* Community natural resource and livelihood projects that address root causes of conflict must address the concerns of rival ethnic groups equally, even if the project addresses the driving factor of conflict which stems from a single community. This eliminates the possibility of inequitable resource distribution that could fuel feelings of jealousy, or empower one group over another. The Kara community tourism project allowed the Kara to offer farmland to the Gngangatom during the dry season following the peace agreement, but perceptions still existed that the Kara may have been economically empowered at the expense of the Gngangatom community.
- *Individual in-kind grants budget must be carefully measured against community resources and assets:* Injecting large sums of money at the community-level, including high per diem rates for attendance at meetings and paying outside suppliers for materials that can be locally obtained, destroys communities' self-initiative and the possibility of a multiplier effect. In addition rapid shifts in income create or exacerbate intra-community inequalities as direct participants in a process benefit financially over non-direct participants. Any per diem rates must cover actual expenses, and income generating activities must be appropriately accompanied by a discussion on the equitable distribution of benefits.
- *Community in-kind grants must be supported by sufficient travel, transport and per diem costs to permit for capacity-building:* In remote and vast areas where local civil society and formal community structures are nascent, community projects via in-kind grants require large investment for technical support, including on-site mentoring and trainings, and building the capacity of management committees. Grants management in these contexts requires sufficient staff time and mobility to accompany the "soft" aspects of providing the hardware. These costs although providing less immediate visible output are critical to ensuring project activities are sustainable.
- *Demonstration of short-term results is critical for longer-term engagement and sustainability:* False promises and lack of participatory learning approaches have led many communities to conclude that development actors are all talk and no action. The introduction of new "soft" organizational concepts, such as bylaw development and management, are also difficult for communities to visualize without a concrete, tangible output. In the Kara community tourism site and Hamer Rangeland Rehabilitation, it was critical to demonstrate a concrete output before taking communities through a process of organizational development and management capacity-building. Only upon witnessing the beginning of tangible, practical benefits did communities engaged in critical organizational development processes.
- *Building off local practices and traditions has the greatest potential for achieving sustainability of new, innovative approaches:* New, innovative methodologies for peace-building and related development initiatives are effectively adopted when they build off of existing structures and institutions. During organizational development trainings, the Kara were not able to conceptualize that a *single* manager would be responsible for the overall operation of their tourism site, nor were words such as "Board," "Manager," and "Supervisor" directly translatable into the local language. Participatory institutional analysis revealed that the community had a clear governance structure and that this structure could be

adopted for the tourism site. When roles and responsibilities were chosen the community was able to better conceptualize site management because local concepts were referenced.

- *Informing wider institutional network and creating linkages among government actors is critical for sustainability:* Inter-woreda consultative and reflection meetings in peace-building and inclusion of regional-policy makers in local processes linked to Mago National Park demonstrated that facilitating wider institutional linkages among government is critical for improved decision-makings, responsiveness and delivery of results. Bringing government officials from different woredas and from the region face-to-face is especially critical where no established forum exists for inter-governmental communication on critical issues, and where misunderstandings and inter-governmental conflict arise as a result.
- *Placing communities at the front-line of mobilizing and organizing greatly enhances ownership and therefore impact of activities:* The northern and southern cluster youth cultural exchanges provided the most vivid lesson for how appropriate use of community mobilizers can have an immense impact on peace processes. Participating community members at the village-level clearly perceived the events were the work of their own children (the youth who had been engaged by SELAM-C as mobilizers) rather than Pact Ethiopia. The use of the youth facilitators for direct interface with the community motivated elders and inspired their creative participation. Allowing elders and key youth to mobilize and organize the larger community without the project's involvement had an unprecedented impact on community participation, volunteerism and self-initiative.
- *Capacity-building through “learning-by-doing,” as opposed to formal trainings significantly enhanced the multiplier effect of project activities:* The local government's response to the Konso, Bodi and Dime conflict demonstrated that conflict resolution methodologies are more likely to be adopted and replicated when learned through on-site mentoring and direct participation. When violent conflict broke out among the three ethnic groups, zone officials who had been engaged in previous SELAM-C facilitated peace processes responded immediately to the crisis. They carried out internal community-level discussions on conflict at the grassroots level and motivated the communities for a multi-ethnic peace-dialogue. SELAM-C was only asked to provide technical comments and some financial and logistical support for the dialogue. These same officials were previously non-responsive in such situations

## **VI. The Way Forward**

### *The Current Environment*

SELAM-C had to balance the attainment of its goal and objectives with time and resource constraints given the many challenges of the operational environment. The project therefore supported enhancing stability in South Omo Zone, but was not able to holistically address the wider structural governance framework that could sustain the peace far into the future.

The contributions of SELAM-C and the contextual realities of South Omo Zone have created a new environment for peace-building. SELAM-C has supported a) the cessation of violence, b) stabilization of relationships among ethnic groups, c) enhanced awareness among local government and communities of best-practices to peace-building, d) enhanced capacity among

local government and communities to implement these best practices, and e) enhanced awareness among communities regarding their ability to impact the root causes of conflict. These results contribute to an environment that is far more conducive to improving good governance on a systemic level among all conflict transformation actors than what was possible at the outset of the project. At the same time there exist two key external factors that threaten the sustainability of peace conditions, including:

*The On-going fragility of peace conditions:* As noted by the evaluation:

While there currently is relative peace (especially compared to the 2003-04 period) among many of the ethnic groups as a direct result of the interventions of Pact and others, this peace was uniformly acknowledged as being fragile and could be disrupted by a number of different triggering events. Nonetheless, the Project has been a very successful stabilizing and unifying force at a critical juncture in the South's development (9).

Local government and communities have expressed that more needs to be done to strengthen peace conditions, by enhancing institutional capacity for conflict resolution on a systemic level and deepening reconciliation.

*GoE's push towards rapid development with focus on cattle marketing and external investment:*

The GoE has increasingly drawn its attention to developing pastoral areas, to enhance control over the territories and ensure their contribution to the national economy. This focus has resulted in rapid, sweeping policy reform including expansion of the cattle trade and agro-industry development. While both are potentially beneficial, they can also quickly exacerbate tensions in the near term as pastoralists are not immediately inclined to sell their cattle, and as large tracts of prime grazing territory are converted into land for bio-fuel and other crop cultivation. The final evaluation notes rapid, unplanned development as a potential problem exacerbating conflicts that at the moment are stabilized and ripe for longer-term peace-building interventions:

As learned at various levels of the GoE, the government has a clear rural development plan for the South which envisions the very significant expansion of cattle marketing (including for export), large-scale agro industry, the trunk roads infrastructure, permanent settlement of pastoralists, and a major focus on education. Given the region's history, the fear is that the push for such rapid – potentially non-participatory – development will only further exacerbate conflict tensions (12).

### Recommendations for Future

The factors defined above strongly suggest that further peace-building action is necessary if peaceful co-existence among South Omo ethnic groups is to prevail in the long-term. The external final evaluation document emphasized:

...failure to continue to address the periodic conflicts and the more fundamental root causes in the South Omo Zone will only prolong the area's instability, continue to threaten the stability across the borders, and delay appropriate and equitable development (9).

To achieve sustainable peace, future conflict resolution efforts must address the new context for peace-building and establish deeper interventions for conflict resolution (as opposed to rapid response and mitigation), higher-level institutional strengthening among government and civil society partners, and enhanced linkages with cross-border peace actors. The project evaluation provided a series of recommendations on how to further peace-building work through Pact Ethiopia, which align with Pact Ethiopia's own assessment of appropriate next steps given its experience in South Omo Zone. The most salient of these include:

- *Build capacity and local government and community-levels in conflict prevention and reconciliation* beyond the conflict response approaches that were previously implemented. Such approaches should deepen the use of appreciative methodology and engage communities in processes that address syndromes of hatred, revenge, guilt, and blame that perpetuate the feelings of conflict beyond the cessation of violence.
- *Continue to strengthen civil society partnership and coordination*, especially given the few local partners for conflict prevention and reconciliation in South Omo Zone around conflict reconciliation. This means drawing additionally on civil society that may be primarily engaged in other sectors, but can mainstream conflict in their work.
- *Strengthen horizontal linkages among woredas and among the woredas and zone*, to enhance a coordinated response, joint-planning and improved decision-making, and support the development and implementation of a common strategy towards peace-building based on best-practices.
- *Connect local government initiatives with regional and federal policy-makers*, ensuring that best-practices at the woreda and zone level inform policies from the bottom-up.
- *Support communities in adapting to the changing geo-political and economic context* by supporting participatory processes that allow communities to understand and adapt to the various large-scale investments and economic "openings" taking place within their landscape. This includes agro-investment and cattle marketing.
- *Ensure that South Omo Zone conflict dynamics are connected to the border areas* as political shocks from Sudan or conflict forces from Kenya can easily disrupt South Omo peace processes.

### The ERC Project

Pact Ethiopia has submitted a proposal to USAID for a new project, titled Ethnicities Reconciling Conflict (ERC) which was designed to build upon the experiences and lessons-learned from SELAM-C, and to address gaps to sustainability. Specifically, to quote from the project proposal::

Pact Ethiopia proposes to implement ERC, a new project to address these identified gaps and advance longer term conflict mitigation and reconciliation. Specifically, the new project will: 1) focus not only on conflict response but also on reconciliation and prevention; 2) coordinate among civil society organizations, local government and other key actors to document and disseminate best-practices and to support collaborative planning of activities; 3) build capacity of local communities and local governments in order to empower them to create linkages and facilitate dialogue between the communities and the regional and national level government; and 4) develop linkages to and institutional relationships with cross border communities that impact local conflict inside Ethiopia (2).

As a whole, ERC is designed around the key areas that require intervention to sustain peace-building in South Omo Zone, or reconciliation, institutional strengthening, and cross-border linkages. These intervention areas were also confirmed by the final SELAM-C project evaluation as key areas that required intervention to sustain peace, which emphasized that “...given the precarious nature of the South and associated border areas, the continued Pact/USAID presence in the Zone through the implementation of the ERC Project should be viewed as a vital opportunity for the USG as it pursues its interests in the greater region (9).” Accordingly, the overall goal and objectives of the ERC project are as follows:

**Goal:** Advance long-term reconciliation and conflict transformation for the sustainable development of South Omo Zone.

**Objectives:**

1. Enhance capacity of local government, communities and civil society to support multi-ethnic community-driven conflict mitigation and reconciliation dialogue processes and relevant community driven projects.
2. Facilitate the establishment of local forum that includes civil society, local government & other actors to document and disseminate best practices in conflict mitigation and reconciliation and to support collaborative planning of activities.
3. Strengthen local government-community interactions as well as linkages with higher level government to improve communication and enhance selected governance capacities that affect conflict reconciliation and mitigation
4. Improve peace among cross-border communities through coordination of cross border conflict mitigation efforts in the Karamoja area.