

Conflict Analysis Report

Participatory conflict analysis for Transforming Household Resilience Through Inclusive Economic Development in South Sudan (THRIVE) Consortium Programme in South Sudan, for CAFOD.

STOOS Consulting

April 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms	3
List of Figures	4
List of Tables	5
1. Executive summary	6
2. Context and purpose of the THRIVE programme	9
2.1 Context and project background	9
2.1.1 Project objectives	11
2.1.2 Theory of Change	11
2.2 Conflict Analysis background, objectives, and scope	11
2.2.1 Conflict Analysis objectives	11
2.2.2 Scope of conflict analysis	12
2.3 Approach and Methodology	13
2.3.1 Data collection methods	13
2.3.2 Limitations and challenges	19
3. Findings	20
3.1 Current context	20
3.1.1 Overall trends	21
3.1.2 By county	24
3.2 Root causes, triggers, and dynamics of conflict	25
3.2.1 Background factors	27
3.2.2 Influential actors	29
3.2.3 Summary of current context and root causes	31
3.3 Potential effects of conflict on the THRIVE programme	34
3.4 Programming approaches	35
3.4.1 Peacebuilding responsibility	36
3.4.2 Peacebuilding activities	40
3.4.3 Implications for THRIVE programming	43
3.5 Capacities and opportunities for peacebuilding	45
3.5.1 Capacity and training needs	46
3.6 Policy, Advocacy, and Strategic dialogue	47
3.7 Resource allocation to support peacebuilding	47
4. Conclusions	48
5. Recommendations	52
5.1 Overall recommendations	52
5.2 Government recommendations	53
5.3 THRIVE consortium recommendations	54
Annex	57
Annex A: Conflict Analysis framework	57
Annex B: Introduction for all KIIs and FGDs	58





Annex C: KII Discussion Guide (Internal Stakeholders)	59
Annex D: KII Discussion Guide (External Stakeholders)	63
Annex E: FGD Discussion Guide (local communities)	67
Annex F: Survey questionnaire (Local communities)	70
Annex G: Conflict Analysis summaries per county	77
Annex H: Tabular data relating to Figure 10	81

ACRONYMS

CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organization(s)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GUN	Greater Upper Nile
HC	Host Community
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PwD	Person with a Disability
RAA	Ruweng Administrative Area
SSHARP	South Sudan Humanitarian & Resilience Programme
THRIVE	Transforming Household Resilience Through Inclusive Economic Development
ToR	Terms of Reference

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Study area map showing Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile states.

Figure 2. Study area map showing THRIVE intervention areas across Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile states.





Figure 3. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by residential status and state [n=542].

Figure 4. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by age [n=542].

Figure 5. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by residential status [n=542].

Figure 6. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by employment type [n=542].

Figure 7. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by disability / no disability [n=542].

Figure 8. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by education attainment [n=542].

Figure 9. surveyed respondents' perceptions of levels of security in daily life today, as compared to five years ago - and aggregated across all eight focus Counties [n=542].

Figure 10. Surveyed respondents' perceptions of daily life as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by County [n=542].

Figure 11. Surveyed respondents' perceptions of levels of security in daily life today, as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by County [n=542].

Figure 12. Surveyed respondents' perceptions of daily life as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by employment type [n=542].

Figure 13. Surveyed respondents' perceptions of daily life as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by residential status [n=542].

Figure 14. Surveyed respondents' perceptions around the likelihood of greater conflict breaking out in the next 1-2 years - disaggregated by County [n=542].

Figure 15. Dimensions of conflict analysis.

Figure 16. Factors considered as contributing to an increased likelihood of conflict [n=542].

Figure 17. Respondents' perceptions of factors fuelling the occurrence of conflict over the previous five years [n=542].

Figure 18. Factors fuelling the occurrence of violent conflict - by county [n=542].

Figure 19. Respondents' perceptions of actors who hold most influence in whether conflict breaks out or not [n=542].

Figure 20. Respondents' perceptions of actors who hold most influence in whether conflict breaks out - by county [n=542].

Figure 21. Respondents' perceptions of societal groups expected to be most affected in a conflict scenario [n=542].

Figure 22. Respondents' perceptions of aspects of women's and girl's lives typically made worse by conflict [n=542].

Figure 23. Respondents' confidence in new peacebuilding programmes in their county [n=542].

Figure 24. Respondents' perceptions of actors who are responsible for conflict reduction [n=542].

Figure 25. Respondents' identification of actors who should be directly engaged in peacebuilding programs [n=542].

Figure 26. Identification of actors who should be directly engaged in peacebuilding programmes - by county [n=542].

Figure 27. Identification of aspects of peacebuilding where women should play an active role [n=542].





Figure 28. Identification of aspects of peacebuilding where women should play an active role - by county [n=542].

Figure 39. Government/ NGO peacebuilding activities which hold the most potential [n=542].

Figure 30. Government/ NGO peacebuilding activities which hold the most potential - by county [n=542].

Figure 31. Peacebuilding activities which are most urgently required [n=542].

Figure 32. Peacebuilding activities which are most urgently required - by county [n=542].

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Overall data collection sample.

Table 2. KII data collection sample.

Table 3. FGD data collection sample.

Table 4. Survey sample.

Table 5. Dimensions of conflict analysis - by county.

Table 6. Theory of change assessed against findings.

Table 7. Peacebuilding approaches and attributes.

Table 8. Prioritisation of programming approaches.

Table 9. Conflict drivers and peacebuilding approaches.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings of an independent and participatory conflict analysis in Greater Upper Nile Region, to identify and analyse the underlying causes, dynamics, triggers, peace capacities and stakeholders of existing and potential conflicts to develop informed, context-specific interventions for the THRIVE Project that aims to enhance economic and food security, and improved resilience to conflict and climate shocks and stresses affected communities in Greater Upper Nile (GUN)

Project background

The THRIVE programme in South Sudan aims to bolster resilience in conflict and climate-affected communities in the Greater Upper Nile (GUN) region. Targeting eight priority counties in Upper Nile (Ulang, Renk, Fashoda, Panyikang, Nasir), Unity (Rubkona, Panyijiar), and Jonglei (Akobo) States over four years, THRIVE will reach





approximately 120,000 households (105,000 direct beneficiaries and 15,000 indirect beneficiaries) with gender-responsive and inclusive development, market system strengthening, financial inclusion, women's economic empowerment, climate change adaptation, and social cohesion activities.

Methodology

Data collection followed a mixed-methods approach, and took place from 3rd-14th March 2025, with local communities (women, men, youth, elderly), cultural and religious institutions, community groups, people with disabilities, commercial actors, local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and local government officials. Data collection was conducted in the counties of Ulang, Renk, Fashoda, Panyikang, Nasir, Akobo, Rubkona, and Panyijiar, and employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating desk reviews, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and household surveys. By triangulating qualitative and quantitative data, the methodology addressed THRIVE's objectives of enhancing conflict sensitivity, fostering resilience, and strengthening social cohesion.

Key findings

Current context

Perceptions of security across the eight counties vary significantly, with Nasir, Akobo, and Ulang counties reporting increased insecurity compared to five years ago, typically linked to food insecurity, inter-communal violence, weak governance, and climate shocks. Meanwhile, counties such as Rubkona and Panyikang indicate improved stability, whereas Renk and Panyijiar have mixed assessments. Nasir stands out for its especially difficult conditions, partly due to recent military activity. Survey data also reveals that cattle keepers, host communities, and returnees hold the most negative views of current conditions, while concern about future conflict is highest in Akobo, Fashoda, Rubkona, and Ulang, despite lingering hope in Nasir following the 2018 peace treaty.

- **Ulang** – Conflict has worsened significantly due to political tensions, food insecurity and inter-communal violence driven by armed youth and lack of governance.
- **Renk** – The situation has improved, but underlying political and tribal tensions still pose a medium risk of conflict.
- **Fashoda** – Conditions remain largely unchanged, with ongoing tribal disputes and political agendas exacerbating food insecurity.
- **Nasir** – The situation has deteriorated sharply, culminating in open conflict between the White Army and SSPDF in March 2025.
- **Panyikang** – While relatively stable, the area faces growing threats from tribal grievances, food insecurity, and youth gun ownership.
- **Rubkona** – Although better due to the 2018 peace deal, communal violence continues, and peace remains fragile.
- **Panyijiar** – Conditions remain tense with climate change, unemployment, and tribalism fueling displacement and conflict risks.
- **Akobo** – Dramatically worse, as tribalism, political tensions, and armed groups erode peace and deepen local conflict.

Root causes, triggers, and dynamics of conflict





Across all eight focus counties, despite differing local contexts, common drivers of conflict include food insecurity, tribal tensions, gun ownership, unemployment, and climate change - factors that are deeply interconnected and cyclical in nature. Climate-related shocks often trigger displacement, food insecurity, and land disputes, escalating into violence, particularly among armed youth. The most influential actors in either mitigating or fueling conflict are predominantly male and include local and national government, the national army, local leaders, and youth. While their roles vary by county, all are seen as central to the conflict landscape. Women and community-based cohorts like farmers and business owners also play nuanced roles in peacebuilding, though their influence is often under-recognised. Each county shows distinct conflict dynamics, with areas like Nasir, Ulang, and Akobo experiencing worsening conditions and heightened risk, while others like Renk and Rubkona report relative but fragile stability.

- **Ulang:** *Root causes: Political tensions, food insecurity, weak governance, armed youth, and inter-communal violence.*
A lack of political authority combined with food insecurity and youth-led violence makes Ulang highly vulnerable to recurring conflict.
- **Renk:** *Root causes: Tribalism, cattle raiding, political agendas.*
While currently stable, Renk remains at medium risk due to deep-rooted ethnic tensions and politically driven tribal rivalries.
- **Fashoda:** *Root causes: Political manipulation, food insecurity, tribal disputes.*
Food shortages and ethnic divisions, exacerbated by political agendas, keep Fashoda locked in a cycle of latent conflict.
- **Nasir:** *Root causes: Political tensions, youth militarisation, weak governance.*
Nasir's recent descent into open conflict reflects the volatile mix of political rivalries and armed youth mobilisation.
- **Panyikang:** *Root causes: Tribalism, climate change, gun ownership, food insecurity.*
Although relatively calm, Panyikang faces escalating risks from youth armament, inter-communal grievances, and worsening climate shocks.
- **Rubkona:** *Root causes: Food insecurity, communal violence, cattle raiding.*
Despite relative peace from past agreements, Rubkona's future remains fragile due to socio-economic stressors and ongoing violence.
- **Panyijiar:** *Root causes: Climate change, unemployment, tribalism, political tensions.*
The compound effects of environmental stress and ethnic-political divisions make Panyijiar prone to instability and displacement.
- **Akobo:** *Root causes: Tribalism, cattle raiding, political tension, gun proliferation.*
Akobo is increasingly unstable as resource competition and armed tribal rivalries erode post-conflict peace.

Potential effects of conflict on the THRIVE programme

Participants across the evaluation emphasised that any major conflict outbreak would have catastrophic consequences, not only for communities but also for peace-building efforts like the THRIVE programme, which would likely be forced to shut down. Respondents demonstrated a clear understanding of conflict's broad impacts - on institutions, the environment, mental health, and especially vulnerable groups. Children, women, people with disabilities, and the elderly are seen as most at risk due to limited ability to escape or defend themselves, with widespread reports of abductions and gender-based violence (GBV). Women and girls face





compounded harm, including loss of livelihoods, disrupted access to healthcare and education, and displacement.

Programming approaches for peacebuilding

Participants across the eight counties shared insights for future peace-building programmes such as THRIVE. Despite challenges, most remained optimistic that well-organized programmes with strong intent can succeed, and emphasised the importance of involving local actors, including youth, women, and local governments, in the peacebuilding process. Key priorities include economic development, market growth, job creation, and addressing food insecurity, which are seen as drivers of conflict. Participants highlighted the need for dialogue between adversaries, empowerment of women and youth, and gender-focused initiatives for sustainable peace. Confidence in new programs varied by county, with Ulang and Panyijair more optimistic and Fashoda less so. Urgent needs include improving food access and strengthening emergency response, alongside longer-term efforts like economic growth and social cohesion. The consensus was that peacebuilding should be locally-driven, inclusive, and multifaceted to succeed.

Capacities and opportunities for peacebuilding

Despite significant challenges, Conflict Analysis findings suggest optimism among stakeholders that meaningful peacebuilding is achievable with adequate funding, commitment, and inclusive action. Existing capacities, including women's groups, local leaders, youth, and civil society, offer a foundation that can be strengthened through targeted training and support. Opportunities for peacebuilding closely align with local challenges, with priority actions including community dialogue, disarmament, youth and women empowerment, and restoration of public services. While institutional capacity at the national and state levels remains low and under-resourced, local actors are motivated and present an opportunity for grassroots-led change, especially if equipped through capacity-building in areas such as peacebuilding, gender, livelihoods, and climate adaptation.

Policy, Advocacy, and Strategic dialogue

Evidence from the analysis underscores the need for data-driven, conflict-sensitive approaches to inform policy, advocacy, and strategic dialogue efforts in peacebuilding. Integrating demographic, socio-economic, and historical data can enhance coordination between government and NGOs, while ensuring programmes respond effectively to community needs. Advocacy should prioritise inclusive policies, community dialogue, and the empowerment of marginalized voices, including youth and armed groups in counties such as Rubkona. When combined with peacebuilding, such efforts can strengthen trust, foster reconciliation, and improve resilience to conflict shocks at the local level.

Conclusions

Conflict dynamics across South Sudan show common patterns of cause and effect, with issues such as food insecurity, tribalism, political tensions, and unemployment exacerbated by climate change. Some counties, such as Ulang, Fashoda, Nasir, Akobo, and Rubkona, face a higher risk of conflict due to these interwoven factors, while others like Renk, Panyikang, and Panyijiar are currently more stable.

Women, girls, children, people with disabilities, and the elderly are the most vulnerable to conflict, often lacking the means to defend or escape. There is a widespread call for women, youth, and local actors to play a more





active role in peacebuilding, although societal norms may limit women's participation in higher-level political dialogue. Gender training is essential to address these limitations.

Recommendations

A range of strategic and programmatic recommendations and considerations have emerged from conflict analysis and can be found in the Recommendations section (5.0), along with specific recommendations for tier of government, and THRIVE consortium members.

- **Further develop the THRIVE programme strategy:** In accordance with the Theory of Change and the findings of this conflict analysis, match the identified approaches in the THRIVE programme with the context in each county where there are best chances of positive effects and impact.
- **Prioritise local ownership and leadership:** Engage local leaders, youth, and community-based actors as central facilitators of peacebuilding activities, particularly in counties where national institutions are perceived as distant or ineffective.
- **Leverage youth and women's potential:** Empower youth and women as key change agents, especially in counties where their involvement is more positively perceived (e.g., Renk, Panyikang, Fashoda).
- **Focus on economic development as a peacebuilding driver:** Support job creation, local market development, and entrepreneurship, especially in counties where economic frustrations are viewed as contributing to conflict (e.g., Akobo, Panyijiar).
- **Customise programming by county:** Recognize and respond to local variations in attitudes and needs - for example, higher optimism in Ulang and Panyijiar vs. skepticism in Fashoda. Adjust engagement strategies in counties with low support for certain actors (e.g., weak support for women's roles in Akobo and Rubkona) through awareness and inclusion campaigns.
- **Adopt community-centered and integrated approaches:** Invest in community-led peace-building activities such as shared dialogues, joint projects, and emergency response mechanisms, and integrate peacebuilding with basic delivery of service (e.g., food access, disaster response), which are viewed as effective entry points for reducing tensions.

2. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE THRIVE PROGRAMME

2.1 Context and project background

The THRIVE programme in South Sudan aims to bolster resilience in conflict and climate-affected communities in the Greater Upper Nile (GUN) region. Targeting eight priority counties (Figures 1 and 2) in Upper Nile (Ulang, Renk, Fashoda, Panyikang, Nasir), Unity (Rubkona, Panyijiar), and Jonglei (Akobo) States over four years, THRIVE will reach approximately 120,000 households (105,000 direct beneficiaries, and 15,000 indirect beneficiaries) with gender-responsive and inclusive livelihoods development, market system strengthening, financial inclusion, women's economic empowerment, climate change adaptation, and social cohesion activities.



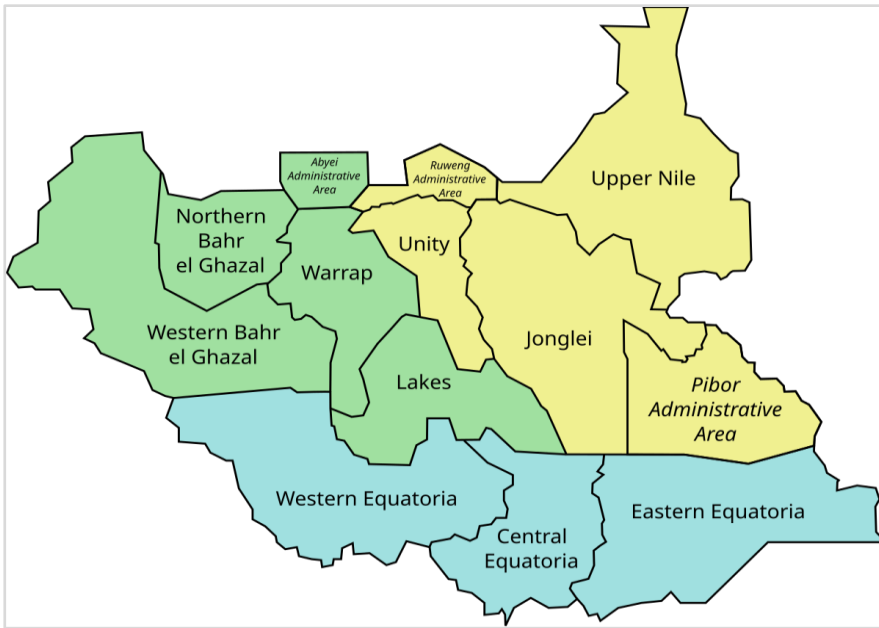


Figure 1. Study area map showing Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile states.



Figure 2. Study area map showing THRIVE intervention counties across Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile states.

Led by GOAL, in partnership with Mercy Corps, CAFOD, and VSF Swiss, and local implementing partners, the consortium focuses on fostering sustainable and inclusive economic development and building household resilience through community-centred approaches, market systems development, financial inclusion, peacebuilding and social cohesion, DRR and climate change adaptation, and women’s economic empowerment

2.1.1 Project objectives

THRIVE’s overall goal is for target households to achieve economic and food security, and improved resilience to conflict and climate shocks and stresses. Key outcomes envisaged as a result of the integrated intervention strategies include:

1. Increased incomes among individuals and micro/small-scale businesses engaged in the fishing, livestock, and agro/non-timber forestry sectors.
2. Improved food security among households targeted with livelihoods and women/youth empowerment activities.
3. Strengthened disaster preparedness and coping capacities for climate and conflict shocks and stresses.
4. Improved social cohesion and conflict resolution capacities among target communities.



5. Women and youth economic empowerment, including financial inclusion and improved gender equality.

2.1.2 Theory of Change

Aligning with the broader South Sudan Humanitarian and Resilience Programme (SSHARP) Theory of Change, THRIVE's Theory of Change envisages that:

“IF markets in target agricultural systems critical to the target population are thriving, inclusive, diverse, competitive, and serve users, and IF women and youth are economically empowered to access sustainable market-oriented livelihoods opportunities within those systems, and their participation is valued by their communities, and IF communities dependent on those systems are able to mitigate, adapt to, and manage the effects of climate change and conflict shocks and stresses, and resolve conflicts peacefully, THEN target households and communities will be more resilient, live in harmony, have improved economic and food security, and reduced need for humanitarian assistance”.

2.2 Conflict Analysis background, objectives, and scope

The core objective of the participatory conflict analysis is to identify and analyse the underlying causes, dynamics, triggers, peace capacities and stakeholders of existing and potential conflicts to develop informed, context-specific interventions for the THRIVE Project that prevent escalation of conflicts, support peacebuilding, advocacy and improve resource allocation.

2.2.1 Conflict Analysis objectives

The specific objectives are as follows:

- 1) Analyse the potential effect of the existing and/or potential conflict on the THRIVE programme delivery and its consequences on its target group, especially women, men, girls, boys, marginalised and underrepresented groups. The analysis will provide THRIVE with detailed analysis report on the internal and external conflict related factors including climate change related conflicts, which have the potential impact on THRIVE programme operation and its target group, with key recommendations on minimizing the effect of those factors and how THRIVE delivery can be further improved to better respond to the emerging needs of the external context e.g., differentiated roles for men and women for promoting peace or addressing specific conflict factors.
- 2) Deepen and strengthen THRIVE understanding and programming approaches for conflict sensitivity and peace building to ensure that current and potential conflicts are not exacerbated.
- 3) Identify potential synergies and opportunities for mainstreaming peace building and conflict resolution within the scope of the four THRIVE programme objectives and its approaches, including capacities for peace to define potential entry point/roadmap for mainstreaming peace building across the objectives. By understanding stakeholders, root causes, conflict dynamics and peace capacities, new areas for programming needs can be illuminated.





- 4) Map the current capacity and assess the training needs for THRIVE consortium members staff for conflict sensitive programme delivery based on the Do NO Harm principle.
- 5) Generate and provide verifiable data to strengthen THRIVE's approaches for policy, advocacy, and strategic dialogues with key local, national, and international stakeholders
- 6) Identify the best practices and tools for making conflict analysis an on-going regular process within the THRIVE consortium with a reasonable frequency as per-the needs and requirements of the consortium to ensure programming is continuously informed by ongoing changes to the conflict.

2.2.2 Scope of conflict analysis

The participatory conflict analysis of the THRIVE Consortium Programme will cover eight counties of Greater Upper Nile (GUN). Geographically, the analysis will be conducted in the counties of Ulang, Renk, Fashoda, Panyikang, Nasir, Akobo, Rubkona, and Panyijiar. The analysis will target various stakeholders within these locations, including local communities (women, men, youth, elderly), cultural and religious institutions, community groups, people with disabilities, commercial actors, local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and local government officials in addition to a robust desk review.

The analysis will identify both common issues across the targeted counties and county specific issues:

- Assess the potential effect of existing and potential conflicts on the THRIVE programme delivery and its target groups, deepen THRIVE's understanding of conflict sensitivity, and ensure interventions do not exacerbate conflicts.
- Identify synergies and opportunities for mainstreaming peacebuilding and conflict resolution within THRIVE's program objectives, map the current capacity and assess training needs for THRIVE consortium members for conflict-sensitive program delivery, and identify best practices and tools for making conflict analysis an ongoing process within the THRIVE consortium.
- Provide data on capacities for peace, which can be strengthened to address the structural causes of inequity, social cohesion, identifying entry points opportunities for building peace and how conflictual stakeholders work collectively on understanding the nature of the conflict they are a part of.
- Surface and provide actionable recommendations for programming, policy, advocacy, and strategic dialogues with key stakeholders including institutional frameworks to mitigate, do no harm and reduce conflicts.
- Assess potential effects of existing and potential conflicts related to climate change and provide actionable recommendations for intervention.

2.3 Approach and Methodology

The conflict analysis employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating desk reviews, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and household surveys. By triangulating qualitative and quantitative data, the methodology addressed THRIVE's objectives of enhancing conflict sensitivity, fostering resilience, and





strengthening social cohesion. Ethical considerations and inclusivity were also prioritized, capturing diverse community perspectives to deliver actionable recommendations for THRIVE’s programming and advocacy.

2.3.1 Data collection methods

Secondary data (desk review)

The desk review systematically examined existing documents, reports, and literature to establish a robust understanding of conflict dynamics, socio-economic contexts, and operational environments across the eight counties of the Greater Upper Nile (GUN) region. This method provided a baseline of secondary data, ensuring the analysis is evidence-based and aligned with THRIVE’s objectives.

The desk review addressed the assignment goals by identifying root causes, triggers, dynamics, and peace capacities of conflicts, assessing their impact on THRIVE’s delivery, and highlighting capacity-building needs for conflict-sensitive programming. It also generated evidence to inform policy, advocacy, and strategic dialogues at local and international levels. Key documents reviewed included THRIVE proposals, operational plans, M&E data, conflict-specific reports, thematic studies on livelihoods, gender, climate resilience, and policy briefs. Analytical methods such as content analysis, gap analysis, and policy analysis were also deployed to extract meaningful insights and identify areas requiring further investigation. The findings of the desk review informed the work plan, design of data collection, and analytical and reporting frameworks.

Primary data collection

The overall data collection sample included the following:

Participant types	Participants	KIIs	FGDs	Survey
Internal stakeholders	THRIVE consortium staff (Mercy Corps, CAFOD, VSF Swiss)	3		
External stakeholders	Private sector actors	7		
	Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	4		
	Local community leaders (traditional, religious)	11		
	Local government officials	7		
Local Communities	Women		7	542
	Men		7	
	Youth		7	
TOTAL UNITS PER MODE		32	21	1
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS BY MODE		32	148	542
TOTAL NUMBER OF FEMALE PARTICIPANTS		14	60	271
TOTAL NUMBER OF MALE PARTICIPANTS		18	88	271
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS			722	

Table 1. Overall data collection sample.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted one-on-one, in-person and online, to gather in-depth insights directly from key informants. These interviews enabled for detailed and candid conversations, allowing informants to share their experiences





and perspectives freely, and for the interviewer to collect rich, nuanced data that is less likely to be generated in group settings.

Key informants were selected to ensure they could provide insightful information and to cover a wide range of voices who provided views upon root causes, triggers, peacebuilding opportunities, drivers of conflict, impact on livelihoods, resilience, the gendered dimensions of conflict, and the roles stakeholders play in either exacerbating or resolving tensions. The insights helped assess how conflicts influence THRIVE’s programming and identify strategies to better support vulnerable populations. KII participants included local government officials, community leaders (traditional and religious), civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector actors, THRIVE staff, and thematic experts in areas such as gender and climate resilience. A purposive sampling was adopted, and interviews were guided by semi-structured questions, and adhered to strict ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality.

Data from KIIs was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, stakeholder mapping to understand relationships and influence, and comparative analysis to highlight differences across counties. Insights were cross-referenced through triangulation with other data sources, ensuring validity and depth.

Basic parameters of the KIIs included:

- **Mode:** semi-structured interview guide.
- **Sample size:** 32 x KIIs, with a range of stakeholders and participants.
- **Method:** Mix of face-to-face and remote interviews, as preferred/feasible.
- **Duration:** c.60 minutes.
- **Format of data submission:** all digital transcripts of interviews (MS Word / Excel).
- **Language:** A combination of English, Arabic, and local languages - as preferred/feasible.
- **Location:** Stakeholders were selected across project locations (as feasible/ appropriate), to ensure representation.

Each KII was carefully documented through audio recordings and/or detailed notes to ensure accuracy, and as with FGDs, the data collected from the KIIs underwent discourse and content analysis to identify recurring themes, gaps, and actionable recommendations. The table below sets out the achieved sample for KIIs:

Participants	Upper Nile					Unity		Jonglei
	Ulang	Renk	Fashoda	Panyikang	Nasir	Rubkona	Panyijiar	Akobo
Internal stakeholders		1				1		1
Private sector actors	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
CSOs		1	1			1	1	
Local community leaders	2	1	1	2		1	2	2
Local government officials	1	1	1	1		2	1	
TOTAL KIIs BY STATE	17					11		4
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	32							





Table 2. KII data collection sample.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs gathered insights from household and community members across the Greater Upper Nile (GUN) region and established a platform for participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and ideas, to better understand the root causes, triggers, and dynamics of conflict and identify opportunities for peacebuilding. By facilitating structured dialogue, FGDs captured community perceptions of THRIVE’s programming and its potential to address conflict-related challenges. Participants in FGDs included separate groups for women, men, youth, and marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, ensuring inclusivity and safety for open dialogue. FGDs also featured individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds, including farmers, cattle keepers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, and small business owners, to ensure diverse sectoral perspectives. FGDs typically featured c.8–12 participants per group.

Youth FGDs featured young people aged 16-24 years, and a mix of genders within each group. Men and Women FGDs primarily featured adults aged 25-59, though some vulnerable groups were also featured across all adult FGDs, typically the elderly (60+ years), and People with Disabilities (PwDs).

Trained facilitators created a safe and respectful environment for discussion, employing participatory tools like conflict mapping and problem-ranking exercises to encourage meaningful engagement. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, comparative analysis to highlight differences across counties, and triangulation with data from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and desk reviews to ensure reliability and comprehensiveness.

Participants	Upper Nile					Unity		Jonglei
	Ulang	Renk	Fashoda	Panyikang	Nasir	Rubkona	Panyijiar	Akobo
Women	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
Men	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
Youth	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
TOTAL FGDs BY STATE	12					6		3
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	21							

Table 3. FGD data collection sample.

Basic parameters of the FGDs include:

- Mode: semi-structured interview guide.
- Sample size: 21 x FGDs, with a range of local participants.
- Method: Face-to-face and/or remote interviews, as feasible.
- Duration: c.75-90 minutes.
- Format of data submission: all digital transcripts of interviews (MS Word / Excel).
- Language: A combination of logical languages, Arabic, English - as preferred/ feasible.
- Location: Local venues were selected, as advised.





Survey

Household surveys captured broad, measurable insights into the impact of conflict, social cohesion, and resilience at the household level, and provided representative, statistically reliable data to complement qualitative methods. By engaging household and community members representing diverse demographic groups, the surveys ensured inclusivity and highlighted differences in experiences across gender, age, and socio-economic status. The surveys also supported the analysis of gender dynamics, offering insights into the distinct challenges and opportunities for women, men, and youth in fostering social cohesion.

Surveys targeted young people aged 16-24 years (both genders), and adult Men and Women aged 25-59. Adult surveys also included representation of some vulnerable groups, typically the elderly (60+ years), and People with Disabilities (PWDs).

A detailed survey instrument was developed, containing closed-ended questions to ensure consistency and comparability. Data collection teams were trained on ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality, and surveys were administered through face-to-face interviews or digital platforms, depending on local accessibility and security conditions. Responses were recorded systematically for analysis, and the data obtained from household surveys underwent quantitative analysis to identify trends, correlations, and patterns. Statistical methods were used to assess the relationships between conflict impacts, resilience strategies, and socio-economic factors, and descriptive statistics summarized key findings, while comparative analysis highlighted differences across states, counties, and demographic groups. Results were also triangulated with findings from qualitative methods, such as FGDs and KIIs, to ensure comprehensive insights.

Sampling

A **purposive sampling approach** was applied to ensure that the survey sample was representative of different segments of the community and geographic areas, and the sampling strategy followed a stratified random sampling to ensure representation across the eight counties. A representative sample size was calculated to balance statistical reliability with logistical feasibility, ensuring coverage of urban, rural, and marginalized communities. Measures were also put in place to ensure a balance in gender representation.

This method was chosen to capture diverse perspectives while ensuring that key demographic groups were well-represented. To determine the total sample size for each state with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the following formula was followed:

$$n = N \times Z^2 \times p \times (1-p) / E^2 \times (N-1) + Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)$$

Where:

n = required sample size

N = population size

Z = Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (1.96 for 95%)

p = estimated proportion of the population (commonly 0.5 for maximum variability)

E = margin of error (0.05 for 5%)

This sample size calculation was based on a **95% confidence level** and a **5% margin of error** using a maximum variability proportion of 0.5. A total sample size for each county was calculated to reflect the variance on overall





population for each county (i.e., to be weighted), resulting in a total sample of **542** for the three target states (see table below). This approach allowed the sample to reflect the distribution of the population within each state accurately and was calculated from numbers of HHs across all relevant counties (as shared by CAFOD). N.B., following this initial weighted calculation, the sample for each county was moderated slightly, to ensure a reasonably robust number of individuals were represented across each of the eight counties.

Survey participants	Upper Nile					Unity		Jonglei
	Ulang	Renk	Fashoda	Panyikang	Nasir	Rubkona	Panyijiar	Akobo
Women	30	14	26	21	12	34	87	48
Men	10	17	45	10	33	25	90	40
TOTAL BY COUNTY	40	31	71	31	45	59	177	88
TOTAL BY STATE	218					59	265	
TOTAL SURVEYS	542							

Table 4. Survey sample.

Other demographic attributes of the survey sample include the following:

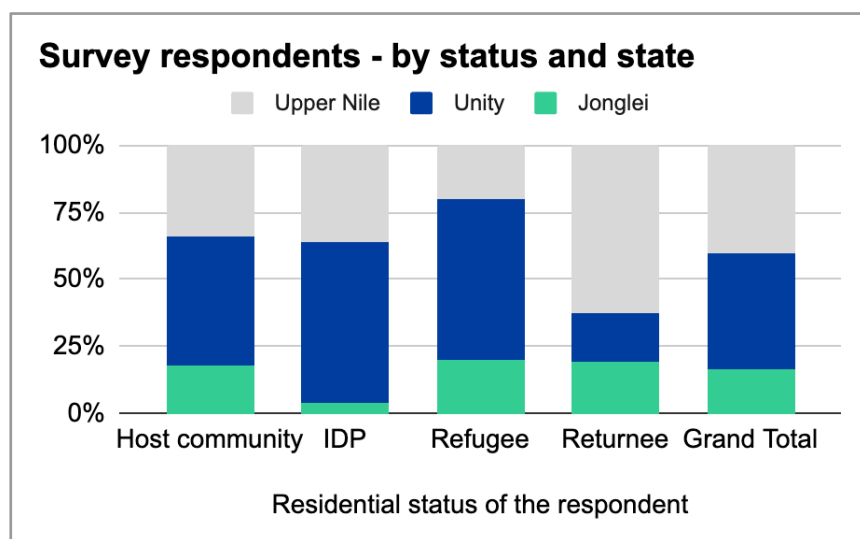


Figure 3. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by residential status and state [n=542].



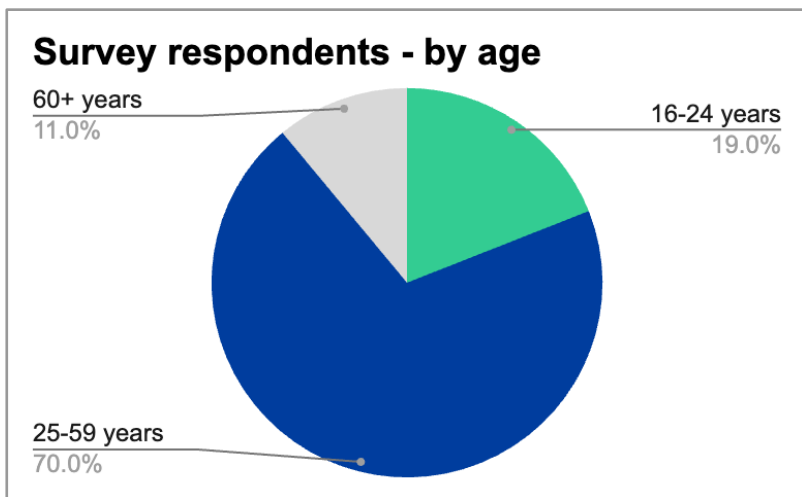


Figure 4. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by age [n=542].

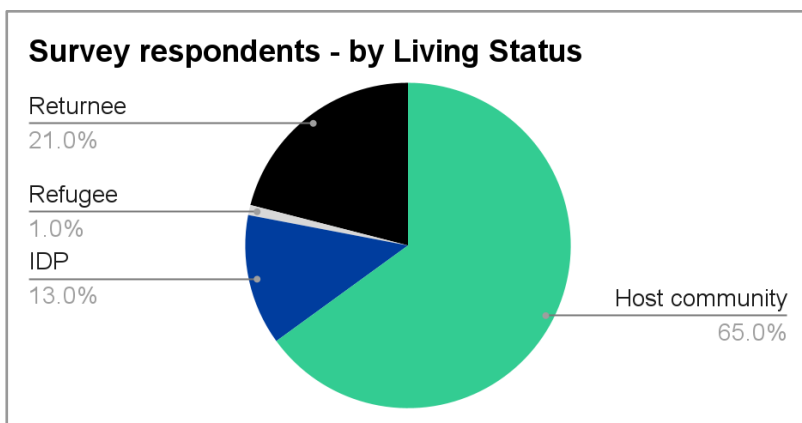


Figure 5. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by residential status [n=542].

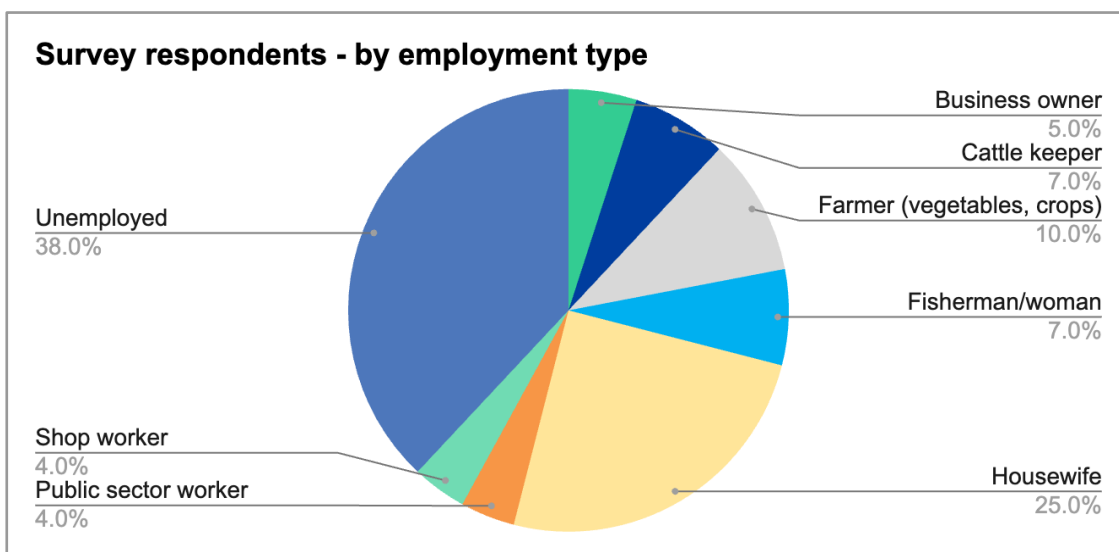


Figure 6. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by employment type [n=542].

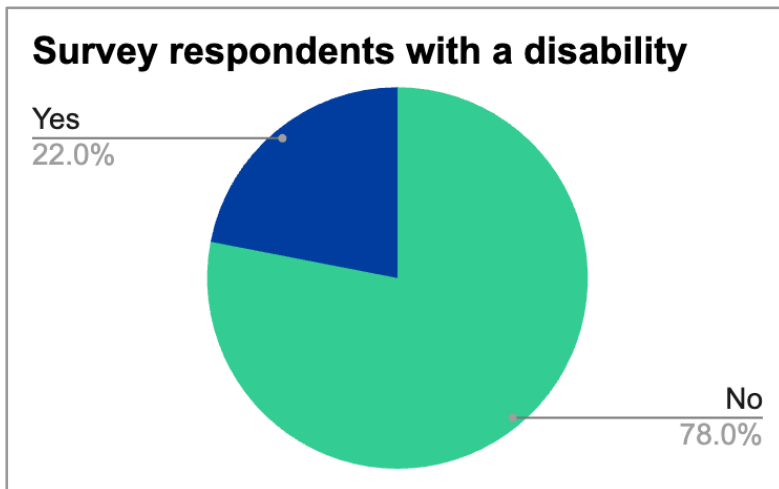


Figure 7. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by disability / no disability [n=542].

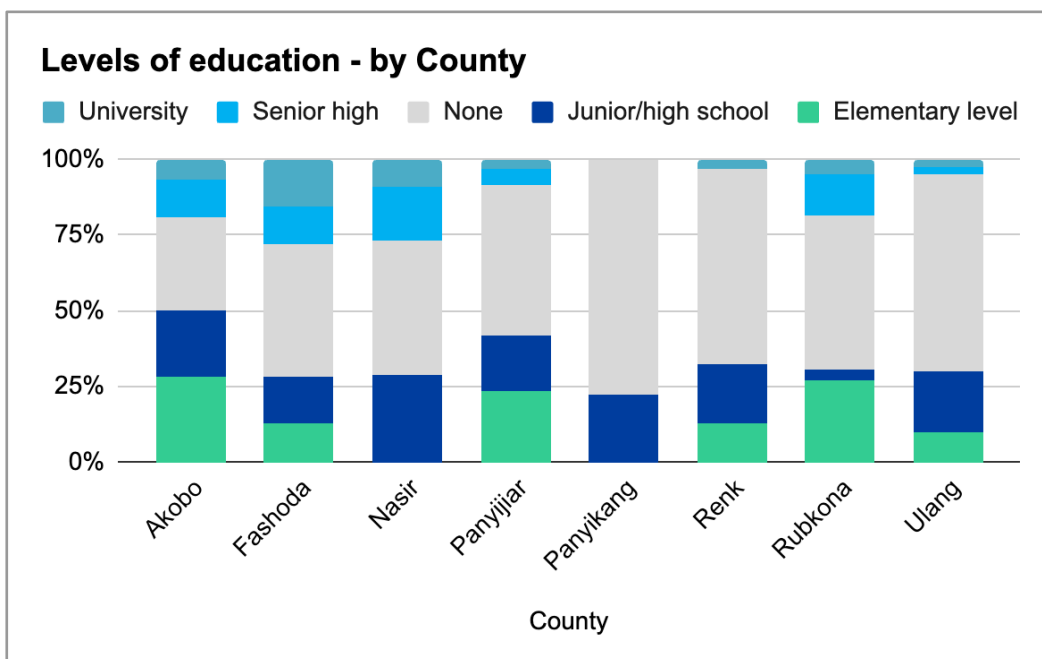


Figure 8. Surveyed respondents disaggregated by education attainment [n=542].

2.3.2 Limitations and challenges

There were some challenges experienced in collecting data during March 2025 in Nasir County, due to escalating insecurity between the White Army (local youth) and SSPDF soldiers. In addition, the situation in Ulang was also tense at the time of data collection.



The data collection process for the CAFOD Conflict Analysis Assessment encountered several challenges and limitations that impacted the efficiency and comprehensiveness of the assignment. These challenges were primarily related to security concerns, logistical constraints, respondent availability, cultural sensitivities, financial expectations from partners, communication barriers, and capacity gaps among field enumerators.

One of the major challenges was the volatile security situation in some areas, particularly in regions with ongoing intercommunal tensions such as Ulang and Nasir counties. This posed a risk to data collection teams and restricted movement, limiting access to certain key informants and communities. In some cases, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and surveys could not be conducted due to heightened insecurity. (e.g., Nasir). To address this, local community members and trusted intermediaries were engaged to facilitate introductions and ensure safe access to respondents.

Logistical constraints also posed a limitation, as poor road infrastructure and unpredictable weather conditions made it difficult to reach remote locations. Limited transportation options further delayed scheduled interviews and focus group discussions. To mitigate this, data collection was strategically planned around accessible locations, and remote interviews were conducted where feasible.

Financial expectations from local partners and community members affected participation in the assessment. Some respondents expected monetary compensation before engaging in interviews or discussions, leading to delays and difficulties in obtaining unbiased responses. To address this, clear communication on the purpose of the assessment and ethical guidelines regarding incentives was reinforced before data collection commenced.

Challenges in communication, including lack of mobile network coverage and limited internet access in some areas, hampered real-time coordination and data transmission. This was particularly evident in remote locations where enumerators struggled to relay updates or seek clarification. To manage this, field teams established pre-arranged reporting schedules and used alternative communication methods such as satellite phones where possible.

Respondent availability and willingness to participate in the assessment presented another challenge. Due to conflict-related trauma and mistrust, some individuals were hesitant to share information, fearing potential repercussions. To overcome this, the research team employed community engagement strategies, worked through local leaders, and assured respondents of confidentiality and anonymity.

Cultural sensitivities also impacted the data collection process, as some communities like Nuer were unwilling to discuss conflict openly. Certain questions required careful framing to avoid reinforcing divisions or triggering distress. To navigate this, data collectors underwent training on conflict-sensitive interviewing techniques, ensuring that discussions were conducted respectfully and inclusively, and Research assistants were recruited from local respective areas of data collections.

Despite these challenges, the assessment was successfully completed through adaptive strategies, collaboration with local stakeholders, and flexible data collection methods. Lessons learned from this process will inform future conflict assessments, improving both methodology and implementation in complex environments.



3. FINDINGS

3.1 Current context

This section is presented by overall trends (3.1.1) and current context by county (3.1.2).

3.1.1 Overall trends

The current context regarding conflict presents a mixed picture across the eight counties of focus, as demonstrated in figure 9 (below), with similar levels of perception of the situation being worse, like, and better than, five years ago.

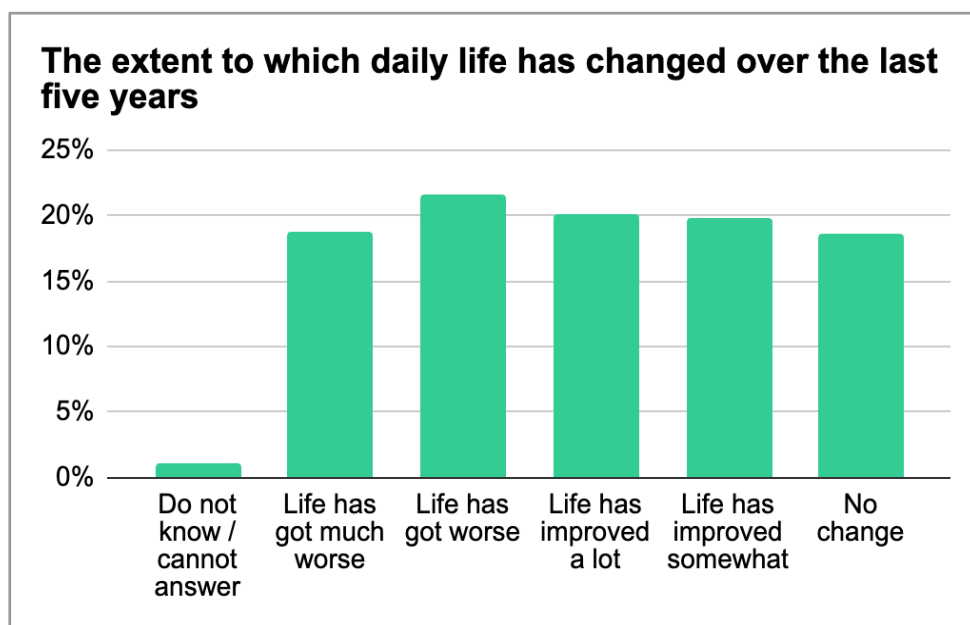


Figure 9. surveyed respondents’ perceptions of levels of security in daily life today, as compared to five years ago - and aggregated across all eight focus Counties [n=542].

These differences in perception are reflected by location of respondents (Figures 10 and 11), where responses from the counties of Akobo, Nasir, and Ulang all suggest the situation is more fraught and insecure now than five years previously.

“Compared to 5–10 years ago, localized violence has increased due to weak governance and climate shocks”

[KII, Internal Stakeholder, VSF-Akobo, DRR and Peacebuilding Officer, Akobo, Jonglei]

Responses from Akobo, Renk and Panyijiar are more nuanced and show both negative and positive appraisals of daily life and perceptions of security.

“The situation is very calm, because the youths have come together. There is no need for tribe”.

[KII, External Stakeholder, Local Government, Renk, Upper Nile]

Responses from Nasir, however, appear to reflect the most difficult situation on the ground, and is likely related to the military activity in Nasir in March 2025, which resulted in aerial attacks and the use of barrel bombs¹. Survey responses from Panyikang and Rubkona, however, appear to show the situation is calmer and more stable now, than five years previously.

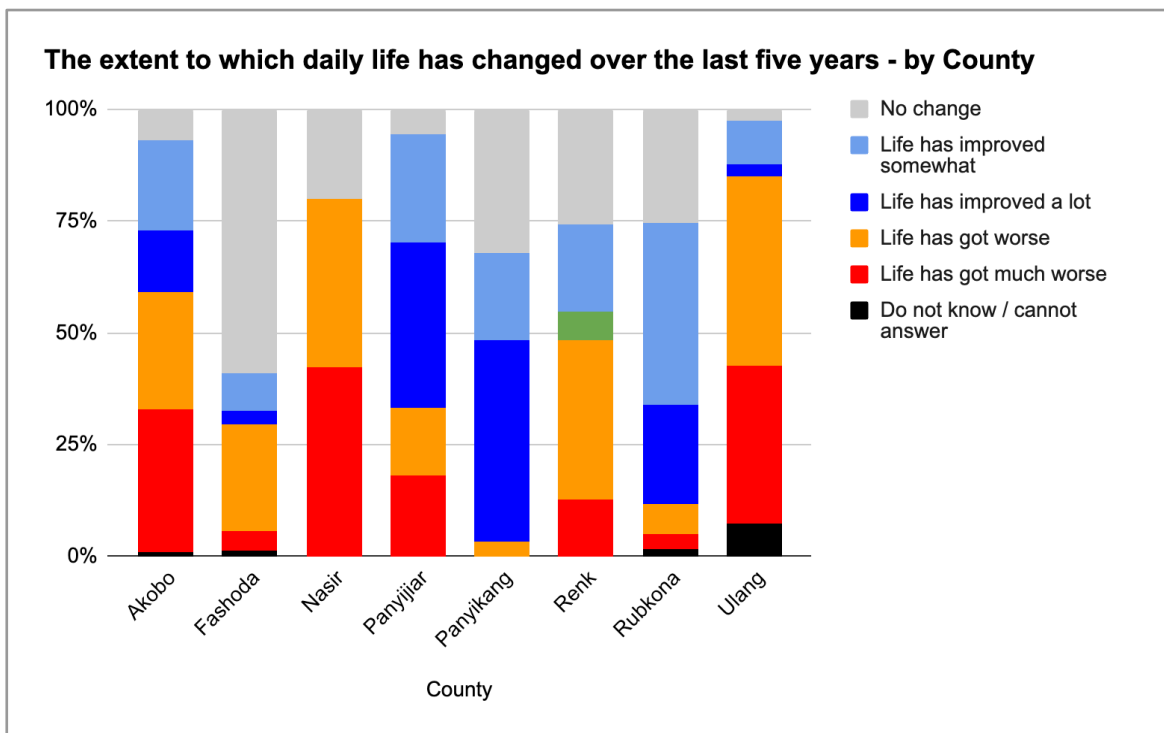


Figure 10. Surveyed respondents' perceptions of daily life as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by County [n=542].

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce8yr42r96do>

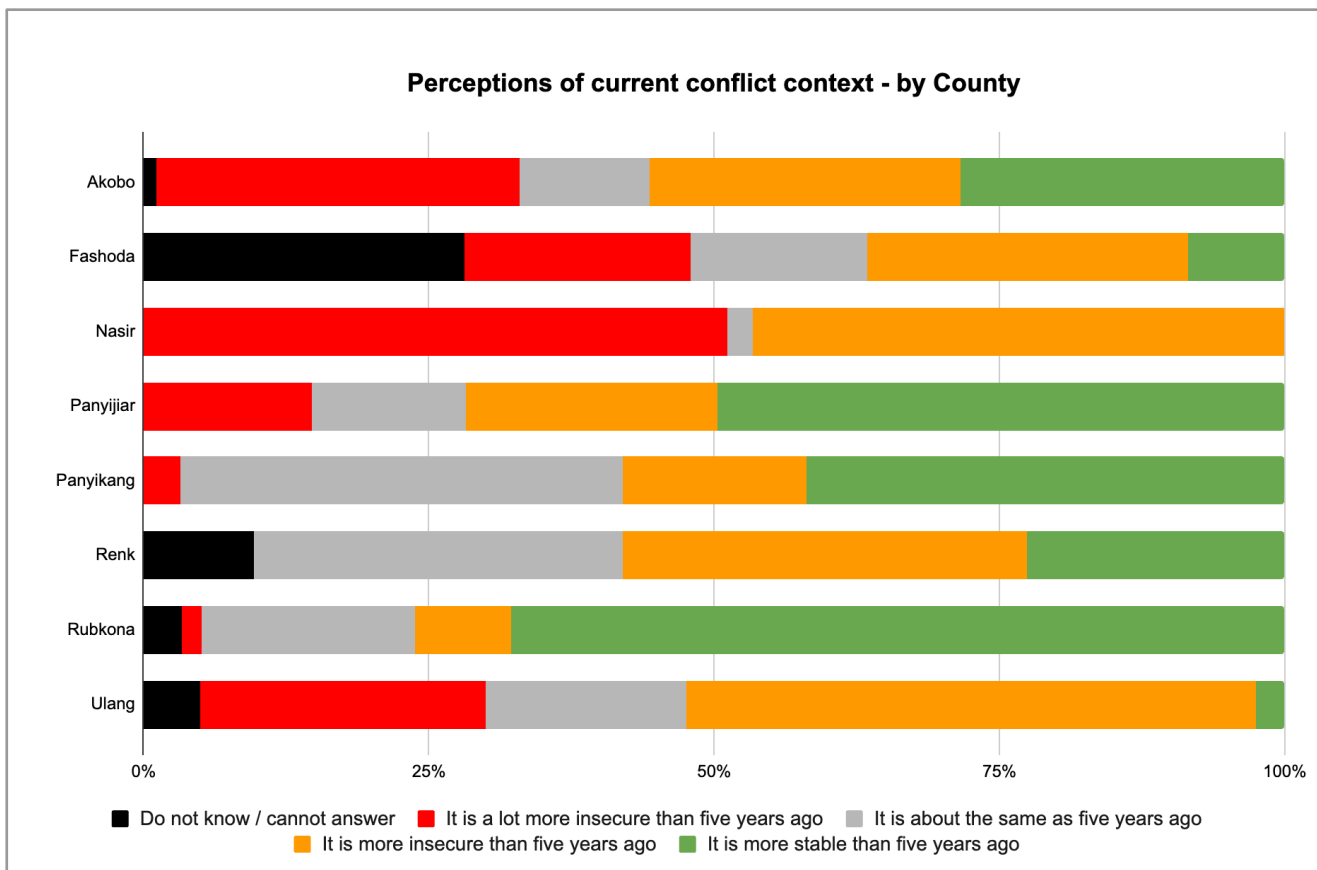


Figure 11. Surveyed respondents’ perceptions of levels of security in daily life today, as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by County [n=542].

When the same survey question data is disaggregated by employment type (Figure 12), cattle keepers appear to hold the most negative perceptions of daily life, presumably reflecting the triple challenge they face in terms of climate change (flooding, drought), land disputes, and cattle raiding, as mentioned across the majority of FGDs and KIIs in this evaluation.

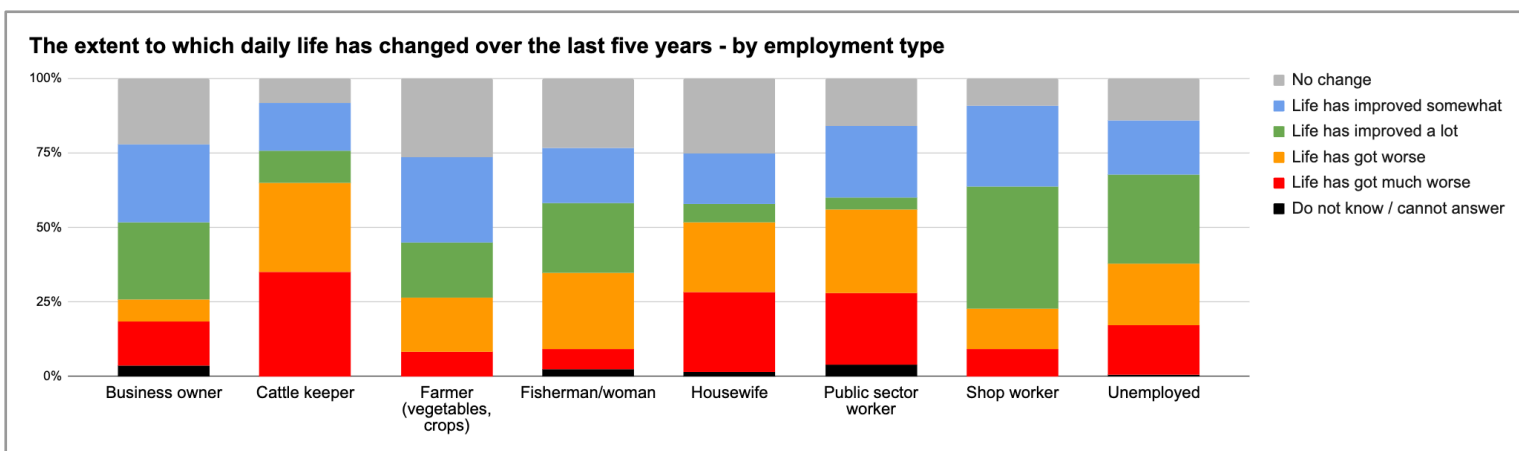


Figure 12. Surveyed respondents’ perceptions of daily life as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by employment type [n=542].

When perceptions of security are disaggregated by residential status (Figure 13), they show the host community and returnees exhibit the most concerned perceptions, which may reflect their longer-term commitment to where they live (whereas IDPs and Refugees may represent a more ephemeral cohort, geographically).

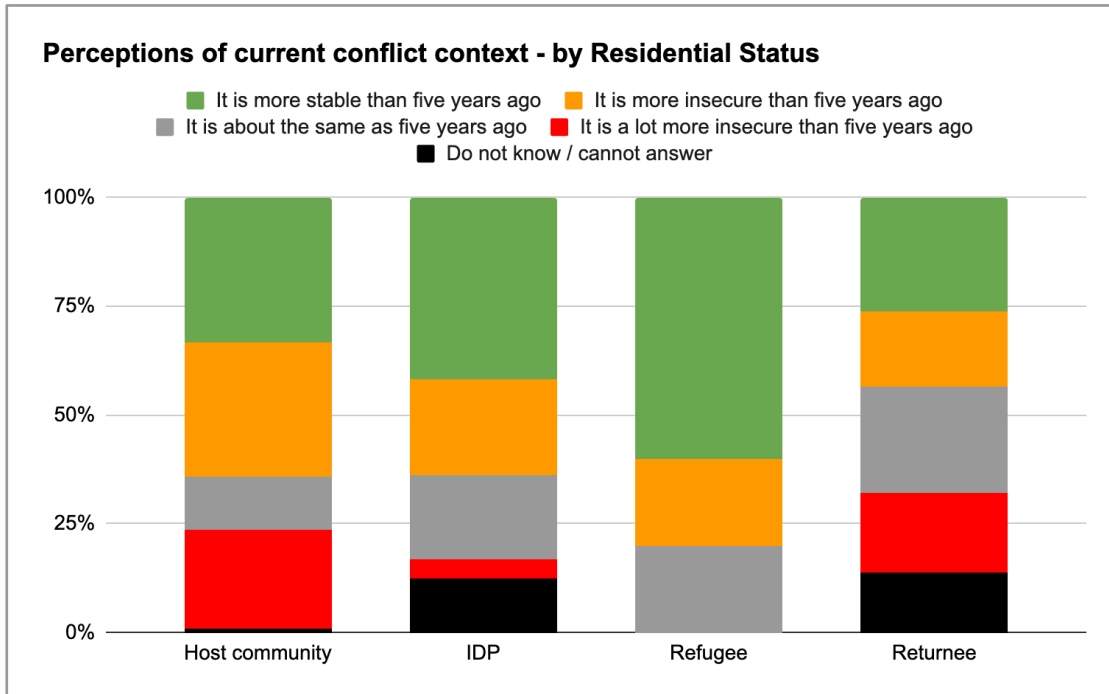


Figure 13. Surveyed respondents' perceptions of daily life as compared to five years ago - disaggregated by residential status [n=542].

When the same surveyed respondents were asked about the likelihood of conflict breaking out over the next 1-2 years (Figure 14), those based in Akobo (60%), Fashoda (56%), Rubkona (48%), and Ulang (42%) held the most concerned views.

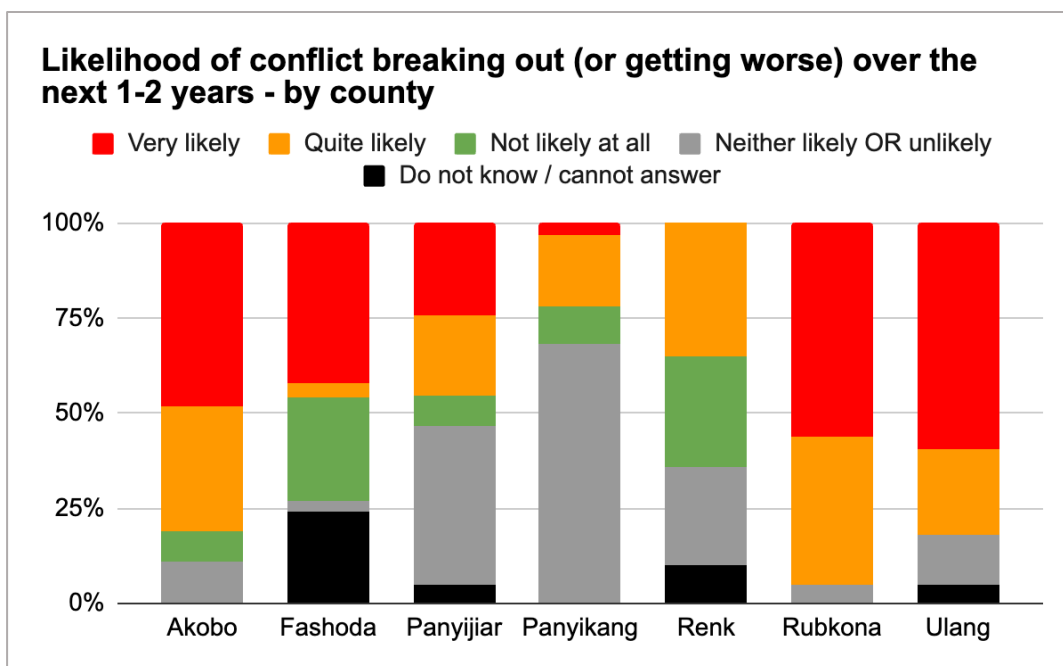


Figure 14. Surveyed respondents’ perceptions around the likelihood of greater conflict breaking out in the next 1-2 years - disaggregated by County [n=542]².

Fashoda and Panyikang

With regard to the situation in Fashoda and Panyikang, it is clear that both counties are grappling with acute instability and humanitarian challenges.

Fashoda has experienced recurring violence, including intercommunal clashes and attacks by armed groups. Notably, in late 2022, the county witnessed significant insecurity, leading to civilian casualties and mass displacements. While there have been efforts to stabilize the area, including military interventions, the situation remains fragile, with many displaced individuals yet to return to their homes.

Panyikang faces severe humanitarian conditions, with media reports (April 2025) indicating a 'catastrophic' level of need. The county has suffered from high mortality rates and limited access to essential services. Security concerns have led to the suspension of humanitarian operations, further exacerbating the plight of the local population.

3.1.2 By county

Ulang: The situation in Ulang has worsened considerably over the past five years, with food insecurity exacerbating the already fragile environment, and acute political tensions, reflecting a stark absence of political will and authority to address the root causes of conflict, leading to widespread revenge killings, inter-communal violence, and the proliferation of armed groups and youth factions that continue to fuel instability in the region.

² N.B., survey data collection in Nasir was cancelled due to outbreak of conflict in March 2025.



Renk: While Renk has seen improvements and is now at a medium risk of conflict, underlying concerns about ethnic tribalism and cattle raiding persist, and there is ongoing concern that the political and tribal agendas of local leaders and political elites could destabilise the fragile peace, resulting in increased tensions between rival groups and the risk of renewed violence.

Fashoda: Fashoda's situation remains largely unchanged, with food insecurity continuing to plague the population, and tribal disputes combined with political manipulation playing a significant role in worsening the region's stability, leading to widespread conflict risks as political groups and armed factions exploit these tensions to further their own agendas.

Nasir: Nasir has experienced a severe deterioration in security, culminating in the outbreak of open conflict between the White Army and the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) in March 2025, with deep political tensions, a lack of effective governance, and the mobilisation of armed youth all contributing to the high likelihood of further escalation in the region.

Panyikang: While there is relative security in Panyikang, the county is facing increasing inter-communal grievances fueled by food insecurity, growing ownership of firearms among youth, and climate change, which together create a volatile environment where long-standing tribalism and a lack of effective governance could lead to further violence and instability.

Rubkona: Although Rubkona has seen some improvements due to the peace agreement in 2018, the situation remains precarious, with the county facing recurring communal violence, cattle raiding, and food insecurity that continue to undermine socio-economic development, leaving the region in a fragile state where the potential for conflict resurgence remains high.

Panyijiar: The situation in Panyijiar is relatively unchanged, with the ongoing challenges of unemployment, the impacts of climate change, and deep-rooted tribalism contributing to food insecurity and displacement, while political tensions and revenge killings between the Nuer, Dinka, and Shilluk ethnic groups continue to strain the peace and threaten the region's stability.

Akobo: Akobo's security situation has worsened significantly, with a combination of political tensions, tribal disputes, widespread cattle raiding, and the erosion of the 2018 peace agreement, along with the increased availability of weapons, all contributing to the rapid deterioration of peace and the rise of armed groups and local leaders who continue to fuel the ongoing conflict.

3.2 Root causes, triggers, and dynamics of conflict

Regardless of differing local contexts as present in each payam, county, and state, there are shared commonalities that consistently appear across all eight focus counties in this study, regarding the root causes, triggers, and dynamics of conflict. The diagram below (Figure 15) presents a summarised analysis at the macro-level, and demonstrates the connections between background factors, causal factors, causal events, conflict, and finally, the effects of conflict. The challenge with the latter is that the effects are such that they feed back into the loop and represent a set of background factors that can all too easily feed into ongoing conflict.



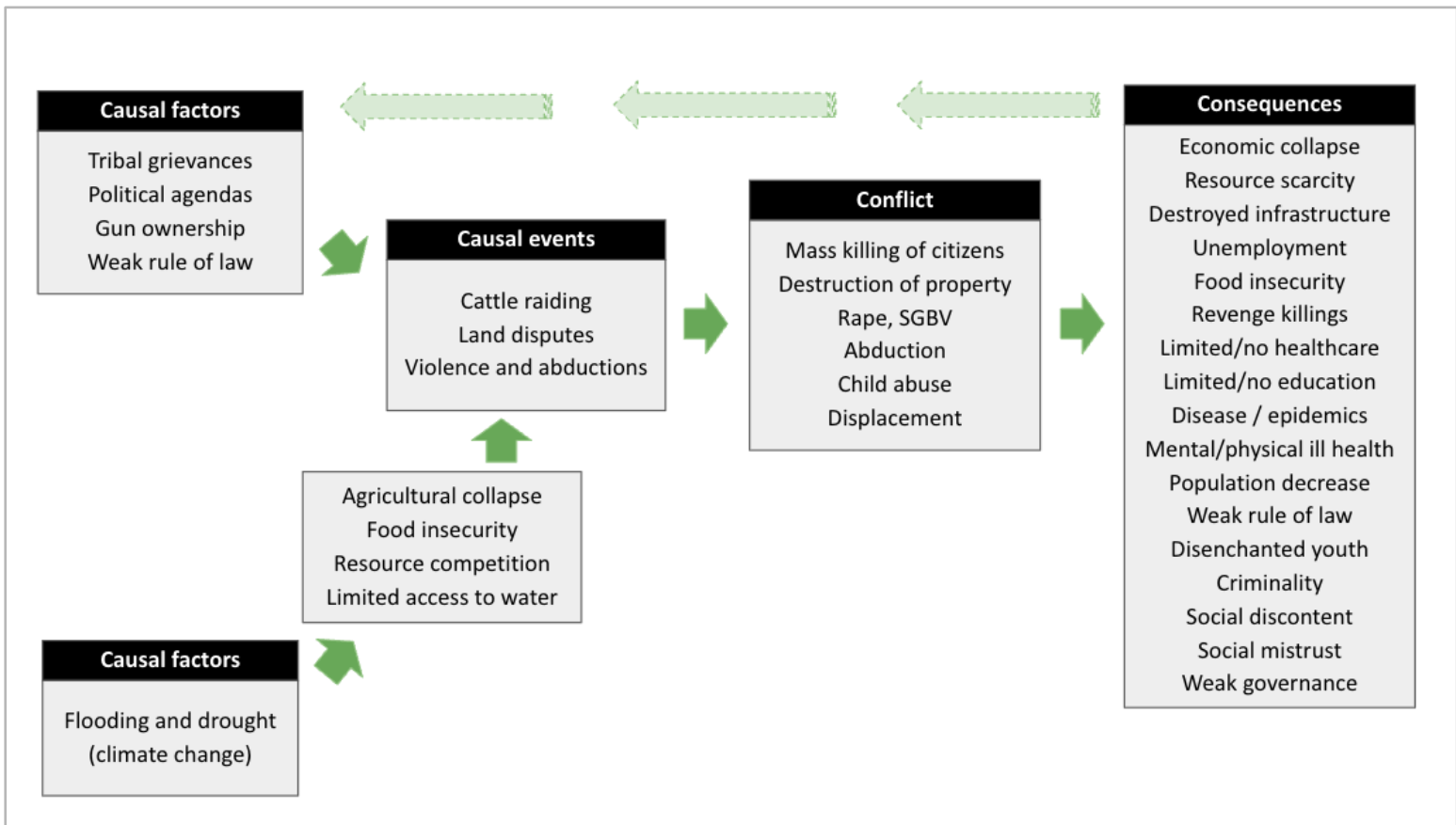


Figure 15. Dimensions of conflict analysis.

The root causes, triggers and dynamics of conflict per country are analysed and presented below:

Ulang

Root causes: Political tensions, food insecurity, weak governance, armed youth, and inter-communal violence.
 Ulang's root causes are driven primarily by food insecurity and a deep breakdown in political authority, where the lack of formal governance structures has allowed revenge killings and cycles of inter-communal violence to flourish unchecked, especially as armed youth and informal militias increasingly fill the power vacuum with destabilising force.

Renk

Root causes: Tribalism, cattle raiding, political agendas.
 Although Renk has experienced some improvements in the last five years previous, the underlying causes of conflict remain embedded in ethnic divisions and politically driven tribalism, where political and local leaders exploit identity lines to mobilise communities, manipulate grievances, and engage in cattle raiding that threatens to undo the recent gains in peace and security.

Fashoda

Root causes: Political manipulation, food insecurity, tribal disputes.



Fashoda continues to face the same structural challenges as before, with high levels of food insecurity placing pressure on local livelihoods, while tribal rivalries and politically motivated armed groups perpetuate instability by taking advantage of resource scarcity and historical grievances to pursue narrow political interests.

Nasir

Root causes: Political tensions, youth militarisation, weak governance.

Nasir's conflict is rooted in unresolved political rivalries and the militarisation of youth, where the lack of a functional governing system has allowed armed factions like the White Army and national military forces to dominate the security landscape, escalating tensions into open conflict and diminishing opportunities for peacebuilding.

Panyikang

Root causes: Tribalism, climate change, gun ownership, food insecurity.

In Panyikang, increasing tribal divisions, worsened by climate-related displacement and food shortages, have coincided with the growing availability of firearms among youth, creating a highly combustible environment where grievances often escalate into violence due to weak disarmament and limited conflict resolution capacity.

Rubkona

Root causes: Food insecurity, communal violence, cattle raiding.

Although Rubkona has enjoyed relative peace under the 2018 agreement, long-standing issues such as chronic food insecurity, land-related disputes, and repeated incidents of cattle raiding continue to drive communal violence, undermining development efforts and fostering resentment among already vulnerable populations.

Panyijiar

Root causes: Climate change, unemployment, tribalism, political tensions.

The situation in Panyijiar remains tense as environmental stress from flooding and droughts has deepened food insecurity, while limited economic opportunities and high unemployment feed into growing tribalism and politically charged narratives that exploit ethnic divisions and further entrench cycles of conflict and displacement.

Akobo

Root causes: Tribalism, cattle raiding, political tension, gun proliferation.

Akobo's decline into instability has been fuelled by the convergence of tribal hostilities, armed cattle raids, and the political fragmentation of the region, all exacerbated by widespread gun ownership and the erosion of peace agreements, allowing local leaders and armed groups to operate with near-impunity and sustain violent competition for power and resources.

3.2.1 Background factors

Of the predefined factor categories that make conflict more likely, and as presented to surveyed respondents (Figure 16), five key factors are evident across 50%+ of respondents: food insecurity, tribal differences, gun



ownership, unemployment, and climate change. As the above diagram suggests (Figure 15), there are connections between many of the factors and events identified across all eight counties, for example:

- Climate change leads to drought / flooding, which affects agriculture, which affects food security, which leads to displacement of people, land disputes, cattle raiding, and widespread conflict.
- The combination of political agendas, tribal differences, and land disputes, and ownership of weapons means young men are able to commit lethal violence, violent acts lead to revenge killings, revenge killings prompt further revenge killings, all of which can trigger widespread conflict.

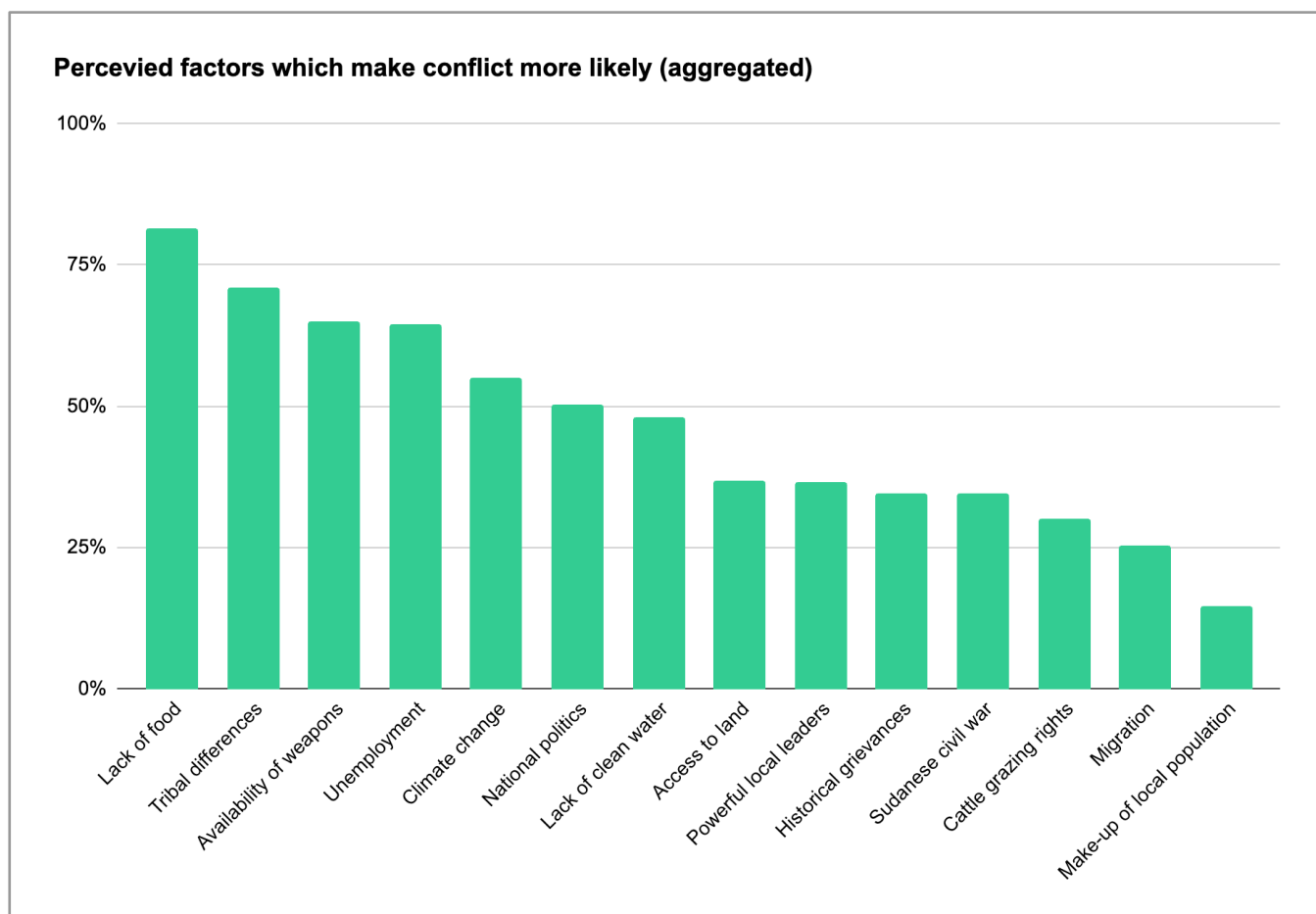


Figure 16. Factors considered as contributing to an increased likelihood of conflict [n=542].

When asked to consider those factors that have most often fuelled the occurrence of violent conflict over the previous five years, food insecurity is the most widely recognised factor across all eight counties (Figure 17). This is backed up by the qualitative interviews, where respondents draw connections between climate change events (especially flooding), land disputes, and displaced populations of people, all of which contribute toward food insecurity. Other identified factors include ongoing communal violence, unemployment, tribal tensions, and the availability of weapons (particularly for youth).

“The greatest threat is guns in the hand of civilians”



[KII, External Stakeholder, Private Sector, Male, Panyikang, Upper Nile]

Factors fuelling the occurrence of violent conflict over the last five years (aggregated)

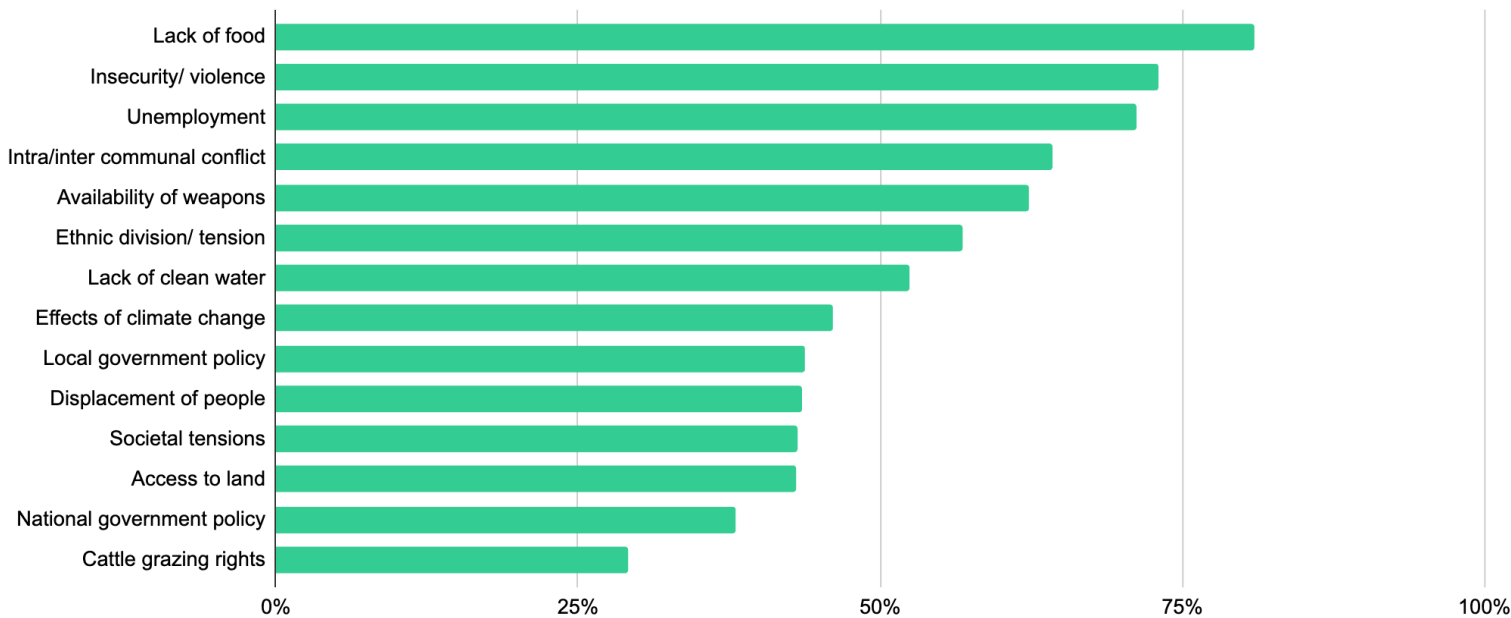


Figure 17. Respondents' perceptions of factors fueling the occurrence of conflict over the previous five years [n=542].

When the same response data is disaggregated by county (Figure 18), the following nuances can be observed:

- Ethnic tensions are a key factor in Renk (97%).
- Food insecurity is a key factor in Ulang (95%) and Fashoda (93%).
- Inter-communal conflict is a key factor in Panyikang (94%).
- Disputed cattle grazing rights are *not* a key conflict factor in Renk (3%) and Fashoda (8%).

Factors fuelling the occurrence of violent conflict over the last five years - by County

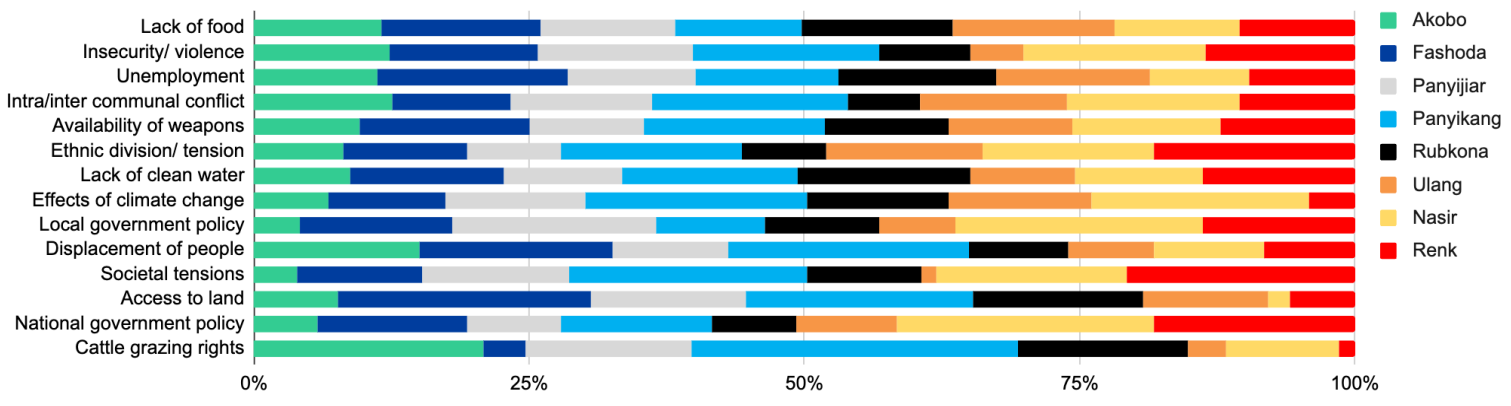


Figure 18. Factors fueling the occurrence of violent conflict - by county [n=542].



3.2.2 Influential actors

Regarding actors in the Upper Nile region who are perceived as being influential in terms of conflict breaking out - or not - the most considered across all eight focus counties include local government, youth, local leaders, national government, and the national army (Figure 19). KII and FGD discussions added extra nuance to the role these top five identified actors play, chief among them being that they are all predominantly male in gender. The national government is viewed as having their own political agenda, and this is tied up with the very formation of South Sudan (2011), and the legacy of the civil war (2013-20). In this sense, the national government is viewed as playing a powerful role in activating communities at all levels across South Sudan, in terms of playing to various aspects of government focus and policy. The national army is viewed as the visible power of the national government, and can directly intervene at any level (state, county, payam), with a range of consequences.

“Government needs to step up now and provide effective security in the GUN region”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Private Sector, Fashoda, Upper Nile]

“Youth and women are against the government, because the government has not been doing its task.”

[FGD, Host Community, Adult Males 39-60yo, Rubkona, Unity]

Local government reflects those local level representations of officially recognised government institutions, who will have various connections with national political parties and organisations. In the context of discussion around conflict, ‘Youth’ are widely understood to mean young men, and are viewed both negatively and positively, depending upon the role they have played locally. Those who view them positively view them as keen to create a better future and to bring an end to repeating cycles of violence, whereas those who view them negatively are concerned they can easily be activated and mobilised by other more powerful actors (political figures, local leaders). Ultimately, all respondents, youth are viewed as an energetic, dynamic, and powerful cohort, who can bring about change when activated.

The majority of respondents, especially in rural areas, know their local leader, and so they are inevitably considered as holding influence at the payam level, in terms of their ability to voice opinions and mobilise communities.

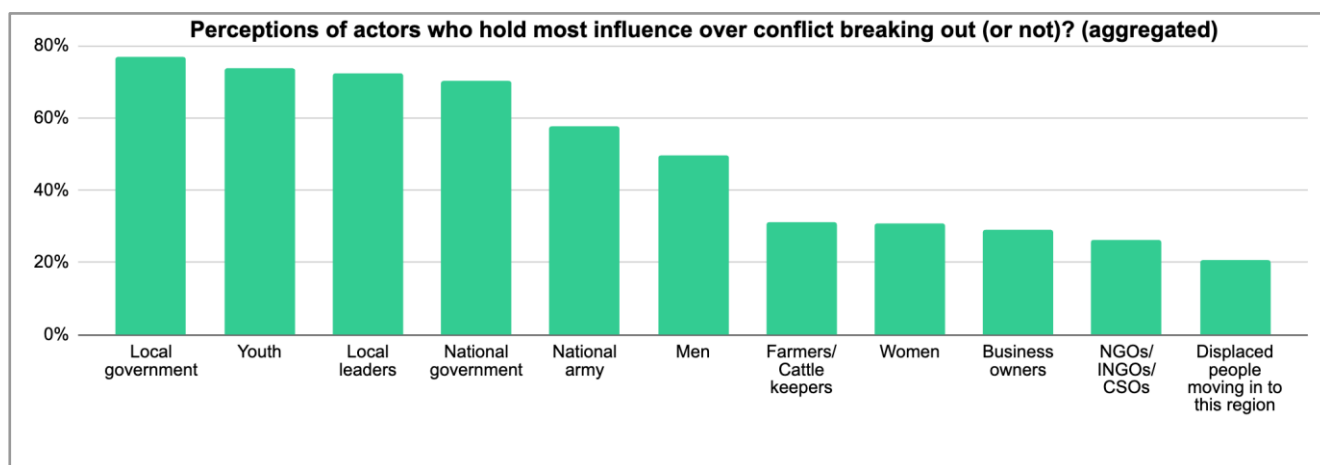




Figure 19. Respondents' perceptions of actors who hold most influence in whether conflict breaks out or not [n=542].

As well as being of male gender, it is also evident that those actors who are viewed as key protagonists in conflict are holders of power - both financial, legal, and physical. These actors in particular include: national army, armed groups, national government, local leaders, and political leaders. For many local communities, they are (negatively) viewed as benefiting in some way from conflict.

"The beneficiaries of conflicts are the armed youth, cattle raiders, politicians"
[FGD, Host Community, Female Youth, 15-20yo, Rubkona, Unity]

When responses to the same question are disaggregated by county (Figure 20), there are some aspects worth noting:

- Farmers/ cattle keepers as a cohort are viewed as an influential peacebuilding cohort in Fashoda county.
- Business owners as a cohort are viewed as the most influential peacebuilding cohort in Fashoda county.
- Women as a cohort are viewed as the most influential peacebuilding cohort in Rubkona county.
- Ulang respondents have difficulty identifying actors who can be influential in preventing the outbreak of conflict.
- Women are viewed as the least influential social group in Nasir regarding their ability to reduce the likelihood of conflict.
- In Renk, farmers/ cattle keepers are regarded as the most influential social group in reducing the likelihood of conflict.

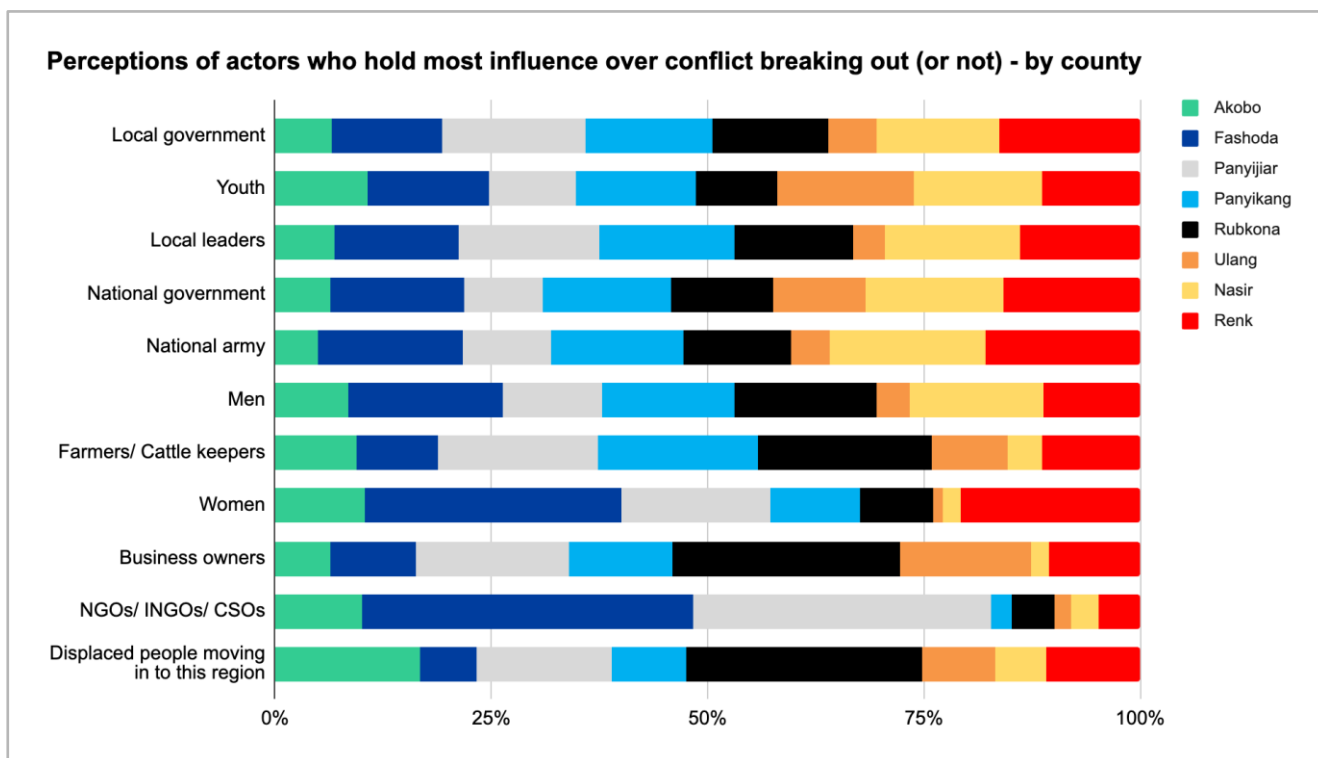


Figure 20. Respondents' perceptions of actors who hold most influence in whether conflict breaks out - by county [n=542].



3.2.3 Summary of current context and root causes

The table below summarises the recent/ current conflict context in the eight counties, and the factors and actors involved.

County	Now vs. 5 years ago	Conflict likelihood	Key conflict factors	Key conflict actors	Comments
Ulang	Much worse	High	Political tensions. Food insecurity.	National army. Youth. Armed groups.	Characterised by a lack of political will and authority, revenge killings, and Inter-communal violence.
Renk	Better	Medium	Tribalism. Cattle raiding.	Political leaders. Local leaders.	While the situation is stable, concern remains that political and tribal agendas can destabilise.
Fashoda	Similar	Medium	Political tensions. Food insecurity.	National army. Political groups. Armed groups.	Widespread accounts of food insecurity, tribal disputes, political agendas being played out.
Nasir	Much worse	High	Political tensions.	Political leaders. National army. Youth.	Open conflict broke out in March 2025, between the White Army and SSPDF.
Panyikang	Similar	Medium	Tribalism. Food insecurity. Climate Change. Gun ownership.	Youth. Local leaders. National army.	While there is relative security, there is evidence of increasing inter-communal grievances, food insecurity, abductions, cattle raiding, and youth ownership of guns.
Rubkona	Better	High	Cattle raiding. Food insecurity.	National army. Land owners.	Relative peace, thanks to the 2018 agreement, yet fragile with repeated communal violence, and negative impact on socio-economic development; uncertain future, with signs of conflict resumption.
Panyijiar	Similar	Medium	Unemployment. Climate change. Tribalism. Political agendas. Revenge killing.	National army. Local leaders. Youth.	Climate change is leading to food insecurity and displacement; political tensions giving rise to tribalism (Nuer, Dinka, Shilluk).
Akobo	Much worse	High	Cattle raiding. Tribalism. Political tension. Gun ownership.	Armed groups. Tribal leaders. Political leaders.	Concern that the 2018 peace agreement is being eroded, through tribal disputes, resource competition, gun ownership.

Table 5. Dimensions of conflict analysis - by county.



By understanding causal factors, conflict triggers and their broad implications, the dynamics of the conflict can become clearer. These conflict drivers do not only affect the immediate communities involved but have ripple effects on the entire region, undermining long-term peace and stability. Addressing them requires multifaceted interventions that consider the root causes and the broader socio-political context, as summarised below:

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity exacerbates poverty and heightens vulnerability, especially among marginalized communities, and leads to competition for scarce resources, driving both inter-communal and intra-communal tensions. As livelihoods become more precarious, individuals are more likely to join armed groups or engage in conflict over access to resources like land or water. Food shortages can also lead to displacement, as people seek areas with better access to food, contributing to social instability and further exacerbating ethnic or tribal divides.

Cattle raiding

Cattle raiding, particularly in pastoralist communities, is often a traditional practice that has become highly militarized in South Sudan. It fuels cycles of revenge and retaliation, often resulting in violent clashes between tribes or clans. This destabilizes local communities, leading to loss of life, disruption of livelihoods (as cattle are a key asset), and increased displacement. The practice intensifies tribal rivalries, breeds mistrust, and can undermine any progress toward peacebuilding. Families and communities often become more isolated and distrustful of each other, making reconciliation efforts more difficult.

Political tensions

Political tensions, particularly when they involve competing ethnic or tribal groups, lead to widespread fear and insecurity among local populations. These tensions often result in violence and repression, as armed groups or government forces may target communities perceived as political opponents. This can lead to forced displacement, destruction of property, and loss of life. In regions where political tensions run high, the population may experience limited access to services (education, healthcare) and face an uncertain future, as political instability disrupts governance structures and resource distribution.

Tribalism

Tribalism deepens divides between communities, creating an “*Us vs. Them*” mentality that hinders social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts. It fuels discriminatory practices and can lead to violent ethnic clashes over resources, power, and territory. The marginalization of certain tribes or ethnic groups often results in cycles of resentment and conflict. This deepens social fragmentation, making it harder for national unity to form. It can also foster inequality in access to resources, which contributes to resentment and instability, particularly among youth and vulnerable groups who are more susceptible to recruitment by armed factions.

Climate change and environmental stress

Climate change exacerbates existing resource-based conflicts, particularly in areas dependent on agriculture or livestock. As droughts and flooding become more frequent, competition for arable land and water increases, leading to tensions between communities and across borders. Environmental stress accelerates migration, as people move in search of resources, creating new friction points. These movements can lead to overcrowded conditions in refugee camps, further straining local resources and infrastructure, and escalating conflicts between displaced populations and host communities.





Unemployment and lack of economic opportunities

High levels of unemployment and a lack of economic opportunities, particularly among youth, heighten frustration and can lead to increased vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups. When youth see no viable future through legitimate means, they may turn to violence or illegal activities as an alternative. This contributes to insecurity and instability in the region. Widespread unemployment can also weaken social fabric as people feel disconnected from their communities, contributing to greater social tension and unrest.

Revenge killings and historical grievances

Revenge killings perpetuate cycles of violence, making it difficult for communities to rebuild trust. These killings often target individuals or families in retaliation for past wrongs, deepening ethnic or clan-based divides. This perpetuates trauma within communities, making peacebuilding efforts more complex. Families and communities caught in these cycles of revenge suffer from the loss of loved ones, displacement, and the breakdown of social networks, which prevents them from moving forward.

Disputed grazing rights

Disputed grazing rights often lead to violent clashes between pastoralist groups, as access to land and water is crucial for livestock. These disputes not only result in loss of life and property but also disrupt livelihoods, especially in areas dependent on animal husbandry. The conflict may also trigger migration, as pastoralists seek more fertile areas, leading to overcrowding, competition for resources, and an increase in tensions with local farming communities. The wider population suffers from the collapse of local economies and the breakdown of communal relations.

3.3 Potential effects of conflict on the THRIVE programme

Overall, Participants of the Conflict Analysis felt that an outbreak of significant conflict would have devastating effects on everyone in that region, including the staff who are implementing peacebuilding programmes, such as THRIVE. In such a scenario, the programme would be forced to close, and staff to evacuate the region.

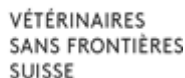
“You would see the evacuation of the state, and closure of the programme”

[FGD, Host Community, Female Youth, 15-20yo, Rubkona, Unity]

In discussing the previous (and in some cases, current) effects of conflict, local community respondents were well informed in describing the wide-ranging impact of conflict upon society, the environment, institutions, mental health, women, etc. In this sense, a programme such as THRIVE would also be impacted, as its activities would inevitably be closely engaged with local communities.

There is widespread consensus around who is typically most negatively affected by conflict - children, people with disabilities, elderly, and women (Figure 21). They are selected because they are recognised to be most vulnerable when communities are attacked, and less able to flee, and/or defend themselves. There are numerous accounts provided of abductions of both adults and children, and rape of women and girls.





“Women experience conflict uniquely For example, they get raped by the armed groups, taken out of school, forced into marriage, abducted.”

[FGD, Host Community, Female Youth, 15-20yo, Rubkona, Unity]

“Children, elderly people, and women, will be the worst affected because they are vulnerable and have no capacity to respond.”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Protection Officer, Male, Ulang, Upper Nile]

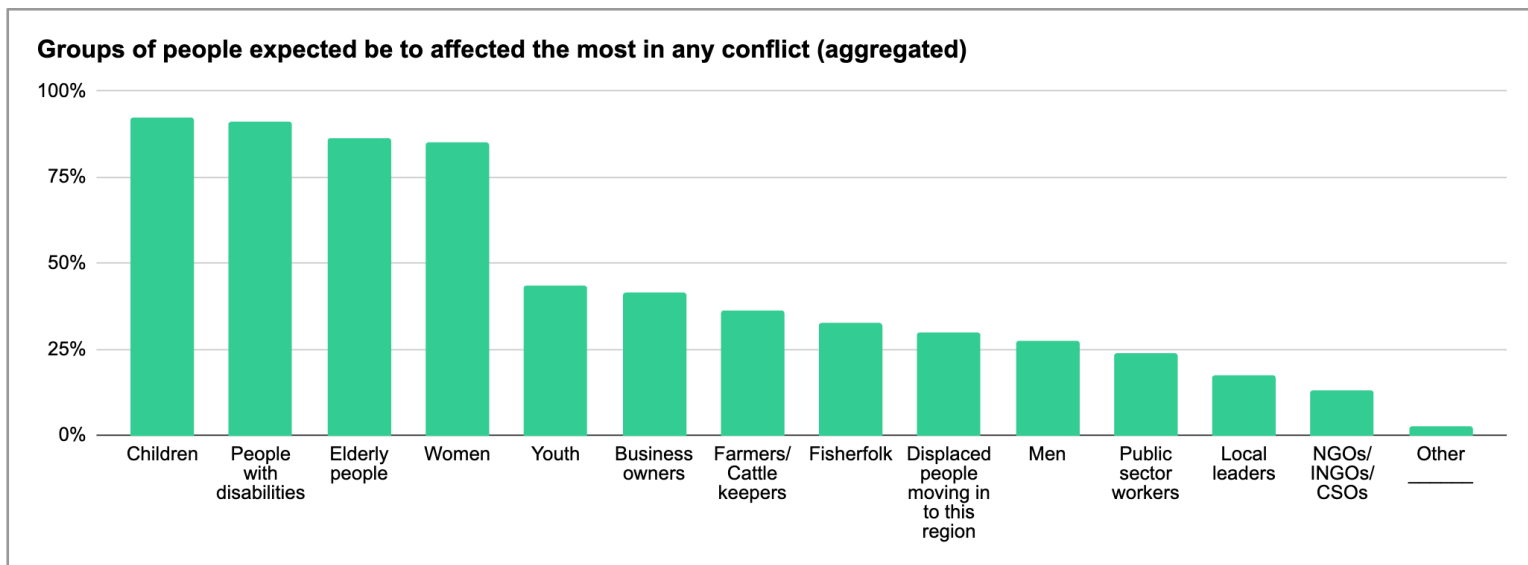


Figure 21. Respondents’ perceptions of societal groups expected to be most affected in a conflict scenario [n=542].

As well as incidences of rape and GBV, women and girls are also subjected to loss of livelihood, reduced (or zero) access to healthcare and education, and displacement, as consequences of conflict (Figure 22).

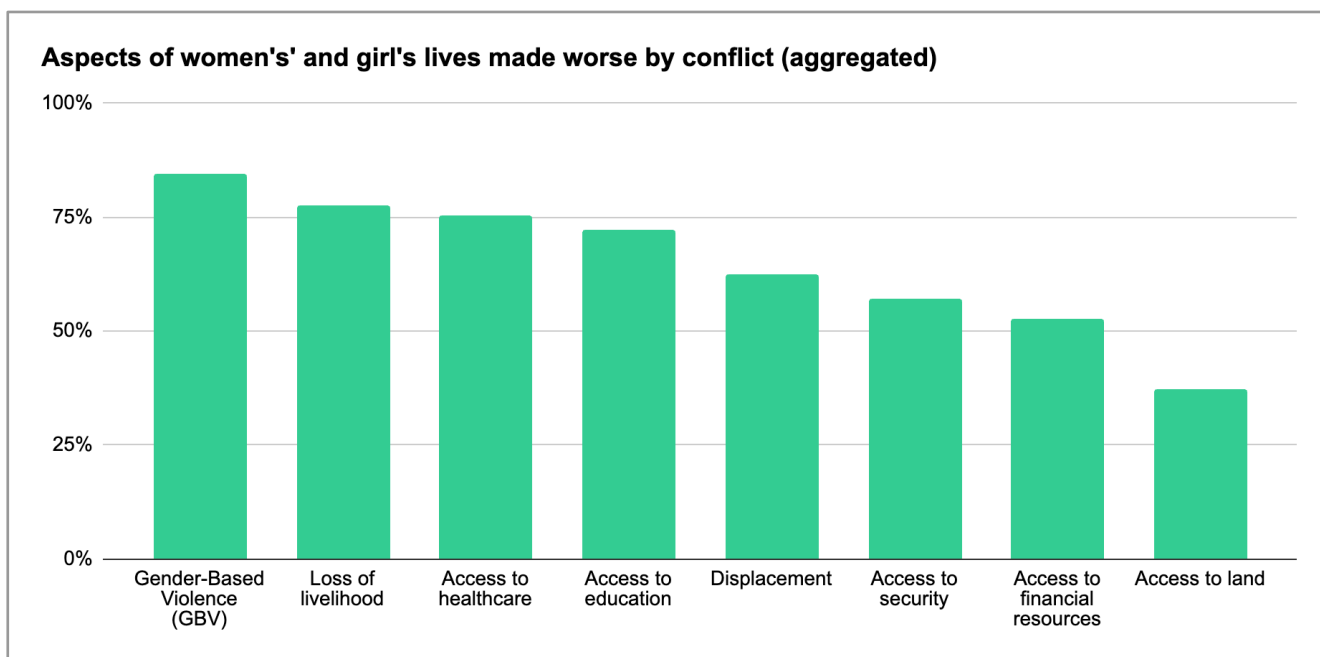


Figure 22. Respondents’ perceptions of aspects of women’s and girl’s lives typically made worse by conflict [n=542].



3.4 Programming approaches

Evaluation participants across the eight counties shared suggestions and considerations when designing and implementing new peacebuilding programmes (such as THRIVE). Despite the challenges experienced across communities, the majority of evaluation respondents retained optimism that future peacebuilding programmes can achieve some success, provided they are backed up with strong intent.

“While it will be challenging from the beginning, a well organised programme can eventually overcome an outbreak of conflict”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Private Sector, Fashoda, Upper Nile]

Respondents from Ulang and Panyijair appear to show higher levels of confidence in new peacebuilding efforts, while those from Fashoda are the least confident (Figure 23).

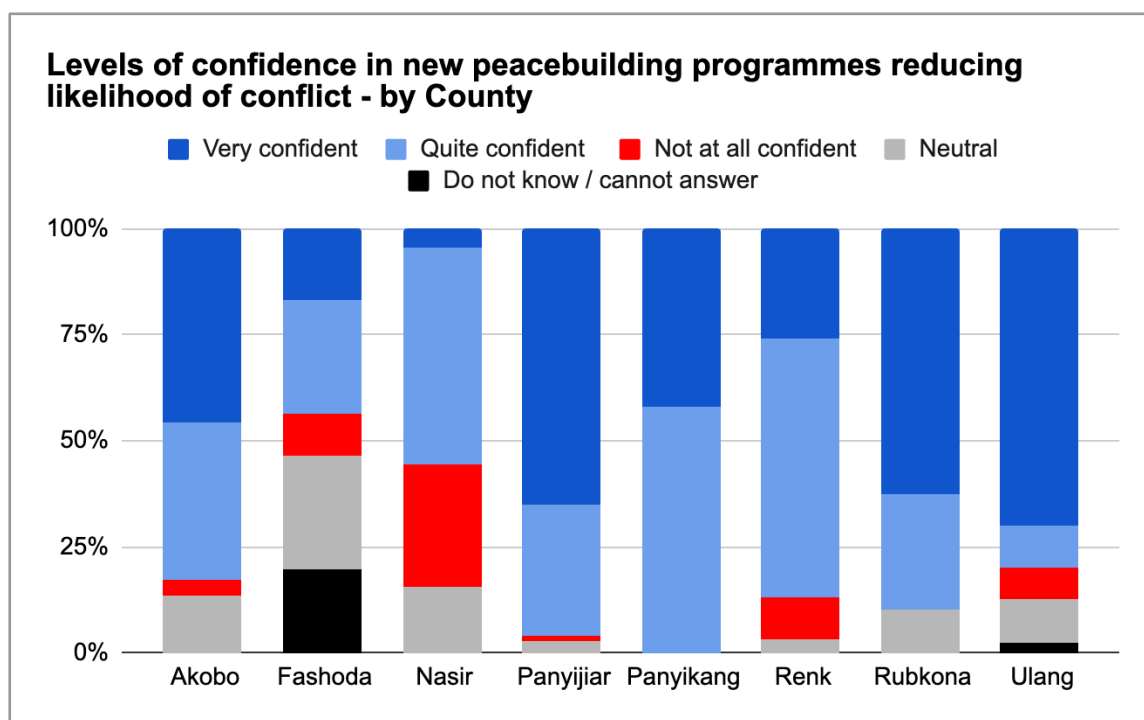


Figure 23. Respondents’ confidence in new peacebuilding programmes in their county [n=542].

3.4.1 Peacebuilding responsibility

In terms of who should take on the task for reducing the likelihood of future conflict (Figure 24), this is primarily viewed as the responsibility of official institutions - local government (79%), local leaders (76%), and national government (73%). They are suggested because conflict management should form a key aspect of their designated role, and they possess the authority to implement action. However, some feel the national

government is too far removed to fully understand local dimensions of conflict and would prefer locally based solutions to be the focus.

“The national government should not be directly involved in community dialogues, because they govern from too far away”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Local Government, Payinjiar, Unity]

It is worth noting, however, that youth (70%), ‘all of society’ (68%), and men (58%) subsequently feature as carrying some level of responsibility to reduce likelihood. Women, however, are not so widely viewed as playing a key role in this aspect (51%).

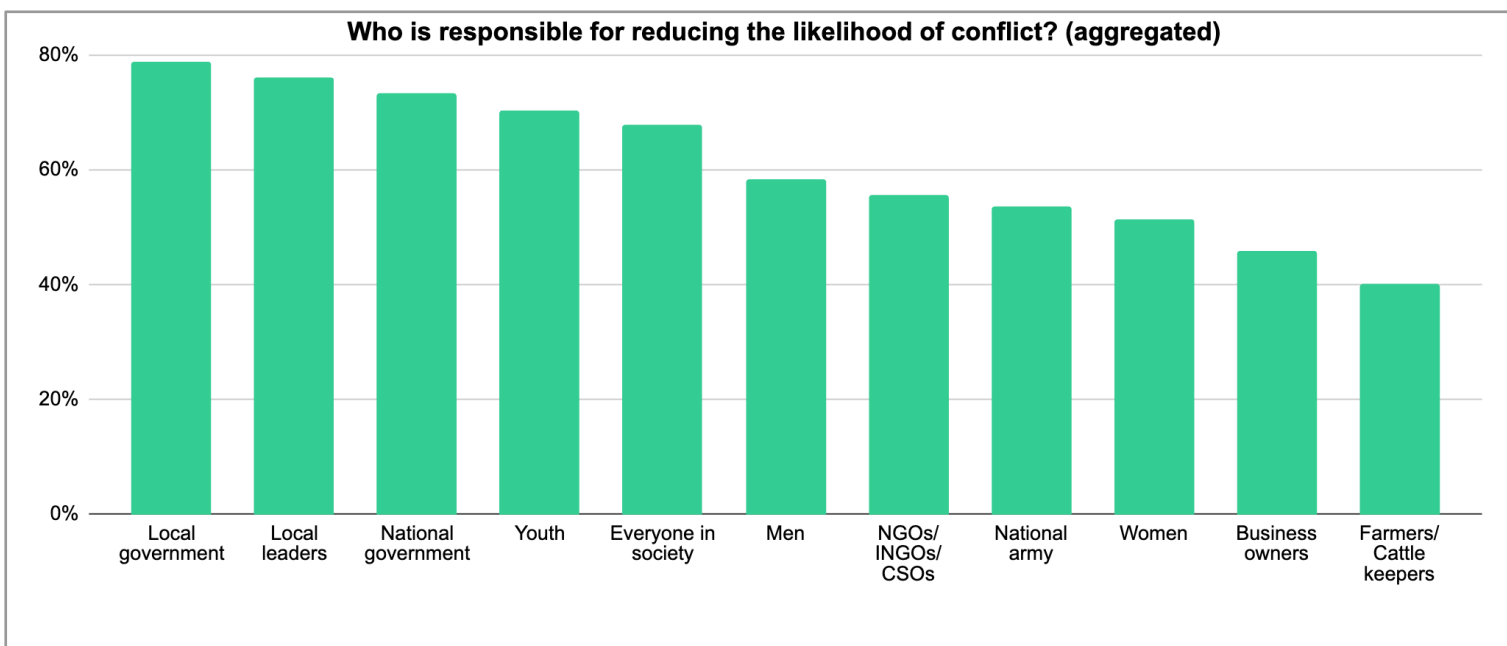


Figure 24. Respondents’ perceptions of actors who are responsible for conflict reduction [n=542].

When the data for Figure 24 (above) is disaggregated by county (Figure 25), the following nuances are observed:

- Women are most positively viewed as suitable for taking on peacebuilding responsibility in Ulang (90%), Fashoda (82%), and Renk (81%), and least positively viewed in Akobo (25%) and Rubkona (25%).
- The weakest support for the national army in taking on peacebuilding responsibility is on Akobo (13%).

In terms of who should be directly involved in new peacebuilding and social cohesion programmes, respondents appear to have favored local institutions (local leaders, youth, local government) and actors over national institutions and other organised groups (Figure 25). While youth are widely acknowledged as the future of society, and a dynamic and motivated cohort, this is often coupled with some concern as to where their energies are directed, with anxiety about them becoming caught up in land disputes, political agendas, tribal tensions, and revenge killings.



“The best opportunities for the THRIVE programme lie in leveraging the active participation of youth and women in peacebuilding initiatives, as their unique perspectives and experiences are crucial for fostering sustainable change”

[KII, Internal Stakeholder, VSF-Akobo, DRR and Peacebuilding Officer, Akobo, Jonglei]

“As a youth leader, I would like to advise my brothers and sisters not to involve themselves in conflict again”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Youth Leader, Local Government, Renk, Upper Nile]

Ultimately, the favouring of local actors reflects a widely held view among respondents that local actors (including adversaries) need to meet and engage in dialogue, as there is no other way for local issues to be worked through and resolved.

Actors who should be directly engaged in organised peace-building and social cohesion programmes (aggregated)

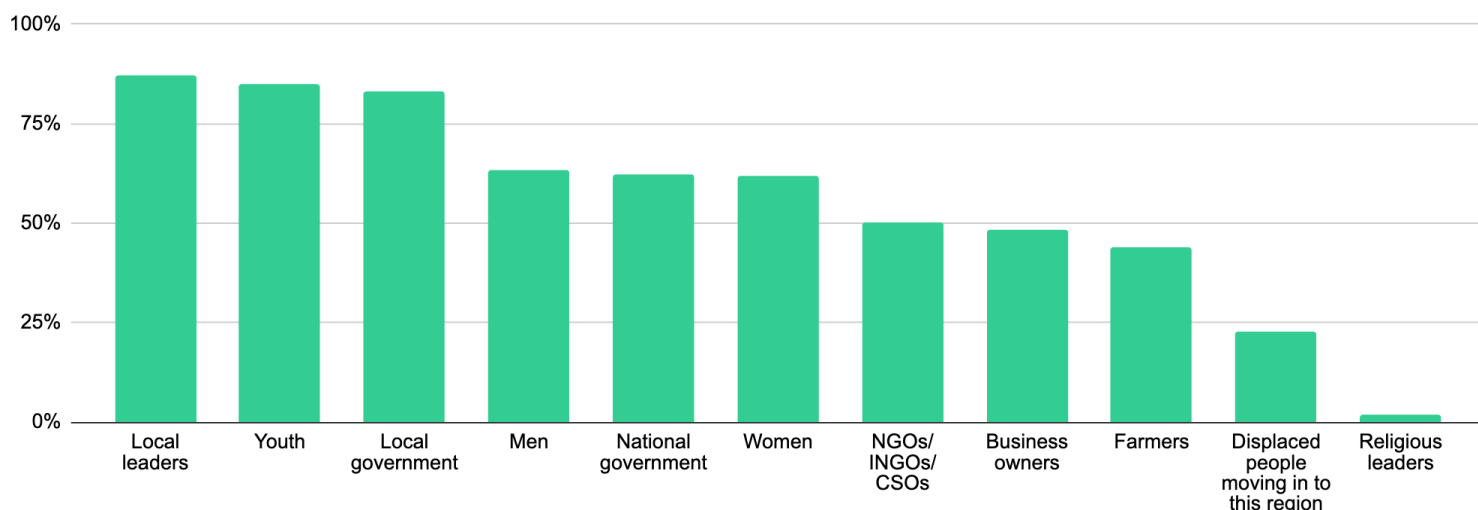


Figure 25. Respondents’ identification of actors who should be directly engaged in peacebuilding programs [n=542].

When proposed peacebuilding actors are disaggregated by county (Figure 26), the following variance can be seen:

- Involvement of local leaders is most supported in Nasir (98%) and Renk (97%).
- Involvement of youth is most supported in Renk (100%).
- Involvement of women is most supported in Panyikang (97%), and least in Nasir (9%).
- Involvement of NGOs/INGOs/CSOs is most supported in Fashoda (89%) and Nasir (89%), and least in Rubkona (8%).
- Involvement of business owners is most supported in Ulang (80%), and least in Nasir (7%).



Actors who should be directly engaged in organised peacebuilding and social cohesion programmes - by county

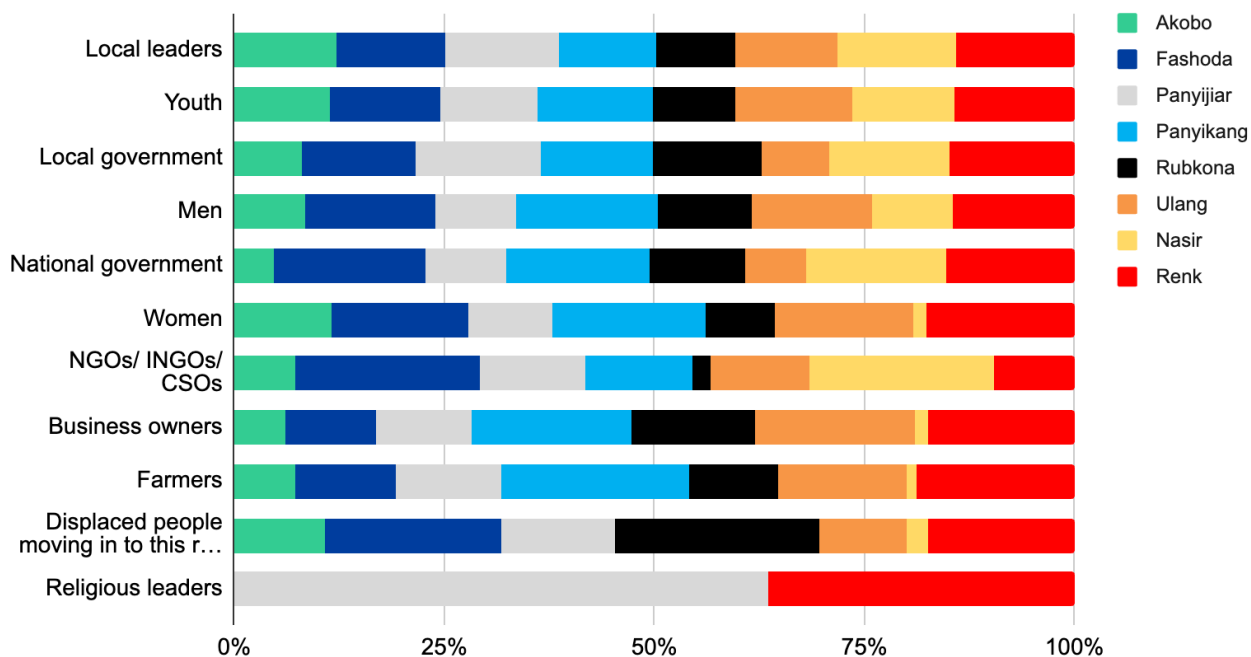


Figure 26. Identification of actors who should be directly engaged in peacebuilding programmes - by county [n=542].

Although levels of support for women in playing an active role in peacebuilding initiatives are mixed overall, when asked which areas they can engage in there is little differentiation - except for 'political processes', which is viewed as their weakest area of input (Figure 27). The most positive affirmations of women's active role in political processes (Figure 28) are found in Panyikang (87%), and the weakest are in Akobo (23%), Renk (26%), and Ulang (28%). These views likely reflect traditional views of women as playing broadly supportive roles at the community level, rather than actively engaged in power-politics which is viewed as the male preserve. For example, a number of comments were captured in KIIs and FGDs which, while acknowledging women's empathetic nature as a positive attribute, also stated that women can "prepare food and drink for the dialogue and peace conferences", hence downplaying their role to that of providing refreshments for the male attendees.

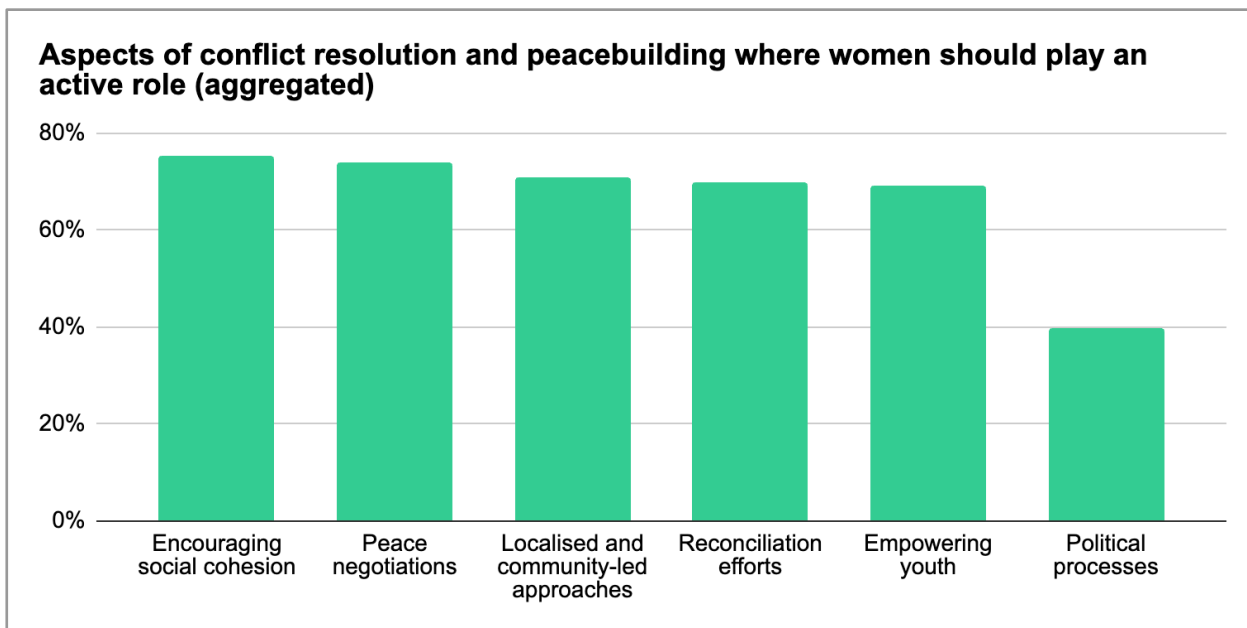


Figure 27. Identification of aspects of peacebuilding where women should play an active role [n=542].

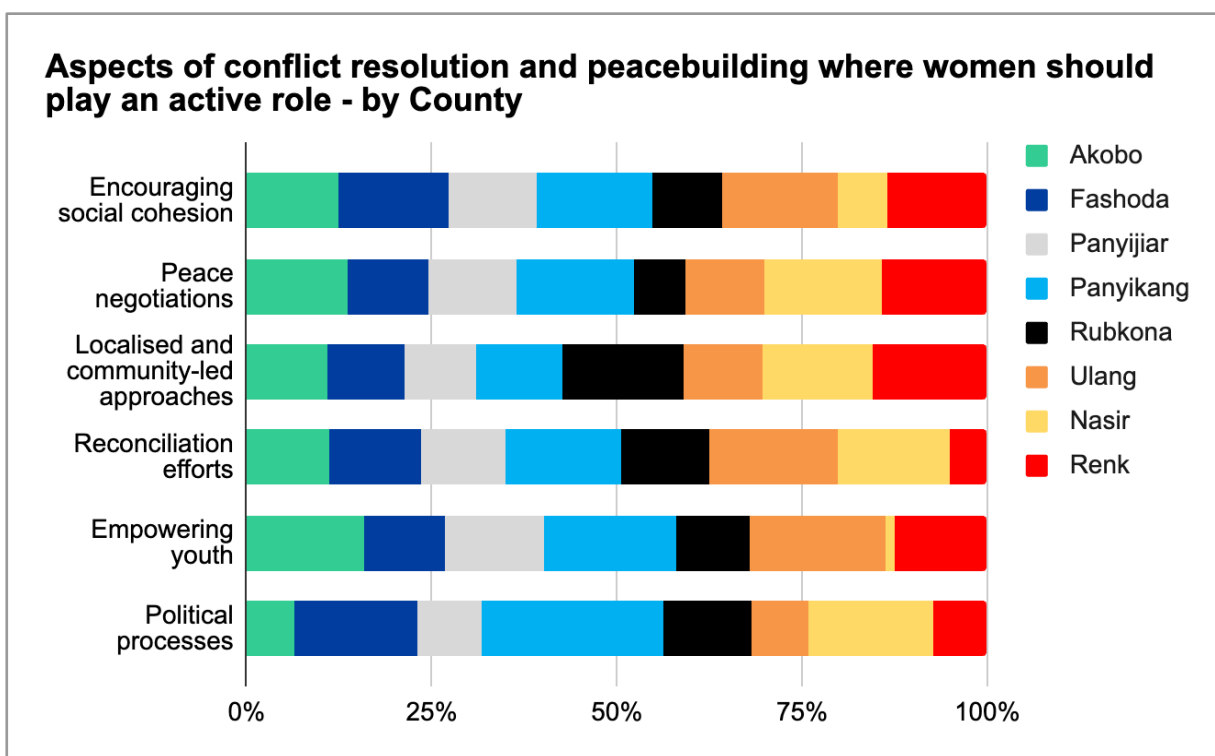


Figure 28. Identification of aspects of peacebuilding where women should play an active role - by county [n=542].

3.4.2 Peacebuilding activities

In terms of specific peacebuilding programme components and which are viewed as potentially more / less effective, there is broad support for all the response options provided in the survey (Figure 29).

Activities as organised by government/ NGOs which hold the most potential in reducing the likelihood of conflict (aggregated)

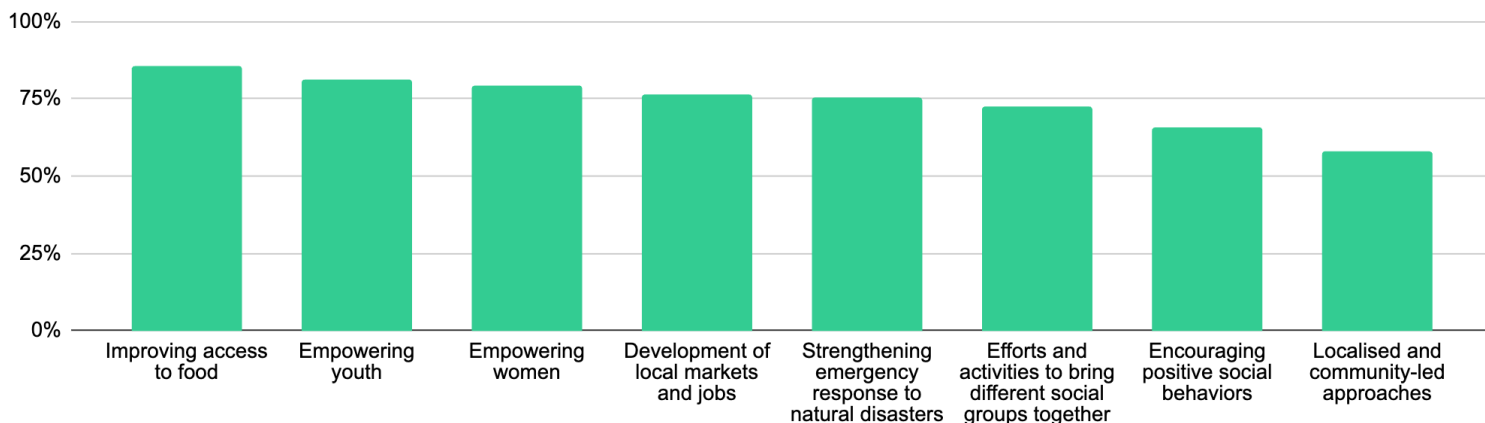


Figure 29. Government/ NGO peacebuilding activities which hold the most potential [n=542].

However, when disaggregated by county, there are some areas of variance worth noting (Figure 30):

- Empowering women is most strongly supported in Fashoda, Panyikang, and Renk (all 100%), and weakest in Panyijiar (65%).
- Empowering youth is most strongly supported in Fashoda and Panyikang (both 100%), and weakest in Panyijiar (68%).
- Development of local markets and jobs is most strongly supported in Panyikang (100%), Renk (100%), and Fashoda (99%), and weakest in Akobo (61%).
- Efforts and activities to bring different social groups together is most strongly supported in Panyikang (100%), and weakest in Panyijiar (57%).
- Localised and community-based approaches are most strongly supported in Fashoda (73%), and weakest in Panyijiar (47%).

Activities as organised by government/ NGOs which hold the most potential in reducing the likelihood of conflict - by County

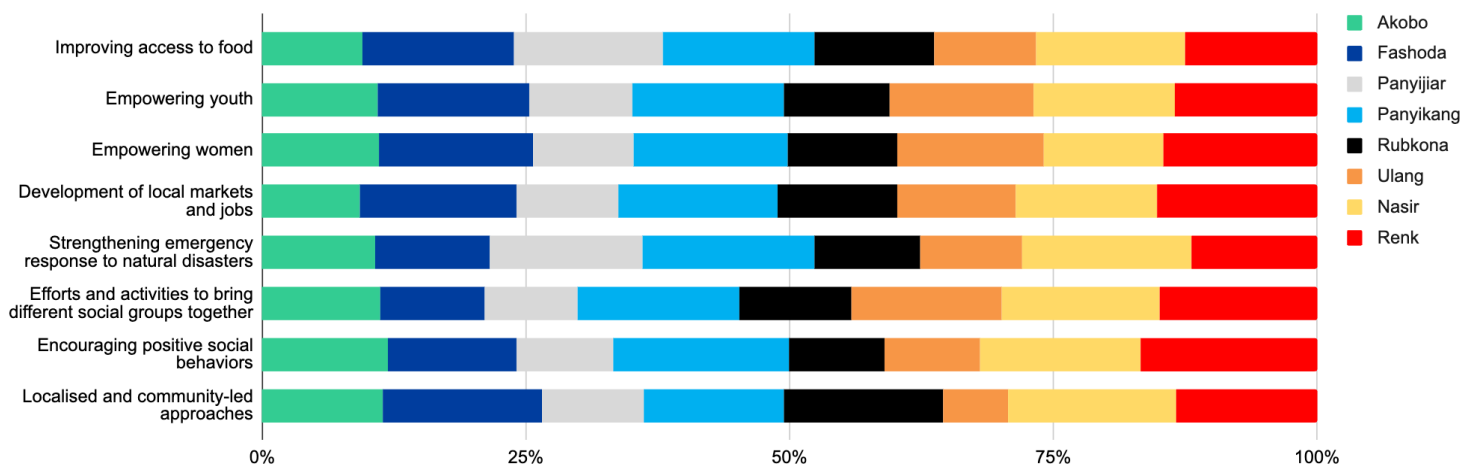


Figure 30. Government/ NGO peacebuilding activities which hold the most potential - by county [n=542].



With regards to those activities which respondents considered most urgently needed in any programme to reduce the likelihood of conflict (Figure 31), the most selected included improving access to food, and empowering women and youth, and closely followed by three other activities (social cohesion, market development, emergency response).

“Emergency response to natural disasters is effective in resolving conflict, because else it leaves innocent communities suffering in pain”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Private Sector, Male, Panyikang, Upper Nile]

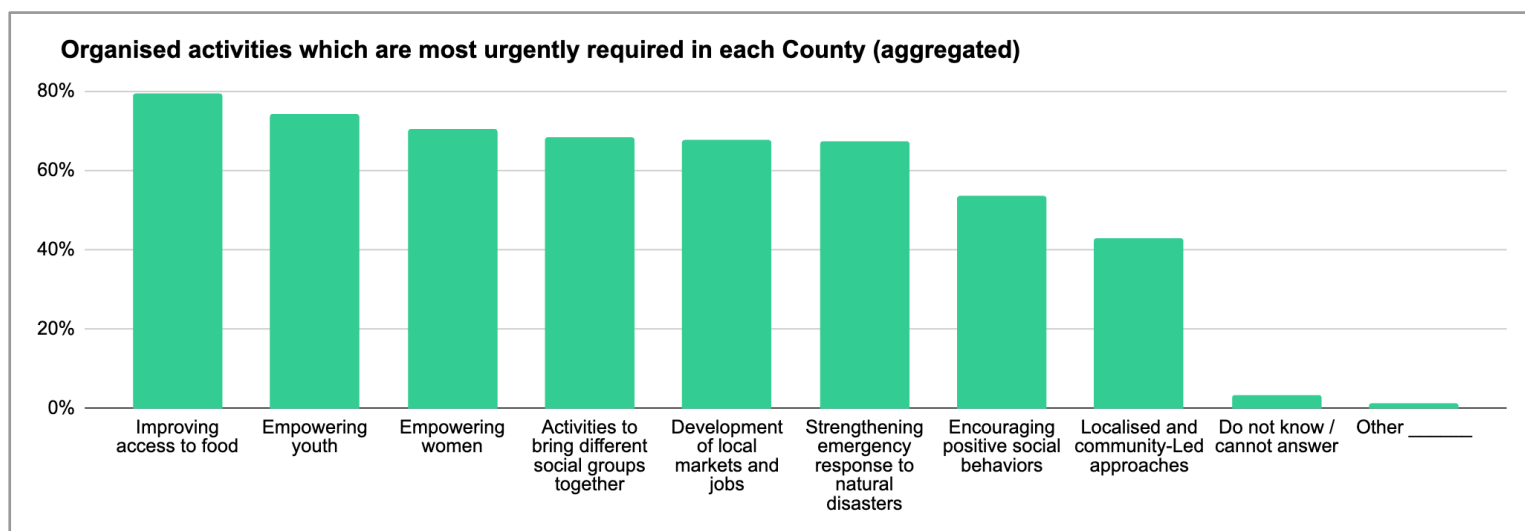


Figure 31. Peacebuilding activities which are most urgently required [n=542].

Economic development entails both improving the conditions for businesses to develop and flourish, and job creation for the local population, in particular youth. The rationale is that as the local economy improves and more people find work, levels of unemployment fall, poverty diminishes, people can afford food, and youth have more purpose and commitment to the community and are less likely to be drawn into local armed groups. A focus on economic development also creates opportunities for youth and women to play roles. Ultimately, economic development creates connections and provider-purchaser relations that can bind society together, and therefore weaken the drivers for conflict, as all will be affected.

“Market development can bring more activities that can accommodate more youth, and so the violence can reduce”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Local Government, Renk, Upper Nile]

“Business is the backbone of the nation. Business is what make youth to be independent and choose their way forward”

[KII, External Stakeholder, Private Sector, Nasir, Upper Nile]





When disaggregated by county, Fashoda has the highest level of positive responses overall (improving access to food: 100%, empowering youth: 100%, empowering women: 97%). and Nasir registers the lowest incidence of selection across all measures (Figure 32).

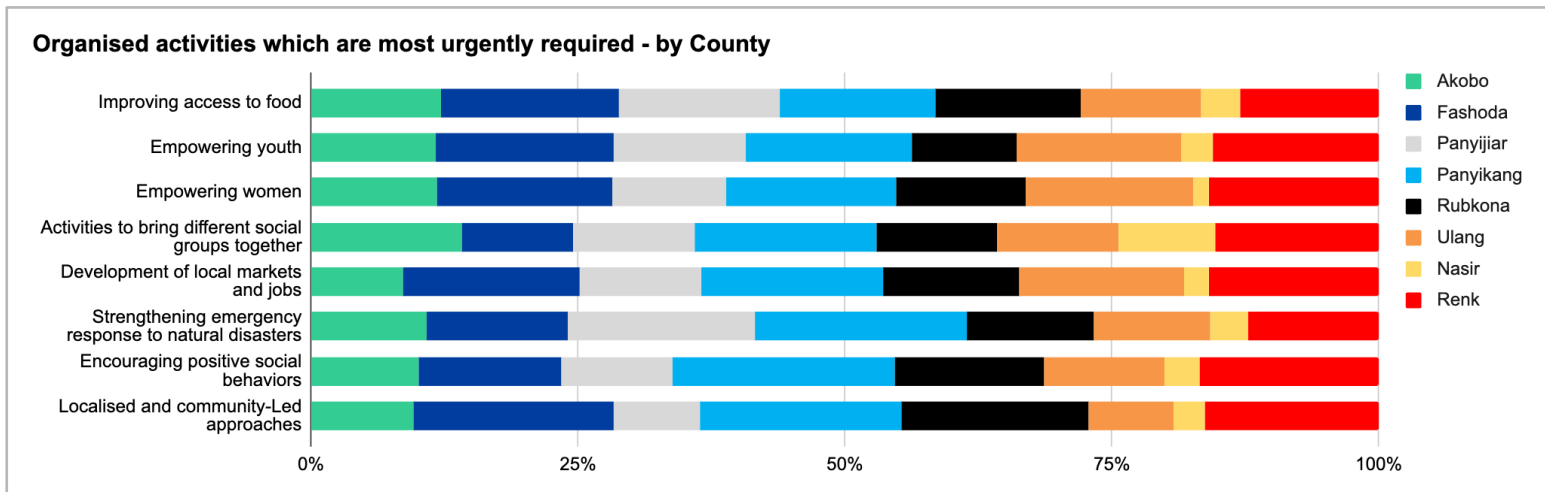


Figure 32. Peacebuilding activities which are most urgently required - by county [n=542].

3.4.3 Implications for THRIVE programming

Overall, there is good alignment between the findings of the conflict analysis and the current THRIVE Theory of Change (ToC), as summarised below (Table 6). However, it is worth noting that as the THRIVE programming approach focuses on longer-term causal factors rather than triggers for conflict, it is likely to be more relevant (and effective) for those counties (i.e., Panyijiar, Panyiklang, Renk) which are *not* on the verge of open conflict, rather than those which are closer to open conflict and where more urgent intervention is required (i.e., Nasir, Fashoda, Rubkona, Ulang, Akobo).

Theory of Change (by section)	Recommendations of ToC based upon conflict analysis findings
<p><i>"If markets in target agricultural systems critical to the target population are thriving, inclusive, diverse, competitive, and serve users..."</i></p>	<p>Positive correlation with findings Majority of respondents cite food insecurity and depressed local economy as key causal factors of conflict. In response, they suggest economic development and agricultural growth as key focuses for peacebuilding, and which ideally include youth and women.</p>
<p><i>"...and IF women and youth are economically empowered to access sustainable market-oriented livelihood opportunities within those systems, and their participation is valued by their communities..."</i></p>	<p>Positive correlation with findings An increased role for women is highlighted in the majority of collected data, and in particular with how they can contribute to, and lead, economic activity and the establishment of local businesses (e.g., micro-farming).</p>
<p><i>"...and IF communities dependent on those systems are able to mitigate, adapt to, and manage the effects of climate change and conflict shocks and stresses, and resolve conflicts peacefully..."</i></p>	<p>Positive correlation with findings Effects of flooding and drought lead to a range of negative outcomes. Respondents are acutely aware of the importance of strengthening emergency response mechanisms, and how these can alleviate the worst effects of climate change that otherwise</p>





	drive people towards conflict.
<i>"...THEN target households and communities will be more resilient, live in harmony, have improved economic and food security, and reduced need for humanitarian assistance."</i>	Positive correlation with findings Food security and economic development are key areas that respondents want to see improved, as this can make society more self-sufficient, resilient, and less reliant on external intervention.

Table 6. Theory of change assessed against findings.

Across all eight counties, respondents shared a range of approaches for peacebuilding, which they felt required support and implementation. Overall, there was a high degree of commonality across their suggestions in terms of types of approach, and the participants in these processes. The most commonly requested approach in FGDs with local communities was for establishing dialogue between factions, at all levels where this was considered appropriate. The rationale for this was that only through dialogue can the differences in agenda between opposing groups, ultimately, be worked through and resolved. There is also a desire to see such dialogue be well organised, comprehensive in scope, and conducted over a long-term time frame.

"First, promoting inclusive dialogue among key stakeholders - political leaders, tribal authorities, and community members - can foster understanding and address underlying grievances."

[KII, Internal Stakeholder, VSF-Akobo, DRR and Peacebuilding Officer, Akobo, Jonglei]

"When there is no dialogue, grievances can develop"

[KII, External Stakeholder, Youth Leader, Male, Fashoda, Upper Nile]

However, respondents were well aware that in such a complex and contested context, holding dialogue between adversaries would not be sufficient on its own. Respondents also proposed a number of other approaches that they felt would go some way to addressing some of the shortcomings, imbalances, grievances, and structural issues in the eight counties. The table below (Table 7) summarises an analysis of proposed approaches, and the various key attributes of each approach within a development programme context.

Approach	Key actors	Activities	Goal	Rationale
Dialogue.	NGOs/INGOs/CSOs. Local leaders. Cattle keepers. Youth leaders. Women leaders.	Establish local dialogue forums. Peace conferences. Land dispute committees. Police cattle raiding.	Reduce likelihood of conflict.	Dialogue creates a direct connection between groups who may otherwise not be interacting. This then creates a platform for discussion, and co-development of solutions.
Economic development.	National government. Local government. Business community.	Market development. Job creation. Financial support. Micro farming loans. Skills training.	Reduce unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity.	Unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity are major underlying drivers that prompt some into cattle raiding, theft, and joining armed groups. Economic development carries multiple benefits that simultaneously erode drivers for conflict.
Empower women.	Women leaders/ groups.	Promote women into leadership roles.	Include women in peacebuilding.	Current conflict context is dominated by men. Society (and many women) are

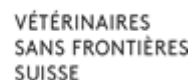


		Engage women's groups more actively.		hesitant for women to play a formal peacebuilding role, yet the majority also believe they can play a key role.
Empower youth.	Youth leaders. Youth.	Training and job development.	Give youth hope.	Youth are disenchanted, and represent a dynamic cohort who can be lured by conflict if no other options appear.
Disarmament.	Local government. Local leaders. Armed groups. Youth.	Gun amnesty among armed groups and youth.	Reduce scope for violence.	The increase in ownership of weapons brings society closer to conflict, simply as a result of guns being in the hands of many (and mostly youth).
Gender training.	NGOs/INGOs/CSOs. Womens' groups. Local leaders.	Gender training workshops and events.	Reduce SGBV.	Women and girls experience rape, abuse, abduction, forced marriage, removal from education. Social norms around gender can be assessed and addressed through a participatory approach.
Social cohesion.	NGOs/INGOs/CSOs. Women's groups. Youth groups. Local leaders. Local government. PWDs. Children. Elderly. IDPs. Refugees. Returnees. Host community.	Cultural activities (dance, music, food, football tournaments).	Reduce tribalism and increase empathy.	Tribal rivalries are causing rifts in society, and vulnerable groups are often the target. Through organised activities that bring people together around recognised cultural events, empathy can be developed between ethnic and other identity groups.
Strengthen emergency response.	NGOs/INGOs/CSOs. Local government.	Dyke construction. Water boreholes. Disaster planning.	Reduce the impact of flooding and drought.	Drought and flooding cause catastrophic environmental damage that affects habitation and agricultural productivity,
Restore public services.	National government. Local government. NGOs/INGOs/CSOs.	Strengthen health, education, rule of law	Redevelop social infrastructure.	Damaged or absent public services have a direct impact on physical and mental health, public safety, upholding of law, and ultimately, ability to live in the area.

Table 7. Peacebuilding approaches and attributes.

3.5 Capacities and opportunities for peacebuilding

Data collected in this Conflict Analysis suggests there is scope for optimism in regard to the belief among respondents that peacebuilding can achieve progress, provided there is funding, motivation and commitment from a range of actors, to put it into action. In terms of existing actors who can play a role, several women's groups were mentioned, as well as the more formal institutions such as government, business community, local leaders, cattle keepers, and youth.



Often mentioned in the qualitative interviews was the need for training of local actors, and across a wide range of settings and structures - including local leaders, teachers, domestic NGOs, local government, and local communities. There is recognition that the current capacity of actors is probably low and degraded, but that given the opportunity, funding, and support, such capacity can be strengthened relatively quickly.

Opportunities for peacebuilding, as highlighted in Table 6 (section 3.5) are multiple, and ultimately, reflect the myriad of problems - i.e., where there is a problem, there is also an opportunity. In terms of prioritising the order in which these opportunities are tackled, the following sequence may be considered (Table 7):

Priority	Activity	Rationale	Timeline
1	Dialogue.	Getting adversaries around a table for dialogue, and reducing the proliferation of weapons (gun amnesty) are actions that may reduce criminal activity and violence (e.g., cattle raiding), and thus prevent immediate triggers for open conflict.	Establishing platforms for dialogue, and a gun amnesty, can both be organised in a relatively timely and cost-effective way (albeit with some careful planning).
	Disarmament.		
2	Empower women.	Women and youth represent two dynamic cohorts who currently lack adequate representation in public life. Potentially they can make a unique and essential contribution to peacebuilding efforts. Social cohesion efforts are needed to bring opposing groups together, and to repair the social fabric.	By connecting with existing women's and youth groups, and other identity groups, collaborations and initiatives can be consolidated and developed in the short-medium term.
	Empower youth.		
	Social cohesion.		
3	Restore public services.	'Visible' public actions which demonstrate to local communities that positive change is possible, and that institutions do care about the rule of law, security, health, education, economy, jobs, environment, and food security of local communities.	Institutional reform (i.e., local government) and development are long-term processes, and require strategic planning, the input of national and local government, business leaders, and the international development community.
	Strengthen emergency response.		
	Economic development.		

Table 8. Prioritisation of programming approaches.

3.5.1 Capacity and training needs

In terms of perceptions of current capacity within public institutions, there is some suspicion of the agenda and motivations of the national government, and a sense that the national army is the main manifestation of national government power. Because the national army is not always perceived positively, this in turn impacts on how people view the national government.

Current peacebuilding capacity at State-level is limited, due to weak governance and under-resourcing, and a lack of political will to support the 2018 peace agreement. NGOs/CSOs, and grassroots organisations are also





generally under-resourced, and face considerable security risks in their operation. The private sector appears to be under-engaged but can play a role in supporting economic development.

“Peacebuilding is still very low at all levels due to lack of funding and cutting of funds by USAIDs and other funding agencies”

[KII, External, Executive Director, CSO, Renk, Upper Nile]

The degraded functionality of local public services also undermines perceptions of both national and local government as effective bodies serving the population of South Sudan. Aside from the widespread desire for platforms of dialogue to be established at the local level, there is also training across the board, in matters relating to peacebuilding, gender, GBV, economic development, land disputes, and many other connected issues. In this sense, current capacity is viewed as low, yet there is acknowledgement that the organisations, groups and actors are in place who can take on the challenge of increasing their own capacity, training others, and establishing peace building programmes within communities.

Areas of function and operation that are viewed as requiring training and capacity building are diverse, and include the following:

- Market Systems Development.
- Gender mainstreaming.
- Financial Literacy.
- DRR.
- Natural Resource Management.
- Climate change adaptation.
- Peacebuilding.
- Data to inform policy/ advocacy/ dialogue.
- Demographics.
- Land resources.
- Historical conflict trends.

3.6 Policy, Advocacy, and Strategic dialogue

Given the scale of the challenge, policy, advocacy and strategic dialogue all have key roles to play. Data informed and evidence-based policy, advocacy, and strategy are required to provide insights on needs, gaps, and opportunities. Key informant data highlights that a combination of demographics, socio-economic, and historic data must be available to inform targeting and programming prioritisation. These insights can also guide collaboration and coordination between government officials and NGOs. Underlying these efforts, the presence of participatory and conflict-sensitive approaches and strong monitoring mechanisms are highlighted as they help to ensure programming remains engaged with community dynamics.

“Using data-driven approaches strengthens collaboration. Government agencies, UN bodies, and NGOs can align efforts, share resources, and develop coordinated strategies for sustainable development”





[KII, Internal, Project Officer, GOAL, Renk]

Regarding advocacy in specific, there is scope and justification to lobby around a range of key issues, such as inclusive policies, dialogue sessions, amplification of marginalised actors, mobilisation of international resources, and greater accountability of national and local leaders. In Rubkona, engaging youth, armed factions, and relevant community groups is noted as particularly important. Such efforts will require collaboration between communities, local civil society groups, local leaders, and NGOs. A combination of advocacy and peacebuilding is understood to strengthen trust, enhance social cohesion and reconciliation, and address grievances within communities and, in doing so, make them more resilient to conflict related shocks.

3.7 Resource allocation to support peacebuilding

There is recognition amongst KII and FGD participants that considerable resource allocation is required to facilitate peacebuilding initiatives. They highlight that resources should be focused on supporting economic activities through vocational training and small business development. These measures can also play a key role in providing appealing alternatives for youth who might otherwise seek to join armed groups. Resources are also needed to support rehabilitation of critical infrastructure such as schools and healthcare facilities to enable access to basic services. Finally, community mobilisation efforts, such as workshops on social cohesion and peacebuilding, which sensitise people on the impact of violence, also require further resourcing.

“Resource allocation can play great role through organising social activities”

[KII, External, Youth Director, Local Government, Renk, Upper Nile]

Adequate resource allocation is expected to support social, political, and economic development across locations. In terms of which actors require resources the most, youth and the elderly were identified most frequently. In addition, some stakeholders emphasise that resources should be distributed equitably among local civil society.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- There is consistency across the eight counties with regard to the overarching observations of conflict dimensions, the underlying causal factors, and trigger events which can prompt an outbreak of open conflict. Within this, there are some nuances around the most evident causal factors, key actors, and the focus of the local population on where peacebuilding efforts best lie.
- There are multiple *cause and effect* interconnections between identified dimensions of the conflict analysis. For example: climate change results in flooding and drought, which impact on disease, and food insecurity, which impact on employment and health, and which exacerbate displacement of people, tribalism, cattle raiding, and criminal activity.





- Those counties which appear to have a most high-risk trajectory oriented toward future conflict include Ulang, Fashoda, Nasir, Akobo, and to some extent, Rubkona. Key issues shared by these counties include food insecurity, tribalism, political tensions, cattle raiding, unemployment, lawlessness, and availability of weapons.
- Those counties with a more stable context include Renk, Panyikang, and Panyijiar. While these counties still contend with a similar set of factors as those counties at higher risk, they currently experience greater levels of stability and social function.
- Those most affected by conflict include women and girls, children, people with disabilities, and the elderly, as they are all unlikely to be armed, and less able to defend themselves and/ or flee. Women and girls in particular face a range of threats both during conflict (murder, rape, abduction) *and* during more stable periods (forced marriage, SGBV, lack of education and health services, loss of livelihood).
- Respondents identify a wide range of actors who can play both negative and positive roles regarding advancing or avoiding conflict. While there is acknowledgement of the responsibility of existing authorities and power-holders (government, local leaders, land-owners) to play a role in peacebuilding processes, there is also a widespread desire to see community level actors also play an active role (women, youth). Economic development and job creation, with a focus on youth and women, is widely identified as a way to improve social cohesion, quality of life, and thereby divert disaffected youth from being drawn in to join armed groups.
- While there is widespread support for women to play a more active role in peacebuilding processes, in many cases this still reflects traditional views of their place in society. For example, some respondents suggest they can play a role in peacebuilding at the community grassroots level, but would not be expected to participate in official, high level political dialogue and discussion (other than to prepare food and drink for attendees). These findings suggest there is a need for gender training, across all relevant groups and actors (and as suggested by several respondents).
- There is widespread request to see the establishment of dialogue processes to bring adversaries together and work through the contentious issues that are currently dividing them. Connected to this is a desire to organise social cohesion activities to unify society and tackle the negative aspects of tribalism.
- A range of approaches, actors, and activities have been identified through this conflict analysis, and which can be considered for application in the THRIVE programme, where most feasible and appropriate. Such approaches also require capacity building and training, to ensure actors are sufficiently prepared for the task of peacebuilding and conflict reduction activities. While there is widespread desire to see local community actors fully involved in such processes, there is also recognition that the national government, and INGOs will also need to play a role, including in training, capacity building, and localisation.





- There is good alignment between the findings of the conflict analysis and the current THRIVE Theory of Change (Table 6). However, it is worth noting that as the THRIVE programming approach focuses on longer-term causal factors rather than triggers for conflict, it is likely to be more relevant (and effective) for those counties (i.e., Panyijiar, Panyiklang, Renk) which are *not* on the verge of open conflict, rather than those which are closer to open conflict and where more urgent intervention is required (i.e., Nasir, Fashoda, Rubkona, Ulang, Akobo).
- The table below (Table 9) summarises the context in each county, in terms of risk of conflict, causal factors, and proposed peacebuilding activities and stakeholders.





County	Now vs. 5 years ago	Conflict likelihood	Key conflict factors	Suggested peacebuilding activities	Suggested peacebuilding stakeholders	Comments
Ulang	Much worse	High	Political tensions. Food insecurity.	Dialogue. Market development and job creation. Strengthen emergency response.	Business community. Women.	High levels of confidence in peacebuilding programmes, yet lowest incidence of urgency for introducing them. Involvement of business owners is most supported in Ulang (80%).
Renk	Better	Medium	Tribalism. Cattle raiding.	Market development and job creation.	Cattle keepers. Women. Youth. Local leaders.	Disputed cattle grazing rights are <i>not</i> viewed as a key conflict factor, but ethnic tensions are. Mixed views on the role of women in peacebuilding. Development of local markets and jobs is most strongly supported in Renk (100%).
Fashoda	Similar	Medium	Political tensions. Food insecurity.	Market development and job creation. Empower women and youth. Improve food security.	Business owners. Women. NGOs/INGOs/CSOs. Cattle keepers. Youth.	Disputed cattle grazing rights <i>not</i> viewed as a key conflict factor. Business owners as a cohort are viewed as the most influential peacebuilding cohort. Empowering youth is most strongly supported in Fashoda (100%). Development of local markets and jobs is most strongly supported in Fashoda (99%). Localised and community-based approaches are most strongly supported in Fashoda (73%). Improving access to food (100%), empowering youth (100%) and women (97%) are viewed as the most urgent changes required.
Nasir	Much worse	High	Political tensions.	Dialogue. Market development and job creation.	Local leaders. NGOs/INGOs/CSOs.	Nasir witnessed an outbreak of conflict in March 2025, between White Army and SSPDF, including aerial bombardment and use of barrel bombs. Across the eight counties, Nasir has the lowest level of confidence in peacebuilding programmes.





County	Now vs. 5 years ago	Conflict likelihood	Key conflict factors	Suggested peacebuilding activities	Suggested peacebuilding stakeholders	Comments
						Women are viewed as the least influential group with regard to reducing conflict (followed by business owners). Involvement of business owners is least supported in Nasir (7%).
Panyikang	Similar	Medium	Tribalism. Food insecurity. Climate change. Gun ownership.	Empower women and youth. Market development and job creation. Social cohesion activities.	Youth. Women.	Inter communal conflict is a key factor (94%). Involvement of women (97%) and youth (100%) is most supported in Panyikang. Development of local markets and jobs is most strongly supported in Panyikang (100%). Efforts and activities to bring different social groups together is most strongly supported in Panyikang (100%).
Rubkona	Better	High	Cattle raiding. Food insecurity.	Market development and job creation. Empower youth. Promote agriculture. Microfinance opportunities.	Women. Youth. Business community.	While the current situation is calmer than five years previous, there is concern that a dispute with the RRA may escalate. Women are viewed as an influential peacebuilding cohort. Involvement of NGOs/INGOs/CSOs is <i>least</i> supported in Rubkona (8%).
Panyijiar	Similar	Medium	Unemployment. Climate change. Tribalism. Political agendas. Revenge killing.	Economic development. Dialogue. Peace conferences.	Local leaders. Local Government. National Government.	Across the eight counties, Panyijiar has lowest levels of support for empowering women (65%) and youth (68%), social cohesion (57%), and localised and community-based approaches (47%). Efforts and activities to bring different social groups together (57%), and localised and community-based approaches (47%), are least supported in Panyijiar.
Akobo	Much worse	High	Cattle raiding. Tribalism. Political tension.	Dialogue. Reconciliation. Economic development. Constitution drafting. Elections. Local institution-building.	Community leaders. Local institutions. Women's groups. Mediators and advocates.	Akobo respondents are most likely to feel conflict is going to break out, or get worse (48%). Women are not positively viewed as suitable for taking on peacebuilding responsibility (25%) or having an active role in political processes (23%). Development of local markets and jobs is weakly supported (61%).





County	Now vs. 5 years ago	Conflict likelihood	Key conflict factors	Suggested peacebuilding activities	Suggested peacebuilding stakeholders	Comments
						The National Army is not viewed as suitable for taking on peacebuilding responsibility (13%). Development of local markets and jobs is least supported in Akobo (61%).

Table 9. Conflict drivers and peacebuilding approaches.





5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overall recommendations

- **Further develop the THRIVE programme strategy:** In accordance with the Theory of Change and the findings of this conflict analysis, consider how best to incorporate the approaches identified. For example, the current Theory of Change focus on agriculture, markets, climate change, women and youth appear to be well aligned with the findings of this conflict analysis. The programmatic challenge is to match the identified approaches in the THRIVE programme with the context in each county, in terms of deploying activities and efforts where there are best chances of positive effect and impact.
- **Prioritise local ownership and leadership:** Engage local leaders, youth, and community-based actors as central facilitators of peacebuilding activities, particularly in counties where national institutions are perceived as distant or ineffective. Support local dialogue platforms where conflicting groups can meet and resolve issues directly and prioritise strengthening the individual and organisational capacities of local civil society to support their long-term sustainability.
- **Leverage youth and women's potential:** Empower youth and women as key change agents, especially in counties where their involvement is more positively perceived (e.g., Renk, Panyikang, Fashoda). Design activities that give youth structured, meaningful roles to reduce their vulnerability to recruitment into conflict (e.g., vocational training, business incubation, civic engagement), and encourage broader inclusion of women beyond traditional support roles by promoting their participation in political processes and leadership.
- **Focus on economic development as a peacebuilding driver:** Support job creation, local market development, and entrepreneurship, especially in counties where economic frustrations are viewed as contributing to conflict (e.g., Akobo, Panyijiar). Strengthen business ecosystems to help youth gain independence and reduce incentives for joining armed groups.
- **Customise programming by county:** Recognize and respond to local variations in attitudes and needs - for example, higher levels of optimism in Panyijiar vs. skepticism in Fashoda. Adjust engagement strategies in counties with low support for certain actors (e.g., weak support for women's roles in Akobo and Rubkona) through awareness and inclusion campaigns. Consider and factor-in the characteristics of each focus county, in terms of their proximity to open conflict, the most critical causal factors and triggers, and the most likely actors who can be supported to reduce the likelihood of conflict. For example: Ulang, Fashoda, Nasir, Akobo, and to some extent, Rubkona, may all require tactical intervention that focuses on dialogue and disarmament (i.e., conflict 'triggers'), given their proximity to open conflict; whereas the focus on Renk, Panyikang, and Panyijiar can better focus on addressing longer-term causal factors (e.g., economic development, empowerment of women and youth) as they are in a somewhat more stable position.
- **Adopt community-centered and integrated approaches:** Invest in community-led peacebuilding activities such as shared dialogues, joint projects, and emergency response mechanisms, and integrate





peacebuilding with basic service delivery (e.g., food access, disaster response), which are viewed as effective entry points for reducing tensions.

- **Build on what works:** Activities such as empowering youth and women, supporting social cohesion, and improving access to food were consistently identified as impactful and urgently needed - these should form the backbone of future interventions. Highlight successful local models and scale them up or adapt them for other contexts.

5.2 Government recommendations

Recommendations as appropriate for each tier of government (i.e., national, state, local/county) are presented below:

National Government

The national government should focus on strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks for peacebuilding by prioritising dialogue platforms that bring together conflicting groups and promoting national reconciliation processes. It should invest in capacity building for both national and local institutions, ensuring that they can effectively address economic and social grievances. Additionally, the government must work closely with international partners and local stakeholders to decentralise decision-making and ensure the localisation of peacebuilding efforts, while creating policies that support youth empowerment, gender equality, and economic development as drivers of long-term peace.

In terms of specific actions as informed by this Conflict Analysis, the following actions can be considered:

- Engage with state governments to understand the current context, key actors, conflict triggers, and most appropriate peacebuilding activities and stakeholders (implementers and participants), at both state and county level.
- Where a county is close to open conflict, consider urgent measures such as national army intervention to separate warring parties, and stabilise the situation.
- Lead efforts to reduce levels of gun ownership across states, and stem the influx of weapons. This may require an organised gun amnesty, road checkpoints, etc., as overseen by the national army.
- Provide resources and technical support in establishing dialogue platforms across states, rehabilitation of public services (utilities, transport, education, health, legal), improvements to climate change emergency response infrastructure and systems, economic development.

State Government

State governments should take a proactive role in supporting dialogue and reconciliation processes between ethnic and tribal groups within their regions. They should ensure effective implementation of national policies at the state level by supporting community-led peacebuilding initiatives and providing the necessary resources and training. States should facilitate job creation and economic development projects, particularly in areas with high unemployment, to reduce the appeal of armed groups. Additionally, state governments should focus on educating and sensitising communities about the importance of gender inclusion and the involvement of women and youth in decision-making and peacebuilding activities.

In terms of specific actions as informed by this Conflict Analysis, the following actions can be considered:





- Understand the current context across all counties, and identify those where urgent measures are required, and those where medium and longer-term approaches can be implemented.
- Establish dialogue platforms across counties, featuring local stakeholders and communities, but designed and overseen by state level actors with INGO/NGO guidance.

Local Governments

Local governments must engage directly with community leaders and civil society organisations to promote social cohesion and resolve local disputes. They should ensure the implementation of community-driven peacebuilding activities such as joint projects, dialogue initiatives, and emergency response mechanisms. Local governments should also promote economic opportunities such as local market development and vocational training, especially for youth, to reduce vulnerability to conflict. Encouraging inclusive governance and ensuring that women and marginalised groups have an active role in decision-making processes is also essential for fostering long-term stability and peace.

In terms of specific actions as informed by this Conflict Analysis, the following actions can be considered:

- Establish committees to engage with and manage a range of peacebuilding measures, as appropriate to each county. Ensure committees are inclusive, and feature local women's groups, youth groups, business community, local leaders, local government, and cattle keepers. Committees can identify where selected types of peacebuilding activities should be initiated (as well as how, when, and who to participate).
- Establish economic development working groups, with a focus on identifying opportunities for investment, collaboration, training, and capacity building. In particular, working groups should feature the business community, women, and youth.
- Liaise with the local government to oversee public service rehabilitation (utilities, transport, education, health, legal).
- Intervene where cattle raiding takes place, with back-up of county/ state/ national levels of authority (police, security, army) as required

5.3 THRIVE consortium recommendations

Given the context and objectives of the THRIVE programme, and acknowledging the challenges with assessing the precise current capacity of consortium members (CAFOD, GOAL, Mercy Corps, and VSF Germany), the following recommendations are designed to guide the approach to strengthening capacity and addressing training needs for conflict-sensitive program delivery based on the *Do No Harm* principle.

1. Conduct a comprehensive capacity assessment

Before addressing training needs, a baseline assessment of the current capacity of the four consortium members should be conducted. This should include:

- Review staff expertise and skills in conflict sensitivity, community engagement, and humanitarian principles.
- Map the current understanding and application of the *Do No Harm* principle across all levels of the programme, particularly in target counties in South Sudan.





- Identify gaps in technical knowledge, especially with regard to gender sensitivity, local governance, and community relations, which are pivotal to the program's success.
- Evaluate organisational systems in terms of how they incorporate conflict-sensitive programming and manage risks related to conflict escalation.

2. Develop tailored conflict sensitivity training

Based on the findings of the capacity assessment, develop a context-specific training programme for staff across all levels (national, state, local) that focuses on:

- Conflict sensitivity: Equip staff with tools to analyze conflict dynamics and understand how programming can either exacerbate or mitigate conflict. Ensure that staff members understand the nuances of local conflict drivers (e.g., tribalism, cattle raiding, food insecurity) and how these dynamics affect program outcomes.
- Do No Harm: Provide in-depth training on the Do No Harm principle, emphasizing how to design, implement, and evaluate programmes that are sensitive to conflict risks and do not inadvertently cause harm.
- Gender and inclusion: Integrate gender-sensitive conflict analysis into programming and ensure staff are trained to effectively engage women and youth in peacebuilding activities.
- Cultural competence: Equip staff with skills to understand and work within local cultural and social frameworks, ensuring that peacebuilding efforts are contextually appropriate and have local buy-in.
- Monitoring and feedback mechanisms: Train staff on how to establish robust systems for monitoring the impact of interventions on conflict dynamics and providing communities with platforms to share feedback.

3. Foster cross-organizational learning and knowledge sharing

Encourage collaboration between the consortium members to foster cross-organizational learning. Each organisation has unique strengths that can contribute to the overall capacity building process.

- Exchange workshops and learning platforms: Hold workshops and meetings where staff from all organizations can share best practices, lessons learned, and specific challenges encountered in the field.
- Peer mentoring and coaching: Implement a peer-to-peer mentoring system, where experienced staff from one organisation can support less experienced members of the consortium on conflict-sensitive programming practices.

4. Strengthen local capacity through community engagement

Given the emphasis on local ownership, capacity building should extend to local actors, such as community leaders, local NGOs, and civil society groups. Key strategies could include:

- Community-based training sessions: Conduct regular training for local stakeholders to help them understand and apply conflict-sensitive approaches in their own communities. This will promote local ownership and ensure the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts.
- Training of Trainers (ToT): Identify key local leaders or actors and train them to act as facilitators for broader community-level training, thus creating a ripple effect that spreads skills and knowledge.





- Localised assessments: Support local actors in conducting conflict assessments and developing action plans to address the drivers of conflict specific to their communities.

5. Ongoing capacity monitoring and feedback mechanisms

Set up systems for regular capacity monitoring and feedback loops to track progress, identify emerging gaps, and adjust training as necessary:

- Surveys and interviews: Conduct regular surveys and interviews with staff to assess the effectiveness of training and identify areas needing further attention.
- Context monitoring: Continuously monitor the evolving conflict dynamics in target counties and ensure that the training program adapts accordingly, especially when shifts in conflict drivers are identified.
- Peer reviews and external evaluations: In addition to internal evaluations, engage external evaluators to provide an independent assessment of the program's conflict sensitivity and its adherence to the Do No Harm principle.

6. Leverage external expertise for specialised training

Given the complexity of conflict-sensitive programming, it may be beneficial to engage external experts or organizations with specific expertise in conflict resolution and *Do No Harm* programming. These specialists can provide advanced training on more complex conflict-related issues and safeguard mechanisms, and ensure that all THRIVE staff have access to the latest insights and methodologies for peacebuilding in conflict-prone areas.

7. Institutionalize conflict sensitivity into organisational culture

Ensure that conflict sensitivity is embedded not only in the training programmes but also in the overall organisational culture of each consortium member. This includes:

- Integrating conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm considerations into project design, evaluation frameworks, and policy development.
- Promoting conflict sensitivity as a key performance indicator in staff appraisals and organisational assessments.





VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES
SUISSE

ANNEX

Annex A: Conflict Analysis framework

The structured framework (below) was developed for conducting the participatory conflict analysis, aligning data collection methods - desk reviews, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and household surveys - with the consultancy’s objectives and questions. It outlined the specific data to be collected, the relevance of each method, and the expected outputs, ensuring a comprehensive and actionable understanding of conflict dynamics, peacebuilding opportunities, and programmatic risks in the Greater Upper Nile region.

Objective/Question	Data Collection Method	Specific Data to Collect	Expected Outputs
Identify root causes, triggers, and dynamics of existing and potential conflicts.	Desk Review	Review reports, policy documents, previous conflict analyses, and THRIVE program documents to identify historical, political, social, and economic drivers of conflict in the GUN region.	Comprehensive understanding of conflict drivers and triggers in the eight counties.
	KIIs	Gather insights from local government officials, community leaders, CSOs, private sector actors, and thematic experts on conflict patterns, causes, and escalation points.	Context-specific information on conflict causes and dynamics, including key stakeholder roles.
	FGDs	Facilitate discussions with community members (women, men, youth, marginalized groups) to capture localized perceptions of conflict dynamics and impacts.	Community-level perspectives on conflict dynamics, contributing factors, and immediate triggers.
	Household Surveys	Collect quantitative data from households to understand how conflicts affect daily lives, resource access, and socio-economic conditions.	Statistical data showing the prevalence and effects of conflict on households across the counties.
Analyze the potential effect of conflicts on THRIVE program delivery and target groups.	Desk Review	Review program documents, reports, and evaluations to understand operational risks and challenges posed by conflicts.	Identification of conflict-related risks to program delivery and effectiveness.
	KIIs	Explore program-related challenges with THRIVE staff and local leaders, focusing on how conflicts disrupt or reshape interventions.	Key risks and mitigation strategies for ensuring conflict-sensitive programming.
	FGDs	Discuss with community members how conflicts influence their participation in and benefits from THRIVE activities.	Community insights on barriers to program participation due to conflicts.
	Household Surveys	Assess household perceptions of THRIVE’s role in addressing conflict-related challenges.	Quantitative data on household views of THRIVE’s impact amidst conflict.
Identify capacities for peace and opportunities for peacebuilding.	Desk Review	Analyze existing community-level peacebuilding initiatives and policies related to conflict resolution.	Documented peacebuilding capacities and opportunities in the target areas.
	KIIs	Gather inputs from CSOs, thematic experts, and community leaders on local peacebuilding efforts and their effectiveness.	Stakeholder insights into existing and potential peacebuilding mechanisms.
	FGDs	Facilitate discussions on community-level capacities for peace, including traditional conflict resolution practices and social cohesion mechanisms.	Community-identified peacebuilding strengths and





			potential entry points for interventions.
Deepen THRIVE's understanding and programming approaches for conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding.	Desk Review	Examine THRIVE's previous approaches to conflict sensitivity and their outcomes in similar contexts.	Lessons learned from past conflict-sensitive programming.
	KIIs	Discuss conflict sensitivity with THRIVE staff, local officials, and experts to identify programmatic gaps and opportunities for improvement.	Recommendations for enhancing conflict-sensitive programming.
	FGDs	Collect community feedback on how THRIVE can better address their needs while ensuring conflict-sensitive implementation.	Community recommendations for improving THRIVE's responsiveness to conflict dynamics.
	Household Surveys	Quantitatively assess household awareness of and satisfaction with conflict-sensitive measures in THRIVE programming.	Data-driven insights into the effectiveness of current conflict-sensitive approaches.
Map stakeholders and assess training needs for conflict-sensitive program delivery.	KIIs	Interview local government officials, CSOs, and private sector actors to identify key stakeholders in conflict and peacebuilding, and their training needs.	Stakeholder maps and training needs assessment for enhancing conflict sensitivity.
	FGDs	Discuss with community members their expectations of key stakeholders and opportunities for collaboration in peacebuilding.	Community-validated stakeholder roles and capacity gaps.
Generate actionable recommendations for advocacy, policy, and programming.	Desk Review	Synthesize findings from policy documents and reports to align recommendations with broader policy frameworks.	Evidence-based recommendations for advocacy and policy adjustments.
	KIIs	Collect targeted recommendations from local leaders, CSOs, and experts for strategic dialogues and policy alignment.	Stakeholder-driven recommendations for actionable peacebuilding initiatives.
	FGDs	Engage communities in identifying practical, localized solutions for conflict mitigation and resilience-building.	Community-informed, actionable recommendations for THRIVE programming and advocacy efforts.
	Household Surveys	Use quantitative responses to validate and support the recommendations from qualitative methods.	Statistical backing for actionable recommendations and advocacy priorities.

Annex B: Introduction for all KIIs and FGDs

The introduction in the grey box below will be applied prior to all KIIs and FGDs:





Hello

I am part of a team of evaluation consultants (STOOS) working together with CAFOD to conduct an analysis of resilience in conflict and climate-affected communities in the Greater Upper Nile (GUN) region. We would like you to please take part in this interview to better understand your thoughts on this topic.

I can assure you of the following:

- Your participation in this interview is voluntary.
- The collected information is for conflict analysis purposes and will be treated confidentially.
- The questions I will ask you relate to the conflict context in the Greater Upper Nile region of South Sudan.
- You have the right to withdraw from the interview anytime during the interview, and to withdraw any information already provided.
- You have the right to refuse to answer any question.
- Your responses will be treated confidentially and will only be used for evaluation purposes.
- Your identity will be kept confidential.
- This interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes (as appropriate) to complete.

Do you give your approval to proceed with the interview? (Yes/No)

Do you give your approval for this interview to be audio recorded? (Yes/No)

The recording will only be used to ensure that we capture all of your insights and will be deleted afterwards.

(If not, take written notes only)

Annex C: KII Discussion Guide (Internal Stakeholders)

To be used in interviews with CAFOD project staff and THRIVE consortium staff.

Can you please start by introducing yourself and your role?

First name:

Position / Role:

Organisation:

Gender Identity (optional):

Location (country, region):

INTRODUCTION





- What does your current role involve?
- What is your understanding of the THRIVE programme and its objectives?
 - What is your role in this programme specifically?

CURRENT CONTEXT



- What is your understanding of the current situation in the GUN region, regarding conflict?
 - How does it compare to the situation 5/10 years ago?
 - Similar? More stable? Less secure? Why?
 - How does this vary across the states of Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei?
 - How would you describe the overall trajectory of conflict? (i.e., past, present, future)
- What do you characterise as the underlying drivers that typically contribute to conflict in the GUN region?

[wait for response, but also probe for the following if not referenced: tribal differences, access to land, cattle grazing rights, migration, Sudanese civil war, politics (local and national), climate change, demography, powerful local leaders, access to food and water, availability of weapons, unemployment, historical grievances, etc.)

 - To what extent are these factors internal (e.g., tribal grievances) and/ or external (e.g., climate change)?
 - What are the short term vs. longer term drivers?
 - What are the types of triggers that can prompt an immediate breakout of conflict?
 - Can you give an example?
- From your knowledge, who are the main stakeholders in the overall conflict context in the GUN region?
 - Who has the power? (military, political, manpower, community support, financial, land ownership)
 - Who holds grievances?
 - How does this vary across Upper Nile, Unity, and Jonglei?
 - Who stands to benefit / lose out from conflict? How? Why?
- What kind of actions can be taken to prevent escalation of conflict?
 - In addressing both immediate and longer-term potential for conflict?
 - How would you describe the capacity for peacebuilding currently?
 - At payam / county / state / national levels?
 - NGOs, CSOs, private sector?
 - What role can advocacy play?
 - What can it achieve?
 - How?
 - To what extent can resource allocation support peacebuilding initiatives?
 - How?
 - Can you give an example?

CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT



- How do you assess the consequences of conflict in the GUN region?
 - What have you observed previously?
 - What kind of effects may be evident in any future conflicts?
 - What makes you say this?
 - Which sections of society do you feel would be affected the most?

[wait for response, and then probe for feedback on: Women/ men/ youth/ children/ Farmers/ Cattle keepers/ marginalised groups (people with disabilities, elderly)]

 - Why them?
 - In what ways?
 - How are women and girls affected specifically?
 - In which payams/ counties/ states of the GUN region?

- Thinking about the THRIVE programme, what type of consequences could an outbreak of conflict have on the programme overall?
 - On the local communities engaged in the programme activities.
 - On local project staff?

THRIVE: APPROACHES, SYNERGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES



- Overall, how can THRIVE reduce the likelihood of conflict (and conflict expansion) in the GUN region?
 - What are the key components of the programme?
 - What are the roles for both peacebuilding and conflict resolution respectively?
 - How are they both best deployed across the programme?
 - What activities should be carried out in what order?
 - Where? With whom? Why?
 - Who should be included?
 - Should anyone be *excluded*? Who? Why?
 - What role can women and girls play in this process specifically?
 - What does a roadmap look like?
 - What are the start/ end points?
 - What are the key milestones along that path?
- Where do you think the best opportunities lie for the THRIVE programme?
 - Why these ones in particular?
- To what extent can peacebuilding and conflict resolution be mainstreamed across the programme components?
 - Which of these programme components might be more/ less challenging to develop? Why?
 - Market Systems Development (MSD)
 - Localised and Community-Led Approaches
 - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)
 - Social and Behavior Change (SBC)
 - Which of these programme outcomes might be more/ less challenging to achieve? Why?
 - Increased incomes
 - Improved food security
 - Strengthened disaster preparedness and coping capacities
 - Improved social cohesion and conflict resolution
 - women and youth economic empowerment
- How would you describe the current capacity within the THRIVE programme?
 - Which areas/ teams/ activities are more/ less capacitated than others?
 - Is mapping required to diagnose current capacity?
 - If so, what should be mapped?
 - How might this best be designed and carried out?
 - What is required to further develop team capacity?
 - How might this best be achieved?
 - Training?
 - What type?
 - Of whom?
 - Funding? Mentoring? Collaboration?



- How does a *Do No Harm* approach feature in this?

- What type of data needs to be made available to support the THRIVE programme?
 - How might such data inform approaches for policy, advocacy, and strategic dialogue?
 - Can you give any examples?
 - How might such data inform dialogue and collaboration with key local, national, and international stakeholders?
 - Can you give an example?

BEST PRACTICE

- What do you see as areas of best practice around conflict analysis that the THRIVE programme can look to?
 - In terms of informing the overall approach?
 - In terms of shaping how the programme components are implemented?
- How might conflict analysis be embedded as a regular, ongoing component of the THRIVE programme?
 - How frequently do you think this should be occurring?
 - why?

CLOSING COMMENTS

- What do you see as the current Strengths/ Weaknesses/ Opportunities/ Threats of the THRIVE programme?
- Is there anything else you want to share about this topic?

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME

END INTERVIEW

Annex D: KII Discussion Guide (External Stakeholders)

To be used in interviews with a range of external stakeholders with knowledge of the topic/ region, including thematic experts (climate, gender), private sector actors, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), local community leaders (traditional, religious), and local government officials.





Can you please start by introducing yourself and your role?

First name:

Position / Role:

Organisation (if applicable):

Employment type:

Gender Identity (optional):

Location (payam/ county / state):

INTRODUCTION

- What does your current role involve?
- What is your understanding of the THRIVE programme? (N.B. awareness will vary considerably)
 - What is your role in this programme? (if known / if any)

CURRENT CONTEXT



- What is your understanding of the current situation in the GUN region, with regard to conflict?
 - How does it compare to the situation 5/10 years ago?
 - Similar? More stable? Less secure? Why?
 - How would you describe the overall trajectory? (i.e., past, present, future)

- What do you characterise as the underlying factors that typically contribute to conflict in the GUN region?

[wait for response, but also probe for the following if not mentioned: tribal differences, access to land, cattle grazing rights, migration, Sudanese civil war, politics (local and national), climate change, demography, powerful local leaders, availability of weapons, unemployment, historical grievances, etc.)

 - To what extent are these factors internal (e.g., tribal grievances) and/ or external (e.g., climate change)?
 - What are the short term vs. long term drivers?
 - What are the types of triggers that can prompt an immediate breakout of conflict?
 - Can you give an example?

- Who are the main stakeholders in the overall conflict context in the GUN region?
 - Who has the power? (military, manpower, financial, land ownership)
 - Who holds grievances?
 - Against whom? Why?
 - How does this vary across Upper Nile, Unity, and Jonglei?
 - Who stands to benefit / lose out from conflict? How? Why?

- What kind of actions can be taken to prevent escalation of conflict?
 - In addressing both immediate and longer-term potential for conflict?
 - How would you describe the capacity for peacebuilding currently?
 - At payam / county / state / national levels?
 - NGOs, CSOs, private sector?
 - What role can advocacy play?
 - What can it achieve?
 - For whom, and to whom?
 - How?
 - To what extent can resource allocation support peacebuilding initiatives?
 - How?
 - Can you give an example?

CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT

- How do you assess the consequences of conflict in the GUN region?
 - What have you observed previously?
 - What kind of effects may be evident in any future conflicts?
 - What makes you say this?
 - Which sections of society do you feel would be affected the most?
[probe for feedback on: women/ men/ youth/ children/ farmers/ cattle keepers/ marginalised groups (people with disabilities, elderly)]
 - Why them?
 - In what ways?
 - How are women and girls affected specifically?
 - In which payams/ counties/ states of the GUN region?
- Thinking about any new, organised programmes that aim to resolve conflict and build peace, what type of consequences could an outbreak of conflict have on such a programme overall?
 - On the local communities engaged in the programme activities?
 - On local project staff?

PROGRAMMING: APPROACHES, SYNERGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Overall, how can any new, organised programmes resolve conflict, build peace and reduce the likelihood of conflict (and conflict expansion) in this county/ state/ GUN region?
 - Where do you think the best opportunities lie for any such organised programmes that aim to resolve conflict and build peace?
 - How might such a programme approach this?
 - Who should be included?
 - Should anyone be *excluded*? Who? Why?
 - What role can women and girls play in this process specifically?
 - Which of these programme activities might be more/ less effective in resolving conflict and building peace in this county/ state/ region? Why?
 - Development of local markets and jobs
 - Localised and community-led approaches
 - Empowering women
 - Empowering youth
 - Encouraging positive social behaviors
 - Improving access to food
 - Strengthening emergency response to natural disasters
 - Activities to bring different social groups together
 - Is there anything else that should be added to such a programme?

CLOSING COMMENTS



VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES
SUISSE

- What do you see as the greatest opportunities and threats for any conflict resolution and peacebuilding programmes in this region?
- Is there anything else you want to share about this topic?

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME

END INTERVIEW

Annex E: FGD Discussion Guide (local communities)

To be used in interviews with a range of local community residents with knowledge of the topic/ region, including women, men, youth, and marginalized groups (e.g., elderly, People with Disabilities).

Can you please start by introducing yourselves?

First names:

Ages:

Gender:

Employment status / types:

Location (payam, county, state):

INTRODUCTION

- How long have you lived in this community?
- How has life changed locally over the last 5 years?
 - What are the main changes you have noticed?

[wait for response, and then probe for the following: Access to land, Cattle grazing rights, Unemployment, Insecurity/ violence, Societal tensions, Effects of climate change, access to food/ water, Displacement of people, Availability of weapons, National government policy, Local government policy]
 - How do you feel about this?

CURRENT CONTEXT



- How would you describe the current situation in this county, regarding conflict?
 - How does it compare to the situation 5/10 years ago?
 - Similar? More stable? Less secure? Why?
 - How do you feel about this?
- What do you view as the factors that typically contribute to conflict in this payam/ county/ state/ region?

[wait for response, but also probe for the following if not referenced: tribal differences, access to land, cattle grazing rights, migration, Sudanese civil war, politics (local and national), lack of food and water, climate change, demography, powerful local leaders, availability of weapons, unemployment, historical grievances)

 - To what extent are these factors internal (e.g., tribal grievances) and/ or external (e.g., climate change)?
 - What are the short term vs. longer term factors?
 - What are the types of triggers that can prompt an immediate breakout of conflict?
 - Can you give an example?
- Who are the key people/ actors in the overall conflict context in this county?
 - Who has the power? (military, manpower, financial, land ownership)
 - Who holds grievances? Against who? Why?
 - Who stands to benefit/ lose out from any conflict? How? Why?
 - [wait for response, but also probe for the following (as appropriate): Local leaders, Farmers/ Cattle keepers, Fisherfolk, Business owners, public sector workers, Men, Women, Youth, Children, People with disabilities, Elderly people, Displaced people moving in to this region, NGOs/ INGOs/ CSOs]
 - How do women and girls experience conflict differently from men and boys in your community?
 - What specific risks do women and girls face during conflict? (e.g., gender-based violence, displacement, loss of livelihood)
- What kind of things can be done to prevent escalation of conflict?
 - What can be done to prevent both immediate and longer-term potential for conflict?
 - How would you describe the likelihood of effective peacebuilding currently?
 - What role can different groups in society play in this process?
 - Women? Men? Youth? Local leaders? Farmers/ Cattle keepers?
 - How?
 - What roles can women and girls play in conflict (e.g., as combatants, peacebuilders, mediators, caregivers)?
 - How do traditional roles of women shape their participation in decision-making and peace processes?

- Are there any women-led initiatives or organisations involved in peacebuilding? How effective are they?
- Whose responsibility is it to reduce the likelihood of conflict in this county?
 - [wait for response, but also probe for the following (as appropriate): National government, Local government, National army, Local leaders, Farmers/ Cattle keepers, Business owners, Men, Women, Youth, Everyone in society, NGOs/ INGOs/ CSOs]
- To what extent can funding of different groups support peacebuilding?
 - How?

CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT

- What are the effects of conflict in this county?
 - What have you experienced/ noticed previously?
 - What kind of effects might happen in any future conflicts? Why?
 - Which sections of society do you feel would be affected the most?
 - [probe for feedback on Women/ men/ youth/ children/ Farmers/ Cattle keepers/ marginalised groups (people with disabilities, elderly)]
 - Why them?
 - In what ways?
 - What are the safety and security issues affecting women and girls in this county?
 - Does conflict affect women and girls differently than men? If yes, how?
 - How does/ has conflict affect women's access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and security?
 - What about their access to jobs, land, and financial resources?
- Thinking about any conflict resolution / peacebuilding programme in this region, what type of consequences could an outbreak of conflict have on such a programme overall?
 - On the programme activities?
 - On you and your family/ local community?
 - On local project staff?

PROGRAMMING: APPROACHES, SYNERGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES



VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES
SUISSE

- In your opinion, how can any new conflict resolution and peace-building programme reduce the likelihood of conflict (and conflict expansion) in this county?
 - How likely is it to be effective?
 - What types of activities should be carried out in such a programme?
 - Where? With whom? Why?
 - Which groups of people will be key for making such a programme as this a success?
 - Local communities/ Farmers/ Cattle keepers / women/ businesses/ local government?
 - To what extent should women be included in peace negotiations, political processes, and reconciliation efforts?
 - What challenges do women face in participating in governance and conflict resolution?
 - How can women and girls be better supported to have a voice in peacebuilding efforts?
- Which of these programme activities might be more/ less effective in resolving conflict and building peace in this county? Why?
 - Development of local markets and jobs
 - Localised and community-led approaches
 - Empowering women
 - Empowering youth
 - Encouraging positive social behaviors
 - Improving access to food
 - Strengthening emergency response to natural disasters
 - Activities to bring different social groups together
- Is there anything else that should be added to such a programme?

CLOSING COMMENTS

- What do you see as the greatest opportunities and threats for any conflict resolution and peacebuilding programmes in this region?
- Is there anything else you want to share about this topic?

THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME

END INTERVIEW

Annex F: Survey questionnaire (Local communities)

Automatically generated data:

- Survey Code (ID)





- Device Code (ID)
- Date
- Location
- Start Time
- End Time

A. START OF SURVEY

Q-Code	#	Data Collection Date	Date	Automatic
		Researcher's name	Text	
		Researcher's gender	Select One	- Male - Female - Other
		State	Select One	- Upper Nile - Unity - Jonglei
		County	Select One	- Ulang - Renk - Fashoda - Panyikang - Nasir - Rubkona - Panyijjar - Akobo
		Community	Text	

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____ and I am working for STOOOS Consulting. We are currently conducting a study to better understand the dimensions of conflict (and potential conflict) in your region. I would like to ask you some questions to understand your experiences, opinions, and observations. This is a short survey and by answering the questions you will help humanitarian organizations provide support.

The survey will take about **15 minutes**. I am using this tablet to help us collect information. It does not record your voice or take your photograph; we use it to store the information you provide very safely. Your answers will be treated with the utmost privacy and confidentiality. Your identity will always remain anonymous, and we will not be recording your name. That means that no one will be able to link your responses to your name, and your name will never be used in connection with any of the information you tell me.

Participation in the survey is **voluntary**, you can choose not to participate, and there is no benefit for participating.

If you choose to participate, there is no obligation to answer all the questions, and you are free to refuse any question you do not wish to answer. You have the right to withdraw your agreement to participate in this survey at any time during the interview.

If you have questions, please ask; if not, may I begin the questioning if this is appropriate?



		Are you willing to participate in the survey? VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT	Select One	1. Yes 2. No
Q Code	Question #	Question	Answer Type	Selection

B) RESPONDENT PROFILE

-	0.1	Gender of the respondent	Select One	1. Male 2. Female 3. Other
-	0.2	Age of the respondent	Text	1. <16 years 2. 16-24 years 3. 25-59 years 4. 60+ years
-	0.3	Residential status of the respondent	Select One	1. Host community 2. IDP 3. Returnee 4. Refugee 5. Unclear
-	0.3.1	Duration of displacement:	Select One	1. <6 months 2. 6-12 months 3. >12 months
-	0.4	Employment status of the respondent	Select one	1. Housewife 2. Unemployed 3. Farmer (vegetables, crops) 4. Cattle keeper 5. Fisherman/woman 6. Public sector worker 7. Shop worker 8. Business owner 9. Other



-	0.5	Do you consider yourself to have any of the following disabilities?	Select Multiple	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical disability (e.g., mobility impairments, chronic physical conditions) 2. Mental or psychological disability (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder) 3. Cognitive or intellectual disability (e.g., learning disabilities, developmental disabilities) 4. Sensory disability (e.g., visual or hearing impairments) 5. None of the above
	0.5.1.	Does anyone in your household have a disability?	Select One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No
	0.5.1.1	If yes, how many people?	Text	
	0.5.1.2	If yes, how many children?	Text	
	0.6	Marital Status	Select One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Widowed 5. Prefer not to say
	0.7	How many people are in your household, including you?	Text	
	0.8	Level of Education	Select One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. None 2. Elementary level 3. Junior/high school 4. Senior high 5. University 6. Prefer not to say



0.9	What is your current housing situation?	Select One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living in an IDP camp/ settlement 2. Living in a Returnee camp/settlement 3. Renting a house 4. Owning a house 5. Other
0.9.1		Text	

C) CONTEXT

C1	How has daily life changed over the last five years in this local community?	Select One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No change 2. Life has improved a lot 3. Life has improved somewhat 4. Life has got worse 5. life has got much worse 6. Do not know / cannot answer
C1.a	Which of these factors fuel the occurrence of violent conflict over the last five years?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to land 2. Cattle grazing rights 3. Intra/inter communal conflict 4. Ethnic division/ tension 5. Unemployment 6. Insecurity/ violence 7. Societal tensions 8. Effects of climate change 9. Lack of food 10. Lack of clean water 11. Displacement of people 12. Availability of weapons 13. National government policy 14. Local government policy 15. Do not know / cannot answer 16. Other _____
C2	How would you describe the current conflict situation in this <u>county</u> ?	Select One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is more stable than five years ago 2. It is about the same as five years ago 3. It is more insecure than five years ago 4. It is a lot more insecure than five years ago 5. Do not know / cannot answer



C3	In your opinion, how likely is it that conflict will break out (or current conflict will get worse) in this county over the next 1- year?	Select One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very likely 2. Quite likely 3. Neither likely OR unlikely 4. Not likely at all 5. Do not know / cannot answer
C4	Which of these factors do you feel make future conflict <i>more likely</i> in this county?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tribal differences 2. Access to land 3. Cattle grazing rights 4. Migration 5. Lack of food 6. Lack of clean water 7. Sudanese civil war 8. National politics 9. Climate change 10. Make-up of local population 11. Availability of weapons 12. Powerful local leaders 13. Unemployment 14. Historical grievances 15. Do not know / cannot answer 16. Other _____
C5	<p>To your knowledge, what are the main grievances held by groups of people in this area?</p> <p>Who holds the grievances, and against what/ whom?</p>	Open text response	<hr/>
C6	Which of these groups of people can play a key role in influencing the outbreak of conflict (or not) in this county?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National government 2. Local government 3. National army 4. Local leaders 5. Farmers/ Cattle keepers 6. Business owners 7. Men 8. Women 9. Youth 10. Displaced people moving in to this region 11. NGOs/ INGOs/ CSOs 12. Do not know / cannot answer 13. Other _____





C7	Whose <u>responsibility</u> is it to reduce the likelihood of conflict in this county?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National government 2. Local government 3. National army 4. Local leaders 5. Farmers/ Cattle keepers 6. Business owners 7. Men 8. Women 9. Youth 10. Everyone in society 11. NGOs/ INGOs/ CSOs 12. Do not know / cannot answer 14. Other _____
C9	In any conflict in this county, which of these groups of people would you expect to be affected the <u>most</u> ?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local leaders 2. Farmers/ Cattle keepers 3. Fisherfolk 4. Business owners 5. Public sector workers 6. Men 7. Women 8. Youth 9. Children 10. People with disabilities 11. Elderly people 12. Displaced people moving in to this region 13. NGOs/ INGOs/ CSOs 14. Do not know / cannot answer 15. Other _____
C10	Which of these aspects of the lives of women and/ or girls are made <u>worse</u> by conflict?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) 2. Displacement 3. Loss of livelihood 4. Access to healthcare 5. Access to land 6. Access to financial resources 7. Access to education 8. Access to security

D) THE FUTURE

D1	In your opinion, how confident are you that any new conflict resolution and peacebuilding programmes can reduce the likelihood of conflict (or conflict expansion) in this county?	Select one	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very confident 2. Quite confident 3. Neutral 4. Not at all confident 5. Do not know / cannot answer
----	--	------------	--





D2	Who do you think <u>should</u> be directly engaged in any such organised peace-building and social cohesion programmes to resolve conflict and build peace in this county?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National government 1. Local government 2. Local leaders 3. Farmers 4. Business owners 5. Men 6. Women 7. Youth 8. Displaced people moving in to this region 9. NGOs/INGOs/ CSOs 10. Do not know / cannot answer 11. Other _____
D3	Which of these areas of conflict resolution and peacebuilding do you feel women should play an active role in?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Localised and community-led approaches 2. Empowering youth 3. Encouraging social cohesion 4. Peace negotiations 5. Political processes 6. Reconciliation efforts
D4	Which of these types of activities as organised by government/ NGOs might hold the <u>most potential</u> in reducing the likelihood of conflict in this county?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of local markets and jobs 2. Localised and community-led approaches 3. Empowering women 4. Empowering youth 5. Encouraging positive social behaviors 6. Improving access to food 7. Strengthening emergency response to natural disasters 8. Efforts and activities to bring different social groups together 9. Do not know / cannot answer 10. Other _____





D5	Which of these types of organised activities are most urgently required in your county?	Select all that apply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of local markets and jobs 2. Localised and community-Led approaches 3. Empowering women 4. Empowering youth 5. Encouraging positive social behaviors 6. Improving access to food 7. Strengthening emergency response to natural disasters 8. Activities to bring different social groups together 9. Do not know / cannot answer 10. Other _____
D6	What do you see as the greatest opportunity for any efforts in reducing conflict in this county?	Open text response	_____
D7	What do you see as the greatest threats to any efforts to reduce conflict in this county?	Open text response	_____
D8	Is there anything else you wish to share with us on this topic?	Open text response	_____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

Annex G: Conflict Analysis summaries per county

The summaries below provided an assessment of each county in terms of their current context, dimensions of conflict, and potential peacebuilding approaches.

Fashoda

Category	Overview
Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Much worse now.
Conflict likelihood	High.
Key conflict factors	Political tensions, food insecurity.





Key conflict actors	National army, youth, armed groups.
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Dialogue, market development and job creation, strengthen emergency response.
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Business community, women.
Additional details	Widespread accounts of food insecurity, tribal disputes, political agendas being played out. High levels of confidence in peacebuilding programmes, yet lowest incidence of urgency for introducing them.

Ulang

Category	Overview
Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Much worse now
Conflict likelihood	High
Key conflict factors	Political tensions, food insecurity
Key conflict actors	National Army, Youth, Armed groups
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Dialogue, Market development and job creation, Strengthen emergency response
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Business community, Women, Local communities, Local government, youth
Additional details	High level of inter-communal violence and revenge killings, marked by a lack of political will and authority to curb the same. Optimism about the utility of peacebuilding remains high. Involvement of business owners is most supported in Ulang (80%).

Renk

Category	Overview
Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Better now.





Conflict likelihood	High.
Key conflict factors	Tribalism, Cattle Raiding
Key conflict actors	Political leaders, local leaders.
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Market development and job creation.
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Cattle keepers, Women, Youth, Local leaders, Church leaders, local associations, local government.
Additional details	Despite relative stability, concerns about violence induced by tribal and ethnic grievances remain high. Job creation and market development is most emphasized (100%) to reduce incentives to take up arms.

Panyijjar

Category	Overview
Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Similar then and now.
Conflict likelihood	Medium.
Key conflict factors	Unemployment, climate change, tribalism, political agendas, revenge killings.
Key conflict actors	National army, local leaders, youth.
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Economic development, Dialogue, Peace conferences.
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Local leaders, Local Government, National Government, Women, Church leaders, Youth, General community.
Additional details	Concerns about the impact of climate change on food insecurity and displacement are present. Political tensions, particularly their impact on exacerbating tribal cleavages, remain salient. Yet, relatively, the county reported the least support for peacebuilding efforts targeting social cohesion (57%) and inclusion of women (65%), youth (68%), and using community-based approaches (47%).

Panyikang





Category	Overview
Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Similar then and now.
Conflict likelihood	Medium.
Key conflict factors	Tribalism, food insecurity, Climate change, Gun ownership.
Key conflict actors	Youth, local leaders, national army.
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Empower women and youth, Market development and job creation, Social cohesion activities.
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Youth, Women, Women's organizations - (Women Vision, Unity State Women Network), Local government. Local councillor, Farmers, Cattle keepers, Persons with Disabilities, Church leaders.
Additional details	Despite relative stability, fear of inter-communal violence remains high, aided by increasing cattle raiding, youth gun-ownership, and abductions. Within this context, peacebuilding is received positively with an emphasis on inclusive activities oriented at social cohesion and economic rehabilitation. Involvement of women (97%) and youth (100%) is most supported in Panyikang.

Rubkona

Category	Overview
Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Better now.
Conflict likelihood	High.
Key conflict factors	Cattle raiding, Food insecurity.
Key conflict actors	National army, land owners.
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Market development and job creation, Empower youth, Promote agriculture, Microfinance opportunities.
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Women, Youth, Business community, Cattle owners, Fishermen, Armed groups, Village local Associations, Local government, Local





	council.
Additional details	Repeated instances of communal violence and tensions with the RRAA, alongside poor socio-economic conditions, risk resumption of conflict despite relative calm at the moment. Peacebuilding, especially through women, is viewed positively. Though there is hesitance about involving local NGOs, CSO, and INGOs (8% support this).

Akobo

Category	Overview
Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Much worse now.
Conflict likelihood	High.
Key conflict factors	Cattle raiding, tribalism, political tension, gun ownership, armed groups, tribal leaders, political leaders.
Key conflict actors	Armed groups, tribal leaders, political leaders.
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Dialogue, reconciliation, economic development, constitution drafting, elections, local institution-building.
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Community leaders, local institutions, women's groups, mediators and advocates.
Additional details	Concern that the 2018 peace agreement is being eroded, through tribal disputes, resource competition, gun ownership. Akobo respondents are most likely to feel conflict is going to break out, or get worse (48%). Women are not positively viewed as suitable for taking on peacebuilding responsibility (25%) or having an active role in political processes (23%). Development of local markets and jobs is weakly supported (61%). The National Army is not viewed as suitable for taking on peacebuilding responsibility (13%). Development of local markets and jobs is least supported in Akobo (61%).

Nasir

Category	Overview
----------	----------





Situation now vs. 5 years ago	Much worse now.
Conflict likelihood	High.
Key conflict factors	Political tensions.
Key conflict actors	Political leaders, national army, youth.
Proposed peacebuilding activities	Dialogue, market development and job creation.
Proposed peacebuilding stakeholders	Local leaders, NGOs/INGOs/CSOs.
Comments	Nasir witnessed an outbreak of conflict in March 2025, between White Army and SSPDF, including aerial bombardment and use of barrel bombs. Across the eight counties, Nasir has the lowest level of confidence in peacebuilding programmes. Women are viewed as the least influential group with regard to reducing conflict (followed by business owners). Involvement of business owners is least supported in Nasir (7%).

Annex H: Tabular data relating to Figure 10

The table below presents tabular data as presented in Figure 10.

Surrey question: *How has daily life changed over the last five years in this local community?*

County	Do not know / cannot answer	Life has got much worse	Life has got worse	Life has improved a lot	Life has improved somewhat	No change
Akobo	1%	32%	26%	14%	20%	7%
Fashoda	1%	4%	24%	3%	8%	59%
Nasir		42%	38%			20%
Panyijiar		18%	15%	37%	24%	6%
Panyikang			3%	45%	19%	32%
Renk		13%	35%	6%	19%	26%
Rubkona	2%	3%	7%	22%	41%	25%
Ulang	8%	35%	43%	3%	10%	3%



