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VIABLE SUPPORT TO TRANSITION AND STABILITY (VISTAS)

QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 1, 2015 – JUNE 30, 2015

JULY 2015

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Q3 FY2015 QUARTERLY REPORT
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISTAS reentered South Sudan in June 2014 after a six month evacuation due to the collapse of the country into a new, bitter, civil war in December 2013. Upon reentry the program entered into a critical period of analysis, regrowth, and adaptation in order to understand and respond to the changed conflict and transition dynamics in the country. Several key shifts in strategy and orientation were developed and formalized during the September 2014 Strategic Review Session (SRS), while maintaining the overall strategic imperative of mitigating local level conflicts with national level significance. The team then moved quickly to design a series of activities in line with these strategic objectives in time for dry season implementation.

The third quarter of FY2015 represents the close of the dry season, and thus the culmination and fruition of many of these efforts. Since the SRS, approximately 100 activities valued at approximately \$10,000,000 were designed and approved, with implementation either complete or underway for nearly all of them. Despite the very real security challenges of ongoing conflict in many of its operational areas, VISTAS maintained operational capacity in 10 areas across South Sudan for the reporting period, though two offices were temporarily closed due to active conflict in the region.

With a rapid geographic and human resources expansion in the early months of FY 2015 under its belt, VISTAS used Q3 FY15 to streamline operations, provide training, and invest in monitoring and evaluation, with the aim of making sure that the program's systems are keeping pace with the team's expansion and the complex security situation. Additional changes to the program needed to match the new reality are pending approval in a request for a budget realignment submitted in Q2 FY15.

By the end of the quarter, the team was gearing up for a July Rolling Assessment with an explicit focus on gathering and learning from lessons gleaned over the 2015 dry season. This Rolling Assessment will kick off an intensive strategic review process to take place from August to October 2015 during which the VISTAS team will test its assumptions and assess its analysis and performance over the past year, with the goal of feeding this analysis into strategic planning for the 2016 dry season.

II. PROGRAM STRATEGY

POLITICAL, SECURITY, AND OPERATIONAL LANDSCAPE

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) cannot bring peace talks to a conclusion because, as the government offensive in Unity and Jonglei in May and June and the re-taking of Malakal by Olony/SPLM-IO in June suggest, each side still thinks it will gain by fighting. Any resumption of the talks is likely therefore to take place under effectively false pretenses.

In the case of the Government, it will likely claim that every legitimate government has the right to crush a rebellion. It will likely strive to deny SPLM/IO the share of power proposed by IGAD, which is too generous a recognition of the IO's limited territorial control. It will likely try to retake Malakal and Leer and also drive IO out of Nyal, Ganyliel, Akobo and Pagak. It will then likely portray the IO as too weak to count.

Snapshot of VISTAS Programming	
Total # of Activities Cleared in Q3 FY15	21
Total # of Activities Cleared in FY15 to-date	98
Total Value of Activities Cleared in Q3 FY15	\$1,979,925
Total Value of Activities Cleared in FY15	\$10,105,474
Total Value of Activities Completed in Q3 FY15	\$2,486,932
Total Value of Activities Completed in FY15 to-date	\$4,069,511
Average Size of Q3 FY15 Activities	\$94,282
Average Size of FY15 Activities to-date	\$103,117
Program Funds Disbursed in FY15 to-date	\$7,105,618

The IO on the other hand will likely continue to threaten the oilfields and make Greater Upper Nile ungovernable. If its demands and those of its constituency are ignored, it has the capacity to condemn the region to decades of low-level warfare, impoverishment and insecurity. The atrocities currently being inflicted in Unity State by government forces and affiliated Nuer militia from Mayom against other Nuer sections will, like the killings that took place in Juba in 2013, seriously damage the government's legitimacy and, if not addressed will likely leave a legacy of hatred and grievance.

Riek Machar has made a major, strategic miscalculation. He may attract more support from Khartoum and become more isolated as the former detainees are slowly lured back to Juba with the promise of positions in whatever government comes next. Constant threats of sanctions and the proposed expansion of IGAD, bringing in China, the Troika, the EU, the UN and four other African countries, seems unlikely to improve matters, while the moves by Tanzania and Kenya to reform the SPLM complicate IGAD's negotiations, which need to be coherent and "facilitated", not *ad hoc* and externally-driven.

Meanwhile, the following scenario, or variants thereon, is possible:

- The antagonists sign some form of power-sharing agreement in Addis
- Juba is somehow demilitarized and some rebels return to government
- Oil revenues and loans suffice to keep the new "security state" afloat
- Uganda remains ready to back GRSS with military force if need be
- "Development" is stalled. Humanitarian aid is the dominant response
- Despite demands for justice and a hybrid court, impunity prevails
- Public security is poor. The rule of law is in abeyance.

VISTAS programs will need to consider how best to:

- Remain flexible in Greater Upper Nile, working with IDPs and in PoCs where possible
- Continue supporting peaceful relationships such as Malual/Rezeigat and Lou/Murle
- Extend operations to the Equatorias to support their relative stability

PROGRAM GOAL

VISTAS Program Goal, as articulated in the 2014 Strategic Review Session, is to prevent the further spread of communal violence and rising tensions in critical areas where conflict may have national implications. VISTAS strategy is based on an assessment that South Sudan is currently experiencing three levels of interconnected conflict: conflict between the military elites of Juba and the Opposition, community-level conflict over access to resources (including cattle, land, pasture, and water), and conflict that can be characterized as 'citizen vs state,' and comprises populations that feel marginalized and aggrieved by the national or state level governments.

With its many offices and high capacity for field work, VISTAS is designed to operate at the community level, often in some of the most remote, conflict-prone regions of South Sudan. VISTAS focuses on areas that are fault lines in the current conflict. These were historic front lines and remain tense with unaddressed grievances and ongoing competition over resources, including the South Sudan-Sudan border in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, the Nuer-Dinka border in Lakes, Unity and Jonglei states (the Wunlit Triangle), and the Nuer-Murle-Dinka borders in Jonglei State. In addition, VISTAS is programming in Protection of Civilian sites (POCs) in the three capitals of Greater Upper Nile (Bentiu, Malakal, and Bor). These formerly multi-ethnic towns have become flashpoints where incidents can quickly expand to other camps and towns. They are emblems of, and have reinforced a national narrative of, ethnic divisions, social disruption, and atrocities against civilians.

Conflict in South Sudan has long been characterized by proxy warfare and mobilization along ethnic lines. South Sudan’s population is predominantly pastoralist and successive governments in Khartoum and Juba have shown neither sufficient will nor capacity to provide services or security to these groups. On the contrary, political and military elites have often successfully armed and motivated these groups to fight for them. As a military strategy, it is a cost-effective way to build coalitions, but it undermines longer term goals of nation and state-building by creating community-level divisions and grievances that are difficult to redress in a context of contested authority, negligible governance capacity, and high prevalence of small arms. While VISTAS has always had a focus on pastoral populations, the program has made some significant investments this quarter to refine our outreach to these critical populations.

PROGRAM SUB-OBJECTIVES

TO INCREASE SPACE FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE AND MANAGE CONFLICT AND TENSIONS

Local peace dialogues have long been integral part of USAID’s work in South Sudan. These peace dialogues provide constructive forums for the airing of grievances, but also for locally-driven solutions to problems. During the third quarter, VISTAS continued supported dialogues between the Murle Chiefs in Jonglei (JON042 and JON048); between the Dinka Malual, Rezeigat, and Misseriya in NBeG (NBG034 and NBG035); and between different Dinka sections in Lakes (WUN016-021). The program has learned that one-off meetings are often insufficient to produce a lasting result. VISTAS’ model, therefore, is to keep a flexible and open approach to the dialogue process, and work with the various stakeholders to supplement the initial meeting with internal consultations, follow-up meetings with dissemination campaigns of the resolutions to populations that are often geographically disbursed, and support to communities to implement any resolutions agreed upon.

This quarter follow-on support included the provision of small-scale infrastructure to traditional authorities and in key places along borders between communities. The program built a guest house along the border between the Lou

Nuer and Murle in Nyandit to be used by Murle delegations as they travel the remote route from the GPAA to Akobo (JON037). Under JON040 VISTAS also finished the construction of a Chief’s Center in Lekuangle that USAID had been forced to abandon work on due to insecurity in 2013. This building serves as a central meeting point for the chiefs to mitigate disputes, resolve conflicts, and strengthen local mechanisms for peace in the community.

Activities that fall within the category of “peace dialogues” rely on a diverse set of mechanisms or approaches. VISTAS uses peace dialogues to establish or reaffirm the legitimacy of traditional authorities, to provide forums for communities to negotiate management protocols for shared natural resources, and to institute or amend trade and shared security mechanisms. In this way they support key traditional justice mechanisms: creating and enforcing intra- and inter-communal norms. A few of the Lakes peace dialogue grants resulted in the formation of new traditional courts to mediate disputes between rival Dinka sections, including WUN017 and WUN020. These courts oversee the payment of blood money (*diya*) to peacefully resolve disputes and interrupt cycles of revenge killing.

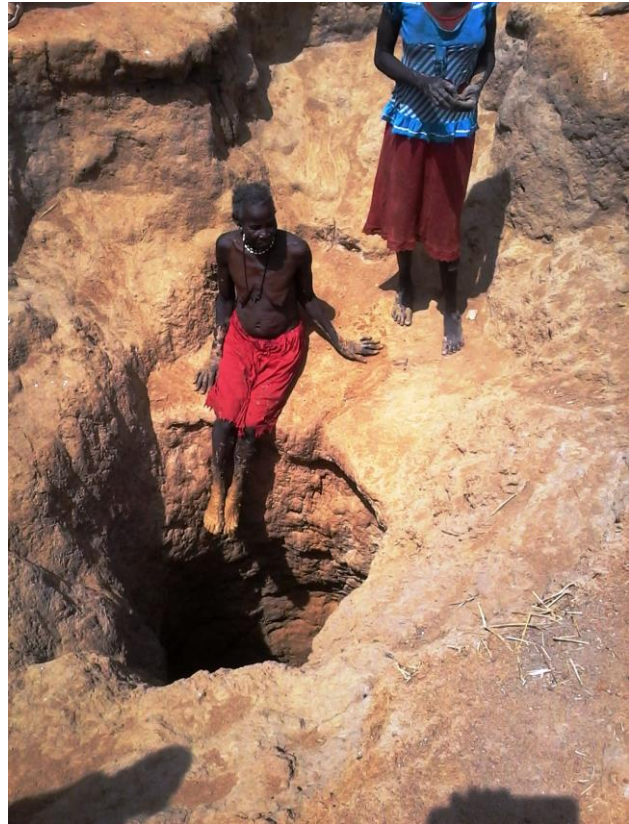
Statistics on VISTAS’ Access to Justice Activities

# of Activities (DG Funds) in FY15	21
Total Value of Activities in FY15	\$1,828,231

TO BUILD CROSS-LINE INTERDEPENDENCY TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Trade has a long history of connecting communities in South Sudan and continues to facilitate relationships across conflict lines. Communities have resisted mobilizing for violence against counterparts across conflict lines because of their dependency on trade. This is fragile, as traders take the risks to cross conflict lines, but the trade preserves a connection between communities. Areas where trade lines are established but fragile offer an opportunity for VISTAS to support trade and promote this mutually beneficial relationship.

In the third quarter the program continued implementation of its ambitious livestock infrastructure activities (NBG028 and NBG031). Under these activities VISTAS plans to construct 12 hand-dug wells in the border payams along the Misseriya cattle migration routes in Aweil East County. There is often scarcity of water along the specified routes Misseriya cattle take once they enter into South Sudan which leads to friction between the local community and Misseriya pastoralists. This activity will not only provide key watering points but will train community youth and women on how to develop and manage such water sources independently. Hand-dug well training commenced at the end of the reporting period, as did the formation of local water committees to manage these resources.



Woman working on a hand-dug well under (NBG028)

VISTAS provided canoes to expand trade between Shambe in Lakes and Tayer in Unity under WUN011 during the reporting period. However, the team continued to struggle to obtain permission to deliver the canoes purchased under WUN010 to their intended beneficiaries in Tayer; the government refused to provide the necessary permission on the grounds that Tayer is Opposition-controlled territory. VISTAS believes that the canoes will be released early in the fourth quarter, whereupon they will be distributed through a new grantee in Jonglei. Likewise logistical challenges faced by the canoe supplier and in transport during the rainy season delayed the implementation of JON031 and JON032 to support the strengthening of trade ties between the Nuer of Akobo County with the Murle of Lekuangole and Pibor counties through the provision of canoes to those communities.

TO ESTABLISH A PEACE CONSTITUENCY

As political and inter-communal violence continues, the population becomes increasingly polarized and militarized. VISTAS supports communities and individuals through various activities to help establish a strong citizenry that resists instability and violence and sees the value of peace.

One of the program's main efforts to establish a peace constituency is through the development of the Morning Star program. Morning Star is a trauma-informed community empowerment (TICE) program, which will bring practical trauma tools to communities in areas deeply affected by conflict. Through Morning Star, VISTAS expects to build community level resilience, while focusing on social infrastructure and local institutions.

During the third quarter the Morning Star program identified 17 Resource Facilitators (RF) and held their first training between May 13th and 28th. The training consisted of two major modules: Healing for Self and Trauma-Informed Community

Statistics on the Morning Star Program	
Total Amount of Activities Cleared in Q3 FY15	\$476,723
Total Amount of Activities Cleared in FY15	\$1,721,586
Total Amount of Activities Cleared to-date	\$1,893,853

Empowerment (TICE). Healing for Self is a 5-day course for personal trauma awareness and healing, for which also a Training of Trainers course has been developed. TICE is an overarching curriculum covering core theoretical concepts of trauma and impact of trauma on behavior and relations. A third methodology, Morning Star, is the implementation module that the program plans to use for small groups of adults at a grassroots community level. Upon their return to their work locations the new RFs began meeting with community leaders to identify groups with whom to pilot their work.

Under this sub-objective VISTAS is also working with the Girl Guides, a nationwide organization that is currently operational in 7 states, to develop a process through which the girls can earn peace merit badges (JBA014).

TO COUNTER A NARRATIVE THAT SUPPORTS CONFLICT

VISTAS is engaging key peace builders and communities in conflict-prone areas in order to improve access to reliable and trustworthy information to prevent political manipulation and to help them make informed decisions that would prevent further tensions and conflict. The program uses traditional and non-traditional media to counter a narrative of division and conflict. These programs are developed by VISTAS' Senior Media Consultant (hired under STTA010). With regards to traditional media, VISTAS has focused primarily on radio because illiteracy rates are estimated at 84%, making radio the most popular and accessible medium in the country.



Wind-Up Radio Distribution in Mayen-Rual

The program built on its efforts last quarter to record and broadcast key peace messages from Dinka-Misseriya and Dinka-Rezeigat Pre-Migration Conferences by doing the same for the associated Post-Migration Conferences through NBG024 and NBG026. These recordings were broadcast on Aweil 99.5 FM and Nhomlaau FM Maluakon and were used as the basis for call-in talk shows. During these shows the Joint Border Peace Committees responded to questions about why sporadic violations of the agreement continued, explaining that a certain degree of criminality cannot be fully avoided but that the fact that the numbers of murders on each side have declined over the past few years validates the strength of the continuing peace. In addition, by the end of the quarter VISTAS had supported the production and broadcasting 36 of its planned 72 call-in radio programs in Greater Rumbek through a partnership with Catholic Radio Network designed to amplify its work on peace dialogues in the area (WUN027). Notably, these programs utilize highlights from interviews with hundreds cattle camp youth who have been involved in the ongoing revenge killings in the area. The program has also distributed wind-up radios purchased under DDGS003 under a number of grants, including WUN027.

VISTAS has also undertaken projects in the area of non-traditional media and communications tools. One such non-traditional approach is participatory film. The program's partnership with Transformedia is an ambitious, multi-part effort to create a "Citizen's Theater" group. While VISTAS is supporting this effort

in Juba and three other states (Jonglei, Western Bahr el Ghazal, and Eastern Equatoria), an Open Society Initiative grant has enabled the program to expand to a fourth state and to hold monthly “Citizen Theater” forums. This initiative includes:

- 1) Trainings of secondary schools and community groups in forum theater in 4 states
- 2) Screenings of film content about how theater brings together diverse South Sudanese groups
- 3) Dissemination of radio segments about how theater and cultural similarities can bring people together
- 4) Monthly “Citizen Theater” events that provide a forum for discussions on culture and identity
- 5) The sharing of clips and quotes from Citizen Theater events via SMS and MMS
- 6) Production of a new South Sudan Theater Organization (SSTO) full theater production about issues that come up in the wider initiative.



Student “Citizen Theater” Group (JBA006)

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

VISTAS and Morning Star have agreed to an action plan to take their partnership through the end of 2015. Under this plan the Morning Star will have four phases, each consisting of two weeks of training for the RFs, followed by six weeks of field work. The RFs started their first round of field work at the end of the reporting period. On the last day of the reporting period two grants to provide support to the RFs host organizations were approved (MOR009 and MOR010), and 12 more received yellow-lights in the third quarter. This support will be tailored to the needs of each partner organization, including items ranging from mobile credit to reference books. Also upcoming are activities to build the capacity of Morning Star as an organization (MOR007) and to evaluate the trainings and capture lessons learnt for future rounds of field work (DDGS011).

The program is awaiting approval from the Contracting Officer to build on its existing livestock and trade support structures grants (NBG028 and NBG031) with a couple of similar activities. Under NBG029 VISTAS is planning seven pilot livestock health and trade structures and four cattle vaccination pens in Wanjok Market, Aweil East County, while it is planning the same package of support in Marial Bai, Aweil West County under NBG031.

The Northern Bahr el Ghazal team is in the process of developing a grant to support a consultative meeting between the Awlad Kamel section of the Misseriya tribe and the Twic and Rek Dinka in Warrap. The meeting is planned for the first week of August. The Senior Omda of Awlad Kamel, Fadhil Mohammed Issa asked the Dinka Malual and the Joint Border Peace Committee (VISTAS’ planned grantee) to take this issue of peace seriously:“(We) want peace with everybody, not only Dinka Malual but it should also extend to all our borders of Abyei, Warrap, Unity and possibly we can even reach those in Upper Nile State. Our coming in this month of Ramadhan by itself is an indication that we are serious because we don’t do anything in this month, but the urgency of matter has compelled us to come.”

The Upper Nile team also has a series of proposed grants prepared for the Malakal PoC once they are able to return to their duty station. These grants use a soft programming approach focused on improving the relationship between the Shilluk, Dinka and Nuer in the Malakal PoC and can easily be scaled up should conditions outside the PoC allow.

III. IMPACT

VISTAS MITIGATES INTRA-NUER CONFLICT IN BENTIU POC

During May and June the SPLA launched a brutal offensive across most of Unity State in conjunction with a sizeable number of Bul Nuer fighters, some of which were remnants of the South Sudan Liberation Army. As a result of the Bul Nuer's involvement in this offensive tensions between this sub-clan and other sections of the Nuer living in the PoC escalated. These tensions can be charted by camps within the PoC because the Bul Nuer live primarily in the first of the six camps of the PoC. By mid-May, a couple of weeks into the offensive, as reports of abuses, such as the murder of civilians and destruction of houses and food stocks reached the IDPs in the camp, open hostilities had broken out between camp 1 and camps 2-6, leading to fears in the international community that the majority from 2-6 would slaughter the Bul Nuer in revenge.



Laborers digging tertiary drains in Bentiu PoC (UNI030)

Two VISTAS grants played critical roles in mitigating tensions between rival Nuer sections. Immediately after the offensive began at the beginning of May the leadership of camp 1 began to create problems in the camp, blocking progress on ongoing projects led by a number of international actors. At the time VISTAS was halfway through an ambitious cash-for-work project under UNI030 to clear tertiary drains throughout the camp in order to reduce flooding and improve sanitation. Because of how closely VISTAS had worked with the leadership of the 6 camps in the PoC (which are organized according to the county of origin of their inhabitants) to identify the laborers hired under this grant and because of its nuanced understanding of their relationship with the community, the program was able to broker a truce between camps 1 and 2-6.

The Unity Team Program Specialist recognized that the PoC 1 leadership had mobilized that camp's youth under the false pretense. The elders were egging on the youth with bullhorns as they approached our staff wielding sticks and other weapons, spreading misinformation that the PoC 1 youth had been allocated fewer work opportunities under this grant than their counterparts in PoCs 2-6. The elders' influence is derived, in part, from their ability to mobilize youth to capture the spoils of the ongoing conflict. After making it clear that the drainage work, which benefitted all of PoC 1, would not continue until the threats stopped, the VISTAS team convened a public meeting in which the leaders were shamed by their community for attempting to sacrifice the greater good for personal gain. Because many actors working in the PoC had unsuccessfully attempted to mitigate conflicts between PoCs 1 and 2-6, VISTAS was soon approached by other members of the international community with requests for assistance in similar matters.



Staff of local NGO that runs Bentiu PoC Conflict Mitigation Meeting Center

At the same time that the VISTAS team was brokering this peace through their efforts under UNI030, the PoC leadership repeatedly utilized the VISTAS-constructed Conflict Mitigation Meeting Center (UNI016) to address the impending crisis. The center, which is run by a local CSO that covers its operating costs by charging fees for events held there, became the main hub for grassroots mediation efforts. In the third week of May it hosted events ranging from interviews with the affected groups, mediation efforts, and meetings of women from both sides of the conflict. Subsequently representatives of the IDP High Committee that represents all 7 PoCs held a meeting at the center at the beginning of June at which they agreed upon guiding principles for managing PoC affairs in a document that has become a mini-constitution for that body. Once approved by the PoC's General Assembly, these guidelines will regulate camp management institutions and define their roles and responsibilities, as well as the ways in which they coordinate their activities with UN and humanitarian agencies operating in the PoC.

CATTLE RETURNS CEMENT PEACE BETWEEN MURLE AND NUER ACROSS BORDER WITH ETHIOPIA

In the last quarterly, VISTAS reported on the return of hundreds of raided cattle by the Murle of Greater Pibor to their Lou Nuer neighbors in Greater Akobo and Uror County. This historic act provided concrete evidence to the two communities that the peace between them was enduring, despite their opposing allegiances in the ongoing civil war (the Murle face pressure from government forces to drag them into conflict, while Akobo is one of the main bases for the SPLA-IO). VISTAS had made possible the critical peace talks that resulted in this peace agreement between Murle and Lou Nuer through logistical support to meetings along the border between Akobo/Greater Pibor and Uror/Greater Pibor under JON027 and JON029, respectively.

After learning that their neighbors had successfully regained their stolen cows through peaceful negotiations with the Murle, the Jikany Nuer living across the border in Ethiopia sent a delegation to meet with their Lou Nuer neighbors in Akobo in early May to request help in securing the return of their own cattle from the Murle. The Jikany Nuer from Ethiopia specifically referenced the terms that had been reached under what has become known as the Nyakodomoch Agreement, the outcome of the JON027 conference.

“They realized that peace offers with more opportunities than the robbery of cattle along their border. The recovery of cattle is just the beginning of bigger things to come; it could build trust and lead to mutual exchange of abducted children.”

– John Mathuch,
Murle leader

Mabil Gai, a powerful Nuer Chief in Akobo, and one of the central brokers of the Nyakodomoch Agreement, then traveled to Lekuangole, where he was able to secure the release of over 100 cattle that had been stolen from Jikany Nuer in Ethiopia. At the end of the reporting period an effort was underway to facilitate the return of additional cattle. Simon Buony Bol, Field Coordination at Nile Hope Development Fund, a major local NGO in Akobo, attributed the success of the cattle return effort to the consultations VISTAS supported at the beginning of 2015 and to the leadership of Mabil Gai.

IV. MONITORING & EVALUATION

The VISTAS' M&E Team, which at the end of FY15 Q3 consisted of the Monitoring, Mapping, and Technology Specialist (MMTS) and three field-based Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists, continued to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of monitoring and evaluation of VISTAS programming in the third quarter. Building on recommendations from OTI M&E advisor Mayra Chavarria's FY 2015 Q2 temporary duty assignment, VISTAS introduced improved M&E systems including activity-level theories of change, activity-level M&E plans, and an updated Activity Evaluation Form. These and other improved M&E processes were introduced to VISTAS program staff at the April 2015 Rolling Assessment by the M&E Team. By the end of FY15 Q3 the MMTS led six training sessions on these new

processes in the regional offices and will complete the final training session for the Unity Team in early FY15 Q4. These trainings have benefited field teams by clearly explaining the new M&E processes and everyone's individual and collective M&E responsibilities. These trainings have already resulted in more comprehensive grant proposals and a greater quantity and higher quality of activity-level notes.

During FY15 Q3, VISTAS began planning for program-level cluster evaluations of priority intercommunal relationships and programming themes. Priority cluster evaluation targets will be developed in FY15 Q4 with further advice from Mayra Chavarria during her upcoming July – August 2015 temporary duty assignment. In addition to providing further recommendations to VISTAS on activity- and program-level M&E, Ms. Chavarria will co-facilitate the July 2015 Rolling Assessment.

At the end of FY15 Q3 VISTAS was actively recruiting a new Director of Research, Reporting, and Evaluation, a position designed to ensure that research, reporting, and M&E efforts are coordinated and effectively inform programming. Also at the end of FY15 Q3, VISTAS was actively recruiting a fourth Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to travel to program areas currently lacking a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist.

V. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

BUDGET REALIGNMENT

VISTAS continues to wait for USAID approval of its proposed budget realignment. This proposal was originally submitted to the Contracting Officer's Representative in February and the Contracting Officer in April. This realignment will reconcile measures that were taken during the program's evacuation of its international staff between December 2013 and June 2014, which was done at the request of USAID. It will also enable the creation of new staff positions, including a Juba RPM and National Conflict Advisor.

OFFICES AND STAFFING

During the third quarter of FY15, VISTAS underwent turnover in a few key positions and signed leases for new office and residential spaces that the team is preparing to occupy at the end of July. In addition, the program planned for the departure of its Chief of Party (COP), Audrey Bottjen, recruiting and beginning to onboard the new COP Jill Morris. Ms. Morris will arrive in Juba at the beginning of the fourth quarter to do a three-week handover with Ms. Bottjen.

The program welcomed short-term replacements for our long-term Senior Stabilization Advisor and International Security Manager positions as our previous staff members rotated out. After Naomi Pendle's departure, Philip Winter joined the team as Stabilization Advisor, in which position he will remain until late August. Similarly, Phillip Horne filled in as International Security Manager (ISM) after Mike Tredway left the program and was replaced at the very end of the quarter by the new long-term ISM, Brett Page.

In addition, the team is waiting for approval from USAID for a number of promotions that have been requested in an effort to retain and build talent in the team. On the Programs side these promotions include promoting the Wunlit RCA to National Conflict Advisor, the Senior Information Specialist to Wunlit RCA, the Information Officer to Senior Information Specialist, and the Information Officer to Senior Information Specialist. The team is currently recruiting for a new M&E position in the form of a fourth, roving Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. This person will be based in Juba and will cover Juba-based activities, but will also travel to our field locations to provide coverage and support.

The new VISTAS office will provide 200 square meters of additional space, as well as ample natural light. The five long-term staff members who currently live at Afex will be moving at the end of July to new residential accommodation that offers the advantage of full kitchens.

SECURITY CONSTRAINTS

The second two months of the third quarter corresponded with the end of the dry season in many part of the country. As such, they were characterized by renewed offensives in the three states of Greater Upper Nile that had varying impacts on our programming in those locations.

These attacks kept the Upper Nile team from returning to the Malakal PoC for the majority of May and June. The team had traveled to Juba for consultations in early May and were then unable to return. UNHAS flights were consistently cancelled due to the inability to obtain the necessary clearances to fly into the city. Clearances are required from the central South Sudanese government and the SPLA, as well as from the Opposition. VISTAS believes that these refusals may be part of an intentional blockade of Malakal, and they have resulted in the international community's inability to resupply food aid, fuel, or even food for the humanitarian hub since the beginning of the June.

In May and June a major offensive by the SPLA and allied Bul Nuer forces disrupted programming outside the Bentiu PoC in Unity State. The program was ultimately forced to cancel a number of activities in central and southern Unity because of the deterioration in the security situation. The destruction of Leer and Nyal in Panyijar Country and continuing insecurity there forced the program to move the Sports for Peace in Southern Unity (UNI023) grant to completed after supporting sporting events in half of the original locations. Likewise a grant to support to help a local NGO return to Leer under UNI026 was rejected. In addition, VISTAS suffered a setback in Tayer, a key trade hub between the Nuer and Dinka and the site of a number of VISTAS grants (UNI018 and 020). The island was bombed and the infrastructure there almost completely raised at the end of May when the government offensive reached southern Unity. While the team was forced to temporarily close the Ganyliel office when the frontlines reached the outskirts of town, the offensive never entered the town and the office was unaffected.

In Northern Bahr el Ghazal the team faced challenges in implementing NBG027 when the Sudanese government refused to grant permission for a number of the planned participants in that women's vocational training to cross the border into South Sudan. This challenge was unexpected as a new security clearance process was introduced in June amid reports of Sudanese rebel activity along the border. However, by the beginning of July these measures were lifted and the team sought to expand Misseriya participation.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Planning is underway for an Operations Bootcamp in October or November. Each of the various VISTAS departments has identified weak points in their operational knowledge, and trainings are being developed to ensure that all staff understand operational procedures. The meeting will be held in Juba and will cover both general operations trainings and specific trainings tailored to the roles and responsibilities of different categories of staff.

ROLLING ASSESSMENT

VISTAS' Program team held a Rolling Assessment in Juba on April 8th and 9th. The purpose of this meeting was to examine lessons learned from the 2014-2015 dry season so far and introduce new M&E tools at the activity level, including activity-level theories of change and M&E plans. The next RA will be at the end of July and will expand our examination of lessons learned beyond the activity level to the programmatic level, prepare for the SRS, and support the transition of the COP and CR.

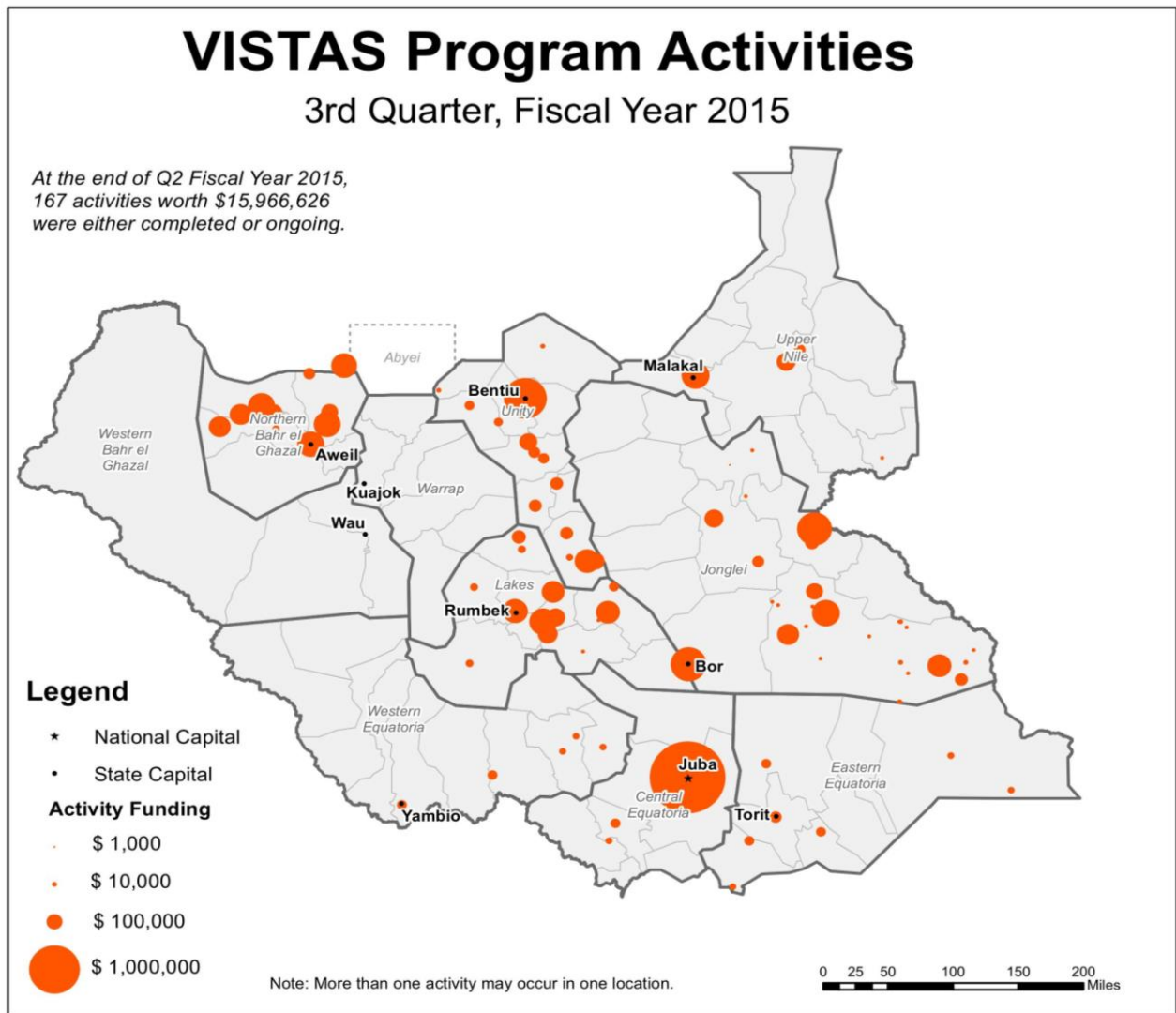
MARKET SHORTAGES

The South Sudanese Pound continues to climb, though with fewer fluctuations toward the end of the quarter. This creates challenges relating to the fact that the cost of key materials can fluctuate so greatly between when a grant is cleared and when materials are purchased that the budget may prove insufficient. In line with Mission Guidance, VISTAS pays in U.S. dollar when possible, as this creates significant savings for the program and USAID.



Wunlit RCA doing the “cow dance” at the April Rolling Assessment

ANNEX A: MAP OF ACTIVITIES



ANNEX B: FINANCIAL INFORMATION (FOR INTERNAL USAID USE ONLY)

	A	B	C	D	E
	Total Approved Budget (Mod 2)	Obligated Amount	Costs Incurred through Invoice 21	Projections FY15Q4	Total Actual and Projected Expenditures through FY15Q4
Project Management Costs	\$ 46,620,520	\$ 17,390,253	\$13,202,020	\$2,623,055	\$15,825,075
TAP - STTA	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 1,492,069	\$1,346,872	\$247,373	\$1,594,246
TAP - DDGS	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,119,051	\$1,088,086	\$114,172	\$1,202,258
TAP - Training	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,119,051	\$295,941	\$76,115	\$372,056
TAP - GUC	\$ 50,000,000	\$ 18,650,856	\$7,681,881	\$2,726,774	\$10,408,654
Fixed Fee	\$ 3,858,436	\$ 1,439,263	\$1,086,274	\$233,306	\$1,319,580
TOTAL	\$ 110,478,956	\$ 41,210,543	\$24,701,074	\$6,020,795	\$30,721,870

Notes:

Budget Lines: Project Management Costs = direct contractor activity (and indirect costs). Operational costs are inclusive of grant handling charge.

TAP STTA = TAP STTA activity plus applicable indirects; does not include fee

TAP DDGS = TAP DDGS activity plus applicable indirects; does not include fee

TAP Training = TAP training activity plus applicable indirects; does not include fee

TAP GUC = TAP GUC activity

Fixed Fee = Total Fixed Fee

Column A – Represents the Total Estimated Cost (TEC) per the award.

Column B – Obligated Amount represents the amount obligated per the latest modification/amendment.

Column C – Costs expended and paid by the Contractor that have been billed to USAID. Costs incurred to date should be within the last 30 days or latest date available.

Column D – Projected expenditures for the associated period.

Column E – Projected expenditures for the associated period.

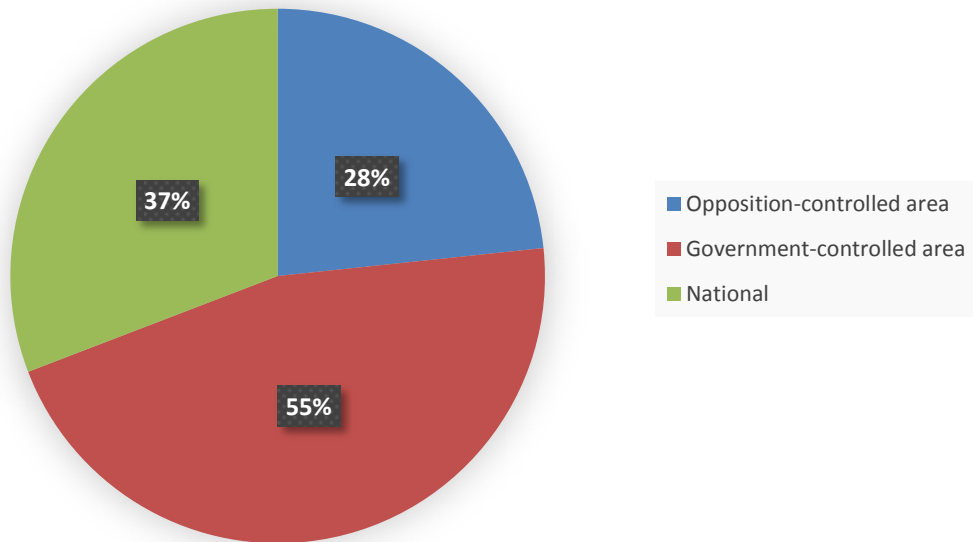
Column F – Total Actual and Projected Expenditures for the associated period.

ANNEX C: SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

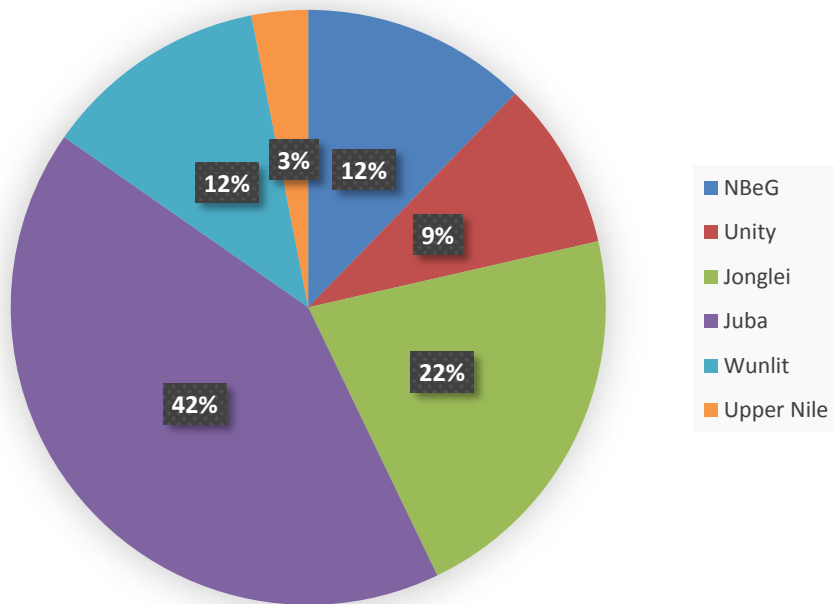
DATE	LOCATION	ACTIVITY
July - August	Panyijar	Panyijar Dikes Rehabilitation (UNI024)
July 20 – August 1st	Juba	2 nd Resource Facilitator training, focused on M&E (MOR023)
July 21-22	Juba	M&E training for Unity team
July 24th	Juba	Morning Star Board Meeting (MOR001)
Late July	Malakal PoC	PoC Social Capital Survey (UPN004)
Late July	Bor	Completion of the construction of footbridges at the Bor POC (JON050)
Late July	Lekuangole, Pibor, Bor, and Akobo	Completion of the distribution of canoes in Lekuangole, Pibor, Bor, and Akobo (JON031-322 and WUN010)
Late July	Yuai, Jonglei	Yuai stakeholders' peace meeting (JON029)
Mid August	Malakal PoC	Capacity Building for the Malakal Peace & Security Council (UPN007)
Mid August	Malakal PoC	Malakal Salaam Theatre (UPN005)
Mid August	Aweil West	Construction of Traditional Authority Court in Greater Ayat Region in Aweil West (NBG033)
Mid August	Aweil	Cross-border peace conference between Dinka Twic and Misseriya Awlad Kamil (NBG036)
Late August	NBeG	Secondary School Peace Writing Competition (NBG022)
Late August	NBeG	Water Points Along Dinka Malual – Misseriya Cattle Migration Routes (NBG028)
Mid September	Wanjok, Aweil East	Livestock and Trade Support Structures in Aweil East (NBG029)
Mid September	NBeG	Livestock and Trade Support Structures in Aweil West (NBG032)
Late September	Aweil	Dinka Malual – Misseriya Joint Women Vocational and Peace Building Training (NBG027)
Late September	Rumaker, Aweil East	Water Points Along Dinka Malual – Rezeigat Cattle Migration Routes (NBG031)
Early October	Juba	3 rd Resource Facilitator Training, focused on peacebuilding (MOR023)
Early October	NBG	Rehabilitation of Football Field in the Border Communities (V-NBG025)
Early October	Aweil	Construction of Internews Radio Station in Aweil (NBG030)

ANNEX D: REGION-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

FY15 # of Cleared Activities by Govt-controlled, Opposition-controlled region, or National



FY15 # of Cleared Activities by Region



ANNEX E: PROGRESS ON INDICATOR TARGETS

INDICATOR	ANNUAL TARGET	Q3 FY15 ACHIEVEMENT	FY15 CUMULATIVE
Number of new groups or initiatives created through USG funding, dedicated to resolving the conflict or the drivers of conflict.	20	4	14
Number of people participating in USG-supported events, training, or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation.	10,000	272	5,754
Number of USG-assisted campaigns and programs to enhance public understanding, NGO support, and media coverage of judicial independence and accountability.	10	14	19
Number of local women participating in a substantive role or position in a peace building process supported with USG assistance	180	0	90

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