

Final review of the 'Civil society-led conciliation, LRA demobilization and peacebuilding' project 2011 - 15

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2011 - 15



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List of abbreviations

AC	Amnesty Commission, Uganda
AURTF	African Union Regional Task Force
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, Uganda
CAR	Central African Republic
CDJPR	Diocesan Commission of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, Aru DRC
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FdF	Forum de Femmes
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ICC	Inter-Church Committee
JUPEDEC	Jeunesse Unie pour la Protection de l'Environnement et le Developpement Comunautaire, Zemio CAR
JPC	Justice and Peace Commission
LPC	Local Peace Committee (Comité Local de Paix)
LRA	Lords Resistance Army
MONUSCO	UN Stabilization mission in the DRC
MTR	Mid-term review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RCSTF	Regional Civil Society Task Force
TJPC	The Justice and Peace Commission, Gulu Uganda
Totto Chan	Totto Chan Centre for Child Trauma, Juba South Sudan
ROFU	Reseau des Organizations de Femmes des Uélés, Dungu, DRC
SAIPED	Solidarity and Integral Assistance to Destitute People, Dungu DRC
SHWDA	Self Help Women Development Association, South Sudan
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

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Summary

The Norwegian Embassy in Kampala commissioned an end review of the “Civil Society led Conciliation LRA Demobilization and Peacebuilding program in LRA affected areas”, implemented by the London based NGO Conciliation Resources (C.R.) The review was conducted by a team from Norad, assisted by a South African consultant. Given the complex context of this project, the review team would like to emphasize the distinction between the methodological challenges in verifying and measuring the results on the one hand, and the outcome of the interventions on the other. In general, the team is therefore cautious in its observations, and the report should be read with this in mind.

Brief description.

For almost 30 years Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has caused death and suffering. Since the breakdown of the Juba peace process in 2008¹, the conflict spread to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan with grave humanitarian consequences. In these areas, the LRA can operate where there is little governmental presence. The LRA is today seen by the governments as a more peripheral problem, but the group is still a destabilizing factor in their area of operation. The aim of the CR project was to connect and train organisations and people at the village level, facilitate cross-border learning and networking, and enable the local partners to engage in peace building, mitigate the threat of LRA and do advocacy towards authorities at the local, national and international level. Over the project period other social and political conflicts has captured much of the attention of national governments and the international community. The LRA is today reportedly consisting of 100-150 soldiers, in addition to women and children. Nevertheless, it is a fact that LRA continue to terrorize parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR). In 2016 it was reported 191 attacks by LRA, 25 people were killed and 715 persons abducted, some of which have been released after a shorter period of time².

Performance of the project.

We have attempted to answer whether the project has led to a generally higher self-confidence, voice and courage for the target groups that may be applicable to security threats of today. Although the empirical support is limited, there are indications that this broadly is the case. Secondly, we have reason to believe that the project has contributed to a more common ground between civil society in the LRA affected areas. We are reasonably confident that the training and accompaniment by C.R. were well received and were a considerable support to civil society actors.

Compared to the objective and the outcome statements the project seems to have given significantly more tangible outcomes on the community level than the advocacy work on national and regional level. Achievements have been made in relation to local peace building, establishing and maintaining early warning systems and changing people’s attitudes towards LRA returnees. In particular, the establishment of Local Peace Committees (LPC) seems to have been successful and contributed to conflict resolution. The committees have also been instrumental in acting as an intermediary between the population and the local government, improving the relation between them.

¹ In 2006-08 negotiations were ongoing in Juba, South Sudan, between the Government of Uganda and the LRA to strike a peace deal. Norway, among others, funded the peace talks.

² According to the LRA Crisis Tracker by Invisible Children and The Resolve
<https://www.lracrisistracker.com/dashboard>

Regarding the effect of support to various women's groups and organisations, stakeholders do report that women in the project area today are more involved in peace building than 10 years ago. Our findings do clearly indicate that these groups have also contributed to increased acceptance of LRA returnees and assistance to these. However, we cannot fully attribute these change to the project, as there has also been a numerous other actors working for this. Despite the considerable efforts for capacity strengthening and organisational development, it has been difficult to assess the lasting effects of this related to the performance of these organisations.

Even if the cross border meetings seems to have had a positive effect on the level of knowledge, and strengthened the partner's advocacy and involvement in peace building, the actual effect of the advocacy efforts have been hard to assess. There are, on the other hand, examples of these efforts contributing to policy changes, like the Ugandan Amnesty Act, and to keep the LRA problem on the agenda among national, and to some extent regional and international actors.

Unintended effects. Some positive unintended effects are reported, such as increased food production and local conflict resolution in areas not related to LRA. We have not come across identifiable negative effects. However, given the nature of the project, some unmet expectations among certain target groups, would be likely.

Theory of change (ToC). The overall ToC has certain weaknesses. However, in line with this theory we do find some proof of mobilisation at the community level leading to increased engagement in peacebuilding and advocacy, but little to suggest major policy changes. When it comes to relevance and justification for the more specific ToC'es the picture is mixed. Some are reasonable assumptions that we find justified. Others are in our view unrealistic, or we do not find evidence to support them.

Effectiveness and efficiency. The overall development approach emphasising partnership, accompaniment, participation and a bottom-up approach is in line with international best practices. The sustainability seems significantly stronger at the community level, compared to the national and regional level, were activities like cross border dialogue and advocacy will not be continued without external funding and a strong coordinating organisation. We have not seen a specific needs assessment in the documentation as a rationale for the type of intervention that C.R. represents, however we assess the project to be relevant in the given situation, especially in DRC and CAR.

Changing context and adaptability

Regarding the adaptability to a changing situation on the ground, the project seems to have been able to adjust. The approach to voice the concerns of people contributes to this. The shift of most of the local project activities to CAR and DRC is an example of applied flexibility. The documentation could however be clearer whether the project "road map"³ was revisited, new partners invited, other training modules introduced and so on, or one sticks to the established formula.

Value for money

It has not been possible to do a meaningful analysis of the cost effectiveness, due to lack of detailed project accounts. CR's financial system has not been able to produce financial reports, broken down to detailed expenses on country level or detailed budget lines with unit costs. This is a significant weakness. The Embassy could, on the other hand also have included requirements in the agreements that CR should be able to produce such detailed accounts on request.

³ Our expression

1. Introduction

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kampala commissioned Norad to conduct a final review of the ‘Civil society-led conciliation, LRA demobilization and peacebuilding’ project in Uganda, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR) (November 2011 - November 2015). The project’s overall objective was ‘to enable communities and their representatives across LRA-affected areas to make more informed and effective contributions towards ending conflicts’. The project was implemented by the British organization Conciliation Resources (CR) in cooperation with local partners. Norway has contributed NOK 21 350 00 allocated through two agreements with Conciliation Resources, financed from different budget votes (Peace/reconciliation, and Regional allocation for Africa) and managed by the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala. The project had also some funding from other sources, but with substantially less money than the Norwegian contribution. The Belgian Embassy in Kampala initially (in 2011) pledged to support the project with £ 272 700 per year for three years, but we did not find any proof of this pledge being honoured. The British Directorate for International Development, DfID contributed £ 153 055, while Barings Foundation supported with £ 135 000 and UNICEF gave £117 879 for the project.

The purpose of the project was to connect and train organisations and people at the village level, facilitate cross-border learning and networking, and thus enable the local partners to engage in peace building and mitigate the threat of LRA. In addition engage in advocacy towards authorities at the local, national and international level. The objectives of the project were stated the following way in the project document:

Development goal: To contribute to a non-violent end to the LRA conflict and a peacebuilding process that is just, sustainable and seeks to meet international human rights standards, and the needs of conflict-affected peoples.

Project goal: Support and enable communities and their representatives across LRA-affected areas to increase their peacebuilding advocacy regarding return from LRA ranks and increase collaboration across borders in the region in pursuit of a more constructive peacebuilding process.

2. Methodology and limitations

The team consisted of Gisle Hagen and Hans Inge Corneliussen, both from Norad, aided by a South African consultant, Litlhare Rabele, engaged to liaise with local women and women organisations involved in the project. The team were in Uganda 13th to 20th September. During this period one of the team members visited Aru and Dungu in the north-eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The African consultant organised a consultation with representatives from some of the involved women groups in Kampala 2nd to 5th December. This gathering consisted of representatives from South Sudan, DRC and CAR. No victims of LRA violence were present – due to practical difficulties.

Methodologies applied in this review has included document reviews, interviews with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and persons with knowledge of the project or LRA issues in Europe or other parts of Africa, and meeting with key staff and other stakeholders from Uganda, DRC, CAR and South Sudan, mostly using semi-structured interviews.

The physical size of the “LRA affected areas” is vast, roughly the size of France, covering various ethnic, religious and linguistic communities. It was only possible to cover a selection of the partners and visit two geographical areas in North-Eastern DRC. Since it was not feasible for the team to

connect with a significant number of individuals at the village level to listen to how they view the outcome of the activities of the project, the assessment of the effectiveness is largely based on statements of persons engaged by the project or individuals with knowledge of the project and the situation in the four countries.

3. Assessment

3.1 Performance of the project

The project operated in a volatile context that for decades has been marked by conflict and violence, and as a result, substantial humanitarian needs. It has to be taken into account that achieving sustainable results under such circumstances is substantially more difficult than operating in other poor, but stable countries. The three expected outcomes of the project were adjusted and clarified during the project period. This was done in line with the advices in the mid-term review of 2012. We will base our assessment on the modified project summary version from 2014, attached to the Addendum II of the contract between The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kampala and Conciliation Resources, dated 11th September 2014. Conciliation Resources state 3 outcomes of the project⁴:

- Communities better understand the threat and impact of LRA and positively contribute to the efforts to mitigate them.
- Women and women's organizations are empowered and take active roles in addressing the causes and effects of violence.
- Civil society actors exchange information regularly among themselves within and across borders and conduct effective advocacy with policymakers at the local, national and international levels.

3.1.1 Communities better understand the threat and impact of LRA and positively contribute to the efforts to mitigate them.

A key element when it comes to strengthen local communities ability to mitigate the threat from LRA has been the establishment of Local Peace Committees (LPC). The project initiated/supported 21 LPC's to be formed in north-eastern DRC and 5 in South Sudan⁵. The committee members have been elected by the communities and consists of both men and women. Initially the LPC's mandate was:

- To gather information of LRA activities, map insecurity and provide early warning to other communities so that they could take necessary precautions.
- To report security incidents and local conflicts to security forces, UN missions and local authorities.
- Awareness raising to change the attitudes of the communities in order to create acceptance and reintegrate the LRA returnees.

The LPC meets on a daily basis to assess the information they have collected and make reports. According to informants in DRC, it took some years before the population understood that the LPC's could be a useful tool for them. Initially many thought that the LPC would be delivering certain goods and services, like other NGO's. Interviews with stakeholders from different locations confirm that the

⁴ Even if the definitions of the outcome of the project were adjusted during the project period, it did not substantially change the project activities or working methods.

⁵ Some of these LPCs had been initiated by local churches prior to the project.

LPC's now are recognised and have a high standing in the communities. The local population have found them to be very useful also for solving other local conflicts, for example disputes over land, instead of bringing them to the formal courts. A sign of the relevance of the LPC has been the fact that neighbouring communities also want to have LPC's established. One effect of the LPC reported from community representatives and outside observers was the improved cooperation between the communities on one hand, and the local government and the security forces on the other hand. The LPC's were said to have acted as a bridge between the two sides. The result has been increased contact and communication. The local authorities also sometimes ask the LPC to try to solve local conflicts. The LPC's have received training and follow-up from CR and its local partners, and some of the members have also participated in the cross-border meetings organised under this project. It is however a challenge, according to LPC members we talked to, that they have no funds for activities, for example in assisting LRA returnees. Another challenge is that the legitimacy and success of the LPC sometimes have been perceived as a threat by local government and/or traditional leaders, since the LPC's to some extent operate within their area of responsibility.

Some partners mentioned that a positive effect of the project had been better coordination and cooperation between civil society groups working on LRA issues. It was also reported that the project had made the local population more aware of their rights and made it more difficult for formal and informal leaders to exploit people's ignorance.

Previously (in the first years after LRA shifted towards DRC/CAR/Western South Sudan from 2008) it was a problem that persons who escaped from LRA and came back to their village were received with hostility and sometimes even killed. Local radio stations, LPC's and other local organisations have been supported by the CR project to create awareness and spread messages communicating that the returnees are also victims and that they did not voluntarily join LRA. Other civil society actors, not linked to this project, have spread the same message. Because of this persons associated with the project have sometimes been accused of being LRA supporters, since they advocate for receiving the former LRA soldiers well. Attitudes towards LRA returnees have reportedly changed over the years and abductees are today more welcomed, even if they still might face problems. This is confirmed by civil society organisations in both North-Eastern DRC and Western Equatoria (South Sudan). Land and housing remained a huge challenge for many of the LRA returnees in all the 4 countries. In addition to illiteracy and the psychological problems many of the returnees face. The LPC's have tried to gather support for and assist the returnees with food for a limited period. It is however a challenge that they are not able to assist further in getting education, vocational training, land and psycho-social support. There are other NGO's caring for such needs, but the assistance is limited and insufficient. It is also a challenge that civil society organisations apply different approaches to psycho-social assistance.

3.1.2 Women and women's organisation are empowered and take active roles in addressing the causes and effects of violence.

Even if the LPC's to a large extent have an even distribution of both male and female participants in the committees, members experienced that women would be hesitant to bring women issues to the LPC's. Because of this CR took an initiative to establish Forum de Femme (FdF) that were linked to and cooperated closely with the LPC. In DRC these groups have contributed to gathering of information about LRA movements and activities and warning communities when a LRA group is approaching. This has made it easier for people to know when it is safe to move in the area and farm in the fields. The FdF have also initiated communal farming. This means that instead of each farmer

going to her or his field, the farmers go together and work in one plot one day and then another plot the next day. Farmers working together are less vulnerable for LRA attacks and abductions. The FdF have also sometimes been involved in solving local conflicts, including on the request of the local authorities.

In addition to the FdF CR has supported a number of women organisations in the 4 countries; by strengthening both their core organisational skills (project cycle, use of logframes and workplans, financial management and monitoring and evaluation), and their expertise in peacebuilding activities such as information gathering, conflict analysis, early warning mechanisms and advocacy. Many of these groups engaged with the traditional and religious leaders to spread the word of peace and reconciliation.

The involved women organisations in the four countries have worked for acceptance and peaceful coexistence between LRA returnees and the communities. Many of those returned still face discrimination and poverty since they do not have access to production resources such as land and capital. They reported that almost all returnees that have been in captivity for a long time are illiterate, since they were abducted at a young age. The women groups have, to a varying degree, assisted LRA returnees with food, medical support, basic skills-training and psycho-social work. Most of the interviewed stakeholders in DRC and South Sudan were of the opinion that women in the project area today are more involved in peace building than 10 years ago, before the first phase of the project started. Since the CR project has been one among a number of initiatives trying to assist LRA affected communities, this change cannot solely be attributed to this project⁶. However, given the relatively long time the project has been ongoing, it is likely that in the locations where CR has had many partners and activities, the CR project has contributed significantly to the involvement of women.

3.1.3 Civil society actors exchange information regularly among themselves within and across borders and conduct effective advocacy with policymakers at the local, national and international levels.

The understanding of LRA in the affected communities in the 4 countries was not obvious, and has been interpreted differently. In the words of one reliable informant: “One particular dilemma was that depending on which country you were in, you would get a different perspective/analysis of what LRA is. Rumours ruled the discussions. There was no information flow between the four countries. Despite being neighbours, most of them had never met, had no trust in each other.” Bringing representatives of different groups and organisations in the four countries together has been one of the key activities of the project. The purpose of these meetings was to establish relations, share experiences, do joint training on advocacy and other themes, develop common messages and lay the foundation for continued contact across borders. Reportedly the cross border meetings have contributed to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the LRA problem and reduced stereotypes among the participating organisations and groups. We have not been able to establish to what extent the learning from these gatherings have been spread by the participants within the

⁶ It has not been possible, within the limits of this review, to establish a comprehensive overview of other projects targeting LRA affected communities in various locations spread out across a wide geographical area in 4 countries. Thus, the review team do not have sufficient evidence to conclude on the extent of coordination between the CR project and other initiatives. However, in Dungu in DRC it was reported by local stakeholders that the cooperation and coordination between organisations addressing the LRA problem were good, and that CR and its partners contributed substantially to this (ref. 3.1.1 page 8).

groups they represent or their home community, although we have reason to believe that this happened to some extent (see annex 5).

From 2012 to 2015, CR and its partners disseminated 15 issues of the newsletter “Voice of Peace”, which explained conflict dynamics and showcased peacebuilding efforts in the LRA affected areas. 600 paper copies were distributed in all 4 countries every 4th month. In addition, content from the newsletters were broadcasted from various local radio stations. An electronic copy was also distributed to 2,700 national and international policymakers in country capitals worldwide. Respondents in the DRC pointed out that it had been challenging to reach out with the publication in a large area with poor infrastructure. The radio messages reached further, but not the whole LRA affected area. Illiteracy and the fact that many do not have a radio were also mentioned as a hindrance. All these contributed to a somewhat random outreach. It was, on the other hand, reported that the “Voice of Peace” broadcast had contributed to wider acceptance of LRA returnees in the communities where their message had reached.

At the start of the project the National government and Western diplomatic missions in DRC did not see the LRA presence in North-Eastern Congo as a big problem, and rather wanted to underplay the effect of the LRA. CR and the partners have throughout the project period been involved in targeted advocacy towards the Government in Kinshasa. This has included a number of meetings with government officials presenting reports documenting the impact of LRA activities in various locations. According to local partner representatives in DRC, the effect of this has been a change in attitudes of the FARDC in North-Eastern DRC, and a recognition of the problem by the central and provincial governments. Advocacy has reportedly also been carried out by CR’s partners in various locations and has made local authorities more supportive of conflict resolution efforts.

Advocacy activities were carried out targeting African Union (AU) and especially the Regional Task Force and the International Working Group on LRA (EU and USA leading countries). The messages have for example aimed at mobilising these actors to step up their engagement towards the LRA returnees, act on early warnings of LRA activities and do monitoring of genderbased violence. A variety of factors, both domestic and regional/international, influenced AU and individual countries position and engagement towards the LRA problem, and other political and security dynamics seems to be far more influential than the advocacy efforts of this projects. It is a fact that the attention towards the LRA issue has dropped over the last years and that few countries have been willing to contribute with troops to the AU Task Force. Even the main contributor, Uganda, is planning to withdrawing. Admittedly, it is possible that the various advocacy efforts of CR and partners have slowed down this development, and that it has kept the LRA issue higher on the agenda than it would otherwise have been. When it comes to the advocacy to prevent the suggested scrapping the Ugandan amnesty act, CR partners and other civil society actors seems to have been successful in the sense that the law was revised and maintained. However, we have not been able to establish if this success can be attributed to the work of CR and its allies, or to what extent other factors contributed to this result. At the policy level, in the three other countries, different attitudes and policies are apparent regarding amnesty, rule of law and development challenges. The amnesty issue is solved differently, with Uganda as the most “generous” country; roughly 30 000 persons are to this day pardoned by the Amnesty Commission, of which 15 000 are former LRA members.

3.2 Unintended effects

Fundamentally, development initiatives aim at making changes in a community or society. But most interventions also have unplanned side-effects, negative or positive. In the CR project the unintended effects reported by stakeholders, are positive. We do not conclude that there were no negative consequences, but find few indications.

Increased food production. According to women's groups in DRC, the security for local farmers (mainly women), was strengthened since women organisations involved in the CR project encouraged the farmers to go together and labour in one plot at the time, instead of each farmer going to her or his field alone. This approach of communal farming made people less vulnerable for LRA abductions, but also had a positive side effect increasing the food production in the villages.

Local conflict resolution. As the communities trust in the LPC's increased, this made people approach the committees with other issues, not related to the LRA problem. The LPC's have for example been involved in trying to solve conflicts over natural resources and between Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) and the local community.

Youths less involved in illegal poaching. Youths from communities living in areas bordering the Garamba National Park have from time to time been involved in illegal poaching inside the park. Engaging in this sort of activity most youths have not been aware that local authorities and security forces have been viewing anyone hunting for animals inside Garamba as LRA soldiers or potential LRA sympathisers. Awareness about this, and also increased knowledge in the communities living around Garamba on where the border for the park actually run, have deterred youths from this sort of illegal activity.

3.3 Theory of change

The overall theory of change (ToC) is based on the assumption that supporting mobilisation of grassroots organisations, village elders, religious leaders and other respected community representatives for conflict prevention and transformation can lead to social, economic and political change. We find this assumption to be somewhat simplistic and we do not see any discussion in the project documents pointing at the challenges of such an approach⁷. This ToC might be the correct in certain situations, however, the willingness or not of local or national political leaders to change policies towards LRA is dependent on a wide variety of factors that CR and their partners cannot control. It is also a question of these civil society organisations' ability to influence and the responsiveness of the political actors.

CR operates with a number of more specific theories of change.

A) Cross-border dialogue helps the partners in the 4 countries to learn from each other, analyse and understand the situation better, which in turn lead to better and more effective peace building locally and more effective advocacy. This seems to be a reasonable assumption since it gives representatives of local groups and organisations with limited access to information on the situation in neighbouring countries the possibility to meet an exchange experiences and ideas. We do also find evidence that

⁷ The overall theory of change was stated as follows in the project proposal from Conciliation Resources to Norwegian Embassy, 2011 : "We believe that if respected community representatives can maintain extensive networks at all levels, including with Track I actors, then there will be better opportunities for creative and sustainable responses, informed by the experience and needs of affected communities, to resolving the political, social and economic dimensions of the conflict (at both official and unofficial levels)."

the project has led to more effective peacebuilding and advocacy. Even if cross border dialogue is not the only reason for this, is it likely that it has been a contributing factor. We find this ToC to be justified.

B) *Engaging diaspora Acholi groups and individuals that have a potential to influence the LRA leadership to engage in peacemaking.* We doubt the realism of this. After the Juba peace talks broke down in 2008 and LRA moved its main area of operation to DRC/CAR, the contact with and influence of the diaspora has diminished. Today Joseph Kony and his top officers have very little contact with the outside world through electronic communication, because they are afraid of being traced. We have not found evidence of CR and partners trying to engage the Acholi diaspora linked to LRA. This ToC is not justified.

C) *Increased participation of conflict affected communities, combined with action research, creates a strong foundation for advocacy that in turn can influence regional and international governments policies and practice.* This ToC is quite similar to the overall ToC and while we see from various project reports that CR and its partners have been successful in conveying their messages to both regional and international actors, measuring the effect of this is methodologically difficult. However, CR's combined efforts over a number of years might have contributed to keeping LRA issues higher on various governments agenda than it otherwise would have been. We find this ToC to be justified to some extent.

D) *Increasing levels of personal communication between governments officials and LRA leads to shift in government policy.* This ToC is quite similar to B) above, and the realities on the ground has made this ToC unrealistic.

E) *Radio messages will shift public attitudes, challenge stereotypes and build tolerance.* Changing people's perceptions and attitudes is a complex process that takes time. These messages must compete with other voices in the community that might have a different or contradicting message. Nevertheless, these messages might have an effect if sustained over a longer period of time and being complemented by other activities in the communities. Examples from DRC and South Sudan suggests that attitudes have changed among a substantial part of the population in LRA affected areas. We find it plausible that the radio broadcasts have contributed to this, but such messages alone will not necessarily lead to changed attitudes. This ToC is thus partly justified.

F) *Establishing and maintaining extensive networks at all levels there will be more opportunities for creative and sustainable responses to social and political unrest.*⁸ This theory focuses mainly on the cross-border communication, and seems to entail risk at two levels; 1) The region is linguistically, religiously, politically and ethnically diverse⁹, and 2) cross-border meetings and workshops are logistically challenging and dependent on external financial support. This ToC is only partly justified.

3.4 Effectiveness and efficiency

In the "End of Project Report"¹⁰, CR points out the following key achievements concerning effectiveness;

- The project was effective in delivering tangible results that positively contributed to its purpose, namely to support and enable communities and their representatives across LRA

⁸ Revised project proposal for a 3- year allocation of NOK 18 mill by Norwegian Embassy, November 2011.

⁹ As pointed out by the 2013 planning template, aided by an external consultant.

¹⁰ Narrative Report November 2011-November 2015

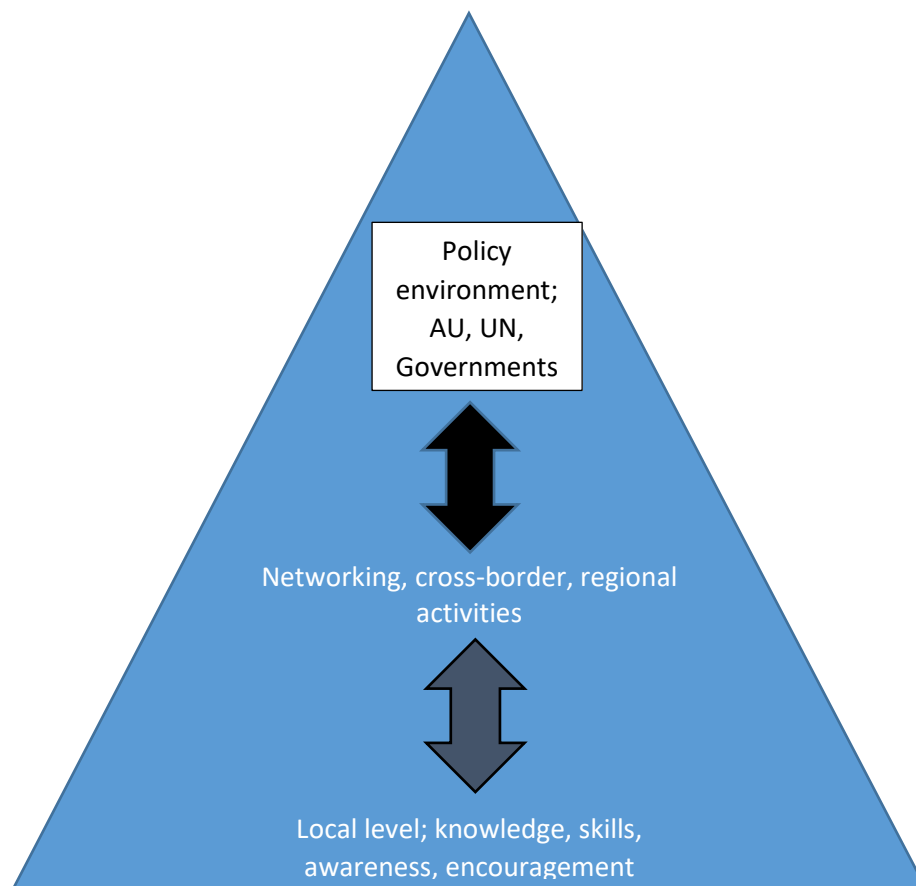
affected areas to increase their peacebuilding advocacy regarding return from LRA ranks and increase collaboration on cross-border peacebuilding and reconciliation.

This was done by (our numbering, does not indicate importance)

- 1) Changing the international policy (AU, African governments, UN and NGOs) response, from a militaristic approach, to ending the LRA through civil society engagement, return and reintegration.
- 2) Campaign to reinstate the Ugandan Amnesty Law
- 3) Sustained international attention to the LRA conflict
- 4) Direct facilitation of return and reintegration
- 5) Strengthened civil society engagement with local government
- 6) Increased cross-border collaboration among civil society and state officials
- 7) Regional Civil Society Task Force (RCSTF); influential cross-border advocacy platform
- 8) Voice of Peace: strengthening cross-border advocacy and conflict understanding

The Mid-term review (MTR) of October 2013 concluded that the cross-border exchange and networking are effective and innovative, in the sense that the project a) links local movements to each other, b) connects with authorities, and c) connects with the international community.

The available information suggests that the project was effective at the local level, then gradually decreasing at the cross border level towards the Policy environment. Without being explicitly formulated in the project documentation, the project may be illustrated as a pyramid:



At the local level, we have counted approx. 12 partners involved altogether, evenly split between each of the countries comprising the "LRA affected areas". The effectiveness of the project is partly

hierarchic/vertical and partly horizontal; it must be found at individual level, community level, the four national levels¹¹, and partly at the international level.

The flexible nature of the project is indicated by the fact that a given thematic issue may be raised in the project and lead to a certain change in one country, but not in another. Consequently, we note that certain questions are solved differently across the borders and that governments take different views. As an example, a widespread amnesty for former LRA militants was introduced in Uganda. To our knowledge such an amnesty has not been issued by governments in the three other countries. Other sensitive issues could be mentioned.

CR applied a partnership approach, in other words working through local partners instead of establishing local CR offices for implementation. Regarding cross-border meetings and regional and international advocacy CR had a more direct role in facilitating these sort of activities, but at the same time making sure that the partners were given a platform to exchange experiences and tell their stories. CR were given credit for not only treating the partners as implementing agents, but also assisting in organisational development and building capacities in the area of peace building and advocacy. The approach of CR is to a large extent following best practices for working in partnership, including accompaniment and support over time, instead of just one of courses and trainings that often have little or no effect.

We note that the bottom of the pyramid is more informal and consists of organizations with less institutional structure or formalized routines. In the middle of the figure, it is our understanding that the RCSTF is the creation of CR and enables the partnering NGOs for each community to exchange experiences across borders. This indicates a certain effectiveness of the project.

The JUPEDEC case

In the Central African Republic, a country outside the main sphere of Norwegian development aid, the organization “Jeunesse Unie pour la Protection de l’Environnement et Developpement Communautaire”, connected with Conciliation Resources in 2010 through an MOU, the contents of which are not known to us. To our knowledge JUPEDEC has received funding and technical support from CR and is the only organization in CAR with networks in communities affected by LRA. It has grown into a considerable change agent, engaged in development projects, climate issues and has established working relation to the authorities.

Today, it seems a skilled and committed organization.

JUPEDEC informs that for every project they undertake, a protocol is entered into with the central government in Bangui, stating joint actions for follow-up.

The choice of JUPEDEC as a partner seems a wise one. However, the explanation why a certain organization is selected as a partner is not entirely convincing. The project proposal of November 2011 suggests that there is a wide selection of candidates, and that CR identifies the suitable partners through an analysis of context and matching competencies in a formalized, open process.

At least in the CAR, we assume that CR simply approaches the most visible NGOs and agrees to a cooperation. This is legitimate.

As mentioned in the MTR, certain LRA affected areas are in extreme deprivation, leading to

¹¹ Uganda, South-Sudan, CAR, and DRC.

A number of the partner organizations are engaged in service delivery (Totto Chan, JUPEDDEC) outside the project. In many cases, selecting organizations engaged in service delivery gives legitimacy to advocacy, peacebuilding and human rights awareness. We have no evidence that this has been done more extensively.

It is crucial for the assessment of the outcome of the project that we have an opinion on whether the local level is sufficiently powerful and coherent to push the upper levels of the pyramid. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is the case, although - as mentioned - the effect appears weaker the higher up in the pyramid you move. The proposed interaction and two-way communication between the bottom and the top is plausible, but there is little evidence to show what was informed, discussed from the local movements, then decided and implemented from top (the policy environment). There are a number of issues and themes dealt with at the various levels - but we have difficulties in seeing how a specific issue has risen through the hierarchy and entailed normative change or reform. However, this may be a question of reporting structure, rather than realities. To take one example; activity 3 in the 2011 annual progress report (*working with partners to resolve emerging disputes; land disputes and IDP/community disputes*) is a highly relevant topic, but how was this crucial question covered by the networks, and did the project find common ground in the LRA affected areas?

During the project period and according to the international media, the LRA-challenge has gradually faded while other conflicts and security challenges have increased. To what extent respectively a militaristic response or a softer civil-society approach has contributed to receding LRA movement can still be argued, but as pointed out in the MTR, the project has served to bring attention and understanding of the context.

Even if the rationale for the project is centred around LRA, our view is that the effect of the project goes beyond any particular militant group.

The number of people who have attended the cross-border meetings vary from 50 - 100¹². At first glance, the numbers seem impressive, and the topics on the agenda (the outputs) were relevant and in line with the project proposal.

3.4.1 Development approach and sustainability

Most respondents were of the opinion that national, and especially regional and international advocacy would not be continued after the project ended. We support this view because it requires financial resources and a leading and coordinating agency like CR. Also cross border dialogue in the form of physical meetings will most likely not continue for the same reasons. Sharing of information between partners in the 4 countries might be carried on, however, we got the impression that this happened only to a limited degree. Respondents pointed out that lack of mobile phone coverage or access to phones, even less access to internet and also people not being familiar with using internet, were some of the reasons for this.

The dissemination of information and messages through the Voice of Peace and radio programs are not sustainable and is not very likely to continue after the project. Even so, the communication through these media seems to have contributed to a more lenient attitude towards LRA returnees in the communities. This change in attitude might be lasting, but it will also depend on how the returnees are reintegrated into the community. The sharp decline in funding of psycho-social and material support makes this harder.

¹² See 2011 Annual Progress Report by outputs

The most sustainable part of the project seems to be the activities in communities, in particular the LPC and the FdF. Most respondents were of the opinion that the peace committees would continue long after the project ended, and so far this seems to be the case. A major reason for this is that the committees are widely accepted and that they have proven effective to also solve other issues not related to the LRA problem. The LPC has also established and maintained a relationship with traditional leaders and local government officials and representatives for the security sector in the area.

One component of the CR project has been to strengthen women groups and women organisations in the project area with the aim of making them more able to be involved in peace building. It has not been possible to do a broad assessment of the results of these activities. However, there are indications that women and women groups are more involved in this area now. CR continues to engage with the local partners on LRA monitoring and support to women's groups, and their assistance of returned women and children, but at a much lower level than when the project was operational. The sustainability of this component is however uncertain if or when this support stops.

3.4.2 Relevance

Whether formulated as goals, purposes or outcomes, the project is relevant to the context. This was for example underlined in the RCSTF meeting in Bangui, CAR in September 2012, where the non-violent approach was deemed to have gained ground¹³. Even if LRA as a movement with a strong political and religious agenda, must be regarded as diminished, with the remaining activists in survival mode depending on poaching and illegal trade, the group still poses a significant security threat in the areas it operates and causes fear and pain to the local population. We see the project as relevant because it has contributed to local communities ability to mitigate the threat of LRA in a better way, facilitating a better environment for LRA-returnees, and contribute to local peace building and advocacy. In addition, the areas where LRA operates are underdeveloped, deprived of social services, weak with regard to rule of law and therefore vulnerable - shown clearly when movements such as LRA appears.

3.5 Changing situations, flexibility and exit strategy

During the project period 2011-15, the LRA-problem and international attention has gradually faded while other conflicts and security challenges in the Region have increased. The CR project has reportedly adapted the annual workplans to the situation in the project area at the time. Even if there are still challenges in Northern Uganda regarding LRA returnees, the terror group has not been a threat to the area since 2008. On this background CR stopped project activities in Northern Uganda in 2013. However, the extensive experiences of Ugandan partners addressing the LRA problem have been utilised in the project, and CR has brought partners from the other countries to Northern Uganda so that they can learn from their experiences. This has been relevant and useful for representatives from the other 3 countries.

Western Equatoria in South Sudan experienced increased LRA attacks after the peace negotiations between the group and the Government of Uganda broke down in first part of 2008. The threat from LRA towards the civilian population has however diminished during the project period for two reasons. First the number of attacks has gone down as LRA has moved further into DRC, CAR and Sudan (South Darfur). Secondly the communities organised self-defence groups (Arrow boys) and the

¹³ Agreed Minutes of the Annual meeting between Conciliation Resources and Norwegian Embassy 28 January 2013.

South Sudanese army (SPLA) did also challenge LRA. According to a local women's organisation, not involved in the CR project, but based in Western Equatoria where LRA operated, self-defence groups are the main reason why attacks and abductions were reduced. This organisation also reported that radio messages and other awareness raising initiatives under the CR project had contributed to former LRA abductees being better received in the communities. From 2014/15 other security challenges have been far more prominent in Western Equatoria than the LRA threat. It can be argued that CR should have scaled down further in South Sudan and focused its attention on the more severe situation in DRC and CAR.

LRA is still creating insecurity by attacking villages and abducting people from communities in North-Eastern DRC and South-Eastern CAR. Even if the threat in general has gone down, so has also the international support to organisations working with the LRA affected communities. Thus there continues to be a gap between the need for assistance to communities and individuals that are victims of LRA and the assistance available.

Also in the DRC there were signs of change in the project as a consequence of a changing situation. When the United States supported military operation also started to send radio messages targeting LRA members and encouraging them to defect and return, CR stopped its transmission of similar messages. When the Local Peace Committees experienced that women would be hesitant to bring women's issues to the LPC's, CR took an initiative to establish Forum de Femme (FdF) which are reported to have made it easier for women to raise issues important to them.

"Flexibility" can be interpreted in various ways. It is obvious that a project covering such a vast geographical area, in four different countries of which three are in a very fragile situation, one must be flexible to get anything done at all. As the project documentation points out, the LRA and similar movements go cross-border, enabling a civil society response that matches the asymmetrical nature of the threat. The documentation emphasizes that the project has brought awareness to stakeholders, that the government lacks the capacity to intervene, protect and support and consequently that community, family, teachers must step in¹⁴.

Flexibility points at the tricky question of exit, and preparing the donors and beneficiaries for the day when external finance is exhausted. We do not see evidence of indicators that tells the stakeholders when mission is completed, or any planned exit strategy to prepare for the discontinuation of the external funding. CR has, on the other hand continued supporting most partners, also after this project ended, but at a considerably lower level.

3.6 Value for money

Financial reports from the project has been received by the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala in line with the project agreement between CR and the Embassy. We find these reports to general to provide any meaningful assessment of the cost effectiveness of the LRA project. We have a number of times requested CR's head office in London for detailed project account that for example could allow us to assess if the costs of a cross-border meeting were reasonable, analyse travelling expenses or the indirect costs of the project. According to the finance department of CR the accounting system they have had until now has not been able to produce such detailed project reports, broken down to detailed expenses on country level or detailed budget lines with unit costs. We have no reason to believe that CR has been trying to hide this sort of information, but it is surprising that an INGO of such standing is not capable of producing detailed accounting information. The Embassy

¹⁴ Annual report 2014, page 13. Statement from South Sudan

could, on the other hand also have included requirements in the agreements that CR should be able to produce more detailed project accounts on request.

According to the Annual Report 2015, CR has 12 partners in East and Central Africa, roughly the same as CR has in Caucasus or Southeast Asia. We presume the cost of the program increases with the number of partners. There are, in other words, benefits from increasing the networks, but one can hardly speak of economies of scale in a financial sense bringing down the unit cost as the range of partners increase. This does not indicate that the cost effectiveness is low. A key area of the project is to connect various organizations and its success depends on its outreach. What is decisive is whether the number of partners is sufficient to turn the “tipping point”, giving the project the needed momentum for a game-changer. Even if the East and Central Africa program is the most expensive one in the portfolio, this does not necessarily mean that the cost effectiveness is low.

We find that one of the challenges related to the cost efficiency is the resources required for what we consider an overload of reporting – as listed in Annex 1. The formats, terminology and scheduling of reports are intensive and have changed during the course of project – probably at a high administrative cost for Conciliation Resources and its partners. At the same time, there is little evidence of assessment and response to these reports from the funding side – other than quite general Agreed Minutes from annual meetings. The reporting requirements of Norwegian development aid would have been met with an annual narrative report and audited accounts for the project.

4. Recommendations

We have chosen to sum up the recommendations as follows below, since the various topics of the project are closely connected.

For organisations implementing similar initiatives:

- A development approach like the one CR has used in this project, based on partnership, accompaniment and participation, should also be the foundation for new projects.
- A long-term engagement in local peace building and development activities at the community level is a considerable advantage for advocacy on such issues at a higher level.
- Before engaging in national or international advocacy the chances of realistically achieving positive changes for the targeted population should be carefully assessed.
- Establish concrete objectives, output and indicators that can be realistically achieved within the given time frame of the project.
- During the planning phase; engage in a critical discussion with local partners on the theories of change to be applied in the project, in order to establish a realistic ToC.
- The coordinating partner should be able to provide detailed project accounts on demand from the embassy, auditors or external evaluators.
- Formulate an exit strategy that is realistic. Identify components in the project that are unsustainable beyond the project period.
- Analyse the potential partners to understand their community base; which organizations do not have a broader constituency, which are representing traditional power structures, which are agents of change, who are service providers?

For the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala or donor agency:

- In a situation where many donors withdraw from supporting LRA returnees, continued support to livelihoods, job creation and psychosocial support in Northern Uganda, could be considered.
- It might be considered to continue funding those parts of the project that were sustainable and have had significant impact on stabilisation, like the local peace committees. Such a support could be relatively cost – effective.
- Reporting requirements should be limited to annual narrative and financial reports, if there are not any particular reasons for a more frequent reporting. The reporting requirements might be aligned between the donors in order not to overstretch the capacity of the implementing partners.
- Project agreements should include a paragraph that state the agreement partner's responsibility to provide detailed project accounts on demand from the embassy, auditors or external evaluators.
- More collaboration at outset between an Embassy and implementing agency on project design and monitoring and evaluation frameworks might be a low-cost, high-impact activity that can avoid confusion and measurement challenges later.

Annexes

Annex 1. Main written documentation for the review

The following documents, as titled in the respective headings, were presented by the Norwegian Embassy and/or Conciliation Resources.

Narrative Reports:

- ❖ Project proposal from Conciliation Resources to Norwegian Embassy, revised Nov 3 2011.
- ❖ Annual Progress report, November 2011 – December 2012
- ❖ 2011 Annual Progress by Outputs
- ❖ Agreed Minutes, Meeting with Norwegian Embassy November 7 2011.
- ❖ Bi-Annual Progress Report, December 2011 – 30 June 2012
- ❖ Detailed Activity Report, December 2011 – June 2012
- ❖ Detailed Activity Report, November 1, 2011 – December 31 2012
- ❖ Annual Progress Report, November 1, 2011 – December 31 2012
- ❖ Planning template 2013
- ❖ Progress report January 1 – June 30 2013
- ❖ Agreed Minutes, Annual Meeting with Norwegian Embassy January 28 2013
- ❖ Addendum to Agreement, year 3 NOK 350 000, Oct 9 2013 ?
- ❖ Mid-Term Review, conducted by Dr. Laura Davies, Oct 29 2013
- ❖ Memo on allocation, Embassy of Norway, 06.11.2013 ?
- ❖ Annual Planning Narrative 2014
- ❖ Memo on decision/allocation, Embassy of Norway 11.09 2014
- ❖ Progress Report February 1 – June 30 2014
- ❖ Detailed Activity Report February 1 – June 30 2014
- ❖ Detailed Activity Report, July 1 2013 - January 31 2014
- ❖ Annual Report 2014, Global
- ❖ Annual Planning Narrative 2015
- ❖ Annual Report 2015, Global (Downloaded from website.)
- ❖ Rapport d'Activites Annuel 2015, JUPEDEC. Submitted by JUPEDEC
- ❖ Progress Report July 1 2014 – February 20 2015
- ❖ End of Project Report, November 2015

Financial Reports:

- ❖ Directors and Trustees Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2011
- ❖ Directors and Trustees Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2012
- ❖ Directors and Trustees Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013
- ❖ Directors and Trustees Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014

Annex 2 Persons contributing to the review

- Archbishop Odama, Acholi, Uganda
- Max Furrer, Project Coordinator, International Committee for the Red Cross, Kampala
- Justice Peter Onega, Uganda Amnesty Commission
- Fr. James Latigo, locally based consultant, Gulu, Uganda
- Xavier Ejoyi, Conflict Management Specialist, USAID, Uganda
- Thomas Tiedemann, Head of Section, Delegation of EU, Uganda
- Grace Balungi, Delegation of EU, Uganda
- Bettie Amaso, Safer World, Uganda
- JoyceDfID, Uganda
- Billie Kadameri, Focal Point, Technical Coordinating Committee, Gov. of Uganda
- Dr. Chris Dolen, Refugee Law Project
- Paul Ronan, Project Coordinator, The Resolve
- Modi Enosa Mbaraza, General Secretary, YWCA Yambio, South Sudan
- Rev. Adubango, CDJPR, Aru, DRC
- Oscar Mandela, CDJPR, Aru, DRC
- Charlotte Atako, Voice of Peace, Faradje, DRC
- Fr. Ernest Sugule, National Coordinator, SAIPED, DRC
- Henriette Zibakpio, SAIPED, DRC
- Jaques Tukpe, SAIPED, DRC
- Joseph Babuele, President, CLP - Limay, DRC
- Jean-Pierre Sangaumba, President, CLP – Ngilima, DRC
- Nako Arisi, Presidente, FdF – Limay, DRC
- Nako, Marie, Presidente, FdF – Ngilima, DRC
- Joseph Yeli, Administrator, ROFU, DRC
- Veioujau Mbolihundole, Coordinator, ROFU, DRC
- Gisele Mbiya, Coordinator, AFFREPEV, DRC
- Ruth Minisale, Coordinator, ASSAHU, DRC
- Florentine Anihili, Coordinator, AFND, DRC
- Invisible Children, Dungu, DRC
- Camille-Marie Regnault, Invisible Children CAR
- Mesmin Massoau, Advisor, Human Rights, JUPEDEC, CAR
- Ledio Cakaj, international advisor to the project
- Remember Miamingi, South Sudan, Lecturer at University of South Africa, Pretoria
- Kennedy Tumutegereize, East and Central Africa Programme Director, Conciliation Resources
- Youssef Yai, Political Affairs Officer in charge of LRA issues, UNOCA
- Senior Advisor Anita Krokan, former first secretary, Embassy of Norway Kampala

Annex 3. Project Consultant response

1. *What was your role as consultant ?*

- Supported CR partners in Uganda, South Sudan, CAR and DRC convene preparatory meetings for cross-border training and Regional Taskforce meetings.
- Making contacts and with Parliamentarians and Government in Uganda on behalf of CR and Partners for Policy Advocacy presentations on Amnesty Law and Humanitarian situation in northern Uganda and the region
- Situation analysis and update of the LRA violence in northern Uganda.
- Supporting partners to review their progress reports and plans. After partners writing their first draft report and plans, I would review them and ask clarifying questions or work with them to capture key lessons, emerging issues, impact, etc before submission to CR.
- Participate in joint analysis workshops and review meetings
- Accompanied CR partners in a exchange visit to Georgia and Abkhazia to learn about how CR partners work across the conflict divide.
- Supporting advocacy initiatives- eg advocacy on reinstating the Amnesty Law in Uganda
- Resource person for partners- eg in South Sudan, I facilitated the first ever- civil society/ government dialogue on the LRA. The then Governor of Western Equatoria State (Col. Joseph Bakasoro) requested me to facilitate the first ever dialogue between state Government officials (Governor, Ministers, MPs) and civil society leaders (religious leaders, NGOs, cultural leaders), because I was technical in the subject matter and I was neutral, devoid of local politics.
- Technical input during partners recruitment process for cross-border and peacebuilding staffs.
- Performed any other duty that was assigned to me by CR.

2. *Did you take part in cross-border workshops ?*

- Yes I participated in various cross-border workshops and trainings in Dungu, Bangui, Yambio and several in Uganda.
- Participated in the discussions including writing workshop communiqué
- Facilitated some sessions in the workshop e.g. on dealing with the past/ reconciliation as a resource person. In some cases I gave comparative experiences from northern Uganda.
- In some cases I travelled to the partner organisations (e.g. Inter Church Committee in Yambio) to give them technical and organizational support (for example, preparing a workshop to discuss sensitive issues like LRA returnees, running workshop with groups of people that may have differences of opinions on what the problem is and how to resolve the problem, giving comparative experiences on how we dealt with such a problem in northern Uganda).
- I was also responsible for logistical arrangements: flights and accommodation bookings and final reporting of the workshops

3. *Are there any related continued activities that you know of ?*

- Yes, the partners in Uganda, DRC, Central African Republic and South Sudan continued to share information on the movement of LRA. I am sometimes looped into those discussions .

- With limited funding CR continue to support women groups in South Sudan, DRC and Central African Republic, and I continue to give advice when consulted though there is no much program activities due to limited funding.
- Participation in the LRA experts/ focal point meeting: Because of the advocacy, experience and skills acquired through the project, the local partners are now experts in the field and recognized by key actors including UN. Almost all partners that we worked with e.g. SAIPED, ICC, ROFU, FHAP, ARLPI, JRP are now invited to participate in the LRA experts/ focal point meetings to share their views and analysis, and participate fully in the meeting.

I remember at the beginning, UN was opposed to participation of NGOs in these experts/focal persons meetings. When CR first contacted them, they refused, arguing that the discussions were purely between governments and UN. Eventually, they allowed INGOs (CR, Invisible Children to participate). CR (unlike Invisible Children/Resolve) decided to share the platform with their partners. We proved that these local partners were experts. This was a game changer.

In the subsequent meetings, they were invited to fully participate in the entire proceedings for two days. Since then, they are always invited to participate in the meetings.

- The capacity of organisations and skills of individuals in these organisations have significantly improved. The skills base (organizational and technical) in the LRA affected areas was so low. At the start of the project, almost everything was being constructed: skills in planning, financial management, understanding of what LRA was, advocacy planning, working with returnees from the LRA etc.
- One particular dilemma was that depending on which country you were in, you would get a different perspective/analysis of what LRA is. Rumours ruled the discussions. There was no information flow between the four countries. Despite being neighbours, most of them had never met, had no trust in each other.

To me, the beauty of this project was working with the conflict regardless of the national borders.

- One significant work was to facilitate exchange visits of practitioners from LRA affected countries especially to northern Uganda. The interface and sharing of experience between the affected people was heart rending.

Through the project:

- Trust levels have been increased. Partners in LRA affected areas can discuss and share information on sensitive issues. Individuals know who to contact on the other side of the border.
- The organisation's capacity has significantly improved. The fact that these organizations are still functioning is a testimony that the capacity building helped to transform the situation in LRA affected areas.
- Since the organisations capacity has improved, some INGOs and national organisations have started working with these organisations- something that was unthinkable at the start of the project (for example, Self Help Women Development Association) getting some funding from Invisible Children. Although these are small steps, they are significant in the context of LRA affected areas

- Acceptance of returnees. This is now a known practice across LRA affected areas, a far departure from the initial hostility accorded to them in the beginning

4. Have you any idea of the expectations of the participants to the workshops ?

At the start of the workshops, we would conduct participants expectations exercise. Some of the expectations were:

- Sharing learning on how each of the affected communities cope with the violence perpetuated by LRA and other armed groups.
- How to 'bring back home' individuals- abducted by the LRA.
- How to work with communities to welcome back home individuals who committed atrocities in their communities.
- Social reintegration of returnees: Being a patriarchal society, most of the participants wanted to know how to sensitize communities to accept back women with children born in captivity. The social norms in this part of the world is that the child belong to the father's clan, and it's the father or the father's clan expected to give a male child land when he becomes an adult. Whose land will these children (esp. boys) inherit- since their fathers could be from Uganda or anywhere? Will they be taken to Uganda to get land?

In addition stigmatization or name calling of returnees using derogatory terms e.g. *Tong Tong* (meaning *cut cut* - since the LRA's preferred method is to cut people with machetes instead of killing with bullets, etc.). There was social disharmony between returnees generally and communities. There was also a sense of family shame for individual families hosting such returnees.

- There was also the issue of citizenship. Legally, in Uganda, DRC, S.Sudan, CAR- one can acquire citizenship if one of the biological parents is a citizen of that country. Most of our participants (and the communities they come from) were unaware of the laws or the laws were irrelevant in their day-today- social interaction. They followed the social norms. These children were seen as 'foreigners', stateless, not entitled to land since they don't have clans in their mother's place of birth etc. Most people wanted to know how such complex issues were being handled in Uganda or how they can sensitise communities to accept such children.
- Sharing experiences on how various communities in the region developed their community early warning systems and how community responses link with other actors, e.g. security forces.
- Reintegration of returnees- especially how to work with returnees from LRA who were perceived to be bewitched or abnormal or traumatized.
- Because of the rumours and conspiracy theories- in LRA affected areas, some people thought that Uganda Government and the people of northern Uganda supported 'their boys' to go to neighbouring countries to murder them. They wanted to understand why? In fact, some participants would be shocked to learn that the LRA did more havoc in northern Uganda than in the areas where they are currently operating.

This was more pronounced among the Zande communities where I had to conduct a special workshop while living with them in their village for three days. Because of the history of marginalization, they felt that their respective governments sent this murderous group to finish them all. Matters were not helped by the inaction of the security forces in their respective countries.

In these workshops, some participants were surprised to learn that northern Uganda experienced LRA atrocities for 26 years and that as many as 30,000 children (some would say more) were abducted.

5. *Did they give any feedback ?*

- Yes, The workshops used three ways methods. First, sometimes a simple questionnaire would be administered to participants before the training (see attached sample).
- Secondly at the beginning of the workshops, we would ask participants about their expectations. The organisers would clarify those which will be met during the workshop and those that would not be met.

Individuals with issues that were beyond the workshop would be encouraged to speak to organisers in their 'free time' e.g in the evenings. Since most of the expectations rotated around misinformation, we encouraged participants to speak to their colleagues especially those from northern Uganda who were more experienced.

At the end of the workshops, we would have participatory evaluation, where we would have a list of things that were done well, those that could have been done differently and areas which remained hanging.

Admittedly, most of the time, participants felt that their expectations were met, and the discussions tended to dwell more on 'what next'? Let's take an example, whenever we would have a workshop, the final session would be to target a specific group to share the issues with pre-identified key constituencies.

- Whenever the workshops were in Uganda, the Norwegian Embassy used to organize meetings with other donor agencies, sometimes bringing in Ugandan Government officials.
- Sometime, CR would organize meetings with local leaders or Amnesty Commission or the army or Members of Parliament.
- In CAR, discussions were with the then Prime Minister (now President Toudera, other religious leaders and the media).
- In Yambio, the workshop that I attended was held in Sakure, close to the border with DRC. After the workshop, a smaller group travelled to Yambio for discussions with the then Governor, MPs, senior state officials. We held the first joint-civil society/ government dialogue on the LRA.
- In DRC, when we met in Kinshasa, the American Ambassador hosted a small group of participants in his residence for dinner. He also invited 9 other ambassadors and UN staff and USAID. Another small group met with the Ministry of Defence, while another smaller group met with the Ministry responsible for social affairs.

In CR's wisdom, this approach served three purposes:

- a) To get participants in the workshops to experience first hand advocacy- the preparations needed, the questions asked, the information needs, how information is packaged/ presented, etc.
- b) Participants directly (or through a smaller group) raised their questions with individuals that they rarely met and who could potentially make a difference.

- c) Linked grassroots participants with key decision / policy makers. This would initiate discussions e.g policy makers wanting to know facts and reality in these areas. It humanized the discussions on the LRA

Most of the time, the evaluation used to focus on the postmortem of the training and these 'sharing/ advocacy events at the end of each training/ workshop'.

Lastly, workshop participants feedback questionnaires were another source of feedback, translated in English and French

Annex 4. Questionnaire regarding women's empowerment.

Sent by e-mail to women's organizations. However, very little feedback was given. Therefore, a seminar was arranged, see Annex 5.

1. On improved cross border dialogues; a) How are the cross border contacts and dialogues organised?

b) How frequent?

c) Who are participating in the cross-border activities and who do they represent?

d) Do community groups/ communities have contact with each other outside meetings/ activities organised under CR program?

e) What do you see as the most important benefit from this cross border contact?

f) Has this in any way changed the way you do peace building advocacy?

2. Women and Women's Organisations

a) What is the approximate level of organisation among the affected women?

b) What is the literacy level among the target group? Age? Family situation?

c) How would you describe the level of participation in networking to improve the reintegration of LRA members, and more generally the security situation?

d) What is their understanding of the concept 'safe space for women to voice their opinions'? What is their experience, have they voiced their opinions, in which setting and have they felt safe and welcome?

e) How do women and women's organisations address the effects of violence and the issue of reintegration?

f) To what extent did the organisations address these issues before the project started in 2011?

g) Has there been any change in how they work on these issues since 2011? If so, in what way?

h) What has been the most significant change of the CR Project?

l) Have the organisations / women's groups participated in the planning of the project initially (before start up in 2011) or the development of the annual plans?

3.

a) Did the women frequently talk to their traditional leaders and religious leaders about the threat and activities of the LRA, reintegration and acceptance of defectors?

b) Did they frequently raise concerns with local government / state officials? How were they received?

c) Are there any records taken from contact with traditional leaders, religious leaders or government officials for follow up purposes?

d) To what extent is what you agree on with the traditional leaders, religious leaders or government officials followed up and acted upon?

4. External Interventions

a) Are the organisations familiar with the work of the London based organisation Conciliation Resources? How would you characterise their work?

b) Do they know of other similar initiatives?

c) Are the women's organisations familiar with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 1820 and 1888? Do they find them useful for their situation? Are the women's organisations in contact with the African Union, World Bank or United Nations?

d) Is a communication strategy made and in use by the women's organisations?

e) What are the recommendations you can make to assist the women's groups further?

Annex 5 Summary from seminar with womens' organisations, Kampala 2-5 December 2016.

Representatives from Democratic Republic of Congo;

- Veronique Musseimi, CDJDR
- Henriette Zibakbiu, SAIPED
- Clementine Bangaba, ROFU

From Central African Republic;

- Vivian Fatima, Femme/Homme Action PLUS (FHAP)
- Patricia Bakhmi-Rahmi FHAP

From South Sudan;

- Susan Thomas, SHWDA

- Grace Bakata, SHWDA

Sara Kamungezi, Makerere University, (interpreter)

Background.

The end of this project signifies a very crucial milestone and an opportunity, to reflect, take stock of achievements, challenges experienced and come up with recommendations for future projects. The recommendations will assist the Norway Agency for Development (NORAD), Conciliation Resources (CR) and the women's organisations on a number of programmatic and administrative matters. As per the project agreement, the women who took part in the evaluation were from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan and Central African Republic- CAR. They represented different organisations that CR supports in order for them to ensure reintegration, counselling and acceptance of all the victims by communities at large, including families.

Based on the set of structured questions that the consultant agreed to with the NORAD Team, the assessment is as follows:

Observations

- 1) The women who took part in the assessment were selected on the basis of being project coordinators; they appreciate and acknowledge CR for the work done in their countries on advocacy and integration of women and children returnees into their communities. These are the field officers who engage with other relevant stakeholders and advocate for the support of the returnees. None of the women who took part in this evaluation were the women returnees or LRA victims. These women are the ones who attend the regularly organised cross border dialogues, majority of which have been hosted in Kampala. They indicated that they have had all the dialogues in Kampala, with no dialogues held in other countries of the project. There were no representatives of women's organisations from Northern Uganda which could have added their views to this assignment.

Although these organisations meet regularly, only a few, and the same representatives, attended the dialogues. This excludes other women members from sharing and exchanging knowledge and experience and their views. The participants all agreed that the cross border dialogues are important as they give them space to share ideas, experiences and lessons to use in their own countries. However, the women indicated that outside the cross border dialogues, it is difficult to maintain contact in between cross border dialogues, citing lack of funds for transportation, internet and communication. Their ability to communicate among themselves when they are back in their countries has been limited by lack of sustained financial support for communication and access to internet as well as social media platforms. They also do not have resources to travel to other countries where the project is implemented for learning and interacting with victims.

- 2) The women returnees in most communities are said to be vulnerable, and discriminated against by community members and in some cases families, with a few success stories where returnees have been reintegrated, accepted by communities and were able to settle into family life. Majority of them still face discrimination and poverty since they do not have access to production resources such as land and capital. They reported that almost all returnees are illiterate, since they were abducted at a young age, they never had an opportunity to go to school to learn how to read and write. Those who conceived and bore children when they were

abducted have children who are also illiterate and do not have responsible fathers. The children are a burden to their mothers, who are already struggling to survive. The high illiteracy had been reemphasised as a major challenge which the women's organizations think should be addressed. They also indicated that there are some centres for adult learning which provide the basics on reading and writing, and also encouraging the young ones to go back to school. In some cases this has been successful while in some communities it remained a challenge to enrol the children into formal schools. Because they are illiterate, they remain unemployable, desperate and vulnerable. This increases the chances of going back to join LRA as they do not have any purpose and direction in life.

- 3) On addressing the effects of violence and integration, the participants engage with the traditional and religious leaders to spread the word of peace and reconciliation and for communities to accept the returnees. The establishment of Local Peace Committees or Local Protection Committees has been applauded as a great initiative which has assisted victims. It was also reported that women are active members of these committees, but we note that women victims are still reluctant to open up in these meetings as they see them as unsafe spaces. They acknowledged cooperation between traditional, religious leaders and members of the committees. However, majority of traditional and religious leaders are males and so this makes it difficult for victims to open up completely.
- 4) The organisations offer counselling support to the victim. Although they are not professionally qualified they make an effort to give trauma and healing support. They also help each other make suggestions on how their lives could be improved.
- 5) The LRA discussion seems to have stopped being a priority of governments in these countries, and not enough effort seems to be done to address it. The discussion on LRA seems to be overshadowed by other conflicts in the same countries such as the current conflict in South Sudan. It is also not a priority of most development partners as currently it is only Norway and CR doing this project.

Recommendations

- It is important to focus on youth development and empowerment in their countries, in particular male youth, with initiatives such as employment opportunities. This would ensure that the youth resist the temptation to be recruited by LRA. Further, women and children should be treated as separate groups to ensure that the two groups get necessary support separately, because they have different needs. Putting them together makes it difficult to focus on both groups and how they were both affected by LRA without being biased towards one and not the other. In this case there has been more focus on women, and less on the children.
- There is need for continuous counselling and trauma healing, which should be done by professionals, preferably women. The women victims need continued support with health and medical facilities, for those who were exposed to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV as well as other terminal infections. The importance of having female gynaecologists could also be an advantage to ensuring women have access to medical care in safe spaces with women Doctors.
- Women's organisations should be encouraged and supported to engage and work closely with relevant departments in their respective countries. It appears that there

is little or no collaboration between the organisations and governments in DRC and CAR, with very little engagement with government in South Sudan. This is important as government has the responsibility to take care of all citizens, through the department of health and department for social affairs.

- Strengthen women's forums and invite women leaders from across the continent, forums to speak and address women victims on women's rights as a way of showing support and to empower them with public speaking in an effort to speak for themselves. These women should be more involved in the project and training should be held in their countries. If they are exposed to public speaking they will likely be motivated to engage with stakeholders in finding lasting solutions.
- CR needs more resources to continue the work on peace building, and to take the LRA discussion back to the agenda of Heads of States, governments and the African Union for recommitment to tackling it. The African Union summit and the Regional Economic Communities such as Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) should be engaged in the strategies to find lasting peace in these countries. The women's organisations also need to be advised and supported on how to mobilise resources and on who other potential funders could be. This could ensure sustainability of the project if they diversify their sources of funding.
- There is a demand for adult education programmes and livelihood support. The establishment of vocational training centres could assist in addressing illiteracy and unemployment. The support should be extended to youth and also initiatives to support malnourished children.
- Women returnees should be invited to the discussions, especially reviews of projects as the projects are meant to affect them directly. Their voices should be heard in the reports, not having organisations represent them. One single woman returnee from the organisations that participated would have reflected their direct views.
- More advocacy and training on women's rights for all.

Administration challenges noted are :

- 1) The women seem to be unable to communicate with CR about administrative issues such as their lodging, country that hosts the cross border dialogues and per diem issues, which they raised with the consultant. There is need for effective communication between CR and the women's organisations to ensure trust and open discussions on any matter.
- 2) CR should also consider involving female staff in this project as it may be easier for women-to-women communication on the subject.

December 7 2016

Litlhare Rabele

Annex 6

Terms of Reference Final Evaluation of ‘Civil society-led conciliation, LRA demobilization and peacebuilding’ project

Summary

The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) supported Conciliation Resources (CR) from November 2011 to November 2015 to implement the project ‘Civil Society-led conciliation, LRA demobilisation and peacebuilding’. The project’s overall objective is ‘to enable communities and their representatives across LRA-affected areas to make more informed and effective contributions towards ending conflicts’. The project was initially to be completed by December 2014, but was extended until November 2015. The project was implemented in Uganda, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR) and aims at empowering communities to contribute towards achieving sustainable peace in the region. The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kampala is administering the cooperation with CR, which is an independent organisation working with people in conflict-affected areas to prevent violence and build peace. Please see <http://www.c-r.org> for further information on their work and approach. A Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the project undertaken in October 2013 (final report attached). The final evaluation will assess the effectiveness and relevance of the project, and provide recommendations to inform further engagement by CR and partner organisations in the areas affected by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), and provide a basis for the Ministry’s assessment of possible continued cooperation with CR in this field.

Brief outline of the context

This project was implemented in a complex and volatile environment, in which major political and security changes were taking place (e.g. coup d’état in CAR, escalation of violence in South Sudan). Although the situations in Uganda, South Sudan, DRC and CAR differ, the LRA conflict forms part of the wider conflict dynamics of the region, including weak states and a lack of government accountability, insecurity and the absence of the rule of law, poor infrastructure, corruption, the presence of armed groups (e.g. LRA, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Seleka), poaching and criminal gangs that move easily across porous borders, and conflicts over land and other resources.

Over the project period, the presence and modus operandi of the LRA has changed, while some of the old tactics are maintained. The group has largely left Uganda, and is quieter in South Sudan. In some cases, LRA forces simply use their reputation for violence to intimidate civilians into providing them with supplies without having to actually commit acts of violence, establish informal networks with communities, local leaders or individuals in other armed groups eg ex-Seleka commanders. The LRA has maintained some of their established tactics, including moving in smaller groups, and the element of surprise and uncertainty which multiplies the population’s fear. Reports suggest that LRA has recently increased its activity in CAR, including in areas where LRA previously rarely has operated.

International, national and local responses have focused largely on the use of force, whether through military action by states in the region and African Union, supported by international actors or through self-defence groups (such as South Sudan’s home guards). The fluid and

cross-border nature of the conflict poses significant problems for international donors and actors, which are constrained by mandates tied to national borders. This project transcended the challenges posed by international borders. The project has been unique among responses to the LRA conflict in fostering exchange and collaboration across national borders between civil society actors and state officials, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple conflict dynamics and more effective early warning at the local level.

The project included various forms of cross-border peacebuilding, including developing and supporting a Regional Civil Society Task Force, sharing experience between communities affected by the LRA, facilitating contact between women's groups involved in the project and international counterparts, identifying a common cause of cross-border tension, and working with local leaders and civil society to promote peacebuilding. The creation and use of cross-border systems of information sharing and mechanisms rooted in communities, giving reliable information and also – crucially – help communities resolve their problems and prevent emerging conflicts. In areas where illiteracy and cultural prejudice have kept women's voices out of public discussions on conflict and security issues, the project has empowered women's groups in DRC, CAR and South Sudan and seen them become confident and influential drivers of change. The information feeds advocacy at the local, national, regional and international levels, including through the *Voice of Peace* newsletter that combines analysis of LRA activity in each country with discussion of critical issues (eg. encouraging defection). The project worked with and supported local civil society organisations and community leaders to affect a sea change in community attitudes to those abducted by the LRA from hostility to acceptance and enabled communities to ease their social reintegration into civilian life.

Objectives of the project

The original goal and expected results of the project for the period December 2011- November 2014 were as follows:

Project goal: To support and enable communities and their representatives across LRA-affected areas to increase their peacebuilding advocacy regarding return from LRA ranks and increase collaboration across borders in the region in pursuit of a more constructive peacebuilding process.

Expected results:

1. Improved cross-border dialogue that allows for better analysis and lesson learning that leads to more targeted peacebuilding advocacy.
2. Women and women's organisations are empowered and take active roles in addressing the effects of violence, particularly the reintegration of women and children abductees into their communities.
3. Local radio stations and communities better understand the roles that they can play in peacebuilding and their capacity to do so is enhanced.

Based inter alia on the MTR, CR and the Norwegian Embassy in 2014 agreed to extend the project for one year (Dec 2014-Nov 2015) and the goals and expected results were reframed as follows:

Project goal: To enable communities and their representatives across the LRA-affected areas to make more informed and effective contributions towards ending conflicts.

Expected results:

1. Communities better understand the threat and impact of the LRA and positively contribute to efforts to mitigate them.
2. Women and women's organisations are empowered and take active roles in addressing the causes and effects of violence.
3. Civil society actors exchange information regularly among themselves within and across borders and conduct effective advocacy with policymakers at the local, national and international levels.

The project works in four countries:

- CAR: CR work with Femme-Homme Action Plus (FHAP), which works mainly in the south eastern parts of the country and Bangui.
- DRC: CR work with three partners based in Orientale Province; Solidarity and Integrated Assistance to Affected People (SAIPED), Network of Women Organisations in the Ueles (Réseau des Organisations Féminines des Ueles, ROFU), Diocesan Commission for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, Aru (Commission Diocésaine de Justice, Paix et Réconciliation, CDJPR).
- South Sudan: CR worked with three partners (two based in Western Equatoria State and one in Juba). The three partners are Self-Help Women Development Association (SHWDA), Inter Church Committee (ICC), Totto Chan Centre for Child Trauma (Totto Chan).
- Uganda: CR work with The Justice and Peace Commission of Gulu Archdiocese (JPC-Gulu) and Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI),

Most of the partners have structures that facilitate community peacebuilding. For example, through SAIPED and ICC the project works with 21 local peacebuilding structures called Local Peace/Protection Committees. These are community groups elected to monitor insecurity, provide early warning messages to the community and security forces, mediate local conflicts and facilitate the reintegration of former LRA abductees. In DRC, SAIPED has established nine local protection committees and CDJPR has established six. In South Sudan, ICC has established six protection committees. The work with SHWDA, ROFU and FHAP supports women's community building structures at a grassroots level. While individual partners implemented specific activities in their locations, there are also joint activities undertaken by all partners in the four countries such as production and distribution of the Voice of Peace¹⁵ and cross-border advocacy.

Purpose of the Final Evaluation

The overall purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the project and provide recommendations to inform future strategies in the LRA-affected areas for

¹⁵ See Conciliation Resources http://www.c-r.org/resources/search?text=&language=All®ion=All&conflict=All&issue=All&type=12&field_year=All&sort_combine=search_api_relevance+DESC&adv_text_op=AND&adv_text=&startdate=&enddate=

CR, its partners and other peacebuilding organisations and provide a basis for the Ministry's assessment of possible continued cooperation with CR in this field. Specifically we would like the final evaluation to:

1. Evaluate project achievements

- Provide an independent assessment of the progress and performance of the project against objectives.
- Identify and report on both positive and negative, intended and unintended impact to which the project has contributed.
- Provide an assessment of the theory of change used by CR, its relevance and evidence of success or failure.
- Assess effectiveness and efficiency – did the means of delivering the work provide effective and efficient methodologies, which led to the desired outcomes? How has the work of CR responded and adapted to changing circumstances over time, in particular changes in context?
- Provide an assessment of the project's value for money.
- Document lessons learnt that are applicable to the conflict with the LRA and related conflicts in other contexts.

2. Look ahead

- Produce a set of recommendations that will assist CR and partners to shape future strategies towards peacebuilding and reconciliation in the LRA-affected areas.
- Produce recommendations on future development needs for CR's partner organisations.
- Provide an assessment of potential challenges and opportunities for CR and partner organisations.
- Provide an assessment of an appropriate management structure that will be relevant to manage peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes in the LRA-affected areas, in light of partner capacity and the operating environment.

Outputs

The consultant will be expected to produce the following:

1. **Inception report** (5-6 pages) that will be discussed and agreed upon prior to embarking on fieldwork. The report will clarify the methodology to be adopted, include a provisional timeframe and interpretation of the ToR.
2. **Draft report** (maximum 15 pages, including executive summary but excluding annexes) to be submitted for comment. The production of the draft report will be based on the agreed methodology, after completion of the fieldwork.
3. **Final report** (maximum 15 pages, including executive summary but excluding annexes) following any discussion and subsequent amendment to the draft report.
4. **Presentation of the findings and facilitation of a half-day learning event** for CR staff, project partners and the Norwegian Embassy.

20.06.2016