

# **Gender Considerations in the Sudan VEGA/AMED Program: Assessment and Recommendations**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
A. Background on VEGA/AMED and the Gender Assessment .....	1
B. Assessment Methodology.....	2
C. Use of Terms.....	3
<b>II. MAJOR FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
A. The Situation of Women and Men in Southern Sudan (Context and Culture) .....	4
1. Post-war Context.....	4
2. Women.....	4
3. Men.....	6
4. GOSS Position and the Gender Environment.....	7
B. Findings Among Sudanese Institutions (in Juba) .....	8
1. GOSS Agencies.....	8
2. NGOs/CBOs/Private Sector.....	12
C. Findings at the Project Level.....	14
1. AMED Project Structure and Efforts toward Gender Equity.....	14
2. AMED Human Resources.....	15
3. Technical Approaches.....	15
<b>III. RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>18</b>
A. Top Five Recommendations for VEGA/AMED.....	18
B. Additional Recommendations Compiled from Staff and Volunteers.....	20
C. Recommendations that may be beyond the scope of VEGA/AMED.....	20
1. For GOSS.....	20
2. Other.....	21
D. Gaps in the Assessment (e.g. Areas for Further Analysis).....	22

### Appendices

1. VEGA/AMED Gender Assessment Respondents
2. For Volunteers: Interrelationships of Gender and Culture in Southern Sudan
3. AMED Program Staff: Tips for Staff for Integrating Gender
4. Resources on Gender Mainstreaming, for VEGA AMED Team and Partners
5. Interview/Focus Group Questionnaires

## ACRONYMS

<b>AWLAE</b>	African Women Leaders in Agriculture and Environment
<b>AMED</b>	Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development project
<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>GOSS</b>	Government of Southern Sudan
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced People
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>SOWs</b>	Scopes of Work
<b>SPLM</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
<b>WID</b>	Women in Development
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Fund for Women
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VEGA</b>	Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a volunteer gender assessment team commissioned by the VEGA/AMED project and conducted in January 2007<sup>1</sup>. The assessment is a clear indication from the project team of a serious commitment to gender equity, and a candid recognition of the difficulties of achieving such balance in the current political and cultural context. Since – like many development projects in Southern Sudan – the project has not reached its participation targets for women, the team’s primary assignment was to analyze AMED’s relevant strategies and results. By reviewing project documents, analyzing data, and conducting on-site interviews with project staff, volunteers, Sudanese host agencies in the public and private sectors, training beneficiaries, and collaborating organizations, the team produced the findings and recommendations detailed in the pages below.

History and culture in Southern Sudan greatly affect gender relations, limiting opportunities and benefits for women and contributing to destructive pressures on men. For example, the vast majority of women lack education, are illiterate, have limited economic options and no access to loans or capital. High unemployment has particularly affected men as providers (during the war and now). Unaddressed violence and trauma from the war affects the entire population. Interviews revealed a widespread recognition of the insufficient understanding of gender, among both men and women, in government, NGOs, and individuals. GOSS Ministries acknowledge that they are working in a context of strained resources and, therefore, lack capacity to effectively attend to gender, as well as other national priorities. At the same time, there is a clear recognition that if women are, as estimated, at least 65% of the population – then disadvantages to them extend to families, children, and negatively impact the entire country.

Southern Sudan is in a unique position to mainstream gender well and innovatively, and there is a genuine desire for institutions to increase both women’s involvement and staff’s gender capacity. The CPA requirement for employment of at least 25% of women in GOSS provides a visible example in the progression towards gender equity and equality. Another opportunity is the 2007 census for Southern Sudan, which will provide openly available, up-to-date, comprehensive gender disaggregated data.

Within VEGA, there is a high commitment to gender equity, and strong awareness of the importance of involving both women and men in development. Staff acknowledged the emergency orientation of much of the life of the project so far, working within the newly established postwar environment. Staff and volunteers have a strong understanding of their own (and the project’s) needs, and are open to suggestions. Volunteers have been well received by host organizations and are well-placed to increase opportunities for women - particularly in training – by advocating for balanced numbers and for gender-relevant training plans.

In summary, the VEGA AMED team is committed, aware, and highly motivated to revisit gender mainstreaming in new ways in the next phase of the project. While considerable challenges remain, there is great momentum for change in gender relations and for new ways of including women and other vulnerable groups as the society and government of Southern Sudan redefine, rebuild, and move forward at this unique time in their history.

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<sup>1</sup> The assessment was originally planned in 2006, but security concerns and visa issues resulted in postponement to early 2007.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. Background on VEGA/AMED and the Gender Assessment

The Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development (AMED) Program in Southern Sudan, funded by USAID and implemented by Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA)<sup>2</sup>, supports local organizations toward stability and economic growth within the environment set by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The project began in July 2005 and is scheduled to end in September 2008. The program's goal is to enhance Southern Sudan's peace dividend by creating opportunities for improved livelihoods, employment, and recovery. AMED has two primary objectives: 1) to strengthen market and enterprise development in selected urban areas as a means of increasing private sector employment; and 2) to build the capacity of local community, county, and state level government and civil society organizations to provide effective support to livelihood development and employment generation initiatives. Internally displaced persons (IDPs), former combatants, youth, women, and war-affected populations are all target groups within the program.

The main actors affecting program results are the AMED staff, long- and short-term volunteers, and Sudanese partner host agencies (including GOSS Ministries, businesses and business associations, and local NGOs). Training participants (e.g. entrepreneurs, tradespersons, Ministry staff) are also stakeholders. The principal activities through which AMED achieves its objectives are technical assistance or training provided by volunteers, and advisory services and small grants (in-kind and some financial assistance) managed by project staff.

The AMED project exists in a challenging environment in general, with particular obstacles to gender equity. Southern Sudan has just emerged from two decades of protracted war during which, more than anything else, institutional resources and individual efforts have been directed toward survival, basic livelihoods, and progress towards a peace agreement. Focus on gender and other matters of human rights and justice are fairly new on the development agenda, and to the culture as a whole. The clear lack of skills on how to address these issues is therefore not unexpected. While there are no comprehensive statistics, all respondents acknowledged the high level of inequality between men and women in virtually all spheres of life-including education, law, the economy, and decision-making, among others.

Gender-based economic disadvantages include women's limited access to and control over productive resources such as land, credit, and other assets. Women are also disproportionately represented among the illiterate-women's illiteracy in some cases is cited at 98%. Other concerns for women include limited access to reproductive health services, violence (including rape and abduction), and under-representation at policy levels despite their contributions to the liberation struggle. Although some new laws begin to address the history of discrimination against women and promote gender equality, women are still discriminated against due to inconsistencies between different sets of laws – Government of National Unity, Southern Sudan, State and Customary laws – and the corresponding complexities of enforcement. Cultural traditions also contribute to all of these disadvantages.

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<sup>2</sup> AMED is implemented by five member organizations of VEGA; the team is led by Winrock International and includes ACDI-VOCA, International Executive Services Corps (IESC), Citizens Development Corps (CDC), and Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs (CNFA).

## B. Assessment Methodology

The VEGA/AMED program is currently operating in three locations, Juba, Wau and Malakal; the gender assessment covered only Juba due to limitations of time and some security concerns in the other two regions. Working in Juba, where the program Headquarters is now based, the team was able to assess a wide range of activities and talk to a variety of staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries. While evaluation of the other two areas (and of work accomplished in Rumbek and Yei) would have added to the overall picture, the assessment team believes that the results do reflect overall patterns since the program employs a fairly consistent strategy.

**Respondents.** The assessment worked with four categories of respondents: (i) AMED staff, management and volunteers, (ii) institutional partners, host agencies, and collaborators of the program; (iii) individual beneficiaries (women and men); and (iv) international organizations with a major focus on gender. A meeting was convened with a ‘men only’ group to further investigate attitudes and perceptions that specifically disadvantage men and that may in general contribute to sustaining other gender disparities. [See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of respondent institutions and individuals.]

**Collection of data.** In order to capture unique institutional roles, mandates and relationships to VEGA/AMED, the team developed questionnaires for each respondent group. The questions were addressed orally to respondents in group discussions. Some questions were common or quite similar for all organizations, in order to allow comparison. In general, the team sought to understand the mandates and major work of each organization (or scope of work, if staff or volunteer); the nature of collaboration with VEGA/AMED; the extent to which gender had been integrated into guidance or support provided by AMED; and general impressions about roles of women and men in the current environment of Southern Sudan. Thus the assessment data is largely qualitative. [See detailed questionnaires in [Appendix 4](#).]

**Methodology.** Two key methods were used to gather the information, namely focus group discussions and “key informants.” Focus groups were held with sets of similar respondents (e.g. program staff; women farmers; men who stayed in Juba during the war) who had similar experiences relevant to the project’s activities and attention to gender factors. The “key informant” approach was used with the majority of respondents, including VEGA management and host agency representatives. Most volunteers were interviewed as individuals because each had a unique assignment and experience. The majority of respondents in all categories were men.

### C. Use of Terms

Gender is a complex variable bound in social, cultural, economic and political contexts, as well as regional or area-specific contexts within a given country.

**Gender** refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviors, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Whereas biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them. **Gender equity** means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women. Gender equality is the desired result of these steps and measures.

**Gender equality** entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued, and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equity strategies are used eventually to gain gender equality. Equity is the means; equality is the result.

**Gender Integration** means inserting gender factors into programs and documents that take into account both the differences and inequalities between women and men in program planning, implementation and evaluation. Gender integration can mean looking at how the roles of women and men and their relative power affect who does what in carrying out an activity and who benefits. It is a more limited term about process than Gender Mainstreaming.

**Gender Mainstreaming** implies an entirely new way of doing business for an organization – in other words, mainstreaming a gender perspective from the top to the bottom of an organization, from CEO communication to personnel policies to partner agreements and project activities on the ground. More simply, gender mainstreaming is a way to transform how an organization does business, so that addressing gender inequalities and valuing both men's and women's full participation become integral to an organization's operations and effectiveness. This process helps institutionalize gender in organizations.

## II. MAJOR FINDINGS

### A. The Situation of Women and Men in Southern Sudan (Context and Culture)

As in any country, attention to gender balance in interventions in Southern Sudan requires knowledge of the factors that have left women with fewer skills and opportunities than their male counterparts. Understanding the perceptions of both men and women about gender relationships (in private and public life) and access to resources is vital in designing effective program activities.

#### 1. Post War Context

Significant challenges for all of Southern Sudan result from the recent 20-year period of war: poverty; lack of education, housing, sanitation; lack of infrastructure; lack of employment; violence as a commonly used problem-solving strategy. In addition, the war brings unaddressed trauma issues for the entire population. The gravity and scope of these challenges can make gender issues appear to be a low priority in the timeline of developing Southern Sudan as a whole. At the same time, there are many current opportunities to create a government and a society that addresses the rights and the needs of all of its citizens.

#### 2. Women

Although there are some variations in the status of women between and within different communities that form Southern Sudan, interviewees unanimously described the overall situation of women as subordinate to that of men. The vast majority of women in Southern Sudan lack formal education and have low social and economic status. Women are discriminated against by laws that favor men on inheritance and divorce, and in some areas still are unable to testify in court. Consequently, few women occupy positions of power and influence. Nearly all respondents for this assessment affirmed this position. Some of the concerns raised included the following:

Particular **challenges** for women:

- High levels of illiteracy. Although there are no comprehensive and up-to-date education statistics, the majority of women are said to be illiterate: the Ministry of Gender cited a figure as high as 90%. This is because many families do not send girls to school at all, and those who do enroll in early grades usually drop out after a few years to be married. (Marriage of daughters is a key source of wealth here, since families receive dowries in the form of livestock.) The apparently diminishing cultural tradition of using girls as labor to tend livestock has also contributed to high levels of illiteracy among women.

Since this challenge was so universally cited, we include some secondary data here:<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Education Status for Household Members over 20 years, Mundri and Yei Counties**

Level	Mundri				Yei			
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%
None	98	22.5	336	62.5	55	17.3	176	49.0
Nursery	1	0.2	3	0.6	0	0	2	06
Primary	222	50.9	151	28.1	109	34.3	95	26.5
Junior	42	9.6	27	5.0	69	21.7	64	17.8
Secondary	65	14.9	18	3.3	51	16.0	15	4.2
University	1	0.2	2	0.4	30	9.4	6	1.7
Graduate	7	1.6	1	0.2	4	1.3	1	0.3
Total	436		538		318		359	

**Table 2: Primary School Enrollment<sup>4</sup>**

School information	Upper Nile	Equatoria	Bahr el Ghazal	Total
Schools	261	361	396	1018
Pupils enrolled	51,755	75,894	86,834	214,483
Boys	37,999	48,075	73,241	159,315
Girls	13,756	27,819	3,593	55,168
<b>% Girls</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>26%</b>

- Under-representation at decision-making levels. Although all government institutions are working hard to achieve the mandatory 25% women representation set by the CPA, the majority of these women are in the lowest ranks, often working as clerks, messengers and cleaners. This situation is largely explained by women's low level of education, but some cases of discrimination were cited. One senior female professional in a Ministry, currently a Deputy Director, reported that she had to fight hard to get that position even though she had met all the requirements.
- Limited access to credit- no ownership of assets. Women are still viewed as property of their husbands and families. Once widowed, the woman is inherited by next of kin who takes control of her and property previously held by the husband. Women therefore lack collateral required to access loans in institutions such as banks.
- Lack of protection and psychosocial services. A culture of violence remains, leftover from war, including banditry, extortion, and gender based violence by former soldiers. Unaddressed trauma and mental health concerns exist for the whole population, from the war, and there is a lack of ameliorative services.
- Women lack marketing skills and information. Information is key to effective marketing. Because many women are illiterate and often operate within a narrow radius, they fail to remain competitive in a fast moving world where electronic marketing is taking root.

<sup>3</sup> Itto, A., PhD. (2004) Baseline Study on the Status of Women in the New Sudan: Report from Mundri and Yei Counties, Western Equatoria, Southern Sudan.

<sup>4</sup> Stakeholders' workshop on the status of women in New Sudan: Factors affecting women's participation, access, control and ownership of social, economic and political resources. (29-30 Nov 2001) Nairobi, Kenya

Particular **opportunities** for women:

- The momentum and environment set by the CPA – particularly its requirement of a minimum 25% women in government agencies – is widely discussed and has led to real commitments for change.
- There appears to be genuine interest in gender equity within GOSS.
- Footholds and openings for women in small business: Many businesswomen are in the service sector, concentrated in small restaurants and hotels, because the sector is socially unattractive for men. The assessment team learned that “if you tell a man to clean dishes, he will pack and go home.”
- There is a common perception that women are more bankable than men.
- A shift in gender roles during and due to the war has allowed women access to more options in subsistence business activities. Their responsibility as primary caretakers for family has also contributed to their increased skills and confidence.

### 3. Men

Men hold substantially more jobs and positions of leadership, are better educated, and have more access to financial and capital resources within the family and in society. Yet men too face particular issues in Southern Sudan. Traditionally, men have been considered the heads of the families and “kings of the house.” Along with this role, men are looked to for solutions to problems and blamed when solutions can’t be found. Often with multiple wives and children, they face increased pressures to provide. Their sense of self-respect and credibility with others has a strong base in their ability to provide for family. In the public sector, men face collective pressure to secure peace and pursue economic gains for their newly stable country, while at the same time learning new rules on power sharing with women and international stakeholders.

Particular **challenges** for men:

- Men are affected by the significant challenges affecting the whole society: poverty, lack of education, housing, sanitation; lack of infrastructure, employment, business opportunities, and lack of programs targeting men and former soldiers.
- Many “male roles” were by necessity taken on by women during the war. Specifically in Juba, women have taken on men’s roles in traveling beyond the city limits to engage in subsistence business-related activity that was previously done by men. The cultural tradition of polygamy creates added pressures on men as providers in a context where providing is virtually impossible.
- Cultural traditions that allow, without question, the degradation and oppression of women. A culture of violence leftover from war.
- Unaddressed trauma and mental health concerns, and lack of services to address them.
- Alcohol abuse as a means of escape from the negative economic and social impacts of the war. Peer support for drinking and lack of peer support for positive activities.
- Men’s particular issues and challenges are in general left out of high-level discussions about gender. Although gender work is described as intending to make sure men and women benefit, there may be little actual precedent for considering men’s particular gender-based challenges and issues.

Particular **opportunities** for men:

- A strong desire for peace at all levels of society, coupled with recognition that the social landscape has totally changed since the war, can provide momentum to support change in gender roles and issues.

- Great potential for including men's issues in long term planning.
- Chance for GOSS (with support and funding) to provide programs addressing these dynamics and targeting vulnerable populations of men.
- The growing recognition that many cultural norms limiting women and women's roles were imported from the North. Ethnic pride can add to the momentum for change and for reversing many of these negative gender-based trends.

#### 4. Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Position and the Gender Environment

Southern Sudan has made efforts during the last decade to create the necessary structures for addressing gender issues, in clear recognition of the fact that ignoring gender undermines human integrity and economic growth. Some of the important milestones are:

**The National Convention of 1994.** The Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) pledged to liberate every individual and society from all forms of political, economic and social and natural constraints to freedom, development, pursuit of happiness and self fulfillment, social justice, democracy, human rights and equity for all irrespective of ethnicity, religion and gender. Gains in reduction of gender gaps have remained small (Judiciary Committee Report 2000). There are still few women in key positions in SPLM despite the 25% guarantee for women

**Bill of Rights in Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan.** These progressive documents include the following provisions toward promoting equality for women and men:

- Women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men.
- Women shall have the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits with men.
- Women have the right to participate equally with men in public life.
- Women shall have the right to own property and shall share in the estate of a deceased husband together with any surviving legal heirs of the deceased.

All levels of the Government of Southern Sudan shall:

- Promote women's participation in public life and their representation in the legislative and executive organs by at least 25% as an affirmative action to redress imbalances created by history, customs and traditions;
- Enact laws to combat harmful customs and traditions which undermine the dignity and status of women; and
- Provide maternity and childcare and medical care for pregnant and lactating mothers.

**Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs.** The establishment of the Ministry has provided an institutional structure and framework for promoting and guiding gender mainstreaming in all public and private sectors.

**The Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan-April 2005** brought Sudanese women together to define their priorities for gender equality and women's rights in post-conflict Sudan. The resulting document makes

specific recommendations in the following areas, in addition to work on issues of economic policy, livelihoods, and basic social services (health and education):

- Governance and Rule of Law: E.g. 50% equal representation of women and men; programs to redress negative customs and practices; representation of women in monitoring of the CPA; women's participation in Darfur peace process
- Gender-Based Violence: E.g. establishment of agencies to handle cases of GBV; recognition of HIV/AIDS in relation to human security
- Capacity Building and Institutional Development: E.g. establishment of Women's Fund within the Multi-donor Trust Fund; Support for women's NGOs and businesses

**Development of the Gender Policy Framework (October 2006). Main areas of focus:**

- The legal framework, focusing on harmonization of different laws (Government of National Unity, Southern Sudan, State and customary laws)
- Gender and Poverty-removing constraints to women's access to productive resources
- Education and Health concerns for women
- Violence Against Women; Human Security
- Gender and Reconstruction: Shelter and Housing, Social Welfare
- Gender Considerations in Land, Agriculture and Environment
- Gender and the Economy
- Gender, Power and Decision-making; Rural women and local government

## **B. Findings Among Sudanese Institutions (in Juba)**

The gender assessment team conducted interviews with a variety of governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Juba. GOSS ministries interviewed included some that were host agencies with the VEGA AMED project and some that were not. These latter ministries were consulted for a broad based picture of the social and cultural contexts for gender and the level of support within the government sector for gender equity and equality. As stated already, for purposes of security and logistics, the team's interviews were limited to organizations and institutions based in Juba. Of all host agencies represented in the interviews, 50% were government Ministries or Commissions and 50% represented nongovernmental organizations.

### **1. GOSS Agencies**

**Overview.** The assessment included six interviews with five Ministries and one Commission: Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, and Center for Statistics (a Commission within the Ministry of Commerce). Sixteen individuals participated in these interviews: 14 were men and two were women. The assessment was not intended to evaluate gender mainstreaming within GOSS ministries that were not host agencies; getting information from the various ministries was a way to gain valuable insights into the context of gender for the society as a whole. In general, within GOSS, working with gender is fairly new, skills and knowledge are low, and therefore the picture emerging from these interviews is by necessity incomplete.

Of those represented, five out of six Ministries or commissions acknowledged that GOSS lacks capacity for dealing with gender. The gaps they identified were lack of gender training, lack of qualified women to fill

positions, and lack of infrastructure to follow through on gender objectives or other objectives. Although officials from all ministries stated that they gave priority to women, IDPs, former soldiers, and other vulnerable groups, little information was accessed to show what specific and concrete strategies, initiatives, and programs are in place or planned. Although there is growing acceptance within GOSS of the need to address gender issues there is still reluctance, as well, particularly from men. Therefore there is a need to adopt a Gender and Development approach which clearly and visibly addresses issues of men **and** women, in addition to using (where applicable) the “WID”<sup>5</sup> approach which just focuses on women.

In all GOSS interviews, representatives articulated clear support for gender inclusiveness. All could describe in detail how their particular entity was or was not succeeding in following the “25% standard” for women’s involvement from the CPA. Most acknowledged that they had not succeeded at employing 25% women in the middle and higher level positions, mainly because women’s exclusion from education during the war left them under-qualified, without the basic requirements for the jobs advertised. The Ministry of Labor put it this way, “If a woman applies and I hire her when she does not meet the requirements, I will be accused of corruption.” Most women are in lower job grades (7-10) including clerks, messengers and cleaners.

The strong correlation between culture and gender roles in Southern Sudan is also a factor in the employment of women, with huge impact on identities and roles of men and women in society. Since gender equity challenges the social norms which sustain gender disparities, many people (particularly men) see a conflict. This conflict was well articulated by one respondent from one of the Ministries. “There are two things here, the family and the office. If we don’t separate them, we will have a problem. If my wife is my boss at the office and then doesn’t respect me at home, there will be trouble.” He gave an example of a woman who, after becoming a high level government official, refused to take a subservient role at home and also was perceived as showing behavior disrespectful to males at the office.

Because most respondent agencies presented male interviewees, the assessment may not have gotten a fully accurate picture of realities for women working within the GOSS. Other than a general acknowledgement from all ministries that women held lower positions and that it was hard to hire women for higher positions because of their lack of education, only two statements suggested that women faced discrimination in employment within GOSS. One such remark came from a woman employed by GOSS and the other from an outsider (a long term VEGA volunteer). Men in the ministries may be less aware than women of issues negatively impacting women staff, since they are not affected directly.

Given the gaps and challenges described in virtually every GOSS interview, it is clear that there are concrete ways that VEGA and other organizations can work with GOSS ministries to support their work in gender inclusiveness. In addition to providing training and technical advice through VEGA AMED staff and volunteers, a number of straightforward print resources could be made available to ministries to help promote inclusiveness of women and vulnerable groups in all aspects of their work.

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<sup>5</sup> Women in Development (WID)

## **MINISTRY-SPECIFIC FINDINGS**

### **Ministry Of Gender**

#### Challenges:

- No reliable data on gender exists by which the Ministry could establish baselines and benchmarks for evaluating progress. (For example, there are a variety of estimates on what percentage of the population women actually comprise, what percentage of women are illiterate, what percentage of households are headed by women, etc.)
- Inadequate infrastructure (phone, office space, computers, internet), difficulty communicating with field offices in the states, and the smallest budget of any Ministry.
- Inadequate access to funds available to other ministries.
- Mandate not backed by a budget or systems within the GOSS which would ensure accountability on gender issues; for example, the CPA's 25% standard is not clearly linked to Ministry of Gender for follow-up (nor to the Ministry of Labour).

#### Opportunities:

- Pride within GOSS that the Ministry of Gender is the first such Ministry in all of Sudan. Unique opportunities to impact issues affecting women in all aspects of life (health, education, economics, legal aspects, and judicial oppression).
- Having senior men in the Ministry (Deputy Secretary and Deputy Director General) helps to clarify that gender is not about women but about how women and men relate to each other; this exemplifies that GOSS does not consider gender work only "women's work" - they have provided visible male advocates for gender equity.
- Women are represented even at the ministerial levels of GOSS for the first time in history.
- The Ministry has recently developed a gender policy framework that will guide gender mainstreaming within GOSS and other partner organizations

### **Ministry of Environment**

#### Challenges:

- Protecting the environment can have negative impacts in the short term on women/families and other vulnerable groups. (E.g., the ban on poaching affects impoverished women, who may do subsistence poaching for food. Protections against deforestation affect women collecting wood for cooking or selling.)
- Overcrowding from large numbers of returnees and IDPs (both populations include a majority of women) also contributes to these problems and strains natural resources.

#### Opportunities:

- Awareness within the Ministry of the interactions between environmental issues and gender issues.
- Removal of landmines will benefit women in particular, who are especially at risk as they gather firewood, etc.
- Some programs implemented by the Ministry pay attention to gender issues and can be role model projects.

## **Ministry of Agriculture**

### Challenges:

- The subsistence farms of Southern Sudan do not produce enough food for their own families.
- Concerns with food security may lead to the development of agricultural policies and large-scale agricultural development that provide for food security but threaten the livelihood of women.

### Opportunities:

- Clear recognition by both GOSS and state authorities that women constitute the majority of small farmers (60%) in Southern Sudan (and the associated recognition that any agricultural policies will have an impact on women).
- Support for women doing small farming is available - the Ministry has made it a special priority to target women and IDPs in provision of tools and seeds.

## **Ministry of Commerce**

### Challenges:

- Based on the past two years, the Ministry does not see practical impacts for women of its policies designed to promote gender equality.

### Opportunities:

- The Ministry recognizes the high level of poverty of women.
- Recognition by the Ministry that women need to do well in order for men to do well.

## **Center for Statistics**

### Challenges:

- Although methods of data collection are gender sensitive in some ways, family interviews were designed to address men, in respect to their status as heads of household. Since men may be less informed on various family and home issues, some census information regarding or affecting women may be absent or inaccurate.

### Opportunities:

- The first time in the history of Sudan that population data for the South will be collected separately and included in statistics (2007 Census).
- A number of methods of data collection are gender sensitive (several priority indicators specifically refer to and elicit information from women as well as men, and disaggregate data by gender; survey teams have at least two women per team, so that women respondents will be interviewed by women).
- The Center is committed to making the information available for use in all sectors and to the public at large – which can be used to gain greater understanding of the specifics of gender issues in Southern Sudan.

## **Ministry of Labour**

### Challenges:

- Existence of a wide gender gap in women's employment within GOSS and the historic factors and obstacles to employment of women at high levels.
- No evidence of concrete policies and structures to ensure accountability within GOSS in regards to the affirmative action policies of 25% representation of women at all levels.

### Opportunities:

- Clear affirmative action policy promoting women's representation in GOSS ministries at a mandatory level of at least 25%.
- Indication of an understanding that gender equality has benefits for both men and women and for Southern Sudan as a whole.

## **2. Private Sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

### **Private Sector (Chamber Of Commerce)**

The Southern Sudan Chamber of Commerce is an internationally linked private association which assists business owners and entrepreneurs, with the broad goal of country-wide and household-level economic development. The business community of Southern Sudan faces the particular challenge of having been closed down for 20 years of war, during which time the only businesses allowed to operate were owned by Northerners. The private sector to date consists only of small, subsistence businesses operating within a small geographic area (most only within their locality). So far, there is no economic activity large enough to involve exports.

These challenges affect everyone, and many men – as well as almost **all** women – need skills training and education. References were made during the interview to planned programs to support IDPs and former soldiers, but no details were given.

### Challenges:

- Women's participation in the business sector is limited by their lack of education. In particular, women need literacy and math classes, business skills, entrepreneurial skills, and social freedom to start and operate businesses (even if their husbands resist). At the same time, men must be shown how entire families benefit make when women can make additional cash, in order to ensure their support and avoid family conflict.
- The Chamber of Commerce (COC) supports mainly those business areas which are traditionally male-dominated, including agriculture, livestock, tea cultivation, logging, and fisheries.
- Large-scale businesses (i.e. the most profitable enterprises) are seen as men's domain.
- The possibility exists that cultural taboos regarding gender are sufficiently strong to limit the Chamber of Commerce's (and other supportive groups) ability to advocate for gender equality. The Chamber requested that the international community put pressure on Sudan to develop laws establishing and protecting women's rights to start and run businesses, but did not specifically indicate their own willingness to advocate directly for such laws.

### Opportunities:

- Clear articulation (in interview) of the benefits of involving women in the economic development of Southern Sudan.
- Self-described capacity to function as a “watchdog” or “whistle blower” in regard to legislative advocacy affecting the private sector. The capacity for legislative advocacy can be adapted to support gender equality.
- Women are prominent in businesses related to food and restaurants (as well as small scale agriculture).

**NGOs and CBOs.** Organizations interviewed: Women’s Self Help Development Organization (a CBO with a mission to benefit women, including two for-profit enterprises operated by/for men and women; NICODO a cooperative milk marketing and sales NGO; and ‘Mary’s Group,’ a farmers’ cooperative and member organization of NICODO.

### General Perceptions by Interviewees

- Women have a stronger work ethic and more effective work habits than men.
- Women are more trustworthy and accurate in managing money than men.
- When women earn money, the entire family benefits (while men use cash primarily to benefit themselves).
- When women make and control money, they become more outspoken and have more control over their own lives.
- Women’s increased control over money and their lives has put visible strains on marriages. (It is unclear how unusual or widespread this phenomenon is seen to be).
- It is common for men to spend time and money drinking, which has negative impacts on them and on their ability to provide for their families.
- Given the cultural context, there are clear benefits to organizing separate groups for women and men (for training, cooperatives, for-profit enterprises) so that women can benefit more fully from their efforts<sup>6</sup>.
- There is an expressed need for training on gender and related issues (including training for men about work habits and drinking) in all three organizations.

### Challenges:

- Lack of funds and capacity to implement their work in community development.
- Lack of funds and capacity to develop and expand enterprises and markets in their for-profit work.
- Unclear numbers of men and women beneficiaries.

### Opportunities:

- Commitment to gender equity.
- Recognition of traditional gender-defined roles for men and women in business, and willingness to depart from established gender-based roles.
- Awareness of the positive personal and societal impact of women’s participation in private sector activities.

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<sup>6</sup> This perception was echoed by VEGA AMED staff.

## C. Findings at the Project Level

### 1. AMED Project Structures and Efforts toward Gender Equity

The VEGA AMED team has clearly stated commitments to pursue gender balance in its work. The starting point is the AMED revised program description<sup>7</sup>, which presents a clear commitment to pursuing women's involvement (in addition to that of men and youth) with the following illustrative language:

Sixty percent of Southern Sudan's population is women. While there are strong gender roles in most vocations of Southern Sudan, the AMED team will ensure that associations and enterprises that employ women are included in the project's activities. The expertise of the African Women's Leadership in Agriculture and the Economy (AWLAE) project, which shares office space with VEGA in Nairobi, will be applied to leverage these activities. We will carry out gender impact assessments on key activities and will work with existing programs for women, e.g. the Women's Self Help Organization in Juba and the 'Women and the Law' project in Rumbek.

The AMED team refers to the following **guiding questions provided by USAID** to projects in its economic growth portfolio for Southern Sudan:

- Are women or men disadvantaged by the market conditions that will be affected by the project? ("Project" can mean activity, volunteer assignment, etc.)
- How can the project address current inequities?
- Do women and men have equal opportunities to participate in the project? Also, **do** they participate equally, and how? If not, why not?
- What changes has the project led to? (Positive and negative)
- How can the project monitor impacts on men and women? What indicators and methodologies are used?

A clear example of attention to gender comes in the form of disaggregated training targets set and tracked within each relevant volunteer assignment. Volunteers' final reports include numbers of women and men trained. In some cases, these reports also provide qualitative data relevant to gender. Other information is anecdotal; for example AMED staff told the assessment team that in a training on peace building for youth (mainly boys) in Rumbek, the volunteer (a woman) challenged the boys about their perceptions of gender, and afterwards several boys said they felt encouraged to send their sisters to school and even to bring their wives to the training.

### 2. AMED Human Resources

**Staff.** The VEGA AMED staff team includes about 20% women in Juba. The project faces many of the same challenges affecting the population in general, including lower qualifications among local women and the fact that many educated Sudanese women have not yet returned to Sudan. As part of its overall commitment to re-development, the project is committed to hiring Southern Sudanese staff whenever possible (rather than expatriates or third-country nationals). The AMED project has not provided specialized

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<sup>7</sup> The project revision was approved in late 2006.

gender training for staff; however, several staff members have had some such training in previous professional or academic settings.

**Volunteers.** Staff and management agreed that over the life-of-project so far, many more volunteers have been men than women. Program staff felt that having more women volunteers – particularly African women – would allow the project to set an example for Sudanese host agencies and trainees about women’s abilities in business and other fields. There was some disagreement as to whether women (especially international) were less inclined than men to volunteer in Southern Sudan due to harsh conditions, particularly outside of Juba, but staff had examples of both women and men who had chosen to leave assignments early for such reasons.

Given their varied backgrounds and selection based on specific technical capacities, understandably most volunteers do not have a background in gender equity. However the volunteers interviewed during the assessment were open to gender training and orientation in order to increase the effectiveness of their assignments, whatever the field.

### 3. Technical Approaches

The AMED project conducts technical activities under two objectives and nine different task areas, as laid out in the revised program description:

**Objective 1: Increased private sector opportunities in urban areas**

*Task 1. Support and Strengthen Chambers of Commerce*

*Task 2. Promote Business Skills Training*

*Task 3. Provide Business Advisory Services*

*Task 4. Develop Public-Private Partnerships*

**Objective 2: Enhanced capacity of local institutions**

*Task 1. Strengthen Capacity of Local Government Agencies*

*Task 2. Prepare and Revise Reintegration Strategies*

*Task 3. Support Local Initiatives to Strengthen Markets*

*Task 4. Agricultural Marketing Associations and Cooperatives*

*Task 5. Institutional Transition for the Agriculture Sector Training Centers*

Since volunteer assignments are the principal vehicle for achieving these tasks, the development of Scopes of Work (SOWs) – and later supervision and management of assignments while they are underway – is an essential technical task accomplished by AMED staff. Staff consult closely with host agencies (e.g. Ministries, business associations, NGOs) to determine which activities will contribute most to maximizing the peace through economic growth and job creation, while at the same time building local capacity. It is clear that AMED staff forge relationships with key individuals within the host agencies and may serve as mentors and collaborators beyond the fact of individual assignments.

Principal activities within the volunteer assignments are (1) technical assistance/advisory services; (2) training in a specific topic area (e.g. carpentry, dairy production, entrepreneurship); and (3) organizational development. While designing the SOWs, AMED staff have opportunities to discuss with host agencies

how activities will be affected by gender considerations, and how the assignment can involve and have impact for men and women in substantial ways. One example where this has happened: a small firm in Rumbek that manufactures plastic bottles for water from an artesian well requested that AMED provide a volunteer computer instructor to work with them for three weeks. AMED program staff agreed to design the SOW and recruit a volunteer if the group agreed to involve a minimum of 30% women, and they did it. Such discussions are not yet routine, but may be going forward.

Beyond volunteer inputs, AMED includes a component for small grants to strengthen local institutions. To date the main grant recipient has been a local NGO called the Women’s Self Help Development Organization; support has also gone to strengthen agricultural vocational training centers. The project staff consider AMED’s work with WSHO to be a major success of the program, both in pursuing gender equity and in terms of the impact achieved: “WSHO has seen a big change because there has been lots of follow-up with them on their small grant, plus some of the women have been there the whole time and have really increased their skills. The office is now set up, they have the right attitudes, a business plan, etc.”

### Data on Participation by Men and Women

The greatest number of persons benefiting from the project are local trainees and agency staff who attend volunteer-led trainings. In general, many of the organizations interviewed do not have well-organized data that is disaggregated by sex. This is in part due to the newness and to the lack of systems for doing so. For example, the host agencies could not readily provide written data on people trained by AMED volunteers. They also could not provide hard data on numbers of men and women employed by or assisted by their agencies.

The team was able to get fairly complete data from the NGO NICODO, included here for illustrative purposes only:

**Table 3: NICODO Staff**

Category/position	#Men	# Women	Total
General Assembly (farmers selling milk to NICODO)	180 <sup>8</sup>	20	200
Board of Directors	13	2	15
Staff	4	4	8
Milk collectors	4	0	4
Milk sellers	0	4	4
Cleaners	0	2	2
Security guards	2	0	2
	203	32	335

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<sup>8</sup> Men form the majority in the general assembly, yet the respondents (men) said that most of the work done by women. Farms headed by women are said to be the most productive.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A. Next Steps in Support of Gender Equity for VEGA /AMED

The assessment team's principal recommendation for the project team is to develop a comprehensive in-house gender mainstreaming strategy-consistent with USAID/Ministry of Gender expectations. As far as resources allow, this should involve developing baselines relevant to project activities so that progress can really be measured. In developing the strategy, the assessment team suggests that VEGA AMED incorporate the following specific recommendations, which came from staff, volunteers, Ministry officials, and NGO/CBO/private sector host agency respondents.

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1. Develop training curricula for current staff and long-term volunteers, including specific "tips" on ways to pursue gender equity in the everyday work of the project<sup>9</sup>. Develop the program in collaboration with existing VEGA staff who have a gender background, and offer them leading roles in the training development and implementation. This could be facilitated by a dedicated long-term volunteer with a background in gender mainstreaming or gender in development.

*Justification: Staff, management and volunteers expressed interest in gender training. In every interview, it was noted that gender and culture are intertwined. Local and East African staff are valuable resources on culture, gender, and how they interact.*

2. Provide clear, concrete guidelines on gender mainstreaming in formal orientation for incoming volunteers<sup>10</sup>, to include:

- SOWs that make specific reference to how men, women and vulnerable groups will be included or represented in services delivered, and to how these services are relevant to gender issues.
- Clear deliverables regarding gender.
- Information about ways for trainers to consider the needs of men and women participants.
- Program regularly scheduled times for volunteers to consult with Sudanese and East African staff on issues of gender and culture.
- In cases where a fully-fledged training might not be provided in the needed timeframe, develop print versions of general gender guidelines for volunteers.

*Justification: Staff, management and volunteers expressed interest in adding value to their various assignments by incorporating gender focus into preparations.*

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix 3 includes tips for staff to consider gender in their work.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 2 for suggested draft document to be used in training for volunteers.

3. Develop and/or update a gender mainstreaming strategy for staff to apply throughout project implementation, including:

- General guidelines about gender for new staff in cases where a fully-fledged training might not be provided in the needed timeframe.
- Inclusion of gender responsibilities among other priority areas in job descriptions, timelines, accountability components and M & E components of the project; for example gender-sensitive impact indicators to track who benefits from each activity. (Details of how training programs can address gender issues would fall under this umbrella.)
- Tools and resources for promoting gender mainstreaming and mentoring with GOSS or civil society counterparts. Include practical ways to advocate for greater participation of women in partner institutions (e.g. including a session on gender during business training).
- Program changes to allow for more small grants and loans to NGO/CBO partners (including participation of women).
- For government and non-governmental partners: scheduled follow-up to supplement training programs, to include check-ups on progress with gender equity).

*Justification: Staff and management expressed a desire for clearer, more practical expectations of how to incorporate gender into the overall design of the program, as a way to keep focused on gender among their many responsibilities. Staff particularly expressed the need for grants, loans, and concrete tools for mentoring – in recognition that gender is long-term issue that takes time, repetition, flexibility, (and in this context, the reality that information alone is not enough to reduce gender gaps) - it's not just a numbers game.*

4. Adjust practices and strategies for recruitment of staff and volunteers to include targeting of women and Africans.

*Justification: Interviewees shared examples of how effective women volunteers and staff have been a model for target groups on women's potential and abilities. The project can be an example for host agencies, donor agencies, etc., on gender balance.*

5. Ensure gender-sensitivity in each impact indicator, and designate a staff person to ensure that partners and volunteers can report this way.

- a.) Review current program indicators; if necessary add impact indicators relevant to gender
- b.) Evaluate the kinds of data being tracked, to ensure that some indicators measure change for women and men
- c.) Evaluate the project monitoring system and specify who tracks data and how; how and when it's reported (and to whom?), and who provides analysis.

*Justification: In order to be responsive to changes in USAID's strategy and framework, VEGA is in a position to provide more data on disaggregated project impact.*

## B. Additional Tips

- Keep in mind that in some cases, separate organizations for men and women are the most effective approach for developing long-term gender equality. While overall gender mainstreaming is the goal, sometimes cultural factors mean that women can advance more effectively in partnership with each other and then join mixed groups later. (For example, the women in “Mary’s Group” see men’s participation as a drain on the organization, but they need support to change and strengthen their structure. The men’s group, if they wanted to continue or reform, would also need support.)
- Empower women by training them in bookkeeping, business skills, English.
- Provide practical skills for uneducated/ illiterate women about ways to get income, including handicrafts.
- Computer training is widely needed in the population as a whole. People have not had exposure to computers during the war.
- Training requires a time investment, and repetition - two weeks without follow-up may be inadequate.
- Keep in mind the possibility that training, without grants/loans or follow-up, is not always relevant to women or to other disadvantaged constituencies. Remember this if women are not coming to the training, even though language and schedule is considered. There are reports of beneficiaries telling staff – ‘we don’t need more workshops, we need help (concrete support).’

## C. Recommendations beyond the scope of VEGA AMED

### 1. For GOSS

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Gender and UNIFEM, other relevant NGOs, and local women’s NGOs to develop a comprehensive long-term training program on gender (including men’s issues and gender-based violence) for all levels and sectors of society, with clear guidelines on who’s doing what. Include a component to strengthen the capacity of women’s NGOs.

*Justification: Requests and recommendations for training came from every local group, entity, individual, and Ministry that we interviewed. GOSS officials in particular said that the whole society, at every level, needs training to help them understand new gender policies.*

- Assist the Ministry of Gender to implement its Gender Policy Framework, partnering with all Ministries (not only those in social/humanitarian sector) and to facilitate meaningful work beyond gender-related employment quotas.
- Develop gender programs focused on men’s issues also, including substance abuse education and services; mental health/trauma services; training in gender, culture, and gender based violence.
- Empower both women and men – “Empower both so they can understand themselves, and so all can understand that men and women should not go alone.”
- Support GOSS and the Ministries of Gender and Labour in developing national priorities for employment of women/vulnerable groups, with strong accountability measures and a tiered approach to goals and benchmarks for longer-term criteria (including scholarship programs, adult literacy for vulnerable groups, etc.).

*Justification: To implement the 25% standard on employment of women set in the CPA in a comprehensive, planned way, attending to more urgent or more quickly achievable priorities first.*

Work with the Ministries of Gender, Labour, and Commerce to:

- Offer incentives within the government for making or exceeding 25% women's participation, and monitor at which levels women are involved.
- Offer incentives to the private sector for achieving a minimum of 25% employment of women.
- Offer incentives for local government to establish policies supporting businesses and employment for women and vulnerable groups (e.g., reduced market fees for operating market businesses).

*Justification: All ministries described the difficulties of achieving 25% employment of women. The Ministry of Labour noted that they have no way of enforcing employment of women in the private sector.*

Extend capacity building to support the GOSS Ministries in implementing stated plans and strengthening their attention to gender in these plans, to include:

- Promotion of girls' education, and development of boarding schools for girls.
- Improved access to health care for women all over Southern Sudan.
- Dealing with landmines and poaching bans and their impact on families.
- Increase agricultural capacity of subsistence farmers.
- Developing mental health services to address trauma issues for the entire population, especially targeting former soldiers, refugees and IDPs.
- Strengthening laws to protect women and children, provide child support for families that are abandoned by the father, and to provide legal protection for women reporting rape and other violence by SPLA soldiers.
- Facilitate cross-Ministry work on programs specifically targeting women and vulnerable groups.
- Develop capacity throughout GOSS to plan with considerations of the impacts on women and vulnerable groups of any broad based development programs (agriculture, commerce, labour).

*Justification: Ministries are able to articulate problem areas and plans for gender related programs to address them but lack infrastructure, resources, and capacity to carry them out.*

## **2. Other**

- Coordinate efforts in micro-lending and small business development (and related training) by large and small NGOs, the government, and UN bodies, with attention paid to gender and vulnerable groups and to avoid duplication, note gaps, etc.
- Link gender issues and vulnerable groups to children's well being in public awareness campaigns. (Include both men's and women's issues.)
- Establish a coordinating committee of all registered NGOs working in Southern Sudan – to meet monthly and link NGOs with each other, local groups, and government.
- Work to mobilize the women's community (NGOs) to promote sustainability of gender work over the long term in Southern Sudan.

### **D. Gaps in the Assessment (e.g. Areas for Further Analysis)**

The usual time limitations of the in-country portion of the assessment limited the team's ability to get a full overview of the activities of the project and gender-related issues. Finally, the team's work in Juba gave a rich view of the government sector but did not address issues or examples that may be particular to host agencies in Wau, Yei, Rumbek, or other areas.

As stated elsewhere, there is no full and comprehensive data on gender in Southern Sudan. The team recognizes that the snapshot provided by the interviews and meetings is valuable while at the same time incomplete.

The team did not get to know or explore the Women's NGO (local NGO and CBO) world. More information from this sector would have strengthened the assessment team's perspective on the larger context for gender issues and women's realities.

## APPENDIX 1: VEGA AMED Gender Assessment Respondents

January 24 – February 1, 2007 Juba, Southern Sudan

**24 Jan 07**

**Ministry of Gender**

Peter Sukole, Under Secretary  
Ajak Kuol, Deputy Director General of Gender

**VEGA Long Term Volunteer**, Information Technology  
Juke Mabior, Ministry of Environment

**Ministry of Labour**

James Tipo, Acting Under Secretary  
Nyingwi Livo, Director of Labor

**Ministry of Environment**

Victor Wurda Lo Tombe, Director General, Environment  
Laura Tete Lino, Deputy Director, Tourism  
Bismark George Lowoh, Senior Inspector, Tourism  
David Batali Oliver, Deputy Director, Environment  
Kapuki Tonguni Lado, Asst. Inspector, Environment  
Cecilia Mogga, Senior Inspector-Pollution, Environment  
Joseph Lamu, Director-Biodiversity & Natural Heritage, Environment

**25 Jan 07**

**UNICEF**

Maury Mendenhall, Child Protection

**NICODO**

Stanley Ladu, Acting Coordinator

**UNIFEM**

Lucie Luguga, Programme Manager  
Joy Zacharia, Programme Specialist

**VEGA Staff Focus Group**

Isaac Bazugda, Senior Field Operations Manager  
Zachary Ileri, Program Officer  
Peter Lomnit de Karl, Senior Field Operations Manger  
Eunice Phillips, Senior Field Officer

**26 Jan 07**

**Center for Statistics** (within the Ministry of Commerce)

Isaiah Chol Aruai, Chairman  
Eliaba Yona, Senior Statistician

**VEGA Management**

Mohammed Hago, Deputy Chief of Party

**VEGA/CDC Long Term Volunteer**, Organizational Development  
Alexandra Lepionka, Center for Statistics

**27 & 30 Jan 07**

**VEGA Short Term Volunteer**, Refugee Reintegration  
Rica Terbeck, RDC

**Farmers Cooperative Group** - Member of NICODO  
“Mary’s Group”

**29 Jan 07**

**Women’s Self Help Development Organization**

Margaret Komoyanga, Community Development Officer

**29 Jan 07**

**South Sudan Chamber of Commerce**

Ngor Ayuel Kacdgor, Chairman  
Agnes Dokey, Executive Council Member

**30 Jan 07**

**Ministry of Agriculture**

Francis Luala, Central Equatoria State Ministry, Deputy Director  
Mikaya Gamundi, GOSS Ministry, Deputy Director for Planning

**Ministry of Commerce, Trade & Supply**

John K. Pan Paguir, Director General, Trade

**VEGA Staff** (interviewed separately)

Eunice Phillips, Senior Field Officer  
David Githaiga

**VEGA Long Term Volunteers**

Kirk Manhin, Center for Statistics, Finance and Administration  
Christopher Adams, Ministry of Commerce, Business Advisory and Organizational Development

**Men’s Focus Group** ((Two men were unable to attend)

Stanley Ladu, NICODO Acting Coordinator  
Juke Mabior, VEGA Long Term Volunteer

**VEGA Management**

Greg Olson, Chief of Party

## APPENDIX 2\*: For Volunteers – Interrelationships of Gender and Culture in Southern Sudan

*\* Pending edits by local AMED staff, this appendix can be used as a three-page handout for volunteers, and/or as the basis for a longer volunteer orientation and training package.*

### GENERAL ISSUES

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- Traditionally in Sudan, a man is considered to be the leader of the family, ruler of the household, “king of the house.” Along with this role, men are looked to for solutions to problems and blamed when solutions can’t be found. With multiple wives and children, they face increased pressures to provide. Their credibility is somewhat based on their ability to provide for family.
- Until recently (and currently, in some locations), women in Southern Sudan:
  - Have been unable to own land or buildings
  - Have been restricted to activities taking place in and around the house
  - Are regarded as property or investment in marriage
  - Are required (with their birth families) to pay back their dowry if they want to end a marriage to an abusive husband
  - Are faced with complications regarding care and responsibility of children when married to a man with multiple wives
  - Often are faced with heavy responsibilities for family, corresponding with little power or access to resources
  - Are considered property to be inherited by their husband’s relatives, if he dies
  - Generally lack power or voice in society
- During the past 20 years, due to the civil war, men have been stripped of some of their most important duties as providers for the family (e.g. leaving Juba to collect firewood or drive cattle could have resulted in death; business activities), with strong impacts on them psychologically and socially.
- Many of these same duties during the war were by necessity taken on by women. This has in many cases been positive in promoting women’s greater self-confidence and self-reliance, but has had a part in the psychological impact on men and on families. Some men feel that their children do not respect them if they are not the one bringing the income into the family.
- Southern Sudanese culture has been impacted by Arab/Muslim cultural norms brought in from the North. Some Southern Sudanese recognize that their African cultural norms have been displaced by these other norms, and for them it may be a matter of ethnic pride to move forward in society, promoting gender roles that are more balanced for men and women. For others, proposed and anticipated changes threaten to undermine social order and structures, not the least of which is the family.

If you come from a culture that is very different from Sudan, small things that seem of no importance to you can actually have a big impact on gender issues and participation. For example, a former COP of VEGA AMED told of a situation in one of the outlying towns (Wau) where a woman would not take a job at the VEGA office because it was located in an apartment building that had a bedroom. For her to work there would have been perceived as disgraceful. Therefore in order to ensure the greatest impact from your work, it is important to challenge your own thinking and talk to local colleagues to determine whether project plans are locally appropriate.

## TIPS FOR TRAINING

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### Scheduling and Attendance

1. VEGA AMED staff will keep gender considerations in mind when setting up trainings and workshops for volunteers. Through experience, staff have noticed that women's attendance decreases on certain days and times (market days, certain times of day for tasks of childcare, etc.). Find out from them what these days and times are, about any special scheduling issues for men, and about how they've prepared a training schedule that is accessible to both men and women.
2. Remember these issues as the training progresses and if there are times when participants come late, leave early, or don't show up at all. Take note of how and when men's and women's attendance is affected and let staff know in detail, for future planning.
3. Be careful to avoid assumptions that the trainees are missing training time because they are not interested or motivated. It's quite likely that there's a good reason, invisible to outsiders, for their behavior. Remember that many of the trainees are likely to face daily challenges like accessing shelter, water, or food for their families. Work with people at whatever level they are able to attend and encourage them to get the maximum benefit when they do come.

### Participation

4. Because of their circumstances in the past 20 years, many women do not have strong English skills and this can affect their participation in training. If you notice women are not speaking up in your training and think the reason might be language issues, tell staff as soon as possible; find out if arrangements can be made for an interpreter. If possible, find out information about the training participants before the sessions begin (through a questionnaire or interviews) so that you can incorporate their reality into the design.
5. It is possible that in a mixed training group of both men and women, women will be hesitant to speak up, ask questions, and participate fully and freely. If you notice these patterns, report the issues to staff and ask their suggestions.
6. In mixed training groups in which women are not speaking freely, if possible find a way to divide participants into small groups to do tasks together and make sure that one small group is women-only. Check in on each group and interact with them to find out the extent to which the training activities are assisting their learning. If you get stuck, ask the advice of the staff.
7. Particularly if your training involves discussions, pay attention to how you ask questions. Give people a chance to tell about and learn from their own and others' experience. When possible, answer a question with a question and see if members of the group can answer. Avoid asking questions that trap people in wrong answers. Be sure to noticeably point out the correct parts of answers that are not completely accurate. When someone's answer really needs to be corrected, do it gently. This is a skill that takes time to develop, but can go a long way to increase both men and women's comfort level in speaking out in the training.
8. Other ways to increase participation in discussions can be used to encourage people who aren't speaking to participate. Ask staff to suggest which of the following sample questions might work best with your training group:
  - This time when I ask a question, I want somebody to answer who has not spoken yet today.

- This time when I ask a question, I want a woman to answer (or a man, if they have not been speaking).
  - This time when I ask a question, I want someone under 30 to answer (or over 30 or whatever relevant age).
  - This time when I ask a question, I want someone who is not a parent (or who is a parent) to speak.
  - This time when I ask a question, I want someone who is wearing blue or green to speak (or whatever applies to the number of people who aren't participating).
9. If you find that after one or two days, a few of the same people are dominating the discussion and others don't have a chance to speak, you can try to make a game of it. This is a good way for anyone of any culture to get feedback on how much or how little they are talking:
- Give every person 5 stones (or sticks or any object you can easily get).
  - Tell people that every time they speak, they have to put aside one of their stones.
  - Tell people that after they have used all 5 of their stones, they cannot speak anymore that day (or that morning or that discussion), even if they want to.
  - Tell people to use the opportunity to choose their words and participation carefully and speak only when it's especially important.

If you do this activity, make sure to give participants a chance to discuss afterwards how it felt for them to have their participation structured in this way.

### **Self-Management and Awareness**

10. Depending on your age, gender, culture, values, and life experiences, you may naturally notice how women and men attend, participate, and behave similarly and differently during training sessions and in other interactions -- or you may not notice these things at all. As a VEGA AMED volunteer, it is part of your job to notice gender. If it seems unnatural for you to have to pay attention to these things, consider that noticing small dynamics and being adaptive and flexible to them can actually make a big difference in the value of the training experience for participants. Both sexes stand to gain when volunteers pay attention to and respond to differences in how men and women are involved with and participate in VEGA training and technical support.
11. Occasionally we may encounter situations, opinions, and people in other cultures who have opinions that really bother us, make us feel angry or hurt. It can be especially challenging for foreign and Diaspora volunteers to hear men make statements that they find degrading to women. If, during your role as volunteer, you suddenly get strong emotional reactions to someone's expressed opinions, take note and respond with care. It may be best in such moments to say very little or nothing at all.
12. Recognize that in such situations, discomfort is an indicator but the experience itself can be strengthening.
13. When recalling moments or situations that are strong challenges to your deeply held values, take a moment to consider the challenges men and women in Southern Sudan are facing. Men in particular may be feeling similarly threatened – the whole society is being asked to rethink and change gender roles that have been in place for generations. In your role, consider finding a way to be non-threatening even as you are acting as a change agent.

## APPENDIX 3: AMED Program Staff: Tips for Integrating Gender

### Questions to Ask While Developing Scopes of Work (SOWs)

#### Host Agency Considerations

1. Who will benefit from the proposed partnership between VEGA AMED and the host agency? (Consider primary and secondary beneficiaries.)
2. Will those receiving technical assistance, trainees, and other beneficiaries include both women and men? Has the issue of gender equity been explicitly discussed with the host agency? Does the host agency have a strategy for including both women and men? (Or if not, do we have a plan to help and advise them on this?)
3. Are there external barriers that will affect our ability to equitably distribute benefits through this assignment? If so, is there anything we can do to correct or compensate for these? (In a generic but widely applicable example: women's low level of literacy and English language training may mean that they are not selected as participants for a small business training. Can we conduct parallel sessions with methodologies aimed at illiterate populations? Can we budget for a translator to accompany the volunteer? A second example: women's lack of access to credit means they may not be able to launch a business even after training. Can we work with a bank on this issue? Or with the Chamber of Commerce?)
4. Does the host agency itself pursue gender equity in terms of staffing (with women in meaningful positions) and programs? How can we encourage gender equity ourselves, or link the agency to resources and services outside of VEGA AMED (e.g. UNIFEM, USAID, etc.)?

#### Volunteer Considerations

1. Would this assignment benefit from a volunteer with some background in gender in development (in addition to other technical expertise), or someone willing to learn about and integrate gender considerations?
2. Does our recruitment strategy for this assignment include ways to reach both women and men volunteers?
3. While the volunteer is preparing for the assignment, contributing to refinement of the SOW, etc.: have we already provided him or her with information on gender and cultural considerations in Southern Sudan, so that this can be considered in planning?
4. When the volunteer arrives: have we scheduled orientation and training for the volunteer on gender and cultural considerations? Is there a knowledgeable staff person available and ready to answer the volunteer's questions and assist with any modifications to the SOW that may improve equitable participation and benefits?
5. Have we scheduled a check-in meeting about gender and cultural considerations for the volunteer with Sudanese staff with gender expertise (and gender volunteer, if there is one) a week or two (or halfway) into the volunteer's assignment?

#### **Results Monitoring**

1. Before the volunteer assignment begins: have we already developed participant tracking sheets (disaggregated by gender), post-training questionnaires that track economic and social benefits for men, women and families, and other tools to reflect the project's gender impact? Are the volunteer, host agency, and VEGA AMED staff all aware of these tools and clear on their use?

2. Who will ultimately be responsible for monitoring the results for this assignment, including gender impact?

### **Mentoring Relationship**

1. For past host agencies and agencies with which VEGA AMED collaborates but has not worked directly: are there project-funded trainings or discussions to which we can invite them, to motivate their continued consideration of gender equity?
2. Can we as staff be an on-call resource to these agencies to mentor and advise them on gender?

## APPENDIX 4: Resources on Gender Mainstreaming, for VEGA AMED Team and Partners

### Specific Publications

1. March, C., Smyth, I., Mukhopdaya, M. (1999) *A Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks*. An Oxfam Publication.
2. Gianotten V., Groverman, V., van Walsum, E., Zuidberg, L. (1994) *Assessing the Gender Impact of Development Projects*. Royal Tropical Institute-The Netherlands.
3. International Fund for Agricultural Development. *A Manual for Gender-Focused Field Diagnostic Studies*. ([www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org))
4. FAO/ILO. *Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA): Field Handbook* ([www.FAO.org](http://www.FAO.org))
5. The World Bank. *Toolkit on Gender and Agriculture*. Gender Toolkit Series. ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org))

### Relevant Web Resources

1. United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. <http://www.un-instraw.org/en/index.php?option=content&task=section&id=6&Itemid=80>  
(The ones on Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Action Planning may be of particular use to VEGA AMED and its partners)
2. "Programming to Address Violence Against Women: 10 Case Studies" UNFPA, 2007.  
Link: [http://www.crin.org/docs/UNFP\\_VAW.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/UNFP_VAW.pdf)
3. Gender checklists by development sector, by Asian Development Bank (ADB). <http://adb.org/Gender/checklists.asp>  
(The first one – for Agriculture – may be useful for VEGA AMED)
4. United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP) resources on Gender Mainstreaming [www.undp.org/women/resources.shtml](http://www.undp.org/women/resources.shtml)
5. Consultative Group on International Research (CGIAR) [www.cgiar.org](http://www.cgiar.org)  
(Gender and Diversity Program; CGIAR Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis)
6. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) [www.ICRW.org](http://www.ICRW.org)  
(E.g. Women, Land and Sustainable Development)
7. IIED. Participatory Planning and Action (formerly PRA Notes). [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)
8. Gender Policy, Millennium Challenge Corporation [www.mcc.gov/countries/tools/2007/policy-2007-gender.pdf](http://www.mcc.gov/countries/tools/2007/policy-2007-gender.pdf)

### **International Conventions**

1. The Beijing Platform for Action (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform>)
2. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women ([www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/women/engl-wmn.html#cedaw](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/women/engl-wmn.html#cedaw))

## APPENDIX 5: Interview/Focus Group Questionnaires

### MINISTRY OF GENDER

Can you give us an assessment of the status of men and women in southern Sudan? (Situation analysis. Key areas of gender inequality.)

What is the status of women in the business/formal employment sector? What are the barriers?

Do you have a strategy for training and awareness raising?

Who are the IDPs (sex, age, ethnic groups, etc.)? Who are the most disadvantaged? Are there leaders among them, with whom GOSS negotiates? What are the economic and educational opportunities for them?

How many staff do you have in the Ministry, and how many are women? At what levels? Throughout Southern Sudan?

How do you relate to the GOSS & other Ministries? Do you offer guidance and technical assistance on gender mainstreaming throughout GOSS?

What are the successes of the Ministry? What are you most proud of?

What are your key challenges?

Are any development partners working with you? Do you advise and coordinate on gender mainstreaming in development projects going on here?

What is to be gained by seeking gender balance?

Do you have any impressions about how VEGA/AMED is integrating gender considerations? Aware of any strengths or gaps?

### MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Can you explain your mandate to us?

As the Ministry of Labor, do you oversee hiring practices within the GOSS? Are there issues in terms of gender equity?

What are the main sources of employment in Juba or Southern Sudan? In what sectors do you see women employed and what sectors are men employed? Are there any plans to encourage gender equity in any of the sectors?

What might be gained by employing women and making sure women are included?

What might be lost by including women?

Any recommendations?

## **MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT**

What is your overall mandate as a ministry?

What is the link between the work you have described and women or gender equity?

How do these issues relate to returnees or IDPs?

Describe your collaboration with the VEGA AMED project.

What are your impressions of the way the project is integrating gender considerations?

What kind of contribution has the volunteer made? Has there been a gender angle to it?

If the volunteer provided training to the Ministry staff, what was the breakdown of participants in terms of women and men, and what explains this pattern?

How do you think a gender mainstreaming approach reflects or clashes with different cultural traditions in Southern Sudan?

When you look at the profile of government employees, are there issues of equity (i.e. total numbers, positions in the hierarchy)? Do you work on the Ministry of Gender on this?

## **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

What is your overall mandate and focus as a Ministry?

What is the status of professional women within the Ministry? (What positions do they hold, what status, etc.?)

Please describe the agricultural sector and how men and women participate in both subsistence and commercial agriculture. (Are there differences in how men and women participate, in production of both agricultural crops and products? How do you explain these differences?)

How do returnees or IDPs participate in the agricultural sector?

What is to be gained by attending to gender equity in the agricultural sector in Southern Sudan?  
What is to be lost?

How do gender issues either impede or facilitate the performance of the agricultural sector?  
What strategies does your Ministry take to address gender issues and with what level of success?

What about men's issues?

What kinds of psychological effects has the war and postwar situation had on men?

Do you work with the Ministry of Gender? If so, how?

What suggestions do you have for dealing with gender issues in your Ministry?

What suggestions do you have for VEGA AMED?

## **MINISTRY OF COMMERCE**

What is your overall mandate and focus as a Ministry?

What is the status of women within the Ministry?

Which kinds of businesses are represented in Southern Sudan? Where do you find the most women, and where men? Are there differences in scope and profits between women and men?

What are your licensing systems for new business owners? How friendly are these procedures for both men and women?

Are there exemptions or considerations for IDPs, returnees?

Please give an overview of the gender issues in commerce and trade.

Do you work with the Ministry of Gender? How?

What has your interaction and collaboration with VEGA AMED been like?

What suggestions do you have for dealing with gender issues in commerce and trade?

## **CENTER FOR STATISTICS**

What is your mandate and major areas of work?

Can you tell us about your challenges?

What can you tell us about data analysis, regarding gender?

How do you address population movement?

What types of data do you already have?

What gender issues affect your work?

What is your relationship with VEGA AMED?

How does Southern Sudanese culture help or constrain gender balance?

How can data be used to promote gender balance?

Did people notice that women were singled out for questions?

## **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Please describe your organization and your mandate.

What types of business and trade are you likely to support?

What is the percentage of women among your membership?

What keeps women backward in Upper Nile? (\*Follow-up question)

In what types of businesses are women involved?

How do you involve IDPs?

What challenges are unique to women?

Do you see a need to help women in business to thrive and catch up?

Describe your interaction and collaboration with VEGA AMED.

How can women's potentialities be realized in the various sectors?

## **WOMEN'S SELF HELP DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**

Please describe your organization and your major focus.

How did WSHDO become involved with VEGA AMED?

Did VEGA AMED give technical assistance?

Can the bakery and restaurant sustain WSHDO?

Did VEGA AMED supply a grant or in-kind donations for the bakery?

Describe the impact of collaboration with VEGA AMED on WSHDO.

Any good change for men?

Any changes in women's workload as a result of the project?

How could collaboration with VEGA AMED be improved?

What are the challenges and opportunities for women in Southern Sudan?

Recommendations for the biggest impact for women?

Special challenges for women?

## **“MARY’S GROUP”**

Please describe your group, what year you were formed, your purpose, and your membership (in terms of men and women).

Who participates in management of the group? How many men, women, what types of roles?

Main activities?

Nature of collaboration with VEGA AMED? With NICODO? (e.g. training, in-kind support, other)

What support has proved most useful and why? Who has benefited most?

What support has proved least useful and why? Who has been affected most?

Specific positive changes that have occurred to group members? (e.g. economic gains, income, changes in workload, changes in power relations – control over resources and benefits, other?)

Any negative changes?

What suggestions do you have for improving this collaboration?

## **NICODO**

Please describe your mandate and your organization (including what roles are filled by men and by women)

What gender issues do you encounter in your work – among staff, or membership, etc.? Has VEGA AMED had any role in addressing these issues? Were you asked by VEGA AMED about your understanding of gender?

How do men and women participate in the program?

How do you think gender issues fit in the cultural traditions of Southern Sudan?

What roles in your program are men’s roles and what are women’s roles?

What gained by including women?

In regards to increased income from your enterprises, who benefits? Do women and men benefit differently? Are women involved in job skills training?

What kinds of changes have you seen in men and women as a result of the program?

Any recommendations?

## **MEN'S FOCUS GROUP**

What issues in Southern Sudan concern men differently than women?

What was it like to be a man during the war?

Alcohol – does the war contribute to some men drinking a lot?

What is it like to be a man now?

What issues concern soldiers? Former soldiers?

Are there barriers for former soldiers? Economic opportunities for former soldiers? Other disadvantages? (Advantages?)

We heard described in one of our interviews that a “culture of violence” remains from the war time. What do you think about that?

How did VEGA AMED provide for men's issues in the program?

## **UNIFEM**

What is your major focus in Sudan?

What partners are you working with, and in what capacity?

What do you see as the critical gender issues? Opportunities? Challenges?

What is your national strategy for addressing gender issues?

Where do you think you have made the greatest impact?

What do you see as the greatest needs? What gaps have you identified where services or programs are needed?

Would you have any recommendations for a project like VEGA, or other development projects, on how to be successful on gender equality in Southern Sudan?

## **UNICEF**

What is your major focus in Sudan?

What partners are you working with, and in what capacity?

What do you see as the critical gender issues? Opportunities? Challenges?

What is your national strategy for addressing gender issues?

Where do you think you have made the greatest impact?

What do you see as the greatest needs? What gaps have you identified where services or programs are needed?

Would you have any recommendations for a project like VEGA, or other development projects, on how to be successful on gender equality in Southern Sudan?

### **VEGA AMED VOLUNTEERS (short and long term)**

What is your area of expertise?

What is your main assignment?

How do you relate to host agency?

What are your biggest successes? Challenges?

What is your understanding of gender? Have you ever participated in gender training?

Were you asked by VEGA AMED about your understanding of gender issues?

Did VEGA AMED express expectations of you with regard to gender mainstreaming within your assignment?

Were you provided with guidance on involving women and men in your assignment? Were you provided with cultural considerations?

How did women and men participate in your assignment? What differences did you notice?

How would you explain the differences?

What recommendations do you have about how these issues can be addressed?

What kinds of changes have you seen in men and women (and the institution) as a result of your assignment?

What recommendations do you have about how these issues can be addressed?

Would gender training for women be useful?

What do you see as the purpose of gender component of project?

### **VEGA AMED STAFF FOCUS GROUP**

What is your understanding of gender? Have you ever participated in gender training?

What are your expectations and hopes of what the project can achieve in terms of gender?

What are the requirements for accessing the fund?

How does AMED integrate gender?

Do you know of any prior social analysis in the project's design phase?

Are volunteers aware of gender issues?

Does your job description include any responsibility to pay attention to gender considerations?

Have you given consideration to gender?

What kinds of changes have you seen?

What are your biggest successes? Challenges?

What recommendations do you have?

**VEGA AMED SUDANESE FEMALE STAFF (the only one)**

How is it to work with your coworkers and management, being the only woman staff in the project?

Comments on gender in regards to AMED project?

With host agencies/partner agencies – what more can you do besides tell them? (follow-up from answer to previous question)

Specific types of training or grants? (follow-up question)

Is it keeping women at a low level to train them and support them in things like handicrafts? (follow-up question)

Training women in computers - is it a good idea? (follow-up question)

What about issues and training for men/about men?

Any suggestions for gender at VEGA or for the gender assessment team?

**VEGA AMED STAFF: Operations/Grants Manager**

What is your understanding of gender? Have you ever participated in gender training?

What are your expectations and hopes of what the project can achieve in terms of gender?

Can you describe how AMED integrates gender? How does the project integrate gender into each component (work with government; volunteers; economic enterprises, etc.)?

What is to be gained by involving men and women equitably? What may be lost?

Does your job description include any responsibility to pay attention to gender considerations?

How have you given consideration to gender issues in your job, in your work with the local partners, in your work with volunteers? Honestly speaking, how important do you think this is among all of your job responsibilities?

What is the role of southern Sudanese culture in all of this?

What kinds of changes have you seen in men and women (that you connect to this program)?

What successes are you most proud of? What are your greatest challenges?

Do you see areas that are weak, gaps, and have any recommendations on how to strengthen them?

### **VEGA AMED MANAGEMENT: Deputy Chief of Party**

Review of project description and recent changes on the project.

Have you had gender training? Have you had an opportunity to apply it in your programs?

Gender issues in recruiting trainees.

What are your expectations and hopes of what the project can achieve in terms of gender? What is to be gained by including gender? What is to be lost by not including gender?

In practical terms, how is VEGA pursuing these goals?

Is there a baseline survey which includes gender considerations?

How do your monitoring systems work in regards to gender?

Describe staff recruitment practices and any gender considerations.

Describe volunteer recruitment practices and any gender considerations.

### **VEGA MANAGEMENT: Chief of Party**

Review of AMED project description and recent changes.

Have you had gender training? Have you had opportunities to apply it in your work and how?

Has there been any gender training for staff? (If not, is there any budget you could allocate for this?)

What are your expectations and hopes of what the project can achieve in terms of gender?  
What is to be gained by paying attention to gender? What may be lost?

In practical terms, how are you (the project) pursuing the goal of gender mainstreaming? (give examples)

Is there a baseline survey that includes gender considerations?

Beyond tracking numbers of people, do you track economic impact? What about application of skills by trainees (in terms of follow-up, etc.?)

What are your staff recruitment practices? How do you ensure that women get the information and are able to apply? (Consider language, literacy, etc.)

Same question, for volunteers. Also, have you tried to recruit African women volunteers?

Do you think that staff and volunteers are well-informed and have the skills to adequately assist both women and men in their work?

Do staff job descriptions include any responsibility for integrating gender?

Does volunteer orientation include imparting gender and cultural awareness? How?

How do you think the different cultural traditions and values in S Sudan approach reflect or clash with gender considerations both in the project and in the organization?

Do you have recommendations on how VEGA could strengthen the project's gender components?

Do you have any complete data tables that include all volunteer assignments?