

NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE SOUTH SUDAN

CASE STUDIES & SUCCESS STORIES | APRIL-JUNE 2022



Photo: Women led peace awareness with youths in Malek cattle camp /Rumbek, Lakes State/May/2022

SOCIAL COHESION

ENABLING COMMUNITY DIALOGUES TO RESOLVE INTER-CLAN CONFLICTS IN NYIROL COUNTY

JONGLEI STATE



Photo taken during the peace dialogue between Cie-nyakoang and Cie-kong conducted in Lankien/January 2022

For more than two decades, cycles of inter-clan violence in Nyriol County, Jonglei State have continued despite several initiatives by both local and humanitarian actors to intervene and de-escalate conflict. One of the most persistent inter-clan conflicts is between the Cie-nyakuong clan from Rim Boma and the Cie-leak clan from Wechdeng Boma of Waat Payam. The conflict erupted in 2017 after a man from the Cie-leak clan visited his maternal relatives in Rim Boma who were affiliated with the Cie-nyakuong. During the visit, the Cie-leak man and his maternal uncle began arguing after consuming local brew. After the intervention of other

relatives, the Cie-leak man left the area and returned with a weapon. The man killed his uncle and then fled to his paternal home in Wechdeng Boma.

In response, the Cie-nyakoang clan members from Rim Boma mobilized for revenge against the Cie-leak, resulting in three people dead and one person critically injured on the Cie-leak side. Since then, the cycle of revenge attacks has continued with several people killed including the sub-chief and a youth leader.

Further, several others have been injured or displaced and there has been restrictions to free movement. The Cie-leak are no longer able to travel to Waat town or Lankien town due to fear of attack, thereby limiting the clan's access to the basic services found in the main towns.

Following reports of mobilization by the two clans for further violence in October 2021, Nonviolent Peaceforce organized separate Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) trainings for the youth of each clan in November 2021. During the training, the youth shared their insight on how the conflict was detrimentally impacting their communities and requested NP's intervention to bring the two clans together. A youth from the Cie-nyakoang clan expressed his appreciation for NP's training and said, *"We cannot look at each other's eyes anymore, I don't know how long this will go on but thank you for the training today. I request you to find a way for us the clans to come together and talk to each other so that we can*

stay in peace once again.” A youth from the Cie-leak clan also noted, “As a youth, life is difficult here because we are seen as the problem. Thank you, NP, for giving us this training. I have known today that some of my actions could be the reason the conflict is still going but I ask you to have a bigger training for us all as the two clans so that we can all know what we did wrong and what we should do to stay together again.”

After the training, NP held two separate consultative meetings with each clan to gauge their willingness to engage in dialogue as well as assess the possible threats, concerns, and fears that could hinder the success of the dialogue. During the consultative meeting with Cie-leak clan members, NP observed a willingness to support peace with the Cie-nyakoang. One of the Cie-leak clan elders shared, *“We about talk peace, peace, peace, who doesn’t want peace? All of us we need peace. That is why IO and IG accept peace talk. The same to us, [the] Cie-leak and Cie-nyakoang need to have peace because we have a blood relationship.”*

HOW COMMUNAL TENSIONS AND GRIEVANCES BETWEEN TWO CLANS IN NYIROL COUNTY WERE PEACEFULLY RESOLVED.

Nyirol County



Gathering at Pulturuk peace dialogue, 14 May 2022

In April 2022, tensions rose between the Cie-Matchuk and Cie-Thay clans of Nyirol county (Northern Jonglei), over the appointment of a new Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) Coordinator. The previous coordinator hailed from the Cie-Thay clan and was controversially replaced by a member of the Cie-Matchuk clan, leading to resistance from the Cie-Thay clan and the forced closure of the RRC office. The two clans have a long-standing history of conflict with recent attempts at dialogue failing to bring them closer together. Instead, unresolved issues surfaced after a peace conference in Weideng from the 28th of April to the 2nd of May did not provide the communities with satisfactory resolutions. According to the community, the failure of this dialogue and the implementation of its agreements contributed

attempt at a dialogue on May 14-15. The dialogue was attended by over one-hundred participants, including community leadership, security duty bearers, NP trained women and youth protection teams, and partner organizations. NP prepared the groups through trainings on nonviolent conflict resolution and peacebuilding, emphasizing on the need to focus on interests and needs, rather than positions.

After the groups were prepared, NP facilitated the shuttle diplomacy and supported the dialogue itself through protective presence. Taking NP's training to heart, one of the male community leaders noted that conflict breeds revenge and incites more conflict:

"It is better we sit down like this as one people to discuss what makes us unhappy. If we decide to fight, there is no winner in fighting but it will lead to revenge and more fighting. In dialogue, everybody is a winner because everyone is listened to." The initiative demonstrates the salient role of listening to the opposing side when resolving differences and how to collectively address such differences.

In addition to addressing the most recent disagreement over the appointment of the RRC position, the dialogue was aimed at resolving the outstanding problems that surfaced during the Weideng conference, which was a large conference aimed at restoring peace between Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), and addressing internal conflict over leadership, revenge attacks and control over resources.

As such, the discussions during Pulturuk dialogue also addressed the primary outstanding resolution: *"Compensation for any outstanding cattle and killings will be agreed by the communities; violent reclaiming of cattle will be considered a grievance and the perpetrators will be held accountable."* Through discussions that were facilitated by NP on peacebuilding and nonviolent conflict resolution, it was revealed that the unfulfillment of this resolution continued to fuel conflict between the Cie-Thay and Cie-Matchuk: as per the resolution, the Cie-Matchuk clan bore the responsibility of providing cattle to Cie-Thay as blood compensation for the killing of a Cie-Thay clan member. However, the blood compensation was not paid, contributing to continued distrust and tensions, culminating in the disagreement over the RRC position.

Following this revelation, both clans made a commitment to the commissioner, NP and other parties present (local authorities, army commanders, women protection teams and youth protection teams) to implement the outstanding Weideng resolutions with immediate effect, and particularly agreed to dissuade local youth from engaging in cattle raiding, discouraging them from mobilizing to incite violence and raids. Furthermore, the chiefs agreed to take greater action on the collection of raided cattle from the community members involved in the raid, and the return of said cattle to their rightful owners. One of the paramount chiefs reaffirmed his commitment to peace, adding that he will control the random cattle raiding that is perpetrated by members of his community. He stated, *"I will make sure my community will follow the resolution from the Weideng conference and the dialogue of today. It is true when promises are broken it can lead to mistrust and fighting. My*

community will also stop raiding cattle as agreed for peace."

Once the tensions over the lack of implementation of the Weideng conference agreements were resolved, the Cie- Thay community also accepted the appointment of the Cie-Matchuk member to the position of RRC coordinator. Furthermore, in ensuring their commitment to peaceful co- existence, community leaders from Pulturuk promised those present that they will embrace the peaceful resolutions of administrative disputes or any other disputes in the future.

NP will continue to support dialogues and strengthen community-led discussions to address and resolve inter- clan violence and promote peaceful coexistence in Jonglei and the GPAA and monitor the implementation of such peace agreements in order to give support towards sustainable peace dialogues in the communities. trainings on nonviolent conflict resolution and dialogue facilitation.

PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES

TRAINING ARMED ACTORS ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Mugwo Payam, Yei County, April 2022



Soldiers at the GBV prevention and responsetraining, 11-12 April 2022, Mugwo payam

Mugwo payam, located along the Yei – Kaya Road about 14 miles from Yei County, continues to be a hot- spot area of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) offences. The sustained presence of the armed actors and military activity along the Yei – Kaya Road has exacerbated power differences between civilians and armed actors and fomented acts of violence including SGBV. Following continuous reports by community members from December 2021 to April 2022, and the reporting of 16 cases of rape that were allegedly perpetrated by the South Sudanese People Defense Force (SSPDF), one of the state army commanders stationed in Mugwo requested Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), to conduct a

training on GBV prevention for the state army stationed in Mugwo payam.

In response, NP organized a 2-day SGBV training from the 11th -12th April 2022, which was attended by 25 military personnel, a head chief and payam director of Mugwo payam. During the first day of the training, NP introduced SGBV and its various types, asking the participants to identify the most prevalent and reported forms of SGBV in the payam, to which they identified physical and sexual violence as the most common type in Mugwo payam and Yei County more broadly. Through this training, the participants identified the linkages between power abuse (informed by the societal power imbalances between males and females), as well as alcohol and drug abuses as some of the endemic causes of SGBV.

This abuse of power, especially through the possessions of guns was further acknowledged by one of the soldiers who stated, “*when you have a gun in your hand, you have power over someone who does not have so you can get whatever you want with a gun in your hand.*”

During the second and final day of the SGBV training, NP focused on SGBV guiding principles, referral pathway mechanisms and the importance of a survivor centered approach, which opened a discussion amongst participants on how they have been assisting SGBV survivors. In so doing, the participants were able to glean the significance of raising communal awareness and responsibility about

SGBV and how to assist and support survivors. The training, whilst accentuating the existence of referral pathways and services such as Bakhita health center, MSF clinic in Maridi and Mugwo Primary Health Care Center (PHCC), also highlighted the need for similar trainings to be extended to other payams such as Jaribo. Indeed, this was buttressed by the army commander, who in addition to commending NP's role in offering the training as well as heeding his call, added *"we have been receiving several cases of SGBV pointing to the armed actors as the people committing the crimes. So, when I thought of which partner to give us knowledge on SGBV, I thought of NP because they can go to difficult areas and reach people and provide knowledge"*. He further called upon the soldiers to take responsibility in preventing SGBV and to make Mugwo payam a SGBV-free payam, in addition to asking NP to extend the trainings to other soldiers in surrounding payams. NP will continue to conduct SGBV trainings to armed actors and community members in order to increase their knowledge in SGBV prevention and utilization of referral pathways for SGBV survivors requiring post-incident support services among communities. NP will additionally follow up to provide more SGBV training for soldiers in the payams of Yei County, as requested by the state army leadership

WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY

“NO ONE IS A HERO IN CONFLICT”

WOMEN WAGING PEACE IN YIROL AND MVOLO COUNTIES



Photo; Women participants leading the discussion during the intra-community dialogue in Yirol, Mapourdit. 30th March 2022

We are certain that when women linked up and worked together, they can bring peace and prosperity to these (Mvolo and Yirol) two communities. —A woman participant during an NP training in Mvolo, January 2022

Mapourdit Center, Yirol County. On 25 April 2022, Nonviolent Peaceforce together with trained women leaders and youth representatives along with key members of the Mvolo and Yirol communities convened an Inter-communal Peace Conference. It was another attempt at peace for these two communities whose lives and relationships has been deeply affected by violence. Previous unsuccessful attempts at dialogue focused on

characterized by violent conflict over access to resources, particularly related to cattle keeper migrations. This has often resulted in Gender Based Violence (GBV), civilian deaths and forced displacements.

Although interventions have been made by others in the past, the top-down approaches of these initiatives created a lack of ownership and sustainability over the peaceful relations that both communities are looking for. To address this gap and encourage communities to solve their conflict in nonviolent ways, NP engaged with the communities, in particular women and male youth, to support their efforts in setting up a dialogue between the communities.

Women and youth participated in a series of trainings that deepened their understanding of the conflict, enhanced their communication and facilitation skills and increased their confidence to take an active role in the dialogue process between and among the Yirol and Mvolo communities. During one such training in Mvolo, one of the women participants acknowledged that women can contribute greatly to establishing community peace, sharing that; *“as a woman and a mother, one of the things we do every day is resolving conflict from resource distribution in the family to solving conflicts at home, (and) not interfere with the community peace. So, with the new skills NP is teaching us, yes, we can lead peace talks.”*—Woman participant from Mvolo during the conflict mediation training on March 1, 2022.

These trained women leaders, with support from NP, then proceeded to conduct a preparatory intracommunal dialogue for their respective community which enabled participants to find and recognize their common interests, rather than positions. Both sides remembered their history of peaceful co-existence as brothers and sisters. The women underscored that the intercommunal conference is a way to mend this relationship, rebuild trust, and show their love to one another.



Photo; Dialogue training for women group in Wowo Boma, Barh El Grindi Payam, Mvolo County. 3rd March 2022/Nonviolent Peaceforce

Going into the intercommunal conference, one of the women acknowledged the challenges inherent in any reconciliation process and the importance of forgiveness. She narrated, *“starting a conversation like this is very hard between the two communities because of the loss and pain caused by the conflict. I thank you NP, you have given us the opportunity to come together and talk. Today I have learnt that no*

one is a hero in a conflict. Everybody has experienced loss and pain. But I urge us to forgive and move on. Let us practice how to sit down and talk like it is today here, this sitting alone shows a good sign of peace.”— Trained woman leader from Mvolo during the Intercommunal Conference on April 25, 2022.

Together, participants defined and agreed on ways with which to sustain the peace conference, avoid future clashes, and bring back freedom of movement and the safety and security of all civilians, as well as ways on how to disseminate this good news to the rest of the community. The conference ended with one women leader assuring NP of their commitment to continue waging peace in their community: *“you have done your part in making us understand the importance of peace, it is now time for us to put in practice all the trainings you have given us to make sure we enjoy peace among ourselves.”*—Trained woman leader from Yirol during the Intercommunal Conference on April 25, 2022.

Indeed, by centring the experiences and voices of women and youth as key components in promoting dialogue and reconciliation, and reducing violence, NP promoted the capacities and leadership of women and youth as important peace actors in their respective communities. Their empowerment paved the way for a successful intercommunal conference, which is but another step in the work for better intercommunal understanding. NP will continue monitoring the situation on the ground and in developing other initiatives that can help sustain these efforts.

WOMEN PROTECTION TEAMS LEAD RECONCILIATION THROUGH DIALOGUE IN WALGAK

Walgak, Jonglei State



Photo: *One of the WPT members addressing a gathering during the celebration of the International Women's day in Walgak*

Walgak, a payam in Akobo West, has long been a center of conflict and been plagued by revenge attacks, cattle raiding and intercommunal violence. With the support of NP and other Reconciliation Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) – a UN fund – consortium partners, Women Protection Teams (WPTs) have been established, and are actively playing a role in de-escalation of conflict through dialogue and mediation.

Recent tensions between the Chiedak Ruot clan of Walgak and Chieyakuah clan of Akobo West nearly triggered interclan attacks after a man from the Chieyakuah clan married a woman from the Chiedak Ruot clan. During an unfortunate incident of mistaken identity, the man who was

living in Walgak with his wife, was killed by members of his wife's clan, prompting family members from the Chieyakuah clan to seek revenge.

With the threat of a revenge-attack becoming more imminent as evidenced by the continued and intensified fighting between family members in public places on multiple occasions, WPT members observed the need for an intervention. So far, community leaders had not yet intervened and the WPT members asked the women in the families to participate in mediation.

One of the WPT members noted that the fighting between these women was not only disruptive to community activities and peace, but also breeding ground for more violence: *"You know here people are always angry, someone is waiting for who will start the fight so that they can jump and finish their anger but if we asked these women you will realize this is not what they want to do either, but they are the people behind this."*

The women involved both agreed to participate in a dialogue led by the WPT members. WPT members planning for the session then decided to include two more women leaders, one from each clan, to support the session and the implementation of whatever the dialogue would bring. The WPTs discussed the nonviolent options for conflict resolution and discussed the impact of continued conflict between them. One of the members of the WPT noted that it was important they talked about the stages of conflict, because most of the time,

in their communities' women and youth have been used to fuel conflicts instead of solving it amicably, yet such conflicts have a great impact on women and youth.

The WPT member narrated: *"We wanted to make sure these women know what the fighting can lead to, it can lead to a bigger problem where you may even lose more of your family members and we talked about this. After they understood that revenge creates more problems."*

After the dialogue, the women agreed to forgive each other and reconcile their differences and not to get involved in any more fighting. There have been no reports of fighting among the two after the dialogue. Instead, community members have asked WPT members how these women were able to become friends as they are now eating, walking and even working together.

Nonviolent Peaceforce will continue to support WPTs through trainings to enhance their capacities in building peace and enhancing safety among the communities using nonviolent means.

WOMEN'S INFLUENCE AND SAFETY INCREASED THROUGH ENGAGEMENTS WITH LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN RUMBEK

RUMBEK, LAKES STATE



Photo: WPTS monthly meeting in Pacong Payam in Rumbek East County

Rumbek, the capital of Lakes State has been plagued by insecurity from persisting intercommunal violence, including cattle raids, revenge attacks, and the proliferation of firearms. These issues negatively affect the safety of the population on a daily basis, limiting their access to services and livelihoods, and causing displacement and fear. Women are often targeted during violent conflict, where gender-based violence (GBV) is exacerbated by the restrictive gender norms and stereotypes, relegating women and girls to secondary citizenship. When women become survivors of GBV, stigmatization impedes them from accessing basic health services and legal remedies.

representatives from different payams on unarmed civilian protection (UCP), including sessions on how to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV. Women Protection Teams (WPTs) were also introduced to the local leaders in each of the payams. During these meetings, the work of the WPTs was explained and entry points for collaboration with local leadership were identified to increase their network and legitimacy as peacemakers in the community.

A chief from one of the payams has become an active ally of the WPT members and appreciated NP for the trainings on how to best support the respective communities to live peacefully. He noted: *"We wholeheartedly thank NP for training us! NP has strengthened our capacity to protect ourselves and also the community at large. We know how to deal with violence in a nonviolent manner so that our communities can live peacefully"* (Malok village, Matangai payam, 29 March 2022).

Following the trainings offered by NP to the local authorities and the community, the WPTs have noted increased knowledge in handling GBV cases especially by the chiefs in their areas. Previously, WPT members would learn about potential GBV cases through gossip at the village square, posing a number of privacy and protection threats for the involved survivor(s). Now, a WPT member from Matangai payam noted, when a GBV case is reported to the community leaders, they notify the WPT immediately. Representatives of the WPT are then asked to support in the case to ensure that it is handled with care. The WPT member

further noted feeling more appreciated and able to exert influence during matters of community importance: *“ever since our community leaders have been trained, they now call us for meetings and tell us to handle some cases involving women, its good because this means women are free to get help.”* (Malok village, Matangai payam, 29 March 2022).

The increased involvement and influence women are able to exert was also found in multiple joint advocacy efforts between local leaders and the WPT in Matangai payam. For example, WPT members and local leaders discussed the pressing food insecurity in Matangai payam, after which the WPT and community leaders took the initiative to form a group of 120 members comprising of the local population, paramount and executive chiefs, and other local leaders. The group is currently identifying and advocating for further agricultural skills trainings to open a joint communal farm on which they can cultivate and partake in subsistence farming. This will support the development of a more sustainable livelihood for the community as well as forming an incentive for increased social cohesion and peaceful relations within the community.

Within this initiative, women will continue to have a prominent role in decision-making and social cohesion activities. Using the knowledge and capacity that they developed in collaboration with NP, the WPTs successfully advocated for support from local leaders and development partners. For example, they were provided with four ox ploughs by a partner organization to start cultivation. WPTs attributed their success to their increased network and the trust building exercises that Nonviolent Peaceforce organized between them and community leadership.

The women also noted that success of advocacy efforts on their part means that women in the community have the capacity to support themselves and their families, and to be independent. One of the WPT members said *“Hunger has been a pressing issue in Matangai Payam, and people have become desperate for food. We decided to use the advocacy skills obtained from an NP training to reach out to another organization to obtain support for subsistence agriculture and protect the community from hunger.”* (Rumbek Central, 4 April 2022).

Nonviolent Peaceforce will continue working with various local actors and community protection teams through trainings and trust building to enhance women’ and community’ safety creating the condition for durable peace.