

Evaluation of the AHP South Sudan Humanitarian Response

November – December 2018

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It is the hope of the evaluation team that the findings, lessons learned and recommendations of this evaluation will inform future responses addressing famine, food security and vulnerable livelihoods, and water, sanitation and hygiene in both complex rapid onset and protracted crises.



Photo 1. UNIDO team conducting GBV training for local government officials in Leer, Unity State.

List of Acronyms

AHP	Australian Humanitarian Partnership
CFW	Cash for Work
CHP	Community Hygiene Promoters
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CTP	Cash Transfer Programmes
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EFSVL	Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence (also referred to as <i>Sexual</i> and Gender Based Violence)
GoRSS	Government of the Republic of South Sudan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
KII	Key Informant Interview
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MICYN	Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition
NBeG	Northern Bahr el Ghazal
OBG	Oxfam Great Britain
ROSS	Relief Organization for South Sudan
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
TPA	Temporary Protection Area
UNIDO	Universal Intervention and Development Organization
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WR	World Relief
WVA	World Vision Australia
WVSS	World Vision South Sudan

Executive Summary

In February 2017, the United Nations declared famine in parts of South Sudan, stating more than seven million people required urgent lifesaving humanitarian assistance. In response, the Australian Government announced \$20 million in funding for South Sudan and Somalia including \$5 million to activate the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP). The Australian Government has contributed over \$50 million to South Sudan since 2017, bringing its total humanitarian assistance to almost \$103 million since December 2013.

In April 2017 (Phase 1) Oxfam and World Vision were selected to implement activities over a 12 month period focused on food security and livelihoods, nutrition, health and WASH, social inclusion/protection with a specific dedicated focus on women and girls, gender-based violence, disability. World Vision activities were focused in Unity State and Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Oxfam activities in Unity State and Jonglei State. An additional \$4 million was contributed to these programs in September 2017 (Phase 2), extending the implementation period to October 2018. 239,362 beneficiaries were targeted through these activities, of which over 50% were estimated to be women, girls and people living with disability.

In summary, the Response successfully met the needs of and delivered lifesaving assistance to the targeted communities and beneficiaries. Nutrition activities, together with Emergency Food Security and Livelihood activities, targeted the most vulnerable and food insecure households, reduced malnutrition in children under five and other vulnerable groups, and assisted families to diversify food sources and sell surpluses where possible. This in turn supported fledging local markets. Cash programming demonstrated the important role this mechanism can also play in stimulating local businesses and markets. WASH activities built new, or rehabilitated, existing water sources and provided training to local communities in maintaining public and private WASH facilities. Protection was mainstreamed through all activities, with specific gender based violence campaigns to raise awareness, supporting much-needed cultural shifts in community attitudes contributing to improving the status of women.

The following are key findings from the evaluation:

Appropriateness and Relevance: The Response satisfied standards of coordination, and impartial analysis of context, needs and risks. Each partner actively participated in the countrywide humanitarian response system, contributing and leveraging data to inform planning and implementation. Plans reflected extensive local knowledge of context and existing relationships with key stakeholders. Ongoing context analysis, consultation, and feedback mechanisms were supported throughout implementation. Activities were adaptively managed in response to changing context, needs, beneficiary feedback and constraints. For example, adjustments made to the types of NFI distributed in NBeG based on beneficiary feedback, and reprogramming of water point construction in Unity and Jonglei due to insecurity and displacement of people.

Organizational systems safeguarded impartial assistance, based on assessed needs, vulnerabilities and capacities, with a focus on the most vulnerable. Triage of needs was a constant challenge due to frequent and rapid shifts in context (e.g. insecurity in Unity), incomplete real-time or up-to-date information, which was in part due to resource availability, and adequate local counterpart capacity, engagement and responsiveness.

Given their extensive experience in South Sudan the partners could improve their comprehensive risk assessment and mitigation planning, for example planning for wet season logistics and pre-positioning supplies during the dry season to reduce overall logistics costs. However, this practice also falls victim to short-term funding cycles that inhibit continuity of planning.

- **Efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness:** All partners presented well-defined and logical plans. Identified risks included insecurity due to ongoing conflict; transport and logistics limitations;

trade and communications with respects to functioning local economies and efficient mobile communications; displacement of local populations and influx of IDPs from other areas; inflation and its effect on the value of money; weather affecting agriculture and river access; and the impact of communicable disease outbreaks on population health. All partners demonstrated skill in addressing risks within their manageable interest.

As of writing this report, *86.4% of target outputs had been achieved:*

- **Nutrition:** Increased access to prevention, care and treatment services for acute malnutrition compared with the same time last year. 26,650 children were treated in 23 centres. 777 health workers, mothers, community mobilizers, leaders and influencers have been educated and mobilized around community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) and Maternal Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN).
- **EFSVL** assistance and access improved among the most vulnerable and food insecure households in areas served. Households benefited from distributions of agricultural tools, seeds, fishing equipment and household utensils, and the training and supervision of lead farmers and extension workers in improved agricultural practices. Families were able to supplement their diets with growing vegetables and fishing, allowing diversification of food baskets, sale of surplus in the market and even assistance to other vulnerable people. This in turn stimulated fledgling local markets and improved other conditions in the household. It also contributed to the changing status of women, as their role in food securing their households and communities was recognized. Other creative approaches, such as Oxfam's CTP, played a role in improving roads, other public conditions, as well as stimulating local businesses and markets, where conditions allowed.
- **WASH:** There was increased access to timely, equitable, safe water, along with improvements in sanitation and hygiene behavior for the most vulnerable Unity, Jonglei and NBeG. 29 new boreholes have been installed, together with repair and rehabilitation of an additional 34 existing boreholes, hand pumps and hand-dug wells. Training of local mechanics and water management committees improved capacity to maintain, repair and sustain community WASH facilities.
- **Protection:** Gender and protection were integrated into most activities, ensuring equal representation of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Initial cultural shifts were evident with respects to the role and rights of the most vulnerable, especially girls and women, gender equality and empowerment. The integration of EFSVL, nutrition services, WASH with Protection / GBV, amplifies effects with the later emerging as an important component, given ongoing insecurity in Unity and Jonglei during the period of performance and the normal historical context.

The response played to organizational strengths, enabling access to DFAT priority areas for South Sudan. All partners demonstrated commitment to resilience and longer-term sustainability, in so far as this is possible within South Sudan's current context. The evaluation is satisfied that the partners adhered to technical standards for best practice.

The two programs while funded through the AHP mechanism, operated as individual programs. Given that partners are dealing with many similar issues in South Sudan, there may be opportunities for collaboration and joint learning between Australian partners.

- Inclusivity and the extent to which the response met the needs of those most vulnerable: The evaluation ratified the inclusive nature of activities, from inception through targeting of beneficiaries, operations management, information sharing and review of outcomes. Partners targeted the most vulnerable using criteria that include wealth and income levels, productive

assets, migration status, and a range of typical vulnerable groups including women and child headed households, the elderly, people living with disability or chronic illness, widows, orphans and children under five.

Overall, areas with stability and security afforded better achievements. Stability opened up opportunities for more conversations with women, and men, on a range of subjects that include GBV, public and household violence, the importance of women's health, love marriages, delaying marriage for adolescents and other positive gender dynamics.

This statement from one respondent best summed up this line of inquiry. "The vulnerable have access to and use latrines now, they have access to water, the number of vulnerable has been decreased. The challenge is – what next? Post-conflict we need an "easier landing" for this community. There are shifts in attitudes towards the most vulnerable, but it requires consistent programming and continuity in order to consolidate gains. The culture is old and needs constant encouragement for change."

- Reinforcement of, and the major challenges to localisation, local capacity / leadership: Local leaders and community members were closely involved as mobilizers, committee members and as volunteers. They received formal and informal training, with the implementing partners careful to attenuate capacity development to existing levels of literacy and competence, and without undermining local structures. Implementing Partners strived for balanced representation of men and women in capacity building and leadership development opportunities.

Overall efforts are changing attitudes, growing capacity and enhancing resilience. Several respondents commented on residual capacity that remains in community. With respects to the training efforts of the four partners:

- Administrative officials benefitted, especially when State and County departments were deliberately targeted, in the absence of GoRSS-led capacity development initiatives.
- Payam leaders have better understanding of their role with respects to coordination and support of activities benefitting their areas.
- Local staff and community members developed technical skills in the management and technical delivery of humanitarian assistance.

One respondent stated, "Once you have a leader confidently speaking out about an intervention, this increases the chance of success."

The main barriers to involving local actors were availability of competent people and the resources for them to do their job. That being said, World Vision and National NGO UNIDO have a successful partnership that leveraged the contextual, cultural and language skills of South Sudanese, while building the capacity of a National NGO to deliver quality technical services and providing important organizational capacity development opportunities.

- Transparency and accountability to affected populations: WV, Oxfam and WR have organizational policies that outline transparency and accountability standards, covering institutional definition of these concepts, cultural considerations and engagement with communities, the later including protection and safeguarding of vulnerable groups, reporting and other humanitarian standard operating procedures. The organizations also have policy covering fraud, corruption and conflict of interest. World Vision worked with UNIDO to develop a memorandum of understanding to guide their partnership that includes clauses on fraud, corruption and conflict of interest.

Engagement with affected communities was consistently informed by standard operating procedures throughout the program management cycle. Highlights of engagement included: consistently strong local relationships between Partners and all local actors; informal, yet strong communication processes between all stakeholders; communities engaged with several

modalities of feedback through formal post-activity monitoring; unsolicited complaints and feedback mechanisms and regular planned and unplanned meetings. Several key officials reported that relationships between themselves and the Partners were characterized by good cooperation and communication.

Three challenges to transparency and accountability deserve mention:

- Limited capacity of counterparts negates opportunities for deeper engagement and participation
- General literacy impedes communication as does absence of mobile network coverage in most counties of Unity state
- Gaps in beneficiary information, which can be problematic to fill. Transparency and accountability must be contextualized and realistic expectations established. That being said, it is the opinion of this evaluation, that all activities and programs of the Response were implemented with acceptable levels of transparency and accountability to affected communities, as per CHS.



Photo 2. Oxfam team in Pibor, Jonglei.

The following recommendations stem from the detailed findings of this evaluation:

1. DFAT should continue a level of funding through 2019 and 2020, to support consolidation of achievement made through this response, while closely monitoring the IPC and the new peace arrangements. Specifically:
 - Continue nutrition programs and food security initiatives in Unity through 2019, to minimize backsliding. Monitor the IPC and be prepared to support efforts in Jonglei and Bahr el Ghazal that build resilience in the local food economy systems.
 - Assuming improved security through 2019 and potential increased food production, determine cut-over criteria that indicate emphasized investment in WASH services, compared with other sectors, including the development of appropriate new water points and expansion of institutional (e.g. schools / clinics) and household latrines.

- In line with the UN's Post-2015 development agenda, DFAT must ensure that gender and women's empowerment are mainstreamed into in all programs they support and fund implementation of relevant parts of UNDP's 8 Point Agenda: Practical Positive Outcomes for Women and Girls in Crisis.¹ While all points of the strategy need to be implemented, prioritize and implement the most feasible items based on UN / NGO assessment of the current context of the newly emerging national security framework. Particularly strengthening referral and justice systems for victims of violence, based on realism, recovery, resilience and reaching the most vulnerable.
2. DFAT should fund organizations that are committed to development of their own South Sudanese workforce, including increasing the number and role of women, as well as those committed to forming partnerships with viable local non-government organizations with the goal of developing these organizations.
 3. Partners must increase the depth and frequency of risk assessments for all locations, driven from the field: communities and staff, with a focus on logistics improvements and mobilization of project resources through pre-positioning, communications and evacuations.
 4. Following on from #3, partners should complete context, cost-efficiency and value-for-money analyses, tracking the high costs of doing business in South Sudan. This type of analysis can support cost models for operating year-round in remote and not-easily accessible areas, addressing particularly the logistic constraints faced by this program. This analysis will support funding higher cost emergency programs in the near-term while the new peace agreements are operationalized, and the country moves towards transitional programming.
 5. The AHP support unit should facilitate NGOs engaged in AHP humanitarian response, to develop learning priorities and a learning agenda and drive a joint performance management, evaluation strategy and systems for each response. This will require DFAT resources and NGO commitment to collaboration, learning and adaptive management. This will require resources to assist partners with capacity building their staff responsible for performance management and evaluation.
 6. Rapidly shifting contexts, and inconsistent availability of systemic information in South Sudan underlines the need to support systematic and objective real-time context analysis throughout South Sudan. DFAT is encouraged to support the GoRSS, UN and civil society organizations to:
 - Develop models of, and scenarios for, migration of conflict-affected populations, that predict population movements, identify inaccessible locations to where people retreat, predict impact to personal security, food security, and access to health, nutrition, WASH and education services.
 - Monitor the adequacy, diversity and accessibility of foods, coupled with the growth of local market economies and trade, as the new peace takes hold. This must include the role of neighbouring local economies in Ethiopia (for Jonglei) and Sudan (for Bahr el Ghazal and Unity).
 - Study the developing role of women in South Sudan to better understand women's expanding and evolving agency, particularly in the context of motivation and intention regarding household WASH adoption.
 - Study the correlation or multiplier effects of integrated programming, for example, food security and livelihoods, nutrition and WASH programs in relation to education and economic development in order to inform value-for-money, from cost efficiency and cost effectiveness perspectives.

¹ <http://www.ss.undp.org/content/dam/southsudan/library/Fact%20Sheets/GEWES.pdf>. Accessed December 28th 2018 @ 14:35 hrs EST.

1. Introduction

The January 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan and the southern-based Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) officially ended more than two decades of north–south conflict during which famine, fighting and disease had killed an estimated 2 million people and displaced at least 4.5 million others within Sudan.

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GoRSS) declared independence on July 9, 2011, after a referendum on self-determination stipulated in the CPA. However, two and a half years later on December 15, 2013, clashes erupted in Juba between factions within the GoRSS and quickly spread into a protracted national conflict with Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile states representing the primary areas of fighting and displacement.

On August 26, 2015, GoRSS President Salva Kiir signed a peace agreement that the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) and other stakeholders had signed on August 17. Opposition leader Riek Machar returned to Juba and was sworn in as the First Vice President (FVP) on April 26, 2016; GoRSS President Salva Kiir appointed a transitional Government of National Unity on April 28.

Fighting between SPLA and SPLA-IO forces broke out in Juba on July 7, 2016, displacing thousands of people and prompting FVP Machar to flee. Throughout the year, ongoing violent conflict, insecurity, resultant displacement, disruption of trade, markets and cultivation, and limited transportation and communication infrastructure restricted humanitarian activities across South Sudan, hindering the delivery of critical assistance to populations in need.

On February 20, 2017 the IPC Technical Working Group updated released by the GoRSS, UNICEF, FAO and WFP, declared Famine - IPC 5 - levels of food insecurity in Leer and Mayendit. The declaration placed 4.9 million people (more than 40% of South Sudan’s population) in urgent need of food, agriculture and nutrition assistance.

In response to this history, Australia has contributed over \$50 million to South Sudan since 2017, bringing its total humanitarian assistance to almost \$103 million since the outbreak of conflict in December 2013. \$5 million went through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) in April 2017 (Phase 1), specifically to Oxfam and World Vision, in support of a humanitarian response (hereafter “the Response”) in Unity State (Leer, Mayendit, Koch and Nyal), Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Aweil, East, South and North) and Jonglei State (Twic East and Pibor). An additional \$4 million was contributed to these programs in September 2017 (Phase 2), extending the implementation period to October 2018.

2. Purpose and scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the AHP response to the February 2017 declaration of famine with a focus on the following:

- The **relevance** of the response (CHS 1 & 6).
- The **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the response (CHS 2 and 9).
- Whether the response reinforced **local capacity** and what were the major challenges that constrained implementing partners achieving that (CHS 3, 4 and 6).
- The extent to which the response **met the needs of those most vulnerable** due to gender, disability and other social disadvantage.
- The **transparency** and **accountability** to effected populations (CHS 4 and 5).

The findings and lessons learned are meant to inform future AHP responses in the contexts of both complex rapid onset and protracted crises.

3. Evaluation Methodology

Using a realist approach, a method well suited to the complexity of social programming, this evaluation sought to understand ‘what worked, for who, in what circumstances and why’ rather than providing a verdict on the response’s success or failure.

Details of the evaluation approach, data sources and methods of data collection, instrumentation ethical considerations and limitations related to this evaluation can be found in Appendix 2 – Details of Evaluation Methodology.



Photo 3. Local Pibor traders, Issa Zacariah (left) and John Oleyo (right) who work with Oxfam to supply commodities to beneficiaries through the Cash-Transfer-Program.

4. Key Findings

In deference to presenting triangulated qualitative data, a detailed accounting of *actual* quantitative activity and outputs results (compared to targets established in plans) is not presented in this evaluation report. Those results are presented in the interim reports to DFAT (on Phase 1 & 2) and the final reports for the Response from Oxfam and World Vision. Quantitative findings presented in this report are restricted to findings that pertain to positive and negative deviation from plans; and are those that are germane to the discussion on efficiency, particularly productivity and fidelity to plans.

4.1 Program Locations

Figure 1 shows the areas of operations covered by the Response, along with the sectors covered in those areas. Specifically, Oxfam was operational in EFSVL and WASH in Nyal (Unity State), and in Pibor and Twic East (Jonglei State). World Vision together with partners UNIDO and World Relief was operational in all four sectors in Koch (Unity State), in Nutrition, WASH and Protection in Leer and Mayendit (Unity State) and in EFSVL, WASH and Protection in Aweil East, Aweil South and Aweil North (Northern Bahr el Ghazal). Unity State was a focus area for DFAT in the Response. World Vision and Oxfam proposed to extend the Response to other the areas, which were also considered high risk in 2017 (IPC 3& 4) and where the organizations already had operations, to which AHP / DFAT agreed.

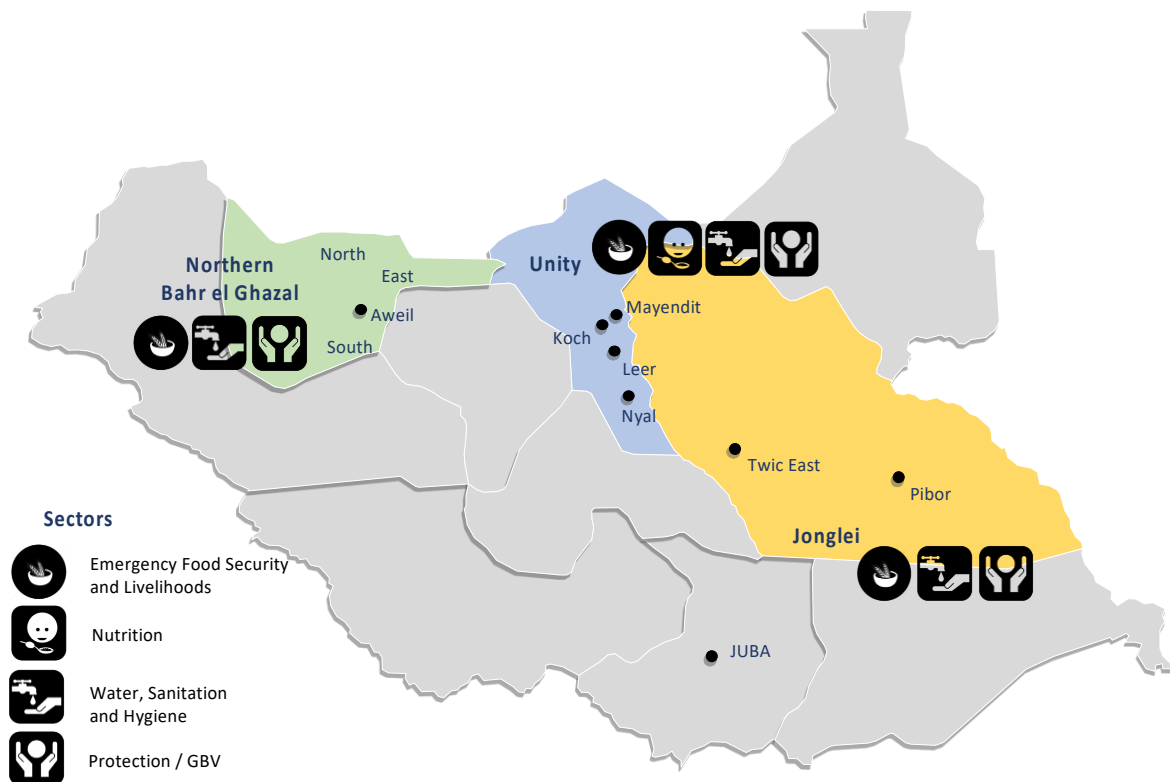


Figure 1. AHP South Sudan Locations and Sectors of Operation

4.2 Response Strategies

The implementing partners shared comparable component objectives for like sectors of the Response, based on examination of the near-term outcomes of *delivery of, increased or improved availability and access to food security, WASH, nutrition and protection / gender-based violence*

services. World Vision’s theory of change held an overall objective of contributing to saving lives among food insecure and conflict affected populations. Oxfam’s overall objective was a summary of the component outcomes, rather than speaking to higher-level outcome. Specific theories of change are summarised in Appendix 5 – Theories of Change, with some specific highlights presented here:

Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods (Oxfam and World Vision)

EFSVL activities were focused on several modalities:

- In Phase 1 Oxfam planned unconditional cash or selected food voucher transfer programmes (CTP) for Greater Nyal and Panyijar County, aligned with their global strategy for EFSVL. After completing market and risk analysis, and as the wet season progressed in 2017, it became evident that market capacity was compromised and unable to support CTP, due to insecurity, and seasonal transport and logistics challenges. The modality was switched to [temporary] food-in-kind in conjunction with World Food Program (WFP) to meet the immediate food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable in target communities.
- In Phase 2, Oxfam was able to implement CTP in Pibor and Twic East.
- In both phases and across all planned target locations, World Vision and Partners supported vulnerable households through the provision of livelihood kits consisting of agricultural tools, vegetable seeds and fishing equipment, as well as capacity building of lead farmers, gardening cooperatives and government agricultural staff, to strengthen agricultural extension services.



Photo 4. Beneficiaries with the combined kits they received in Aweil North.

Nutrition (World Vision)

Nutrition activities were a significant component of the Response in Unity State, delivered through World Vision’s partners, UNIDO and World Relief. Key services included:

- Provision of therapeutic food and supplemental feeding to children under 5 years of age, with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), defined as a weight for height Z-score (WHZ) < -3 and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) as defined by a WHZ between -2 and -3.
- Community mobilization and education on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) through local leadership, mother-to-mother and men’s support groups, and principle care-givers for children under 5 years.
- Active and passive case identification, and management (esp. defaulter tracing) through trained community nutrition volunteers and the primary health care system.
- Establishment of mobile outreach facilities to optimize the reach of these activities across a geographically challenging region.



Photo 5. MIYCN campaign in Bieh, Koch County.

WASH (Oxfam and World Vision)

All geographic areas of the Response received key water, sanitation and hygiene services, including:

- New, rehabilitated or repaired water sources that included boreholes, hand-pumps and hand-dug wells.
- Establishment and capacity development of water resource management and sanitation committees.

- Provision of public (schools, markets), communal and shared household latrines.
- Provision of hand-washing facilities.
- Provision of latrine and environmental cleaning kits
- Provision of hygiene and female hygiene kits, and long-lasting treated mosquito nets
- Capacity building for community mobilizers / volunteers and public education on debris clean up, hygiene promotion, sanitation and water management.



Photo 6. Public latrine, Unity.

Protection and Gender-Based Violence (Oxfam and World Vision)

All sector strategies integrated protection and GBV components, either explicitly as stated activities and outputs, or as a methodological approach to delivery of other services to targeted populations. Key activities included:

- Campaigns and raising awareness for all segments of society (civil and government) on sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), protection of civilians, especially children and the vulnerable.
- Training of EFSVL, WASH and Nutrition sector staff on the Inter Agency Standing Committee's 2015 GBV mainstreaming.
- Mapping of existing Sexual and GBV services where they were available, including psychosocial support for survivors.
- Distribution of dignity kits to vulnerable women and girls.

The remainder of these findings are organized around the six main evaluation questions, linked to the Core Humanitarian Standards.

4.3 Appropriate and Relevant

The extent to which the Response was **appropriate** and **relevant** was assessed by examining processes of project management, alongside the technical strategies and their responsiveness to

local and national context. All partners have extensive experience in their areas of operations: World Relief 20+ years in Unity; Oxfam 30+ years in South Sudan, including Jonglei; World Vision 30+ years in Bahr el Ghazal and other parts of South Sudan, more recently in NBeG; and UNIDO 14 years in Unity. In all locations, existing programs already ratified by local communities, were leveraged into the Response.

- **Systematic, objective and ongoing analysis.** Each partner actively participates in the humanitarian response cluster system, contributes primary context data from their areas of operation, and leverages the extensive secondary data available from other organizations, to inform strategic planning and decision-making. Humanitarian cluster meetings are regularly attended at Juba, State and local levels, providing the key venue for ongoing context and stakeholder analysis, prioritization and allocation of humanitarian response responsibilities. Both Oxfam and World Vision have quality assurance departments that coordinate systems and processes for context analysis of all operational areas.
- **Assessment of needs, risks and understanding of context, including vulnerabilities / capacities.** Initial concepts^{2,3} and 8 week plans^{4,5} for the Response were informed and supported by existing presence in each location, knowledge of local context, and existing relationships with other humanitarian actors and local authorities, both in areas of operation and nationally. Key sources of data used in planning included [February 20 2017 IPC analysis](#) and the [2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), ensuring that context did indeed guide selection of response activities. A joint baseline, completed by World Vision and Oxfam in September 2017, was used to further refine project plans. 15 out of 19 baseline recommendations regarding strategy and potential improvements to project methodology were addressed. This is one demonstration of the organizations' commitment to content analysis and risk assessment. All sources of data reinforced the four sectors of EFSVL, Nutrition, WASH and Protection as appropriate response strategies.
- **Coordination and complementarity.** Ongoing context analysis, during implementation, was supported by processes of regular consultation and meetings with partners, stakeholders and communities, that included cluster meetings, post-distribution monitoring, complaints and feedback mechanisms. Results were discussed internally as well as with administration and beneficiary representatives. *All* interviewees could report on these processes when asked about the extent to which information on context and needs was used in planning, adaptive management and program strategic decision-making.
- **Adaptive management based on changing needs and context.** There are multiple examples of how implementation was adapted, for example:
 - Partners submitted at least three updates / amendments to plans based on shifting context and the injection of additional funds in 2018. The strategies presented in Appendix 5 – Theories of Change represent the *final* amendments in the July – September 2018 timeframe.
 - Oxfam's planned unconditional cash or selected food voucher transfer programmes (CTP) for Greater Nyal and Panyijar County were switched to food-in-kind in conjunction with World Food Program (WFP), after completing market and risk analysis, and as the wet season progressed in 2017. It had become evident that market capacity was compromised and unable to support CTP, due to insecurity, and seasonal transport and logistics challenges.
 - World Vision adjusted components of agricultural kits and fishing kits in NBeG, based on feedback from beneficiary communities.

² World Vision – Initial Concept – HPA South Sudan Famine Final 2017_03_10

³ Oxfam Initial Concept DFAT South Sudan AHP Activation Final 2017_03_10

⁴ HPA South Sudan Famine Response ERIP_World Vision Australia (Phase 1) Final Submission

⁵ HPA_ERIP_8_Week_Plan_Oxfam May 18.Final

Several respondents reported the challenge of triaging the extensive needs, particularly in rapidly and frequently shifting context (e.g. Unity), given incomplete real-time, up-to-date information, which is in part due to resource availability, adequate local counterpart capacity, engagement and responsiveness. That being said, key informants satisfactorily validated the existence and implementation of organizational policies that safeguard impartial assistance based on assessed needs, vulnerabilities and capacities, which also ensure the inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalized populations.

The magnitude of humanitarian need in South Sudan, given the protracted nature of this crisis has to be balanced against the ability to triage the most appropriate response activities, the experience of organizations to implement activities, all while managing considerable operating risks.

Systematic, objective and ongoing analysis informed the design and implementation of programs. The original plans and the amendments during implementation, demonstrate an appropriate and relevant response that was coordinated with and complementary to the work of local actors, other humanitarian organizations, national and local authorities and civil society. In the case of Oxfam's CTP, the response was also inclusive of small-scale private business, a challenge in the current high-risk, low capacity environment of South Sudan.

With respects to the Response activities in Unity, where authorities are party to the conflict that has caused the emergency, ensuring complementarity with national and local authorities is still a premature discussion. Particularly, where all the partners wrestle with expectations that authorities will assume some responsibility for the people and finding appropriate ways to facilitate that. It is hoped that the newly negotiated peace and transition period, allowing for the reintegration of Opposition parties back into the GOSS, will reduce risk, needs and open opportunities for involvement of authorities.

Overall these findings suggest that the AHP Response was appropriate and relevant to the humanitarian crisis of 2017 - 2018 in South Sudan.

4.4 Effective

Clearly defined intended outputs and outcomes. As discussed above, both Oxfam and World Vision presented well-defined strategies for their components of the Response. The theories of change outlined logic between activities, production of outputs, the resulting component objectives (near-term – mid-term outcomes) and overall objectives (longer-term objectives). During implementation, constraints forced amendments to plans, resulting in revision of timelines for completion of activities, or activity and output targets. These amendments were appropriate (see above), well documented, communicated to and approved by DFAT.

Risk management is germane when defining plans and intended objectives. Mitigation of risks is a formidable challenge in South Sudan. Both organizations completed identification of risks to implementation in their plans, demonstrating contextual knowledge and experience in South Sudan. These risks included:

- Insecurity due to ongoing conflict
- Transport and logistics limitations particularly in the wet season
- Trade and communications with respects to functioning local economies and efficient mobile communications
- Displacement of local populations and influx of IDPs from other areas, affecting agreed upon plans
- Inflation and its effect on the value of money
- Weather affecting agriculture and river access
- The impact of communicable disease outbreaks on population health.



Photo 7. Airlifting WASH equipment into Unity.

All partners demonstrated skill in addressing the risks within their manageable interest. Two examples include:

- Frequent insecurity in Unity, and to some degree in Jonglei, that remained a constraint throughout the Response, forcing several evacuations of staff with associated reduction of services. In each case, logistics and evacuation protocols were implemented, protecting staff and program assets with minimal disruption to plans.
- The many adjustments made to logistical arrangements due to wet season constraints, e.g using airlift and on the ground porters, to move WASH equipment into Unity and Jonglei when trucking contractors were unable to reach destinations by road. This one issue had the potential to negatively impact operations because budget for airlift is significantly higher than road transportation. However, partners were able to leverage the Logistics Cluster to move resources to locations. Several respondents did express that there is room for improving the planning on logistics, pre-positioning commodities and supplies or allocating more funds for airlift.

Achievement of intended outcomes As discussed above, end-line quantitative outcome evaluation was not in scope for this evaluation⁶. Therefore, achievement of component objectives can only be assessed based on reports of outputs achieved and triangulated through the qualitative data collected through the KII, FGD, as well as observation.

Review of documents shows that partners submitted 3 amendments to plans, updating objectives and / or targets. Appendix 6 – Oxfam Achievements and Appendix 7 – World Vision Output Achievements show the **output level** achievements for each organization, based on the most recent amendments to plans and reported as of the end of October 2018. In summary:

- Oxfam reported on 26 key performance indicators at **output level**, of which 23 were on or above target (see Figure 2), as of writing this report. (Note that Oxfam WASH activities are ongoing in Jonglei until the end of January 2019, at which time all targets will be met.)
- World Vision reported on 55 key performance indicators at **output level**, of which 47 were on or above target (see Figure 3).

⁶ Oxfam is planning on completing an ex-post quantitative survey in its program locations, early 2019.

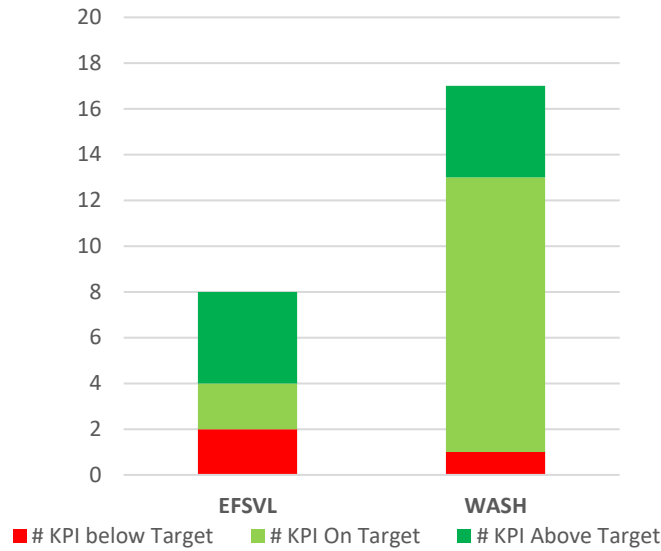


Figure 2. Overall Oxfam Output KPI achievement.⁷

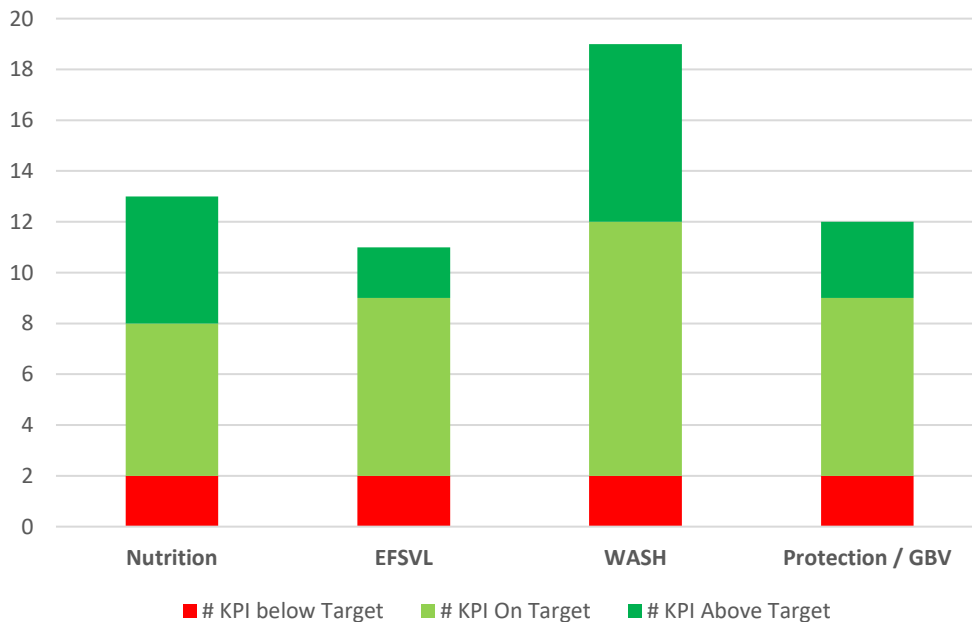


Figure 3. Overall WV Output KPI achievement.⁸

The theories of change for this program were valid given the findings on appropriateness and relevance. Therefore, it can be inferred from the achievement of 86.4% of target outputs (as of writing this report), that the AHP response has contributed to all stated outcomes. Highlights reported by respondents include:

⁷ For the purpose of this evaluation, a KPI is considered on target if the actual reported is within +/- 10% of the planned target.

⁸ *ibid*

- **Nutrition:** Increased access to prevention, care and treatment services for acute malnutrition is evidenced by the overall prevalence of malnutrition in vulnerable groups, which is currently reduced compared with the same time last year⁹. Implementing partners reported at by end of September 2018, admissions of children with SAM and MAM have decreased compared with the same time in the previous year. In addition to the treatment services provided, health workers, mothers, community mobilizers, leaders and influencers have been educated and mobilized around community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) and Maternal Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN).

Implementing partners also reported in interview that overall nutrition appears better in GoRSS areas compared with IO areas in Unity and Jonglei states¹⁰, which have been less secure, have less road access and have had repeated displacement and disruption. At this time, remoteness and instability remain issues outside major towns. Going into next season, while improvements are acknowledged, the IPC forecast as of the end of September remains at Level 5 (catastrophe) for most of Unity and Jonglei. Partners commented in interview, that static nutrition services will be required for the next several years, at least until security and cultivation of cereal crops have stabilized for longer-term food security.



Photo 8. Women's group and their produce during a farmer field day session, in Aweil North.

- **EFSVL** assistance and access have improved among the most vulnerable and food insecure households served in project areas, based on output level reporting. Households have benefited from livelihood support and risk mitigation prevention activities, including distributions of agricultural tools, seeds, fishing equipment and household utensils, and the training of lead farmers and extension workers in improved agricultural practices and supervision. Through CTP, conditional and unconditional CFW community asset creation / restoration approaches and support to trader groups, Oxfam have played a role in improving

⁹ KEY IPC Findings: September 2018 – March 2019 accessed on December 21st @ 16:48 hrs EST.

¹⁰ Nutrition achievements reported here are from qualitative interviews conducted with implementing partners and have not been verified by survey at this time. The evaluation team did not visit Unity and so could not cite raw data of SAM and MAM admissions at clinics.

roads, other public conditions, as well as stimulating local businesses and markets, where conditions have allowed.

Families report being able to supplement their diets with fishing and growing vegetables. For example, women in Wathok, NBeG reported that their garden cooperative project has trained them on the production of vegetables using improved farming techniques (e.g. irrigation, pest control, organic fertilizing). Yields have increased sufficiently, allowing diversification of their families' food basket, sale of surplus in the market and even assistance to other vulnerable people. This in turn has stimulated fledgling local markets, improved conditions in the household and contributed to the changing status of women, as their role in food securing their households and communities is recognized.

The accounts of traders in Pibor market illustrate a multiplier effect where Oxfam support small traders, who in turn contract road and air transport businesses and other commodity traders. It is possible to purchase a range of commodities from the functioning market in Pibor. People in NBeG are also reporting an uptick in cross-border trading from Sudan, including food and non-food commodities, and fuel for motorcycles.

- WASH:** Through provision of water, sanitation and hygiene resources, there is increased access to timely, equitable, safe water, and improvement in sanitation and hygiene behavior for the most vulnerable in the areas of operation in Unity, Jonglei and NBeG for 198,000 people¹¹. Twenty-nine (29) new boreholes have been installed, together with repair and rehabilitation of thirty-four (34) existing boreholes, hand pumps and hand-dug wells. Training of local mechanics and water management committees has improved capacity to maintain, repair and sustain community WASH facilities. The needs in this sector are immense, but there are signs of cultural shifts in sanitation and hygiene behavior. 479 household, shared and institutional latrines were constructed. Partners have experimented with household latrine location (inside and outside compounds) to understand the impact on utilization. There appears to be less cultural stigma around institutional latrines as opposed to household or communal latrines in some locations. There are examples where through demonstration and mobilization, communities are engaging and becoming responsible for constructing their own latrines – in Leer, 9 latrines built by community health practitioners, led to the construction of an additional 50 latrines, as community members learned and have become motivated to find resources and build their own facilities. Oxfam WASH activities are ongoing in Jonglei until the end of January, at which time they expect to meet all targets.
- Protection:** Early / initial cultural shifts are evident with respects to the role and rights of the most vulnerable, especially girls and women, gender equality and empowerment. Through different mechanisms including educating project staff, as well as community education and mobilization (e.g. meetings, community dialogue, drama, story-telling, visual aids), awareness is increasing around gender, sexual and gender-based violence, forced and early child marriage and child neglect. Gender and protection are integrated into most activities, ensuring equal representation of marginalized and vulnerable groups. The integration of EFSVL, nutrition services, WASH with Protection / GBV, amplifies effects with the later emerging as an important component, given ongoing insecurity in Unity and Jonglei during the period of performance and the normal historical context.

Note that outcome findings reported above are mostly from the qualitative data collected through interviews and discussion groups. At this time quantitative survey, repeating the baseline measurement has not been completed. Oxfam will do so in early 2019.

¹¹ This estimate of people impacted is based on 500 families served per water point, with an average of 6 members per family.

The Response has played to organizational strengths and capacities, building on institutional knowledge and experience in South Sudan. The partnerships between World Vision, UNIDO and World Relief are a particular highlight of the Response. It enabled critical access to priority areas of need that aligned with Australia's Humanitarian Strategy for South Sudan and focus of this response in Unity. The partnerships demonstrate NGOs ability to collaborate, complementarity that improves value for money, and dedication to serve the most vulnerable. More will be said on the partnership between World Vision and UNIDO in the findings on local capacity.

Partners are careful to leverage and use relevant technical standards and good practice, through strong collaboration and professional networks in country. However, as a final note on outcomes, the evaluation team notes that gains are subject to ongoing peace and security.

- **Promotion of longer-term resilience and support to broader recovery and stabilization efforts.** Response partners operate from a philosophical commitment to resilience and longer-term sustainability. They work to create conditions for the restoration of normal social and economic life, by contributing to effective livelihoods, service delivery, restoration of basic rights and security, and promoting social capital, often despite the context. Examples of this include:
 - Oxfam's resilience approach to EFSVL, which where possible aims to build markets and stimulate local economies to reduce dependency on humanitarian aid.
 - Commitment to partnering, including South Sudanese NGOs (UNIDO) and administration officials, where appropriate, relevant and possible.
 - Commitment to the advancement of National staff. All partners to the Response have a significant majority of South Sudanese staff. The compliment of women on staff does not yet reflect equality, but does reflect partners' commitments to advancing the role of women.
 - Inclusion of government / administration officials and community members at all steps of engagement from needs assessment, inception meetings, to beneficiary selection, performance monitoring and review.
 - Training and capacity building of staff, counterparts and community members is a hallmark of all the approaches deployed in the Response, including formal and informal opportunities to develop capacity in technical areas or in program management.
- **Barriers / enablers to efficient / effective program design and achievement of results:** The findings presented in this sub-section relate to macro-issues impacting outcomes. Those considered to be within the manageable interest of the program are presented in the findings on *efficiency*. This list, while not exhaustive, reflects commonly discussed points.
 - Culture, social norms and behavior change of beneficiaries. There is a prevailing attitude of self-determination and resilience, expressed by beneficiaries in NBeg and Jonglei. For example, in Aweil people expressed concern about long-time and constant humanitarian assistance. They want to be independent, which is why they "jump at" the EFSVL program. The population is rarely asking for food, but rather only want help with what they honestly can't do for themselves. The case is similar in Jonglei. It would seem to be a function of stability. The same may not be so true in Unity State, where some respondents commented that South Sudanese are "...not believing in themselves. People could be doing more, but still consider that solutions will come from the outside." Several respondents claim that the last 5 years in Unity have been worse than the northern aggression in Unity, prior to South Sudan's independence, and that the humanitarian crisis reinforces dependency.
 - That being said, cultural choices even in areas where there is dependency also affect receptivity of project activities, where there were pockets of outright rejection of some of the interventions proposed, e.g. female hygiene kits, personal latrines.
 - The implementing partners' depth of experience and longevity in South Sudan. Partners are staffed predominantly by South Sudanese staff both in field locations and in Juba.

Beneficiary group discussions confirm high levels of social capital (trust and cohesions) between themselves and the Partners. This positively impacts engagement with the programs at all levels.

- Managing relationships and requirements with multiple donors can be a challenge, but the Partners in South Sudan also have the trust of their counterparts in Australia. That being said, there has been turn-over of management staff on the Response in both Australia and South Sudan, resulting in some impacts to institutional memory, and certainly time needed for each new manager to get up to speed on the program.
- Insecurity and constant displacement of people negatively affected the program in Unity. Insecurity is not only about the GORSS / IO conflict, but also encompasses cattle raiding, age set fighting (Jonglei) and inter-clan fighting. In Unity, the Leer Temporary Protection Area (TPA) was not always accessible and many people displaced from the main towns to the islands in the Toic. This hampers access and targeting of services, because Partners must move deeper to reach people. A lack of real-time migration information is a constraint to planning and operations. Lack of services, creates higher needs, which in turn create flashpoints. Conversely, Oxfam had targeted 5000 vulnerable households in Unity, many on the islands in the Toic. They managed to reach 4,230 households because as security improved, people moved back to the mainland, further impacting ability to reach them.
- Government officials while mandated with administrative responsibilities, are rarely adequately resourced to provide true support to their constituents and humanitarian efforts. There is regular turnover / attrition of officials, further impacting institutional memory and relationships with the Partners and communities. Lack of official understanding regarding the prioritization of program activities leads to competition between communities. With nominal responsibility and official capacity this leaves most real responsibilities with the Partners.
- The lack of all-season navigable roads negatively impacts planning and operations. Partners strive to keep costs down, but invariably this issue forces the use of air logistics at higher costs or delays project implementation. Even more to the point, lack of a road network limits local economies and market access. The areas closer to borders have healthier trading options (Aweil North, Bentiu, even Pibor to some extent in the dry season.)
- It is also worth mentioning that while mobile network coverage has improved dramatically across many part of the country, there are many counties in Unity State without adequate coverage. This impacts communication between Juba and field project locations / offices.
- The following overall observations are made with respects to effectiveness of the Response:
 - **General:** All AHP Response partners operate from a philosophical commitment to resilience and longer-term sustainability. However, the years of protracted humanitarian crisis in South Sudan have, at best, delayed development efforts and at worst, set many communities back. The magnitude of human need and the availability of resources (people, time and money) for many communities in South Sudan, particularly in the areas of operation of the Response, will ensure that resilience and stabilization efforts remain near-term ideals. From the perspective of effectiveness, the challenge facing humanitarian response programs, particularly in South Sudan, is what is considered an appropriate outcome given current context and programming.

All the Response partners are committed to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and deploying transparent processes that ensure accountability. They addressed localization, illustrated through appropriate contextual adjustments to activities and importantly, the commitment of local staff and partners with deep knowledge of fragile contexts. However, foundations are not yet strong enough to sustain outcomes. Gains should only be considered as short to mid-term until security confirms that transitional programming can be

accomplished, and longer-term impacts be assured in areas of sustainable resilience, localization, leadership development and capacity building. New shocks to the current system will negate any gains quickly.

- **EFSVL and Nutrition:** Given improved security in Unity and assuming favourable conditions, areas under cultivation may increase in 2019. However, levels of acute malnutrition are expected to deteriorate in the first quarter of 2019 with an early onset of the lean season as most households are expected to deplete food stocks from their own 2018 production. If the current peace agreement is sustained and unhindered humanitarian access occurs, then the food security situation may continue to improve. However, lack of guidance on livelihood strategies and what is scalable is a risk to maintenance of achievements.
- **WASH:** Since 2013, sustainable WASH development projects, designed for implementation in rural and urban settings, have mostly been suspended and efforts directed to delivering lifesaving emergency water, sanitation and hygiene services. The baseline WASH indicators in the Response's areas of operations were better than National averages for 2011 (assuming comparative measurement methodologies). However, without repeat quantitative survey it is not known to what degree there has been any shift in any WASH indicators, as a result of this response. Oxfam's ex-post survey should provide some information in early 2019.

Given the magnitude of WASH needs, one question from a humanitarian perspective is how to triage WASH needs against other needs, in order to make an informed investment that most effectively meets humanitarian goals. If, for example, the goal is reducing mortality, then which programs have the most impact on that goal? There is little analysis on the correlation of integrated disease surveillance and response data with data on [lack of] access to safe water, adequate sanitation and personal hygiene behavior, making it a challenge to prioritise WASH humanitarian investments. The same is true for correlation of this WASH data with other sectors, for example, education, aside from emergent statistics that show the impact of lack of access to safe water on attendance at school. It is likely that more comprehensive analysis of data would support integrated programming that addresses short-term humanitarian goals, while establishing the foundation for transition programming.

- **Protection / GBV:** Gender equality and women's empowerment is a priority area for the United Nations, following the adoption of CEDAW, resolutions from the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women and the adoption of the Millenium and Sustainable Development Goals. The UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD), The Inter- Cooperation Framework (ICF) on South Sudan, the National Gender Policy, UNDP Global Gender Equality Strategy, and the UNDP 8 Point Agenda on Women and Girls in Crisis serve as the framework for gender equality and women's empowerment in South Sudan.

The majority of positive comments from respondents about women's rights, inclusivity, empowerment and GBV, reinforce that the mainstreaming of gender and empowerment through all activities contributes to goals of a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient world. The program's activities were attenuated to the ICF's goals of *realism* in target setting in a country that is not yet ready to aim only for traditional development objectives; *recovery* from the serious set-backs of recent years; *resilience* of people, communities and institutions; and *reaching the most vulnerable* who have been harmed most by the crisis¹². In a country where the majority of women still experience domestic violence, this program's activities were realistically aimed at awareness raising on issues of equality, empowerment and

¹² <http://www.ss.undp.org/content/dam/southsudan/library/Fact%20Sheets/GEWES.pdf>. Accessed December 28th 2018 @ 14:35 hrs EST.

gender-based violence. As discussed in the findings the processes of the partners successfully identified the most vulnerable.

The Protection cluster coordinates with organizations so that services are not duplicated. If multiple orgs are working in the same area, they offer complimentary services. The evidence suggests that consistent sensitization is starting to have impact, particularly around the rights of girls to be in school and around early and forced marriage. In program areas, enrollment of girls in school is favourable, girls are starting to report GBV cases, women are discussing changes in their rights and equality with men, and leaders are starting to talk about the rights of girls and women. One criticism that can be leveled is the availability of referral services for victims of gender-based violence. These services were not reliably available in Unity and given accessibility issues elsewhere, it can be assumed not readily available to all women in Jonglei or Bahr el Ghazal. This potentially has negative implications for future awareness raising campaigns and public education on these subjects. There is reputational risk, in addition to raising women’s expectations that their cases will be heard and they can receive services.



Photo 9. Community members gathered to listen to the UNIDO protection team during community GBV awareness campaigns in Mayendit County.

4.5 Inclusive

The following key findings are in relation to the extent to which the needs of different groups of people were considered in the design of the response, and also achievements in terms of protecting safety, dignity and rights affected people, promoting gender equality and addressing barriers to inclusion.

All interviewed key informants, community members and beneficiaries ratified the inclusive nature of activities from inception, targeting, management, information sharing and review of outcomes.

- **Inclusivity in design and implementation:** In concepts and eight-week plans (ERIP), all partners adequately described the different groups to be considered in the design and implementation of activities, all locations, all sectors. All the partners target the most vulnerable using criteria that

include wealth and income levels, productive assets, migration status, and a range of typical vulnerable groups including women and child headed households, the elderly, people living with disability or chronic illness, widows, orphans and children under five. Small tribes were also included as minority groups were indicated.

There are common planning and operations activities, with some variations between partners depending on prior level of available knowledge and the activities being implemented:

- The cluster system and other ongoing needs assessment activities provide key information for determining and prioritizing needs. All partners are active members of relevant clusters. Also, by virtue of their experience in these geographical areas and network of community relationships, all partners had adequate knowledge for planning purposes.
- Inception meetings with local authorities and community leaders are used to introduce and explain the following:
 - Objectives and plans. If additional information is required, then needs assessments are conducted, involving communities on the ground in the exercise. This is perhaps more common in Unity where situations changed frequently due to constraints already discussed and information needed updating.
 - Targeting and selection criteria. In most cases, these are discussed and agreed with authorities and leaders before engaging communities. This ensures that all vulnerable groups are identified.
 - Processes for community engagement. Juba ministries disseminate guidelines and procedures to reinforce approaches to community engagement.
 - Information exchange processes, to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Communities are asked to select independent *targeting selection committees*. The aim is to staff committees with people representative of targeted beneficiary groups and minimize the role of leaders and the Partners, ensuring independence of this process. Committees are trained on beneficiary selection criteria, the documentation to be used / produced and how to implement community mobilization strategies.
- Committees identify beneficiaries and pass the registers to the Partners who randomly verify beneficiaries meet selection criteria, ahead of activities being implemented. The work of these committees extends to identifying distribution points and sometimes placement of facilities, e.g. water-points, latrines, nutrition centres, where access, safety and dignity of users are criteria.
- Partners and committees share responsibility for ensuring that people are mobilized for activities.

The consensus is that through these steps, the process of community-led selection of beneficiaries targeted the most vulnerable in each location. Beyond the work of *targeting* committees, community leaders are involved in the selection of volunteers to work on hygiene, sanitation, nutrition and protection committees, based on criteria and advice from partners. Volunteers are people who are respected in community. They are trained in a range of knowledge and skills, depending on their sector of involvement and have proved the best method for disseminating and reinforcing public service messaging, and really encouraging community participation. For example, community nutrition volunteers in Unity have been effective in case management and tracing of vulnerable people, who often have access issues.

With respects to targeting the most vulnerable, insecurity often forces people deep into the bush, which can negatively impact accessibility. This was reported in Pibor and across the programs in Unity. The use of trained community volunteers to access people was a sustainable method used in the Response to address this issue. One of the partners in Unity commented that they tried their best in areas where they had access, but can't rule out that people in the islands couldn't be accessed because of insecurity. Data is not available even now. All who

turned up were served, while staff / volunteers endeavoured to visit and reach others unable to access services.

- ***Achievements in terms of safety, dignity, rights, gender equality and barriers to:*** Overall it is the areas of stability and security that have afforded the better achievements. Stability opens up opportunities for more conversations with women, and men, on a range of subjects that include GBV, public and household violence, the importance of women's health, love marriages, delaying marriage for adolescents and other positive gender dynamics. It is reported as challenging to get involved in some of the larger cultural issues and involvement of men is clearly an important part of these conversations. In areas where insecurity and lack of stability still hamper achievements regarding inclusion (i.e. Unity), food assistance was used as a stepping-stone to educate and mobilize on safety, dignity and rights. Some specifically reported or observed examples illustrate the range of achievements:
 - Women are at the core of achievements regarding inclusion. In Pibor women interviewed reported that their participation at events has increased over time. Women in all locations reported they were more involved in community activities, including the local judiciary. They were observed working, including managing profitable vegetable gardens in NBeG, as participants on all committees [interviewed]. Women are documented as volunteers in WASH, Nutrition and Protection activities in all locations and in EFSVL activities in Pibor.
 - It was reported in Aweil North that the number of girls in school has increased, also illustrating changing attitudes and understanding of the importance of education. This is as a result of gender awareness activities and also the provision of school latrines in NBeG. It was stated that completely separate latrines for girls and boys is preferable. Importantly, the construction of latrines takes into consideration, people living with disability, in that they are fitted with access ramps and handrails.
 - Earlier DFAT reports documented that people living with a disability and households that have a member with a disability were targeted to promote disability inclusiveness during project implementation, supported through nutrition, FSL and WASH activities. For example, children with disabilities were admitted into the nutrition program in Koch County, while others were identified and engaged as members of the child rights club at Koch Primary School to create child rights awareness among school children. One disabled male teacher participated in the mobilization and awareness raising campaign on key Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention messages. Moreover, visually impaired people were supported through WASH activities and under the EFSVL sector; both men and women with disabilities were supported with agricultural inputs. Please refer to the interim and final reports to DFAT for comprehensive reporting on the number of people with disability helped through the response.
 - In Pibor, informants cited examples of the impact of the DFAT program on safety: The CFW program which has cleared roads, has improved access to the county headquarters and improved "safety and other conditions for people" by improving access to markets and water points, which traditionally have often been unsafe venues for women and the elderly.
 - In Unity, a mostly patriarchal society, a lot of awareness creation was done around the rights of girls and women. Consistent sensitization is beginning to have impact, especially regarding the right for a girl to be in school, e.g. in Koch, starting to see girls 15 and 16 years of age still in school. Men and leaders are starting to talk about and advocate for girls' education and women's rights.
 - Satisfying basic needs at community level enables a uniquely South Sudanese spirit of care, protection or hospitality to emerge, which is evident and documented in Pibor and NBeG. Women in the garden cooperative, benefiting from vegetable seeds and agriculture kits, reported being able to assist other vulnerable women attending the health and nutrition center nearby. These same women sang a song, with the following lyrics: *"World Vision has removed us from dirt. We want to ask Angelino, we want to ask Paulino to go tell the people*

at World Vision about the greatness they have done to us. That we love World Vision because they have shown us the way to work as a group and to be accepted. World Vision has taught us hard work. We were a group that was lacking a lot of things.” (NB: Angelino and Paulino are WV NBeG project staff).



Photo 10. Woman pulling off okra leaves for market in Aweil East.

- Partner staff have also been trained on vulnerability and inclusion issues. Managers remarked on the quality of their staff in this regard and the attention paid to designing and planning activities, e.g. distribution processes demonstrate respect for beneficiaries, in that they are designed to minimize disruption to beneficiaries’ daily activities and ensure safety.

Following on from the previous discussion of effectiveness, the assessment of the evaluation team is that the Partners implemented systems and structures to ensure that the needs of different groups of people were considered in the design of the response and that the program protected the safety, dignity and rights of affected people. Partners promoted gender equality and addressed barriers to inclusion.

Processes of inception of new activities, engaging communities, involving administration officials and local leadership all supported these goals of inclusion. Committees had equitable representation of women and men, and also representation of the most vulnerable groups in the communities, including people living with disabilities, single-headed households and the elderly. This was reported in all interviews. While this could be a response bias issue, observation of women in public, including focus group behaviour, demonstrated that there are indeed cultural shifts in the presence and role of women in civil society. They are present, they are vocal, and they are organizing. Men also were able to talk about their support of women. These are positive signs of changes in inclusion. It is often the women who are also the champions of the other vulnerable groups in society.

One challenge that was identified and needs attention is accessibility to vulnerable people who are located away from population centres. This may be by choice, because of acceptance, or in many cases in Unity and Jonglei, simply a matter of personal security. Nevertheless, several comments led to the understanding that it cannot be confirmed that ALL vulnerable people were identified and served by this program. The partners and community targeting committees certainly made efforts to ensure as much. However, without completing a census, it is not possible to know that all vulnerable people, including the most had access to services.

This line of inquiry is best summed up by the statement one of the informants made when asked about achievements regarding safety, dignity, rights, gender equality. “The vulnerable have access to and use latrines now, they have access to water, the number of vulnerable has been decreased. The challenge is – what next? Post-conflict we need an “easier landing” for this community. There are

shifts in attitudes towards the most vulnerable, but it requires consistent programming and continuity in order to consolidate gains. The culture is old and needs constant encouragement for change.”

4.6 Efficient

These findings on efficiency report on the fidelity of the program to its design, defined by the agreed plans and considering the major constraints and lessons learned.

The AHP response was led by a competent group of experienced project managers, some of who are responsible for multiple programs in their areas of operation. The overall program was efficiently implemented with respects to economy, productivity and fidelity to plans, while addressing the challenges and constraints of the context.

- **Implementation according to agreed timelines and budgets:** Table 1 shows the dates of plans and adjustments made, over the life of this program. With the exception of the budget for this evaluation, World Vision expended 100% of its budget as of December 2018. Oxfam expended 100% of its budget as of December 2019. Burn rates reflect changes to the implementation compared to initial plans, and are explained by the constraints experienced.¹³

Oxfam	
Initial Phase I concept	10/3/2017
8-week HPA ERIP – Phase I	18/5/2017
Phase II - Top-up	n/a
Revised Phase II Top-up	26/9/2018
Adjustments to selected targets, modalities, etc.	2/10/2018
World Vision	
Initial Phase I concept	10/3/2017
8-week HPA ERIP – Phase I	15/5/2018
Phase II – Revised Phase II Top-up	15/5/2018
Phase II – Top-up	27/11/2018

Table 1. Plan and amendment dates.

¹³ As discussed under limitations of this evaluation, the evaluation working group agreed to limit the line of inquiry on value-for-money. Where possible some VFM questions were explored, but conclusive findings cannot be drawn from the opinions gleaned, without a more detailed VFM analysis that includes quantitative data on finances, burn-rates, achievement of outputs, risks and the implications of changes to plans.

Achievement recorded for all planned activities and outputs as of writing this report, shows *86.4% of key performance indicator either on or above target, over the life of the program* (see Appendix 6 – Oxfam Achievements and Appendix 7 – World Vision Output Achievements):

- EFSVL:
 - 82% of World Vision’s EFSVL activities have been completed as planned, with above target variance recorded on the number of lead farmers and extension workers with increased knowledge of improved agricultural practices (+46%) and the number of farmer groups / lead farmers trained on value chain development (+15%). The number of farmer field days held, was 68% of the projected target, due to an ambitious target established under Phase II activities.
 - 77% of Oxfam’s EFSVL activities have been completed as planned with above target variance recorded on the overall number of households assisted in Jonglei (+13%), through unconditional cash transfer support to the most vulnerable (+238%) and improved access to livelihood inputs and risk management strategies (+35%). The project was under target (84.6%) for the number of households assisted in Unity because of movement of targeted population from some of the islands back to the mainland, hampering ability to reach them.
- Nutrition:
 - 85% of World Vision’s (UNIDO / World Relief) nutrition activities were completed as planned with the following variances from targets. Five KPIs show above target variance between +40% and +470%. All other KPIs, except two, were on target (see Appendix 7 – World Vision Output Achievements). The number of severely malnourished children with complications, ages 6-59 months treated through stabilization centre (SC) in line with National MOH protocols was only 21 % of the projected target, due to the late establishment of one SC and the closure of 2 others for several months due to insecurity. The number of community leaders and influential members trained to promote MIYCN was 83% of the projected target for the program. This was mainly due to insecurity in the first phase of the program.
- WASH:
 - 89% of World Vision’s WASH activities were completed as projected with the following variances from target. 7 KPI showed above target deviance between +25% and +133%, mainly related to WASH access and hygiene promotion. All other KPI were on target, with two below target exceptions (see Appendix 7 – World Vision Output Achievements). 67% of the projected 15,000 households received water collection containers and 52% of the project 12,000 households received hygiene kits. The variance resulted because WV was relying on the WASH cluster and core-pipeline for these items, but they could not supply the quantities required.
 - 95% of Oxfam’s WASH activities were completed as projected as of writing this report, with the following variances from target. Overall number of household reach in Jonglei showed above target variance of 12.5% and the number of pump-mechanics trained show above variance of 411.8%. There was a +25% variance on the number of female hygiene kits distributed in Pibor and Twic East. 11 KPI were on target. The number of household latrines provided was 53%, as of writing this report. Oxfam WASH activities are continuing in Jonglei until the end of January, at which time Oxfam anticipates meeting all targets.
- Protection:

- 83% of World Vision’s Protection activities were completed as planned with the following variances from target. 3 KPI related to access and training showed above target variances (+81%, +93% and +132%, see Appendix 7 – World Vision Output Achievements). On the negative variance side: 36% of a projected 7,000 dignity kits were distributed and 56% of IEC materials targeted for community level protection and GBV awareness raising. This was due to unavailability of these items from the Protection cluster and the cost to procure additional kits could not be absorbed by the existing budget.
- Oxfam did not monitor specific indicators at output level regarding protection activities, which are integrated throughout their programming. The organization has listed a number of outcome level indicators that address issues of protection. These will be evaluated in the ex-post evaluation planned for early 2019.
- **Key lessons.** The following lessons learned are within the manageable interest of the program:
 - **Planning:** Partners appreciate DFAT’s lead-times and flexibility on planning, including the acceptance to expand the response beyond DFAT’s initial focus on Unity. The 8 weeks for submission of the ERIP after award is adequate *assuming accuracy of existing data*. Availability and accuracy of migration data is an ongoing challenge and in the case of Unity and Jonglei, the influx of IPDs expected did not occur. Given the timeline for commencement of activities in the wet season (2017) and ramp-up of additional activities with the funding top-up (2018), initial planning didn’t necessarily reflect the level of contingency needed due to seasonal conditions. Insecurity, the major factor behind the famine declaration, continued to be a major issue throughout the life of the program, requiring adjustments to plans and targets. Overall there is a tension between 1-year humanitarian planning that espouses long-term development objectives. Organizations are willing to manage this tension, but it is noted as a significant challenge currently in South Sudan.
 - **Organizational partnering:** Collaborative planning between South Sudan and Australia based management teams is reported as a strength of the planning process. Partnering between WV, UNIDO and World Relief in Unity allowed quick scale up of activities in the key focus area of response, through Partners already on the ground. Their extensive local knowledge shortened the implementation cycle. WV, WR and UNIDO all report that the experience has been good. For UNIDO, a National NGO, partnering with WV has realized important organizational development opportunities, particularly in grant acquisition and management capabilities. Initial contact between Partners in Australia resulted in the joint baseline exercise. Other than that, there is little evidence of leveraging the AHP relationship beyond ensuring non-duplication of activities.
 - **Integration of activities:** The integration of sectors / activities presents opportunities to leverage resources for added value. Protection and GBV activities, including training of staff and volunteers, were leveraged across all sectors and activities and resulted in larger reach had those activities operated in isolation. Staff and communities are more aware of the protection issues surrounding selection of distribution points and modalities, placement of WASH facilities, engaging more people to benefit from those programs. At the same time, distributions of food, cash, vouchers, non-food items, meetings with coordination committees and volunteers, provide expanded opportunities for delivering key protection and GBV messages. It is noted that DFAT supported activities benefitted from a number of activities funded by other donors, particularly the use of radio broadcasts for public messaging and IEC materials developed for / by other projects.



Photo 11. WASH resources delivered to Unity by the UN Humanitarian Air Service.

- Logistics:** Logistics remained one of the major constraints to this program. Although it is noted that despite all constraints, all planned activities will be completed by the end of the activation. All logistics incidents were reported in internal quarterly reports, but several issues are highlighted here. Most commodities originate from Juba and the lack of sealed and or maintained roads negatively impacts delivery of supplies, particularly as rain negates ability to move about the country between April and November. Road logistics were attempted after April and contractors were unable to reach destinations, particularly in Unity. Security delays compounded the challenges of wet roads, when some of the early convoys, which might have successfully reached their destinations, were delayed up to 30 days at checkpoints. Delays appear to be arbitrary and capricious and then resulted in several trucks being unable to reach their destinations in Unity due to the onset of rain. This subsequently caused delays to program activities. Alternative arrangements were made using the Logistics Cluster and UN Humanitarian Air Service, to pick up off-loaded supplies and move them to locations. However, the UN system is also constrained by funding and management by the inter-cluster working group. Any guarantee to deliver supplies is contingent upon the totality of competing needs. In the end, the Log Cluster (UN system) may change plans in order to address what is perceived to be a higher priority. Lack of transport within locations (esp. Unity or Jonglei), means that even once supplies are delivered to a location, boats may be needed, or porters may have to be used to move supplies to where they are needed. These alternative arrangements add to program costs, as does the need to warehouse commodities in Juba, when they cannot be moved on time. It is also not possible to move drilling rigs by air and once the wet season sets in, it is not feasible to move the rigs between counties – hence delays to completing borehole construction in Pibor.
- Sharing responsibility and risk:** Program approaches do attempt and partially succeed in shifting some risk from the NGOs. Oxfam’s market based EFSVL approaches move logistics risk to the traders whom they engage. Interviews with the traders revealed their willingness and ability to underwrite the use of air logistics and also planning ahead for dry season pre-positioning. Seed fairs, aim to leverage local surplus seeds for purchase and distribution, although this approach fell victim to the overall food insecurity for 2017/2018. The WASH program has also made use of local technologies, for example, for household latrines, shifting responsibility to communities.
- Compliance and donor concerns:** Both major Partners report that internal and external compliance requirements resulted in significant time being devoted to management of the grants, distracting from on-the-ground program management concerns. The DFAT funding

freeze on Oxfam has created significant challenges to the organization. The organization had to temporarily put staff “on the bench” during May 2018, as well as underwrite Response activities using other revenue sources, in order for the work to proceed. There have been significant delays to activities as a result. That being said, all Partners have strong risk management cultures regarding security, fraud, corruption and management of change requests. Risks and mitigation strategies are revised every 6 months, which has resulted in transparency and accountability between all stakeholders.

There is no evidence that the negative deviance from plans is as a result of anything but the major constraints identified: security, geography and the lack of infrastructure coupled with seasonal issues and logistics. Security concerns had the most impact in Unity state where incidents caused both the delay of commencement of some activities, as well as not infrequent disruptions, when staff had to be relocated until a secure working environment was re-established. There is no way to avoid this, given that conflict is the majority cause of humanitarian emergency and through the life of this program new peace agreements had not been established. All partners have systems in place to evacuate and protect staff in case of emergency. Where possible staff relocate but may stay in the field so that re-entry to program locations can be achieved efficiently. However, staff security is always the highest priority.

Geography, lack of maintained and / or sealed roads hampers logistics throughout South Sudan at any time of the year, but during the wet season movement by road becomes impossible. Most commodities are originating from Juba and so air transport is the most viable option between April and November. The Response was initiated in the wet season in 2017, and so plans to use road logistics before the end of the wet season do not reflect the level of experience that partners have in South Sudan. The same occurred in 2018 with the top-up funding and additional programming.

Several senior managers commented that implementing partners have room to improve risk assessment and mitigation plans. This particularly applies to logistics and opportunities for either pre-positioning supplies by road during the dry season or planning to use air logistics if supplies must be moved during the wet season, in order to keep the program within its planned time frame. Planning and budgets should reflect this. Logistics are a balancing act in South Sudan, between sufficient and available asset to move supplies, and real-time needs, including evacuations. The Logistics Cluster maintains limited asset and is influenced by countrywide needs and priorities. The system is highly politicized, and reprogramming of the log cluster is not an infrequent issue. NGOs need to consider these risks and realistically plan, even if that calls for more expensive alternatives.

Given that this program is managed through the AHP, there was interest to understand the level of collaboration between the major implementing Partners, both in South Sudan and in Australia. There are a couple of examples where the partners collaborated, e.g. initial discussions on proposals and the joint baseline survey. However, respondents have not been able to illuminate any ongoing opportunities that leveraged AHP coordination. Document review reflects the differences to programming that each partner takes and this should not be lost, but there is opportunity to leverage the relationship to improve collaborative performance monitoring and reporting and perhaps more importantly learning opportunities.

This discussion on efficiency also needs to acknowledge the challenges facing Oxfam’s implementation of this program while dealing with DFAT’s funding ban since early 2018, in response to Oxfam Great Britain’s (GB) issues in Haiti. This ban remains until the UK Charity Commission completes its statutory inquiry and then DFAT will reconsider this situation. The ban affected work leading up to the 2018 wet season when activities were not able to proceed as per plan until alternative funding arrangements could be put in place. This caused delays to activities, which were then compounded by wet season constraints as discussed above. Oxfam’s interim funding arrangements have also created significant administrative burden for Oxfam Australia. That being said, Oxfam has managed to implement the program in South Sudan, as planned, in anticipation that

these issues will be favourably resolved. DFAT has also acted in good faith with respects to managing the program with Oxfam in anticipation of the same outcome.

4.7 Local Capacity / Leadership

Local capacity and leadership relate to how this program was able to strengthen local partners and involve them in program activities, described in the CHS in terms of increasing preparedness, resilience and reducing risk, as well as communities understanding their rights and being informed.

Four NGO partners implemented this response, International NGOs *Oxfam*, *World Vision* and *World Relief* and South Sudan National NGO *UNIDO*. The latter two NGOs partnered with World Vision to implement activities in Unity State. The majority of staff in all four NGOs are South Sudanese, supplemented by expatriates in key managerial and technical positions where needed. Each organization is building capacity of South Sudanese staff. However, this internal capacity building is not the focus of these findings. These findings cover:

1. The capacity development of local Government administrative officials (e.g. RRC and ROSS), civil society organizations and regular citizenry, for which the findings for all four NGOs' activities are documented.
2. The organizational development of National NGO UNIDO, through its partnership with World Vision. This is of special interest to this Response, because it demonstrates a key development opportunity afforded a National NGO through partnership with a recognized international partner.

- **Local Government, CSOs and Regular Citizenry.**

- **Planning and Implementation:** From the outset, the implementing partners were able to leverage pre-existing programs and relationships to involve all local partners, including Government and administrative officials, in the planning and implementation of the Response. These relationships are reported as uniformly healthy and all local partners describe engagement with the implementing Partners as an opportunity to develop and learn. Engagement of the RRC / ROSS in planning, presented opportunities to build capacity on accountability, program management and serving beneficiaries. Several of the programs, particularly the nutrition programs and EFSVL target work with State and County level health and agriculture departments, providing opportunities for training and on-the-job mentoring and coaching, based on National standards if available.

Local leaders (non-government) and community members are closely involved with the work given their role as mobilizers, committee members and as volunteers. They received a range of formal and informal training, and development. Effective methods included mentoring and hands-on-support, meetings, dialogues and drama. At least two of the partners articulated an emphasis on youth engagement, e.g. as members of community protection committees. The implementing Partners are careful to ensure that capacity development is attenuated to levels of literacy and competence, and doesn't undermine local structures, e.g. that targeting committees do not become a replacement for local leadership (chiefs). There doesn't appear to be any negative impact of capacity building and leadership development efforts, reflecting the implementing Partners' attention to "do no harm" and risk analysis. In nearly all applications, implementing Partners have strived for balanced representation of men and women when it comes to capacity building and leadership development opportunities.

One of the partners wanted to appreciate DFAT's flexibility and adaptability regarding context, which provides space for the Partners to navigate complexity and learn together with local partners.

- **Outcomes:** It is observed that overall efforts are changing attitudes, growing capacity and enhancing resilience. Several respondents commented on residual capacity remaining in community. With respects to the training efforts of the four partners:
 - Administrative officials are benefitting, especially when deliberately targeting State and County departments, in the absence of GoRSS-led capacity development initiatives.
 - Payam leaders have better understanding of their role with respects to coordination and support of activities benefitting their areas.
 - Local staff and community members are developing technical skills in the management and technical delivery of humanitarian assistance.

One respondent stated, "Once you have a leader confidently speaking out about an intervention, this increases the chance of success."

Community groups, committees and individuals reported knowledge and skills acquisition, and attitude change, due to training by the four partners. Most of these examples have already been reported (see Appendix 6 – Oxfam Achievements and Appendix 7 – World Vision Output Achievements), but here are some specific examples of strengthening local partners, and reinforcing local capacity and leadership through training conducted by the partners:

- **Nutrition:** Training of community nutrition volunteers on a range of topics, including malnutrition, screening and case management approaches, use of local foods as replacement for high nutrition food, e.g. groundnuts for Plumpynut. Training of lead mothers and mother support groups on mother-to-mother support and how to access nutrition services in their area.
- **EFSVL:** It was noted that people are business-minded and need income generation and employment. Training of farming beneficiaries (e.g. women and vegetable growing cooperatives) covered diversification of cropping, best ag practices including irrigation, weeding, fertilizing, post-harvest handling, how to become representatives back to their communities to share their skills, ideas and how to motivate farmers, working with the Ministry of Agriculture, cooperative formation (including power of one voice for negotiation, how to act as a group, better access negotiation). Fisher-folk were trained on processing, drying, maintenance and use of nets. There was significant engagement with government pastoral and agriculture extension workers covering livestock risk mitigation, sensitisation of agricultural-pastoral communities, farmer-to-farmer extension. Oxfam went to local administration officials and seconded staff (3 people from 3 counties) who were trained on farmer-to-farmer extension and paid incentive (seeds and cash) to demonstrate and help farmers with best practices, as well as leadership skills, gender mainstreaming, HIV/AIDs impact on agriculture, causes and prevention. Other sessions with lead farmers and Agriculture department officials included business management, Value Chain Development (VCD) analysis and links to local markets, the value of standards e.g. seed quality.



Photo 12. Demonstration of soil-water management for women's farming group in Aweil North.

- **WASH:** A fundamental tenant of the WASH sector activities was capacity building and self-reliance with the goal of forming local structures to manage WASH resources. Training was extensive:
 - Community members, for example community hygiene practitioners on open defaecation free (ODF) strategy, hand-washing and home hygiene.
 - Water management committees on management of water points, for example, cleanliness, maintenance, fees and fencing.
 - Sanitation committees on sensitizing their community to being ODF, the advantages of latrines, hand washing, cleanliness and use of latrines.
 - Pump mechanics on the rehabilitation of water points. They also received tools sets.
- **Protection / GBV:** The entire program was strong on Protection and GBV, which was essentially integrated across all the other sectors. Communities are starting to open up about issues affecting women and the vulnerable. Women are starting to better understand and advocate for their roles. Committees were trained on sexual and gender-based violence, raising community awareness, referral mechanisms and victim support, the rights of women and girls, the role of men. Some became very active, for example involved in revising local pathways for referral of victims. Oxfam did specific training in this area for local police departments.
- **Barriers to involving local actors:** The main barriers to involving local actors are availability of competent people and the resources for them to do their job.

National Government Ministries associated to the Response include Agriculture and Forestry, Health, and Irrigation and Water Resources. The connections to State Ministry and County departments are inconsistent. There are some emergent standards, guidelines and procedures to reinforce approaches to community engagement from these National

Ministries and where possible the Partners work with these. The partners were not involved with National level capacity building. They work within the County and Payam structures with connections to State level officials, in areas mainly where they are co-located or where Partners are involved with leading local-level sector clusters (e.g. Oxfam leads EFSVL in Pibor)

Interviews with administration officials demonstrate capacity falls victim to levels of resources, attrition, frequently shifting staff appointments and movements. Payment of GoRSS salaries remains an issue with many officials not working if they have not been paid. Therefore, official structures are inconsistent. NGO systems are attenuated to fit what is available with the Partners managing their expectations appropriately, given the limitations of official roles. Official counterparts tend to be more involved with accountability mechanisms at this time, than actual program support.

The main challenges to local civil society capacity development include gender, levels of literacy and accessibility. There are signs of change, but cultural norms regarding women's roles still run counter to work, given domestic work-loads and time that women have available for outside work after meeting home and family commitments.

It is a challenge to scale capacity building initiatives in the current context of scarcity of resources. Cluster coordination and working with local leadership to identify local staff minimizes the risk of competition for available competent people. The partners bring qualified staff from other regions if needed; however this is often not ideal because of language and cultural considerations. There needs to be continued coordinated efforts with respects to counterpart capacity and leadership development.

Preparedness, resilience and reducing risk are the main criteria for determining local capacity and leadership, along with a citizenry who are informed and understand their rights. In essence these are advocacy goals that move populations away from passively receiving humanitarian assistance to being educated and mobilized around their own development, including policy development and implementation. These are often considered longer-term goals, however in the context of South Sudan's protracted crisis, it is reasonable to expect that some capacity will develop during the course of programs that can be leveraged for future responses.

To this end, with perhaps the exception being input to the initial proposals submitted to AHP, the inclusion of local partners across the entire program management cycle, up skills them with contextualized knowledge and skills, realistically pitched to the current context. The programs provided a range of local partners with functional skills in program processes and management, including inception, community entry and engagement, beneficiary identification, working with international and national non-government organizations, reporting, learning and adaptive management. Training on knowledge and skills is not institutional, but rather delivered on-the-job. In addition to the functional skills acquired, work-related or technical skills are also acquired for those staff working in sector activities: nutrition, EFSVL, WASH, Protection. The lack of post-secondary schools and technical institutions to teach vocational skills means that working in the humanitarian sector is one of the few opportunities for people to develop vocational and technical skills.

All South Sudanese respondents were able to point to either work-related technical or functional skills they have acquired through the program. The inference in the program's theories of change is that acquisition of knowledge and skills will improve preparedness and resilience, assuming that the people trained are available for future humanitarian response, whether that is initiated locally and / or through the international humanitarian system.

One of the highlights of this evaluation was the interaction with local women who spoke about their improved roles in society, reflecting improved understanding of their rights, as well as the confidence to mobilize around those rights. While there is a long way to go, it is clear that integrated protection and GBV activities are one effective advocacy tool for social change.

The main challenge is in terms of National GoRSS leadership development. While outside the scope of this program and evaluation per se, all local administrative officials interviewed are under-resourced to perform even basic work functions. Until the GoRSS consolidates peace, stabilizes the country under rule of law, initiates and implements a funded strategy development agenda for the country, it is necessary to manage expectations that local capacity building and leadership development will involve informal civil society-based mechanisms.

- **UNIDO and World Vision.** WV was not operational in Unity State in 2017 when DFAT released the RFP for this Response but has been conducting partner assessments and had assessed UNIDO as a potential National partner. UNIDO has been operational in Unity State since 2004 and so WV initiated a partnership in order to deliver humanitarian assistance in Leer and Mayendiit, Unity State.

UNIDO's extensive relationships with the state Ministry of Health, County Health Departments, Boma Health Committees, Community Health Volunteers, Health and Hygiene Promoters and Mother-to-Mother Support Group leaders ensured rapid initiation and scale up of activities. World Vision supported activities mainly through procurement and logistics, but also with technical expertise when needed. UNIDO managed the technical delivery of Nutrition, WASH and Protection activities. The partnership successfully delivered all planned services (discussed elsewhere in this report).

UNIDO had the advantage of more readily understanding context, culture and local languages and ability to readily engage communities. However, they still operate at a disadvantage when it comes to the International system. This partnership provided important organizational capacity development opportunities for UNIDO:

- Growth through new funding.
- Experience with a major bilateral donor, through joint planning exercises, implementation and performance management with WV.
- Development of internal business systems to support in field operations, including financial systems, procurement, human resources, compliance, complaints and feedback. World Vision assessed UNIDO systems and worked with them to improve existing systems and formalize new ones, e.g. community complaints and feedback.
- Build credibility within the humanitarian community, through partnership with a respected International NGO, such as WV.
- Build credibility with local communities, who can see a National NGO providing services that are more often provided by International NGOs.

UNIDO accredits the success of the operation in Leer and Mayendiit to the close coordination, collaboration and performance monitoring with WV. They were required to report weekly and WV conducted monthly review sessions on progress.

4.8 Transparent and Accountable

This final set of findings is reporting on transparency and accountability to affected communities, not to AHP and DFAT. The latter was not included in the evaluation's TOR. Guided by CHS 4 and CHS 5, these findings cover the Partners' engagement with communities throughout the program cycle, and how effective participation, communication and feedback influenced programs.

- **Organizational policy that supports transparency and accountability:** Both WV and Oxfam have organizational policy outlining transparency and accountability standards. Policies cover institutional definition of these concepts, cultural considerations and engagement with communities, including protection and safeguarding of vulnerable groups, reporting and other humanitarian standard operating procedures. Both organizations also have policy covering fraud, corruption and conflict of interest. Both organizations are currently reviewing policies and systems. World Relief also has policy, but UNIDO does not. World Vision worked with UNIDO to develop a memorandum of understanding to guide their partnership that includes clauses on fraud, corruption and conflict of interest. All partners reported facilitating pro-active discussions with local partners regarding policy on fraud, corruption and conflict of interest. Given recent events, Oxfam highlighted its policy on protection from sexual exploitation and the training that all staff are receiving on updated policy and safeguarding in particular.
- **Implementing partners' accountable and engaged with affected communities:** Engagement with affected communities is informed by philosophy, standard operating procedures, and is consistent throughout the program management cycle. Aspects of engagement (coordination, complementarity, adaptive management) have been reported in earlier findings, but highlights will be repeated here.

 - All the Partners are well known in the operational areas of the Response, illustrated by functional relationships with administrative officials and civil society actors. Local actors have experience with the Partners and report understanding their methods and approaches. All respondents questioned on the subject described processes for community engagement, coordination and their role in the processes, citing that engagement mechanisms empower communities and encourage engagement. The minimum complaints and negative feedback received by implementing partners demonstrate the adequacy and receptivity of these processes.
 - Communication between Partners and local actors is through face-to-face regular and frequent meetings and discussions, throughout all stages of program management. Meetings at County level with County Executive Directors, relevant commissioners, the RRC or ROSS, present opportunities to introduce program objectives and funding, and monitor progress (weekly meetings and monthly cluster meetings). Meetings at Payam and Boma levels introduce programs to communities. Officials at this level take responsibility for sensitizing communities and sharing information. Several officials reported on their role in assisting Partners identify and recruit staff, with a preference for local hires, which isn't always possible. During program implementation, committees of representative community members, selected through democratic process, developed targeting criteria and did beneficiary selection. These committees do not undermine local mechanisms and chiefs are often invited to provide input on vulnerable groups as well. At distributions and other activities, committee representatives were often there to observe and verify beneficiaries, alongside the implementing Partner.
- **Communities' influence of programs through effective communication, participation, feedback:** During and following implementation of program activities, several mechanisms of community engagement and feedback are used to assure quality:

 - All partners conduct and document post-distribution monitoring, on a six-monthly basis at a minimum, the purpose of which is to evaluate effectiveness, appropriateness and coverage. Input is solicited from beneficiaries for a range of questions, e.g. outcomes, client satisfaction, including timeliness of inputs / activities, the information they received prior to activities taking place, satisfaction with venues / how did that work for them, the lead-time for distributions, requirements for and support received to be able to participate, appropriateness of items and activities, other needs that they might have. Methodologies include design review, followed by survey, focus group discussion and key informant

interview. These exercises are formally documented, with findings going to the program manager and used to adaptively improve processes.

Partner post-distribution monitoring reports examined show overall satisfaction of beneficiaries with services received. For example, World Vision's PDM report of April to October 2018 shows the following results from beneficiaries:

- 96% received food security inputs.
- 94% were satisfied with registration processes.
- 88% confirmed attendance at a public sensitization meeting with a Partner org and local officials.
- 60% reported the distribution as timely.
- 100% attested to no fraud, corruption, conflicts of interest with respects to Partner staff or local officials
- The majority reported that they received information about activities from local authorities and civil leaders
- 92% reported that distance to distribution sites was less than 30 minutes.
- 4.4% encountered a problem at their distribution site.
- 76% were aware of the complaints and feedback mechanism as an option

Based on this report, WV concluded that their targeting had indeed reached food insecure households, most of whom were headed by women, there was no evidence of aid diversion, that the fishing twine distributed was not suitable and needed to be changed, that jerrycans distributed were of poor quality, that water tankers for irrigation at gardens were of the wrong size and that beneficiaries also needed a range of tools. This in turn led to 7 recommendations being implemented to address the issues raised, for example, additional consultative meetings with beneficiaries to pre-determine the appropriateness of planned inputs, improve distribution processes to reduce waiting times for beneficiaries, increase the quality, quantity and variety of seeds being distributed and continue to provide and increase information to beneficiaries on targeting criteria and entitlements.

Examples of these types of post-distribution and activity monitoring reports are available from all Partners, confirming their commitment to community participation and receiving feedback in order to adaptively manage activities.

- In addition to post-distribution monitoring, all partners have implemented complaints and feedback mechanisms, providing additional modalities for individual beneficiaries to provide unsolicited feedback (e.g. through staff, their RRC, suggestion box, telephone, community help desk, local authorities). Complaints and feedback are summarised into complaints registers / databases and fed back to quality assurance managers at Juba level for internal discussion and action. Through these mechanisms, beneficiaries are free to offer feedback on program activities, staff and the organization itself.
- Partners used other mechanisms for acquiring feedback on programs. Most of the sectors meet weekly with local counterparts through cluster meetings to discuss progress and receive feedback that is coming from the community through alternative channels. Other sectors have frequent project implementation reviews with officials and civil society leaders to discuss achievements and challenges, e.g. Nutrition program in Unity. Some sectors have worked to train beneficiaries to offer direct feedback through the actual sector strategy itself, e.g. UNIDO have trained mothers to give direct feedback through their mother-to-mother support groups or directly through the chiefs, who in turn bring feedback to UNIDO. UNIDO convene quarterly focus groups to discuss feedback received and report to communities on progress.

Key officials interviewed report that relationships between themselves and the Partners were characterized by good cooperation and communication, as evidenced by regular (monthly) cluster meetings and reports from communities that triangulate reporting from the Partners. They also commented on the openness of Partners to assess requests for additional assistance.

- **Challenges:** Three challenges to transparency and accountability deserve mention:
 - The Government and IO role as parties to the conflict and limited capacity, particularly at local levels, can negate opportunities for their engagement and participation at deeper levels, e.g. in technical assessments and key decisions on programming. This has the potential to bias transparency in favour of the Partners, who are aware of this and therefore use frequent meetings to ensure communication of key information and decisions. However, the number of meetings is a burden.
 - Given general literacy levels at this time, communications with community members are informal and largely ad hoc. While Partners attempt to document as much as they can, institutional memory for civil society is relegated to oral methods.
 - There are information gaps, particularly when it comes to movement of beneficiaries.

This line of the inquiry elicited perhaps the most emotionally charged responses from all the various cohorts of respondents. Partners are proud of their transparency and accountability efforts and offer examples of communities' endorsements, just as communities are keen to offer their appreciation of the Partners:

- *"We make sure everyone knows this compound and that they are welcome"*
- *"Oxfam is not a friend, they are a brother"*
- *"The community would tell you that they are satisfied. UNIDO is family. They are well known and build community"*
- *"The community always tell us, you've been able to teach us so much, you've given us so much, we really appreciate your involvement with us."*
- *"The community is honest with us, maybe because of the long relationship; but they call us the Mother of Koch, sometimes the Grandmother of Koch."*

As with all the previous issues discussed in this report, transparency and accountability must be contextualized and realistic expectations established. That being said, it is the opinion of this evaluation, that all activities and programs of the Response were implemented with acceptable levels of transparency and accountability to affected communities, as per CHS.

Given the magnitude of needs in South Sudan, there will always be tension between the opinions of the humanitarian system (if it can be referred to as a single entity) and local communities. This tension arises from the expectation that the social sector is the main delivery pathway for humanitarian response, complicated by inequities in knowledge and education, cornerstones of engagement in any humanitarian and social endeavor. Key challenges remain. (1) Establishing priorities in a country with extraordinary, yet disparate, humanitarian needs and an overall low human development index¹⁴. Prioritization of humanitarian response will stand in contrast to local needs until peace is achieved and the country's development agenda resumed. (2) The capacity of partners in all sectors, public, private and social (or civil society). Humanitarian assistance delivered through civil society remains the most appropriate in South Sudan until there is no State sanctioned or sponsored conflict and a Unity GORSS assumes full responsibility for the range of services required to avert humanitarian disasters and promote sustainable development.

¹⁴ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/SSD.pdf. Accessed January 2, 2019 at 16:30 hrs EST.

Oxfam, World Vision, World Relief and UNIDO maintain realistic expectations of their local partners and respectfully engage them to levels indicated by available resources, knowledge and skills. Mechanisms of transparency and accountability reflect appropriate opportunities for engaging and reporting back to communities. Administrative officials specifically serve an accountability role, ensuring some formality between NGOs, nascent government structures and civil society. Organizational processes reflect humanitarian standards inclusive of both administrative officials and civil society actors: open communication; policies and standard operating procedures engage communities in all stages of the work; information is provided back to communities in their language using appropriate [oral] formats; mechanisms for complaints and feedback; feedback is acted upon and programs adaptively co-managed in this regard.



Photo 13. Billboard in Juba, capital of South Sudan.

5. Recommendations

In South Sudan, the breadth and depth of humanitarian need across all sectors, ensures that recommendations while necessary, can be prolific and to some degree obvious. The country is unique and with the third lowest HDI value of any country in 2017, the way humanitarian response is enacted is going to be necessarily different from most other humanitarian contexts, particularly those of priority to the Australian Government. That being said, the following recommendations, while focused on South Sudan, should inform the improvement of future AHP responses addressing famine, nutrition, food security and livelihoods, WASH, Protection and GBV in other complex conflicts and protracted environments.

1. DFAT should continue a level of funding through 2019 and 2020, to support consolidation of achievement made through this response, while closely monitoring the IPC and the new peace arrangements. Specifically:
 - Continue nutrition programs and food security initiatives in Unity through 2019, to minimize backsliding. Monitor the IPC and be prepared to support efforts in Jonglei and Bahr el Ghazal that build resilience in the local food economy systems.
 - Assuming improved security through 2019 and potential increased food production, determine cut-over criteria that indicate emphasized investment in WASH services, compared with other sectors, including the development of appropriate new water points and expansion of institutional (e.g. schools / clinics) and household latrines.
 - In line with the UN's Post-2015 development agenda, DFAT must ensure that gender and women's empowerment are mainstreamed into in all programs they support and fund implementation of relevant parts of UNDP's 8 Point Agenda: Practical Positive Outcomes for Women and Girls in Crisis.¹⁵ While all points of the strategy need to be implemented, prioritize and implement the most feasible items based on UN / NGO assessment of the current context of the newly emerging national security framework. Particularly strengthening referral and justice systems for victims of violence, based on realism, recovery, resilience and reaching the most vulnerable.

(Priority: IMMEDIATE)

2. DFAT should fund organizations that are committed to development of their own South Sudanese workforce, including increasing the number and role of women, as well as those committed to forming partnerships with viable local non-government organizations with the goal of developing these organizations.

(Priority: MEDIUM TERM)

3. Partners must increase the depth and frequency of risk assessments for all locations, driven from the field: communities and staff, with a focus on logistics improvements and mobilization of project resources through pre-positioning, communications and evacuations.

(Priority: IMMEDIATE)

4. Following on from #3, partners should complete context, cost-efficiency and value-for-money analyses, tracking the high costs of doing business in South Sudan. This type of analysis can support cost models for operating year-round in remote and not-easily accessible areas, addressing particularly the logistic constraints faced by this program. This analysis will support funding higher cost emergency programs in the near-term while the new peace agreements are operationalized, and the country moves towards transitional programming.

(Priority: MEDIUM TERM)

¹⁵ <http://www.ss.undp.org/content/dam/southsudan/library/Fact%20Sheets/GEWES.pdf>. Accessed December 28th 2018 @ 14:35 hrs EST.

5. The AHP support unit should facilitate NGOs engaged in AHP humanitarian response, to develop learning priorities and a learning agenda and drive a joint performance management, evaluation strategy and systems for each response. This will require DFAT resources and NGO commitment to collaboration, learning and adaptive management. This will require resources to assist partners with capacity building their staff responsible for performance management and evaluation.
(Priority: MEDIUM TERM)

6. Rapidly shifting contexts, and inconsistent availability of systemic information in South Sudan underlines the need to support systematic and objective real-time context analysis throughout South Sudan. DFAT is encouraged to support the GoRSS, UN and civil society organizations to:
 - Develop models of, and scenarios for, migration of conflict-affected populations, that predict population movements, identify inaccessible locations to where people retreat, predict impact to personal security, food security, and access to health, nutrition, WASH and education services.
 - Monitor the adequacy, diversity and accessibility of foods, coupled with the growth of local market economies and trade, as the new peace takes hold. This must include the role of neighbouring local economies in Ethiopia (for Jonglei) and Sudan (for Bahr el Ghazal and Unity).
 - Study the developing role of women in South Sudan to better understand women's expanding and evolving agency, particularly in the context of motivation and intention regarding household WASH adoption.
 - Study the correlation or multiplier effects of integrated programming, for example, food security and livelihoods, nutrition and WASH programs in relation to education and economic development in order to inform value-for-money, from cost efficiency and cost effectiveness perspectives.
(Priority: MEDIUM TERM)