

# **CAPACITY BUILDING IN CONFLICT SENSITIVITY MAINSTREAMING**

**Donor: USAID/SPRING**

**Duration: July 2009 to October 2010**

**Location: Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Lira and Oyam**

## **Background**

On December 16<sup>th</sup> 2006, the government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) signed a permanent Cessation of Hostility Agreement (CHA) to allow the two parties fully engage in the Juba Peace Talks. The signing of the CHA formally ended the conflict inside Uganda and this has allowed the displaced persons to return to the homes. The prevailing peace and the consequent return process of the internally displaced persons paved way for reconstruction of Northern Uganda to begin by both the government of Uganda and development partners. In this regard, most development partners refocused their interventions in Northern Uganda from emergency to recovery and development.

However, while most development partners in Northern Uganda including SPRING implementing partners are implementing recovery and development programmes, most of them are not aware of the concept and the need mainstream conflict sensitivity into their programmes. Most of these development partners also lack the expertise to mainstream conflict sensitivity into their recovery and development programmes. It is upon this background that USAID and SPRING developed a strategy to mainstream conflict sensitivity into their stabilization project in Northern Uganda. All SPRING implementing partners were also to mainstream conflict sensitivity into their activities to ensure conflict sensitive recovery and development of Northern Uganda.

Mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into recovery and development programmes of development partners in Northern Uganda including SPRING and SPRING implementing partners will avoid such programmes from causing negative impacts on the benefiting communities while at the same time maximizing the positive impacts. This will positively contribute to consolidation of peace and security in the region. mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into recovery and development programmes also help to prevent and tackle secondary conflicts such as land disputes among the returning communities, conflict between former LRA fighters and the communities that suffered in their hands during the two decades of violent armed conflicts, resource based conflicts among the returning population, and border conflicts between among communities and between communities with government line ministries including National Forestry Authority and Uganda Wildlife Authority over boundaries.

## **Overall Objective**

To build the capacity of SPRING's implementing partners (IP) in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming in Northern Uganda as well as build the capacity of a local organization capable of delivering conflict sensitivity training and consulting.

## **Specific Objectives**

1. Build conflict sensitivity mainstreaming capacity of SPRING implementing partners and SPRING staff.
2. Support to SPRING's wider USAID conflict sensitivity mainstreaming program.
3. Build conflict sensitivity mainstreaming capacity of local districts in partnership with District Peace Fora.
4. Support to community peacebuilding activities

### **Summary of key accomplishments and achievement of main objectives**

- District leaders in 6 districts and 22 IP sensitized on the project at the start of the project
- Baseline survey conducted at the start of the project and report submitted to SPRING.
- 2 materials developed to deliver training to targeted beneficiaries of the project.
- 77 staff of 22 SPRING IP trained in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming
- 23 SPRING staff trained in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming
- 1 conflict analysis conducted in 6 districts and report shared with all stakeholders
- 2 fora for sharing conflict sensitivity mainstreaming organized for SPRING IP
- 44 site visits to SPRING IP done to provide technical assistance in CSM
- 199 members of Collective Marketing Committees trained on conflict management skills
- 1 staff of GLLACR attended training in CSM organized by International Alert in London.
- 2 USAID Partners' training on conflict sensitivity mainstreaming supported by GLACCR
- 6 USAID and CSM Partner meetings held in Kampala to share CSM experiences
- 6 consultation visits on district CSM training done in the six districts
- 141 officials from Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Lira and Oyam trained on CSM.
- 33 local government staff from Kitgum and Pader Production Sectors trained on CSM.
- 3 district led peacebuilding initiative supported (2 in Amuru and 1 in Gulu)

### **Impacts of the project on the community and households/children**

- The project primarily targeted staff of SPRING Implementing Partners who are agents of change in their respective areas. The project enabled these agents of change to understand the relationship between conflict and development. As a result of the training and subsequent follow up support provided, SPRING IP were able to analyze their projects and mainstream conflict sensitivity into their activities. These knowledge and skills will help SPRING IP even in the future to continue mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into their upcoming programmes and projects.
- The district local authorities were also able to understand the relationship between conflict and development. As a result of the training and sensitization meetings carried out, the district leaders realized the need for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into their District Development Plan (DDP) and a lot of discussions during the training were focused on this. Amuru and Kitgum districts in particular have asked GLACCR to support them so that they can mainstream conflict sensitivity into their DPP.
- The support provided by SPRING and GLACCR helped to strengthen relationship with district and sub-county local authorities. For example, Amuru district and Attiak sub-county local authorities are very thankful and appreciative for the support to Attiak Massacre Commemoration Prayer and renovation of monument in Attiak. They have continued to reach GLACCR to seek for future partnership.
- As a result of the joint conflict analysis carried out by GLACCR, district and community stakeholders especially those who received copies of the report are now more informed of conflicts in the region than before. The reports were distributed to all SPRING IP, district local authorities, members of DRPT, and the wider development partners to help them understand and help prevent and mitigate the identified conflicts through their various recover programmes in the region.
- This project has also strengthened the capacity of GLACCR a local organization. The organization's staff gained tremendous experience and expertise especially in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming as well as capacity building activities. The project has set a firm foundation for GLACCR to continue doing similar work in the region, compete for grants with other agencies, and exposure to key peacebuilding and conflict resolution stakeholders including donors like DANIDA, USAID and DFID.

Today stakeholders who have known GLACCR through the conflict sensitivity mainstreaming project are contacting the organization for various forms of support including rendering expertise and support. For instance, the Catholic Priest of Amuru Parish contacted GLACCR to help mediate a land conflict between a family and Ker Kwaro Pagak in Amuru which the organization accepted and is playing a key role in the mediation process.

- This project also helped SPRING IP improve on their loan recovery from beneficiaries. The training in CSM enabled SPRING IP staff to recover loans in a conflict sensitive ways. SPRING IP avoided arrest of or open confrontation with loan defaulters but instead devised more conflict sensitive ways of making them repay the loans. For instance, IP engaged such defaulters in dialogues, used groups members and local leaders to ensure repayment of loans.
- This project also enabled IP help to Collective Marketing Committees conflicts that are likely to affect after the SPRING project has phased out. Staff of IP therefore helped the CMC to revise their constitutions or by-laws to integrate measure to avoid such conflicts like leadership, use of revenues, and rotation of members to work in stores.

#### **Summary of difficulties faced during project implementation**

- Meeting the high expectation of district leaders in the six districts
- The CSM project started late when most SPRING IP have already started their activities
- Creation of new districts increased number of beneficiaries hence the need for more fund
- Poor mobilization of beneficiaries especially from District Local Authorities in some cases

#### **Sustainability outlook of the project**

The Great Lakes Center for Conflict Resolution is a local organization and will remain working in Northern Uganda for a long time. This project has built their capacity both in the form technical expertise, acquisition of assets and exposure to other partners including donors. GLACCR is already doing other conflict resolution work with local authorities in the region. SPRING organized meetings with partners including USAID, DANIDA, and DFID so that GLACCR meet them and this has been promising and what remains is follow up of the meeting to explore future partnership. In fact the project has laid a firm foundation for GLACCR as a local organization to continue working with the communities in Northern Uganda and also to favorably compete for grants from donors to meet needs of communities.

#### **Project Sustainability**

This project aimed at building the capacity of GLACCR as a local organization to continue providing trainings in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming after phaseout of this project. This objective has been realized because GLACCR now has the capacity to design and implement CSM project on its own. In the course of implementation of the project, one GLACCR staff has attended a training on CSM in London organized by International Alert. Some SPRING implementing partners still come to GLACCR to continue helping them in areas of conflict sensitivity mainstreaming and GLACCR has done this already after phaseout. Further, GLACCR is planning to partner with some of the implementing partners to design and implement conflict sensitivity mainstreaming project.

As a sustainability strategy, SPRING has organized for GLACCR meetings with key development partners including USAID, DANIDA, DFID, International Alert, Safer World, World Food Programme and United Nations High Commission for Refugee to share what GLACCR has been doing and to seek for future partnership after the phaseout of this project. The meetings were successful and GLACCR will follow up issues discussed during the meeting and discuss more about possible partnership.

Because of this project, GLACCR is now known locally as a key stakeholder in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming. Perhaps GLACCR has already been invited by CARE International Uganda to design and deliver for it two trainings in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming which has been successfully accomplished. GLACCR will continue rendering its expertise in the area of conflict sensitivity mainstreaming to other partners in the region.

### **Lessons Learnt from Implementation of the CSM Project**

- One major lesson learnt is that capacity building project in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming needs to start first before the beneficiating partners start implementation of their project activities. This has been a challenge in the case of SPRING supported project. GLACCR started implementing the capacity building project in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming after other partners have already kick started their activities. This meant mainstreaming conflict sensitivity was only possible at implementation and monitoring and evaluation stages of project cycle but not planning.
- Flexibility is a prerequisite in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming. Without being flexible CSM will remain a myth. Flexibility is required on the sides of all stakeholders including donors, implementing organizations, government and local leaders, beneficiaries and the communities. Without being flexible adjustments and changes will not be possible. However, flexibility and adjustment need to be done in consultative and sensible ways that will not negatively change original plans. For instance, GLACCR made adjustments into its budget in consultation with and approval of SPRING and USAID adopt to the changing circumstance in the project environment like creation of the new districts.
- Capacity building project needs to be for at least three years in order to ensure that implementing partners are supported in the process. GLACCR's project was for only 12 months meaning the project ended at the time when implementing partners benefiting from the project needed more support to enable them effectively mainstream sensitivity. In fact more follow up of implementing partners CSM activities are still needed
- Experience sharing among implementing partners is very useful in conflict sensitivity mainstream. This allows the different organizations learn from each other how they are mainstreaming conflict sensitivity and also how they are overcoming challenges they face. GLACCR organized such experience sharing fora but more of such sharing could have enhanced the effectiveness of conflict sensitivity mainstreaming.
- Capacity building in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming needs not to target only the field staff or managers but also board of directors/trustees who are the policy makes and owners of the organizations. Some of the changes have to do with policies and without targeting the board members, making such changes becomes difficult.
- Participation of all stakeholders including beneficiaries, project staff and local leadership is central in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming. Stakeholders need to be genuinely involved right from the beginning of the project to the end of the project. Participation needs to be inclusive and all categories of stakeholders including beneficiaries need to be involved in the process.
- Mainstreaming conflict sensitivity is not a separate project or activities in an organization and requires minimal funding, time and human resources. Conflict sensitivity mainstreaming is about changing ways of doing work. What is required is only to understand the context in

which a project is being implemented, analyze the relationship between the context and the project, and make adjustment or changes to minimize the negative impacts of the project while at the same time maximizing the positive impacts.

### **Recommendations**

- a) There is a need to scale up conflict sensitivity mainstreaming project in post-conflict Northern Uganda to ensure conflict sensitive recovery programmes. Baseline for this project revealed that only International Alert CARE International and NUREP are mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into their programmes despite of the hundreds of development partners working in the region. Therefore, we recommend that conflict sensitivity mainstreaming project be scaled up so that more development partners mainstream conflict sensitivity into their recovery and development programmes. In recent months a consortium consisting of Refugee Law Project, International Alert and Safer World are implementing conflict sensitivity mainstreaming project in Northern Uganda and future project needs to collaborate with them to create more impact. Further, since GLACCR implemented this project benefiting more than 22 organizations, future CSM project needs to consult and collaborate with GLACCR so that such project can take some lessons learnt from GLACCR and builds on what GLACCR has done in Northern Uganda.
- b) Further, there is need for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into District Development Planning cycle. This means the planning structures right from Local Council Chairpersons, Parish Development Committee members, Sub-county Technical Committees, and District Technical Planning Committee as well as the executives need to be trained in conflict sensitivity mainstreaming. In addition to training on CSM, there should be frequent monitoring of CSM activities of the district local governments to provide technical assistance to them. However, mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into a particular sector will create more impact than in the whole district local government.
- c) Implementation of conflict sensitivity mainstreaming needs to be for at least three years so that partners are adequately support to make the necessary changes. Sometimes adjustment or change cannot be effected within short time but over a period of time. The experience with this project is it ended when the implementing partners still need more assistance in mainstreaming conflict sensitivity. Further, capacity building project needs to live long enough to see the impact created. We hope similar project in the future will be long enough to avoid similar challenges this project face.
- d) Further, we also recommend that conflict sensitivity mainstreaming projects or activities need to integrate risks management because there is a direct relationship between conflict and risk. For instance, during implementation of SPRING project drought destroyed crops in 2009 and this created a lot of conflicts in the farmers' groups and in the community in general. Some SPRING IP were not able to recover their loans from farmers because most crops failed and other borrowers used up money borrowed to meet other family needs and recovery of such loans created a lot of conflicts.
- e) Capacity building project needs to focus on an organization as a whole instead of only the project funded by a particular donor. This was also a challenge that this project faced because the trainings and other follow up activities focused on staff implementing the SPRING funded project. Sometimes adjustments or change need to be done in the organization as a whole yet those who are not aware of the concept will not understand the need for the adjustment or change. For instance, policies on per diem for staff from the different projects vary and harmonizing these policies can be challenging. Capacity building also needs to target top managers and board members so that they also understand the need for adjustment or change.