END-TERM EVALUATION OF THE “NETWORKS FOR PEACE: PREVENTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS THROUGH EARLY WARNING MECHANISMS IN AFRICA” PROGRAMME

Leone I. Mawa, Vera K. Muring, and Esther W. Karuru

Donor

30th September 2022
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<td><strong>Project Country</strong></td>
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| **Project Implementer** | 1. Minority Rights Group International, United Kingdom (Grant Holder) (GB-CHC-282305)  
2. Minority Rights Group Africa, Uganda (UG-NGB-4697)  
3. Community Development Resource Network, Uganda (CDRN) (UG-NGB-1458)  
4. Isiolo Sub County Gender Watch (IGW), Kenya (O-O-048/2015)  
5. Kabarole Research & Resource Centre (KRRC), Uganda (UG-NGB-1802)  
6. Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA), Cameroon (O-O-N0 00372/RDA/J06/BAPP)  
7. Réseau camerounais des organisations de droits de l’homme (RECODH), Cameroon (O-O-000323/RDA/J06/BAPP) |
| **Project cost (GB £)** | 996,167 |
| **Project ID** | 248Q-J5MX-LV |
| **Approval date** | 17th Oct 2019 |
| **Project Name** | Networks for Peace: Preventing and Resolving Conflicts through Early Warning Mechanisms in Africa |
| **Start date** | Oct 2019 |
| **Total Target Beneficiaries** | 1. Empower 25,000 members of marginalized communities (Primary Participants)  
2. Reach to 2,000,000 other members (Secondary Beneficiaries) |
| **Closing date** | Oct 2022 |
| **Duration (months)** | 36 months |
| **Sector Board** | Jo Cox Memorial Network |
| **Project Financier** | UK AID Direct/DFID |
| **Key Project Proponents** | Cecile Clerc  
Minority Rights Group International  
Email: cecile.clerc@mrgmail.org  
Tel: 0034697918846  
Agnes Kabajuni  
Minority Rights Group International  
Email: Agnes.Kabajuni@mrgmail.org  
Tel: 00256772368850 |
<p>| <strong>Themes:</strong> | Conflict, Reporting, Early Warning Mechanism, Outcome, and Impact |</p>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>CDO</td>
<td>Community Development Officer</td>
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<td>CDRN</td>
<td>Community Development Resource Network</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>DO</td>
<td>Divisional Officer</td>
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<td>MBOSCU DA</td>
<td>Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association</td>
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<td>MIP</td>
<td>Minority and Indigenous People</td>
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<td>MRGI</td>
<td>Minority Rights Group International</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>PA</td>
<td>Peace Ambassadors</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDC</td>
<td>Resident District Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECODH</td>
<td>Réseau Camerounais des Organisations de droits de l'homme</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPC</td>
<td>Regional Police Commander</td>
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<td>UWA</td>
<td>Uganda Wildlife Authority</td>
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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Accountability: The extent to which the project resolved communication barriers among stakeholders, ensured transparency, and held the implementers accountable for their actions and/or lack thereof.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the project objectives were achieved, and/or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Efficiency: The extent to which the project converted at the lowest cost possible resources/inputs (such as funds, expertise, time and others) into outputs and outcome results.

Gender: The extent of inclusiveness and participation of different gender groups in the project design, execution and accrued benefits to each gender type, including to those with physical and non-physical disabilities.

Impact: The amount of positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended among the beneficiary communities.

Participants: The individuals, groups or rights' holders, whether targeted or not, that benefitted directly or indirectly, from the ‘Networks for Peace Project’. In other words, beneficiaries of the project.

Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of the project were consistent with participants’ needs, sustainable ecosystems, regional and national priorities, human rights, development framework and priorities, as well as funding partner development objectives and Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainability: The continuation of benefits of the project past the life of the “Network for Peace” project or its closure among participants and the probability of continued long-term benefits of project.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation Background:
The “Networks for Peace” project primarily addressed deadly identity based conflicts & other associated conflicts affecting Minority Indigenous Peoples in Cameroon, Kenya and Uganda. In Cameroon it targeted pastoralists & agro-farming communities in the East, West, Northwest and Adamaoua regions; In Kenya it targeted Isiolo & Marsabit communities of Samburu, Turkana, Rendille, and Borana; and in Uganda it targeted the Rwenzori communities of Batuku, Basongora and Bakonzo. The project aimed at Minority Indigenous Peoples (MIP) organizations & communities to better predict and prevent identity-based conflicts, hold duty-bearers to account, and achieve better well-being & developmental outcomes. Minority Rights Group (MRG), with funding from DFID, partnered with local MIP organisations in implementing a 3-year project. An end of project evaluation was conducted to assess achievements of the project strategic objectives and targets and to provide evidence, lessons & recommendations for future improvement.

Evaluation Approach & Methodology:
The evaluation approach was qualitative, consultative & participatory, where data was collected from project MIP communities, duty bearers & project implementing partners. Mixed data collection methods were adopted involving review of existing project documents, primary data using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 90 community members, in-depth interviews with 28 peace activities, key informant interviews (KIIs) with 30 duty bearers, 8 project partners’ staff & 3 MRG Africa staff. The data analysis was guided by the evaluation objectives & evaluation questions following OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating development projects. The data collection process commenced in late July & was concluded in late August 2022.

Evaluation Findings

1. Relevance:
Project initial consultations with stakeholders established that the targeted MIPs lived in an environment of identity based conflicts, marginalization & resource based conflicts. The pastoral communities are patriarchal, thereby leaving the women & girls vulnerable to multiple forms of injustices. In Uganda, authorities were in conflict with the communities over resources shared with wildlife without effective mechanisms to resolve. The project’s recruitment of local peace activists as ambassadors to champion the spread of peace message & lead dialogue meetings addressed part of these gaps. The early warning mechanism (EWM) designed by partners ensured that communities detect/predict conflict early enough & communicate for quick response by duty bearers/ institutional actors. These initiatives proved appropriate & relevant to the target communities & ensured local ownership across the project sites in the region. The elaborate networking structures created in the project for partners to interact & share experiences regularly offered learning opportunities to every partner who is implementing the project. MRG kept strong bonds with regional & national peace actors, and ensured that project partners are well exposed to further networking opportunities with other agencies. This was achieved through national networking forums and peace conferences organized in each partner country. Community representatives & peace ambassadors played central role in articulating their community challenges & shared learning in these forums. Through these initiatives, MIP communities also amplified their voices to the relevant institutions, which in turn led to further direct networking between communities & Peace Actors in the region. Evidently, the project’s participatory approach with full involvement of the communities in addressing conflicts proved relevant; and the supportive environment it offered through the EWM also ensured that the project participants
are close-by, can demand & hold duty bearers to account. The regular project performance reviews, learning & adaptive mechanisms proved relevant to the accomplishment of project activities & the realization of project results. In terms of networking, the project promoted synergy and learning on best practices across different minorities groups, countries, and cultures during these network meetings which was therefore relevant in reinforcing inner debates on cross-cultural diversity, convergence and tackling negative social norms that drive identity conflicts. Therefore the project Theory of Change was relevant, and adaptive to changing contexts during implementation e.g. response to COVID 19, violence against women & girls (VAWG), land conflicts in Uganda etc.; and the design was appropriate to the situation it was designed to address, and adapted well to learnings in the project.

2. Effectiveness:
The project planned to reach to 25,000 MIP community members & local civil society organisations directly by building their capacity to predict & prevent conflicts. This was achieved & beyond where the 5 partners reached to over 30,617 community members (over 3700 in Cameroon, over 14000 in Kenya & over 12000 in Uganda) comprising of 56% male, 44% female and 3% People with Disabilities (PWD). The project target communities have become knowledgeable on conflict prediction, reporting & use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms across the different hotspots in the project locations. The project connected MIP communities to a wide network of CSOs & peace actors, which therefore increased their capacity & amplified their voices both nationally and regionally. Through the network of Peace Ambassadors (PA) community advocacy campaigns were conducted in social gatherings in MIP communities and conflicting neighboring non-MIP communities. PAs actively led & coordinated dialogue meetings from across the different project locations, and regularly reported on outcomes.

The project developed 3 EWM (one per country) which was introduced to the communities and to over 250 duty bearers/ institutional actors to participate in conflict prediction, prevention & management. Nine (9) conflict mapping reports were also produced & over 250 copies shared with duty bearers/ institutional actors. Over 600 duty bearers were engaged on accountability by MIP communities, where over 122 of the duty bearers reached reported increased demand for accountability by MIPs & this improved their overall response to concerns raised by the communities. The partners exchange visits, the 36 networking meetings and the 3 peace conferences (1 in each project country) that brought international & regional peace actors to interact & dialogue on the issues of the MIPs gave an excellent opportunity to share experiences, and learn from the different partners.

The project strategies have immensely led to reduction in conflicts between conflicting livelihoods in Kenya, Uganda and Cameroon. The project strategy to engage the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) proved successful & there is more dialogue between the communities & UWA. The project adaptive mechanism to COVID 19, and other forms of conflict additional to the identity based conflicts also complemented the project results achievements in the project sites & beyond.

3. Impact:
The networks for peace project, although being a 3-year project, rapidly led to reduction in conflicts in target hotspots by over 60% and achieved significant harmony between the conflicting communities. In Cameroon, the Mbororo herders & the majority farming communities have embraced the dialogue platforms & have since preferred it than the government designed conflict management that has been in existence. In Kenya, Uganda & Cameroon, the project led to defusing of over 200 conflict triggers reported through the EWM, some of which could lead to
violent conflicts. In Kenya the EWM led not only to reduction in identity based conflicts but also
cattle rustling, recovery of stolen cattle, illegal fire arms to mention but a few. In Uganda &
Cameroon the cultural prejudices greatly reduced between the conflicting livelihoods. Still in
Uganda the relationship between the communities & UWA greatly improved.

4. Efficiency:
The project strategic objectives were achieved & beyond within a short period, and all strategic
activities were completed in time despite the COVID 19 interruption. Partners, through the
commitments of MRG responded well to emerging risks & provided the rapid response fund to
increase project resilience. The project also maximised the use of voluntary PAs whom the project
was compensating transport fare for advocacy & dialogue meetings, and therefore achieved
results with less spending on staff costs. Additionally, the project reached to more than the
targeted direct beneficiaries (> 30619 as opposed to 25,000). This meant that a unit amount spent
resulted into more beneficiaries using the same project budget.

5. Sustainability:
The project was community led and community owned, and the empowerment of the community
PAs, the MIP communities on the use of the EWM, the knowledge on dialogue committees as an
alternative dispute resolution mechanism both in MIPs & neighboring communities, as well as the
availability of the PAs past the project period & the existence of the EWM are a convincing
evidence that the project will sustain past the project period. Additionally the created networks,
the sensitization of duty bearers on the needs of MIPs, and the continued presence of the CSO
partners who have secured financial resources to extend project activities from other
development partners will ensure that the communities have access to essential support in order
to extend the prevailing peace & available solutions for emerging conflict triggers.

Conclusions:
In conclusion the project achieved its two (2) main strategic objectives, i.e. 1) build the capacity
of local civil society & communities to predict and prevent conflicts and; 2) development &
systematic use of Early Warning Mechanisms. This has been evidenced by the various
engagement & networking platforms the project has created for MIPs to interact with duty bearers
and peace actors (nationally, regionally & internationally). The prevailing peace & reduced
conflict rates in hotspots attests to the project success in all the three project countries among the
MIP communities.

Recommendations:
The project innovative, participatory & adaptive strategies that led to the success of the project
& achievement of strategic objectives should be continued & could be replicated elsewhere.
Other CSOs could learn & replicate these mechanisms into their programs in similar contexts. The
learnings from this project that require some improvements in successive projects should be taken
into account while designing future similar interventions. Some of the learnings include: the current
EWM should become more responsive to MIPs after submitting messages; complementing the
transport remunerations to PAs; increasing the number of PAs per unit area; further engagement
of some duty bearers to address the missing gaps for example UWA & the government on
compensation of MIP communities; fencing of boundaries & empowering of the communities.
Partners should continue to network & expand their presence to areas that were not covered by
the concluded project.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Background

The “Networks for Peace: Preventing and resolving conflicts through early warning mechanisms in Africa”, is a project aimed at addressing deadly inter-community violent conflicts between two main livelihoods of farming and cattle raising, identity conflicts, low community capacities, marginalisation and low trust between communities. The project targeted Minority and Indigenous Peoples’ (MIP) organizations in three countries with the pastoralists seemingly the poorest and most vulnerable populations in these regions. The project covered three (3) countries in Africa, namely: **Cameroon**, with a focus on the conflict between pastoralist and agro-farming communities covering the East, West, Northwest and Adamaoua regions; **Kenya**, with a focus on conflicts in the North Eastern regions, specifically the counties of Isiolo and Marsabit among the Samburu, Turkana, Rendille, and Borana communities; and **Uganda**, with a focus on conflicts affecting Mid-Western Uganda in the Rwenzori sub-region among the Batuku, Basongora and Bakonzo communities. The scenarios in these three countries showed that MIP organizations have a poor capacity to mobilise, train and support their communities to feed into and use Early Warning Mechanisms (EWMs) and to mobilise institutional responses. There was a gap between the MIP organizations in knowledge-sharing, mutual support, and collaboration at the regional and national level. Additionally, duty bearers and decision makers lacked awareness of identity-based conflicts as well as political will to resolve them. All these factors were shown to result to insensitive interventions, reduced accountability, and continuing cycles of violence.

The project set out to address the following: 1) The near-absence of systematically well-designed and used EWMs or when they exist, the fact that these mechanisms are flawed (for distinct reasons) to prevent identity-based conflicts; 2) The poor capacity of MIP organizations to mobilise, train and support their communities to feed into and use EWMs; 3) The poor capacity of MIP organizations to mobilise institutional responses; 4) Weak networks between MIP organizations leading to reduced knowledge-sharing, mutual support, and collaboration at national level but also regionally; 5) Poor awareness of identity-based conflicts amongst duty bearers and decision makers, and lack of political will to resolve identity-based conflicts; 6) Weak links between MIP communities and duty bearers, which results in insensitive interventions, reduced accountability, and continuing cycles of violence1.

Minority Rights Group (MRG) working in close partnership with five (5) local partners implemented strategic initiatives to alleviate the fate of the MIPs in the 3 project countries. One such initiative was the creation of an **Early Warning Mechanism or System** to help communities alert decision makers of potential outbreaks, escalation and resurgence of violent conflict; and promotion of an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflict. The system involves the regular collection and analysis of data on conflicts, by systematically monitoring and reporting conflict indicators. The “Networks for Peace” project targeted to empower 25,000 members of marginalised communities: Mbororo (in East, West, North-West and Adamawa districts, Cameroon); Samburu, Turkana, Rendille, and Borana (in Isiolo and Marsabit counties, Kenya); and Batuku and Basangora (in Rwenzori region, Uganda) directly (and approximately 2 million people indirectly). The assumption is that those directly engaged would be able to better predict and prevent identity-based conflicts, hold duty-bearers to account, and achieve better well-being and developmental outcomes. The five (5) local partners with experience and expertise in similar programmes in the three (3) project countries were: Mbororo Social & Cultural

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1 Network Application 2480-J5MX-LV Networks for Peace: Preventing and Resolving Conflicts through Early Warning Mechanisms in Africa
Association (MBOSCUDA) and Réseau Camerounais des Organisations de droits de l’homme (RECODH) of Cameroon; Isiolo Sub-County Gender Watch (IGW) of Kenya; and Kabarole Research & Resource Centre (KRRC) & Community Development Resource Network (CDRN) of Uganda. Besides, the programme worked in close collaboration with duty bearers /institutional actors.

**Purpose of the Program:** To achieve a significant reduction in identity-based conflicts as a first step to improving the lives of target populations in the target countries.

**Specific Objectives of the Program**
1) Build the capacity of local civil society & communities to predict and prevent conflicts
2) Development & systematic use of Early Warning Mechanisms

1.2 Objectives of the Evaluation
1) Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the programme in relation to the objectives, desired results, planned activities, and supporting outputs set out in the proposal document and any amendments during the programme
2) Provide MRG and partners with an opportunity for ‘structured evaluative learning’, with the aim of learning from the design and implementation process
3) Based on the findings of the evaluation, develop a set of suggestions and key recommendations for future and continued MRG and partners activities
4) Also make recommendations to any stakeholder groups as appropriate

2. **APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Approach
The evaluation approach was qualitative and participatory, combining qualitative desktop review of project reports and other relevant documents, with qualitative interviews with project participants and stakeholders in line with the objectives of the evaluation. The evaluation adopted the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) criteria for objective assessment of the project achievements, namely: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability, as well as Coherence and Gender. The evaluation depended on the key evaluation questions in the ToR on project design, implementation, and results (outputs, outcomes & impact). The project logical frame acted as a basis for assessing programme design (intervention logic & ToC) and for comparing achievements to date from the baseline against the set indicator targets. Additionally, the consultants conducted trend analysis on conflict in the project locations and identified external factors that influenced results (negatively or positively). The consultants adopted a collaborative, participatory and consultative approach in collecting data from target respondents. All of these were guided by the Terms of Reference (ToR) (Annex 3). Moreover, the consultants ensured independence, objectiveness and impartiality throughout the engagement with all stakeholders met.

2.2 Methodology
The methodology adopted for data collection, analysis and reporting was informed by the evaluation objectives, scope and the evaluation approach chosen to address these objectives.

2.2.1 Sampling
Qualitative non-probability and purposive sampling criteria was used for identification of study respondents from across the project countries. A wide range of target respondents were reached, including Three (3) Minority Rights Group Africa (MRGA) focal programme staff; Two (2) key partner organisation staff from each of RECODH, MBOSCUDA, IGW, KRRC and CDRN; Seven (7)
activists or Peace Ambassadors (PA) from each country (and in Uganda an additional Five (5) independent Nyankundire Group - Peace Activities in the Nyakatonzi conflict hotspot were interviewed); Ten (10) duty bearers & decision makers from each country; and Thirty (30) community members from each country (where 1/3 of participants were female &/ or youth). (Annex 2).

**Conflict Hot Spots:** In Cameroon, Kouptamo, Sabga and Akum were sampled from the list of hotspots of farmers and pastoralist conflicts. In Kenya, Burat Isiolo (Borana and Samburo), Ngaremara (Turkana) and Loruk (Samburo and Turkanas). In Uganda the hotspots sampled were Kehendero (Basangora and Bakonzo) in Kasese District; Bulungama and Bweramule in Ntoroko District (Batuku Community). Still in Uganda, the consultant interacted with the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) responsible for management of human-wildlife conflicts involving the Batuku and the Basongora in Tooro Semliki game reserve in Ntoroko District and the Queen Elizabeth game park in Kasese District respectively.

2.2.2 Data Collection Methods & Tools

**Document review:** The documents reviewed included but not limited to: the project final proposal, original and revised/updated log frames, project quarterly reports, annual conflict mapping reports, and EWM conflict reports, as well as social media information used by PAs.

**Focus group discussions:** Community members were interviewed in Three (3) parallel Focus Group Discussions (FGD) per country in each of the sampled conflict hotspots. An FGD guide was drafted, reviewed and approved for data collection from the community members. (Annex 5)

**In-depth Interviews:** Activists were interviewed both individually and in groups using in-depth interview guide. (Annex 5)

**Key Informant Interviews:** Key informant interviews (KII) were held with MRGA programme staff, partners’ staff and duty bearers/ decision makers using tailored KII guides. (Annex 5)

**Direct observations:** Direct observations were used whenever possible for physical verification of visible impact or validation of primary/secondary data.

2.2.3 Data Management & Analysis

The data from various study respondents were transcribed into MS Word, and analysed qualitatively; employing a mix of thematic, content, descriptive, and contribution analysis as well as attribution analysis. Participant testimonies were used to document impact on communities. The analysis findings were organized according to the OECD criteria, while answering the specific evaluation questions per criterion. Using both secondary and primary data, the achievements of the project were derived thematically using the evaluation criteria.

2.2.4 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance was observed in the entire evaluation process, including the design of tools informed by the evaluation issues which were later reviewed by MRG prior to deployment for data collection. Tools were pre-tested and administered by the consultants with minimal assistance from Research Assistants who were pre-trained before the field exercise. Recorded interviews were reviewed for transcription by the consultants. The interview transcripts were corroborated with data from project reports and documents to ensure information consistency in the project life, a principle of Collaborative Learning & Adaptation (CLA).

2.2.5 Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was conducted based on ethical considerations, and the evaluation team observed Voluntary Participation, Informed Consent, Confidentiality, “Do No Harm” principle (social, legal, psychological), and responsible use of Power while in the community.
2.2.6 Evaluation Timeframe
The evaluation process began in July 2022 with a contract signed between MRGA and the consultants, followed by desk review of program documents and reports, inception design and preparation of data collection tools. Actual data collection took place simultaneously in the 3 countries in the months of July and August. Data analysis, preliminary findings report and drafting of the evaluation report were conducted in late August, September and partly October 2022. A quick results validation presentation was made during the closing workshop of the project involving MRGA and Partner Organizations where the evaluation findings, lessons learned, conclusion and key recommendations of the evaluation were discussed and partners’ provided feedback.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS
This section presents the findings of the evaluation of the “Networks for Peace” project. They are discussed in line with the OECD criteria and specific evaluation questions in the ToR. While some findings are presented in a comparative manner across the three countries, others are more generalized where there are no striking variations.

3.1 Relevance
The project anchored on true needs of minority groups as alluded by different categories of respondents including the community members, peace ambassadors, duty bearers/decision makers. In all the three countries before the intervention, Identity Based Conflicts were real and target communities wanted it solved but the challenge was who and how. Pre-project needs assessments in communities & consultations with duty bearers/ institutional actors across the beneficiary countries led to the establishment of the exact needs gaps that needed to be addressed by the project. These consultations and needs prioritization culminated into a baseline report and refinement of the project design to realign with the UK AID funding priority. The project was also found to be a good fit strategically as it matched MRG/partners’ strengths & competencies, as the implementers (MRG/MRGA/Partners) had the requisite expertise/ professionalism and the experience to address such identity based conflicts. Backed by the glaring evidence of the conflicts in the target areas, and the previous knowledge of MRG/ partners on MIPs in the region the evaluation found that the project was well orchestrated both in design and implementation as will be illustrated in later paragraphs. In testing if the project met exact beneficiary needs, the evaluation found that communities ranked identity based conflicts, resource based conflicts, marginalization, lack of participation in elective representation, domestic violence, Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) among others as key needs they had prior to the project entry into the communities. And because the project addressed a range of these critical needs, there was easy acceptance and local ownership, as communities & Peace Ambassadors (PA) highlight that what they had suggested during the consultations is what the project has solved in their area. The selection of PAs by the community members to conduct the affairs of the project in those localities made it even more acceptable.

The evaluation found that the project addressed very relevant gaps (felt and unfelt) among different stakeholders as it was a project designed to benefit MIPs who were often underrepresented in government decision making boards, marginalized in resource distribution/ sharing, least educated and ignorant about their rights; and this was coupled with insensitive decisions by government agents (district/county/national leaders) on the salient challenges unique to MIPs. The integrated strategies of empowering the communities to push for their rights, demand accountability from leaders, and opening the of minds of duty bearers/ institutional actors on services very dear to the MIPs were all essential in ensuring that these longstanding identity based conflicts are reduced and the communities are served equitably and appropriately by duty bearers/ institutional actors. The strategies indeed contributed to greater interactions.
between the MIPs and duty bearers, and also led to improved conflict detection before it fully erupted, and improved response and management.

MRG’s prior knowledge and experience in the project region before starting the intervention also played a significant role in ensuring that stakeholders were handled and managed with extra caution while addressing participants’ needs. For example, it was learned from DfID Cameroon that tackling the Anglophone community challenge as a foreign actor could present some challenges from the Cameroonian government. Conscious of this fact, MBOSCUDE and RECODH became entry points into the country to deal as local CSOs in pursuing this peace initiative to the affected Mbororo communities as opposed to MRG directly. Therefore MRG worked with a high degree of understanding and adaptability in Cameroon that kept key stakeholders on board, and achieved results in the project locations in spite of such challenges; results that would otherwise have been impossible. Such foresight and inclusiveness of all stakeholders into the project opened new opportunities for better understanding of first-hand and in-depth community needs and as such the project went on to employ adaptive mechanisms in order to match participants needs, taking into account the need to ensure the external environment did not constrain the project or its results. Similarly in Uganda, the need for addressing human-wildlife conflict and managing the conflict between the conservation authorities (UWA) and the communities became overriding and had to be prioritized alongside the identity based conflict management. Such flexibility and cognisance of beneficiary needs offered the opportunity for holistic peace to the communities, whether it be identity based or conflict with the authorities; and the absence of the later would have meant that the MIPs were left at the mercy of the authorities without empathy.

In Cameroon the project addressed the historically complex identity based conflicts between the farming communities and the Mbororo pastoral group (MIP) in the West (Bamoun, Bamileke), Akum, Gbayas and Boum in the Admaoua, the Kako and Po in the East. The East, West, North-West and Adamawa Regions are epicenters of Identity Based Conflicts because they host over 70% of the Mbororo indigenous and minority population. The evaluation found that a long history of conflict exists between crop farmers associated with the Christian religion who are early settlers with a more sedentary lifestyle, and pastoralist cattle keepers/herders mostly associated with Islam seen as strangers in many communities due to their nomadic activities. Pressures on land have forced herders to adopt semi-sedentary lifestyles necessitating co-habitation alongside farming communities, thereby provoking protracted/sustained identity and resource based conflicts. The project was thus very relevant and timely based on the context and gravity of the challenges. The evaluation identifies that in Cameroon the 28 PAs and the 250 frontline dialogue committees were actively involved in leading sensitization activities aimed at changing perspectives and perceptions towards peaceful co-existence between the farming & pastoralist communities, while identifying and reporting the emerging conflicts, resolving conflicts through dialogue etc. The project therefore addressed identity based conflict but also worked on the crossroads of co-existence of the two livelihoods for good neighborliness. It was testified by key informants that in areas of Adamawa region some local Divisional Officers (DO) currently rely on the dialogue platforms and competencies of peace ambassadors (both project initiatives) to respond to new agro-pastoral conflicts arising in the community. Kilis stated that DOs see a real added value of the dialogue platforms and the peace ambassadors as a complementary element in the institutional response mechanism to conflict. Community participants highlighted that the two communities (Fulani vs Non-Fulani) have felt the importance of the sensitization and awareness messages for peace, and the role of the EWM for reporting on conflict and triggers. In the Track 2 Diplomacy Meetings duty bearers and implementing partners’ staff were able to diagnose the security crisis and the role of law enforcement agencies on the challenges facing the regions such as the circulation of small arms, rural banditry, kidnapping for ransom in the Adamawa region along sides weakening of pastoral activities alongside the major challenge i.e. the identity based conflicts. These meetings concluded with resolutions on the way forward, and in all of these,
leaders credited the central role the “networks for peace” project was (and in fact still is) playing in complementing the work of the law enforcement officers in dealing with these crises. The sensitization meetings by PAs in communities and the capacity building of Track 3 actors, and the activities of the dialogue committees on these community challenges were found to be useful in dealing with the problems in the hotspots in Cameroon.

**In Kenya** the project addressed complex challenges in the diversely constituted community in Marsabit and Isiolo counties. Identity based conflicts between the pastoral communities of Samburu, Turkana, Rendille, and Borana ethnic groups in the two counties have had negative consequences on the socio-economic wellbeing of the people. The evaluation established that some sub-counties in Isiolo and Marsabit experience resource-based conflicts. For example in Merli sub-county there have been conflicts where the dominant pastoralist community clashes with minority communities (Somali and Borana) over pasture and water for animals. The community blames these conflicts for under development in the area. In the same counties, incidences of cattle rustling are also prevalent especially in the early months of the rainy seasons, mostly habitually engineered by the Samburu and Rendille with an aim of restocking their herds either lost to drought or destocked by government. The community also experiences boundary conflicts between the 2 counties thereby causing fear of displacement. Lack of compensation is also thought to have bred mistrust between communities and this often escalates to conflict. Highway banditry and fire arm proliferation are among the challenges the project areas have been facing. Negative perceptions of the government and violent extremism often contribute to religious conflicts among the communities. The community groups met and the PAs testified that the peace messages passed and the availability of the EWM have led to lessening of identity based conflicts in the two counties; and that the EWM has also been used for reporting theft and cattle rustling as well as other conflicts and highway banditry that have been common in these two counties of North Eastern Kenya.

**In Uganda**, two major conflicts were addressed, i.e. identity based conflicts, human wildlife conflict & conflict with conservation authorities (UWA). Identity based conflict was precisely addressed between the minority Basongora ethnic group (pastoralists) and the Bakonzo (farmers) in Kasese District in the Rwenzori region. The evaluation confirms that the conflicting livelihoods in Kasese District have often fueled conflicts between the two communities and there is disregard for each one’s source of livelihood and culture. Whereas identity based conflicts might have formed the bedrock of the program across the Rwenzori region as is the case in Cameroon and Kenya, it was found that this was not the case for the Batuku in Ntoroko district because identity based conflicts are subtle and were undetected even by the EWM. However, the community’s main concerns are rather human-wildlife conflicts since they surround the game reserves in the area. Although this was not originally the desired gap to address by MRG, it was however very necessary at the time of the intervention as the relationship with the UWA authorities was increasingly becoming dangerous. Discussions with the communities in Ntoroko ranked that conflict with UWA and human-wildlife conflict were their main challenge among other conflicts such intra-community conflicts over land, boundaries fencing, domestic violence, VAWG among others.

In Bweramule and Butungama Sub-Counties, the community pointed out that the paddock fencing of communal grazing land by powerful individuals is now happening, and there is fencing off of pathways and swamps meant to be reserves according to National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) which was also starting to bring tensions in the community. CDRN intervened together with the help of the Community Development Officers (CDO) and the local councils to ensure that pathways are opened for others to access common resources. Key to the communities was that in some areas, the disappearance of youths in the Tooro Semliki Wildlife Reserve (TSWR) was creating an extremely tense relationship with UWA and the law enforcement officers who were ruthless in handling the communities whenever their cattle have got lost in the reserve; women were beaten for collecting firewood in the reserve etc. Discussions with the
community on how these situations were handled by the project revealed that indeed the dialogue meetings with UWA and the local government representatives have resolved these tensions. The project has brought considerable closeness and contact between UWA and the community which has contributed to reduction in conflict with the authorities. Poaching incidences have also declined according to UWA, and there is growing evidence that the EWM has also assisted in checking Human-wildlife conflict and conflict with authorities in both Ntoroko and Kasese. In Kasese it was reported that UWA officers were often manhandling the community members unreasonably whenever they were caught inside of the park. There were no clearly defined boundaries between the community land and game boundary, and stray wild animals were causing destruction to communities’ livelihoods. On the other hand UWA was blaming the community for poaching and illegally trespassing into the park (Queen Elizabeth National Park).

These allegations soured the relationship to near hatred among the communities around the park and UWA. Given the gravity of the human wildlife conflict and the bitter relations with the park authorities (UWA); coupled with the ignorance of the communities on their rights of access to the park, and the general lack of mediation channels with the authorities, it was right that the project did not only focus on identify based conflict in Kasese but also addressed through dialogue and engagement forums the widening gap between the community and UWA. The evaluation found that the dialogue meetings and the Track 2 diplomacy meetings, the use of the EWM for alerting on human-wildlife conflicts, and involvement of UWA in educating the communities on the Dos and Don’ts of the park led to reduced conflicts and improved relationships between the communities and UWA.

The evaluation assessed the project intervention strategies’ overall relevance in addressing MIPs’ needs outlined above and the suitability of the project Theory of Change (ToC), and found that they were appropriate and relevant in addressing the MIP impacting conflicts in project areas. Firstly, the project’s approach of appointing Peace Ambassadors who are community members and identified by their very communities to work as PEACE ACTIVISTS was found to be very appropriate as it ensured that the responsibility of peace is vested in the community, and they must be the first agents in order to find a lasting solution for peace. This was not only appropriate in ensuring the project is successfully locally led, but also meant that traditional/indigenous knowledge of conflict prediction is easily integrated into the EWM framework. The trainings received by the PAs and the skills built on peace prevention, peace dialogue, conflict prediction, submission of data to the EWM system, retrieving/accessing data from the EWM, alerting of duty bearers on emerging issues, and engagement skills with duty bearers/institutional actors were for the most part essential in ensuring the PAs have the necessary tools of work.

The Early Warning Mechanisms developed for reporting & alerting on conflicts proved relevant and appropriate. They became a voice of the minority groups that had less opportunities to prevent conflicts from happening, and did not have a voice in demanding duty bearers respond to emerging signs of conflict. Testimonies of community beneficiaries and PAs reveals that the EWM amplified their voices as, until now, unheard MIP communities. Those at the grassroots, could engage duty bearers by merely sending alerts and if project partners then took up the responsibility to pursue with duty bearers. Equally, the duty bearers and decision makers also confessed that the EWM became a useful tool in their work as it increased their ability to respond quickly to alerts received from the system. The online EWMs developed were also user friendly and compatible with the local communication technologies in communities, being digital systems which allow users to send messages using any platform including mobile phone SMS texts, WhatsApp, and other social media options. Users were also offered toll free contacts to call and alert on issues whenever they felt it was the best option available (rather than sending a message). Therefore the EWM innovation matched with the available technologies already in existence in the project region, thereby made reporting easier and affordable for PAs/community members. In each of the project countries, the EWM framework/structure were derived from suggestions of
Track 3 actors’ networking meetings. For example in Cameroon, the PAs worked hand in hand with the Dialogue Committees elected by both the herders and farmers together to mediate on conflict between the two communities. In Kenya, the structure include PAs, Peace Committees, Nyumba Kumi Initiative, grazing committees and the indigenous knowledge owing to its effectiveness from time immemorial. In Uganda the EW structure comprised of the PAs, Peace Committees and Elders to report and mediate between the conflicting parties. The EWM also ended up being used for reporting actual conflicts that had happened as well as conflicts relating to internal land conflicts, domestic violence, VAWG among others whichever the structure decided was appropriate for them, although the system was meant to mainly receive warnings of conflicts that are yet to happen for rapid response before they occur.

The EWM systems built by partners are well suited for its planned purpose. The evaluation learned that guidance was sought from experts in that field such as the IGAD whose expertise & regional experience in designing EWMs is undoubted. What made the EWMs more user friendly is that fact that the sender’s credentials are kept confidential and anonymous to the duty bearer(s) alerted on the issue by the system without the fear of backlash. For example in Kasese Uganda, a female PA interviewed confessed that she was encouraged to freely submit sensitive conflict information and other community issues to the system well knowing no one in the community would ever know that she was the one who raised an alarm. The integrated EWM guided by experts and the shared experience of implementing partners led to the development of useful and dependable EWM systems across project partners. The development strategy was found to be very relevant and appropriate in that the learning from each partner inspired others to adopt similar solutions. For example KRRC had already developed a EWM & were upgrading. In Cameroon, it was learned that the EWM was designed and launched a little late in the project (2021), while in Kenya it was launched in 2020, but in Uganda the system had to undergo significant upgrading after interacting with the industry experts (IGAD, AU, UN).

The EWM contributed a big turn-around in influencing conflict management in the communities, they attested. It is believed many duty bearers from different institutions have responded to the community’s conflict alerts to the EWM, as opposed to leaning on one security institution alone (which some communities do not trust). Interviews with communities and their leaders highlighted that reporting on cases of theft, land conflicts, domestic violence and political violence among others became easier and MIPs would get the necessary response from the authorities unlike before where they would at times fail to get help. The evaluation concludes that EWMs provided an appropriate alternative means of reporting on issues of MIPs than the traditional case reporting systems (police).

Whereas about 38% of the project activities were directly related to conflict prediction and prevention, the evaluation learned that about 44% of the project activities were actually directly related to creating and strengthening of networks. These networks of the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) were found to be very relevant in that it created an immediate community of practice enabling the partners to share good practices, troubleshoot challenges, provide mutual support on interventions, and respond to emergencies where necessary. This was appropriate as it aimed at maximizing & replicating of good practices realized with other partner(s), while inspiring others to innovate and become visible in the community in addressing conflict through the EWMs. The project networking strategy did not only build functional linkages between implementing CSOs, but also with communities they represent, as well as duty-bearers/institutional actors who hold the necessary power to influence conflicts and also influence responses to conflicts. The evaluation found that these linkages brought the MIPs closer to duty bearers than would otherwise be possible. Through these interactions, communities attested that the project has amplified their voices and acted in their favor since they were never heard by some of their district/county leadership, or had mistrust in them to act appropriately on their minority issues in the community. The linkages indeed brought the stakeholders to a common table to ensure that the MIP organizations are rightly served and their push for peace is recognised. The
networks created with duty bearers through the Track 2 diplomacy meetings held with leaders brought the respective actors to the realization that they bear a role to account to the MIPs given their vulnerabilities in the community. Discussions held with the duty bearers revealed that some communities had been distant from the authorities/security efforts, but through the engagement meetings by MRG/partners the relationship has improved. For example in Uganda the closeness the project created between UWA, the district local administration and the communities was able to resolve the long standing conflict between the UWA authorities and the communities. The communities have demanded UWA act to clarify boundaries, provide timely compensation for lost property to wildlife invasion, and communities’ right of access to the park. Equally in Kenya and Cameroon authorities have been brought closer to the communities in voicing commitments to end damaging identity based conflicts.

Apart from addressing the identity based conflicts in project countries, as well as the human-wildlife conflicts which were accelerating conflict with the authorities (UWA) in Uganda; the project’s adaptive strategies and swift response to address COVID-19, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), empowerment of women to participate in the project, sensitizing of communities on domestic violence, the provision of psychosocial support to families and to girls out of school due to COVID 19, fighting early marriage and harmful cultural rites of passage (female genital mutilation in Kenya) among others tackled by partners in the three countries were found to be very relevant to participants social, economic and health wellbeing, which in themselves are complementary peaceful existence in the community.

The evaluation discovered that the conflict in the project countries was well communicated to the globe via the MRG website and kept the world informed of what was happening, and the reason for the deployment of the EWM. The networking meetings with key stakeholders at the district/ county, national level government representatives, CSOs, regional/international partners coupled with the Peace Conferences all played a significant role in keeping actors informed and engaged with peace mission in the project locations. It was found that the sharing of conflict mapping reports, updates on project progress, challenges faced and exploring of opportunities on how to further network/ or collaborate in addressing identity based conflicts were well executed for engagement of duty bearers/ institutional actors. Therefore the online publication, the networking meetings and the peace conferences were essential and well targeted to the intended stakeholders nationally, regionally and internationally.

3.2 Effectiveness

The “networks for peace” project addressed conflicts in target MIP locations through designing an innovative, multifaceted and functional EWM framework for conflict prevention. Foremost, the project improved the capacity of over 30,619 members (56% - male, 44% - female, 3% - PWD) of MIPs in Cameroon, Kenya and Uganda with 12%, 49% and 39% proportions in the respective countries. The project involved over 250 duty bearers/institutional actors who got engaged in conflict prediction and prevention of identity-based conflicts in MIP communities. The project achieved the establishment of three (3) context-specific EWM systems in project countries (1 per country) systematically designed for receiving alerts on early signs of conflict in the communities for response within the shortest period to avert conflict in time. In Cameroon, it was learned that MBOSCUDA and RECODH developed a common EWM and signed a memorandum of understanding to share administrative and technical implementation structures across project areas. In Uganda, KRRC shared their improved EWM with CDRN. In Kenya, IGW developed a sole EWM for managing the conflicts in the two counties. MRG also organized training for partners on

2 https://minorityrights.org/2021/12/07/early-warning-mechanisms/
3 https://rwenzoriconflictprevention.info/
4 http://conflictewarning-crmr.org/
5 https://igwearlywarningsystem.org/
ways of effectively communicating the EWM results to duty bearers and institutional actors, and this contributed to productive engagements with duty bearers in all the project countries.

To accomplish the use of the EWM by communities, the project worked with 132 Peace Ambassadors who were recruited from across the project communities (28 – Ca, 60 – Ke, and 44 – Ug, approx. 50% female) who were then trained to deliver essential advocacy services to their respective communities on conflict prediction, prevention and management; and the use of the EWM for sending alerts whenever there are signs of conflict in their communities; and how to access data from the system to feed back to the community. A random check on their competences/skills base revealed that the PAs are knowledgeable on how to receive and verify an alert, submit data to the system, access data form the system that is useful to the community and track with duty bearers any appropriate response. There was also sufficient evidence that the transfer of this knowledge of the EWM was happening to the communities, and interviews held with community members in the sampled hotspots indicated that all respondents are aware of the relevant local EWS’s existence and how it works. Communities also confirmed that they have been taught on how to hold duty bearers to account as far as conflict is concerned.

Since the introduction of the EWMs, the program has witnessed an increased reporting on conflict triggers by communities across the board. Until the time of the evaluation, 95 instances (Ca – 15, Ke - 55 and Ug - 25) of conflict-related data were submitted by MIP communities to duty-bearers/institutional actors with recommendations for action. Duty bearers also acted on these recommendations accordingly and normalcy was restored in all the incidents; highlighting that the programme empowerment of MIPs in holding duty bearers to account is indeed becoming fruitful as far as conflict prediction, prevention and management are concerned.

It has been noted that the EWMs are not only used for reporting identity based conflict but have also greatly helped on how communities report and communicate on other root causes to conflict. For example in Kenya, the EWM is relied upon for alerting animal thefts, something they claim has led to the recovery of such livestock & reinstatement back to the owners. An interview with a security key respondent indicated that his unit alerts all other security contingents (i.e. national police service, conservancy rangers, and national police reservist) working in the area whenever a raid happens, in order to follow the animals and make sure they are returned; further highlighting that the conservancy rangers respond first being the ones that live within the areas where raids happen. In Uganda, the EWM has also been used for reporting several political conflicts and domestic violence.

Peace Ambassadors were trained on various topics to enable them to be effective agents in the peace mission within their communities. These skills enabled the PAs to perform impactful awareness raising to their communities, and to successfully engage duty bearers in community meetings and dialogue meetings within the communities as testified by communities and duty bearers in all the countries. The peace ambassadors took advantage of social events in their communities such as village gatherings, religious assemblies, funerals, markets, village meetings, sports events among others as the opportunity presented to share messages PAs also took leading roles in conducting dialogue meetings in the hotspots, and applying the skills they learned from the project capacity building initiatives.

Partners and PAs through the Track 3 meetings engaged leaders on matters community conflicts with participation of the community members. The evaluation learned that through the meetings with Track 3 actors, several topics were discussed with slight variations per country based on the conflict contexts. Amongst these were issues such as land tenure systems and the role of leaders in land conflicts, the roles of leaders in conflict management and how communities can report triggers in the community for duty bearers to act in time. The meetings were more tailored to fostering strong relationship between communities and duty bearers/ institutional actors (local council authorities/ provincial administration, police, county commissioners/ resident district
commissioners, human rights defenders, council of elders etc.). In Kenya, leaders were engaged on political conflicts especially in Marsabit where the conflicts had become worrisome and regular leading to recurrent losses in human life especially in the Rendille minority community being targeted by the Borana and Gabra. As a result of these meetings, a police post was suggested by the leaders in that area and was eventually established which is now serving the community, and this was directly attributed to efforts of the IGW project. The meetings also emphasized the use of the EWMs for reporting triggers so that multiple duty bearers can be reached at the same time for rapid but coordinated response. It was attested that the PAs would regularly engage duty bearers in community meetings organized and would task them to air their commitment to peace given the delicate nature of conflicts severely impacting the MIPs. Implementing partners/ PAs reached over 600 duty-bearers and institutional actors through these engagement missions. The evaluation found that many duty bearers and decision makers, both local and district/ county levels, improved their response to reported conflicts or contributed to coordinated response to alerts sent by the EWM and by the PAs who are also residents of these communities where such issues are originating. Interviews with duty bearers highlighted that indeed the PAs played an active role in doing so, which has enabled the communities’ voices to be heard at all levels (local, district/ county and national). For example in Uganda, the boundary challenges with UWA caused the community to write to the Parliament of Uganda demanding accountability on boundary tracing, and this yielded fruits where UWA and the district local administration had to set aside a dialogue meeting with the community to resolve the issue.

Through the awareness and sensitization meetings, dialogue meetings, and other engagement between duty bearers & communities, there is now an increased participation and better understanding between the MIPs and their leaders on conflict detection & prevention. Until the time of evaluation, at least 122 duty bearers (69 males, 53 females) had reported increased demand for accountability from their constituents and this was attributed to the increased knowledge of the community brought about by the project on how to hold their leaders accountable in terms of conflict prevention and response.

With over 30,619 community members reached in Cameroon, Kenya and Uganda who are knowledgeable on the EWMs and on how to hold duty bearers accountable, the evaluation finds that the expected outputs from the project have fully been met (and in fact exceeded) given that the project had intended to reach 25,000 instead of the actual over 30619.

In regard to networking the evaluation learned that the project undertook networking seriously. MRG ensured that the partners built strong support networks with each other to share knowledge, good practices and challenges on regular basis through networking meetings. Until the time of the evaluation, partners had held 36 partner exchange visits (5 - Ca, 19 – Ke, 12 – Ug), and held inter-partner meetings to review performance, identify and discuss challenges, and solve problems in a coordinated manner. There were also strong bonds between implementing partners and duty bearers/ institutional actors as confirmed by the nature and level of interactions on issues of MIPs. The network grew stronger and richer with additional local, national and international peace actors such as IGAD, AU, UN, and other international actors. For example in Cameroon, one such prominent networking meeting the evaluation learned of was organized by MRG/ MBOSCUDA/ RECODH that brought together representatives from “Decentralized Government Administrations and six (6) representatives of International Actors GIZ, SNV, FAO, IFAD, IOM and UNDP to discuss the conflict in the East, West, Northwest and Adamawa regions” and resolutions were made on how to support the project given its significance to the herder communities and farmers. In Uganda, MRG together with KRRC/CDRN convened a networking meeting that brought together CSOs in the Rwenzori sub-region and the local/ national leaders where a consensus was built on the need for increased information sharing, networking and collaboration after partners had shared information about their experience in managing conflict in the Rwenzori region. Participants recognized the role of the Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice (RFPJ), and decided that it should become part of the peace network. The evaluation confirmed that 42
participants attended the meeting, from the “Police Force, Chief Administrative Officers, Uganda People’s Defense forces (UPDF), Internal security Officer (ISO), Resident District Commissioners (RDC), media staff from print, electronic and press, religious leaders, UWA and representatives from Civil society Organizations in the region”. In Kenya MRG/ IGW organized a similar networking meeting in Nairobi that attracted 35 project partners and Track 2 actors (local and national) and in attendance included “Program Coordinators and CEOs of project partners, CEO of the Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC), the National Steering Committee of Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC PBCM), Partnership for Peace and Security, MARINGO FINEST Advocacy group, IGAD, Food for the Hungry International, Makadara Social Justice, and Information Center, Coast Inter-Faith Council of Clerics, Coalition for Grassroots Human Rights Defenders Kenya, and the Ministry of interior, and the Kenya National Focal Point, community representatives and peace ambassadors”. The evaluation learned that the meeting discussed identity based conflict in Isiolo and Marsabit, and reflected on the opportunities and challenges of peace building and finding common ground on how to collectively address ongoing problems”. The networking meetings became effective at canvassing and amassing support for the MIPs in order to better tackle Identity Based Conflicts in the hotspots.

PAs had networking platforms, physical and electronic (WhatsApp), where they regularly shared learning, challenges, successes and explored opportunities for better performance. The evaluation learned that they held exchange visits to other CSOs/ partners, and participated in Track 3 meetings to network with duty bearers/ institutional actors at the local and district/ county administrations. Interviews held with PAs established that networking meetings with other PAs from sister partners (both in-country and inter-country) and other Peace Activists, for example the Nyakundire Group in Kasese District Uganda who worked very closely with KRRC in hotspots not directly in KRRC project target areas gave them big insights on what was happening elsewhere. This imparted more confidence in them on top of the trainings they had received. The network with duty bearers/ institutional actors strengthened the ties with the communities.

Track 2 networking meetings with CSOs and district/ county and national duty bearers/ institutional actors/ decision makers as well as with international actors served as an antidote for MIP communities to amplify their voices and be heard. Duty bearers/ institutional actors became more accountable to the MIPs throughout the project as illustrated in later paragraphs. For example in Kenya, “Through this network, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and CSOs were able to establish a working group sector that consults within themselves on activities undertaken by a member organization and gives full support to one another. The sector working group gives a joint quarterly report on activities implemented by partners and challenges encountered while working and suggest for possible solutions as a team”.

Implementing partners conducted annual conflict mapping routines in target communities, and by the time of the evaluation a total of Nine (9) conflict mapping reports had been generated (3 per country). These reports were disseminated to target duty bearers/ institutional actors using various channels (e-copy, printed or both); and up until the time of writing over 250 copies of the conflict mapping reports had been printed and distributed across the project countries. The conflict maps aided the prioritization of interventions in particular hotspots with the engagement of duty bearers/ institutional actors on the way forward.

Track 3 meetings held were intended to bring the communities to interact with the duty bearers/ institutional actors. Interviews with PAs revealed that representatives from the dominant/ majority ethnic groups were at times invited into the meetings and contributed views which became part of solutions. The meetings led to joint resolutions on how to pursue peace and shun ethnic conflicts. It was further revealed that on many occasions these resolutions have worked, and duty bearers responsible were able to respond to EWM alerts on conflict triggers and defused them, and

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6 Project Quarterly Report, Document #5
engaged community dialogues to resolve root causes in the longer term. The evaluation established that there were over 240 conflict points handled where the EWM have been used since the start of the project. By the time of the evaluation Cameroon had recorded and resolved 34 incidences, Kenya 143, and Uganda 72. Through the project initiatives incidences of violent conflicts are now rare compared to the past, and where they have occurred they were probably undetected or not reported in time for a swift response. Communities have contributed several statements on how the EWM has saved them and how the project has contributed to the relative peace in their area.

To further cement the networking between partners and Track 2 actors, the project organised three (3) annual multi-country regional Peace Conferences, the first was held in 2020 Kampala Uganda, second one in 2021 Yaoundé Cameroon, and the last was held in 2022 Nairobi Kenya where partners shared good practices, lessons learned and challenges from the project and discussed ways forward. Each of these conferences would go as far as attracting district/ county and national level duty bearers/ institutional actors and decision makers, UN Human Rights Commission, Uganda/Cameroon/Kenya Human Rights Commissions, CSOs working on conflict prevention/ peace in the region, academicians, representatives of MIPs to mention but a few. Various topics were covered in each of the respective conferences including but not limited to Human Rights of Ethnic Minorities and conflict prevention, conflict prevention and mitigation in the context of climate change among MIPs, COVID-19 prevention, and Role of women in Peace Building. The evaluation confirms that the participants interacted with different actors and this led implementing partners and communities to forge alliances with these actors for further regional networking and share information. Government representatives from the various sectors promised to support the work of CSOs and MIPs to see the success of the projects in the respective countries.

Besides the annual multi-country Peace Conferences, the evaluation confirms that MBOSCUDA, RECODH, IGW, CDRN and KRC were active participants in International Peace Day celebrations annually held on the 21st September every year and showcased their work in the communities. The Peace Conferences and International Peace Day celebrations created a widened network of actors who worked closely with the implementing partners, duty bearers/ institutional actors and the communities. It was attributed by community representatives that the peace conferences offered golden opportunities for networking and interacting with key decision makers and duty bearers in the respective countries. PAs and communities stated that they were able to testify about project achievements (conflict reduction) and the challenges they are facing, before their leaders and international actors courtesy of the conference.

The increased networks created through the networking meetings, peace conferences, the International Peace Days and other forums have enabled the implementing CSOs and MIP communities to continue to explore further opportunities to collaborate on conflict prevention. Until the time of the evaluation a total of 36 international actors were already approached by partner/ community members for advocacy during the project period. The advocacy missions targeted international agencies, amplifying further MIP voices so that their rights are protected and they live in peaceful ecosystems. Interviews with CSO partners and duty bearers revealed that there is a growing number of opportunities to network and assist MIPs in the future, all because the “Networks for Peace” project offered them the exposure/ experience to network. By the time of the evaluation most of the implementing partners (IGW, RECODH, KRRRC) had already secured some support from development partners to extend the conflict prevention missions in MIP communities.

The evaluation established that over 630 local/ national duty bearers/ institutional actors were already contacted by the community/ partners since the start of project (Ca -188, Ke - 231, Ug -

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7 List of funding sources to partners for extending similar activities is detailed in Sustainability Section
On the other hand over 440 MIP community members had met with duty bearers/ institutional actors directly or during events (district/ county or national) to discuss conflict in the target communities (Ca – 29, Ke – 330, Ug – 80). These interactions added hope in the minds of MIPs that indeed their conflict challenges are surmountable given that the duty bearers are willing to support.

On the other hand, the project effectively addressed the delicate conflicts in Uganda involving the UWA and the communities in Kasese and Ntoroko districts. It was noted that poaching that used to put the communities at risk with the authorities was resolved by sensitizing the communities to the importance of the wildlife resources and to taking responsibility for protecting the animals. Following the dialogue meetings with UWA, the evaluation established that UWA responded by increasing their surveillance capacity in the Tooro Semliki game reserve to curb illegal poaching and guide communities on the proper use of the park/reserve should they wish to enter. Communities now have a better perception towards the wildlife resources, the UWA and the understanding of the benefits of wildlife to the community. The Warden Community Conservation stated that their relationship with the community has greatly improved. UWA has also sensitized communities on access to the park for herbs, fencing posts, firewood etc., which the communities can now access but through authorization and supervision by UWA. Interestingly enough, some community members expressed reservations over the sustainability of the relationship because of abuse of such privilege accorded them. For example poaching of small wild animals such as the gazelles, and over harvesting of trees for poles from the park/reserve. Their fear is that this might stifle and slow the progress of co-existence with the wildlife and relationship with UWA. In the Queen Elizabeth National Park in Kasese, they have started erecting boundary fencing and digging of trenches to prevent wild animals from straying to people’s farms. This has been credited to the engagement meetings with UWA by the project through KRRC. In Ntoroko, the boundaries are mainly swampy and only electric fencing can suffice, which UWA has not promised will be done soon. In the Rwenzori region, the project also helped in addressing land conflicts that had become a community challenge. Through the EWM a series of land conflicts were resolved between conflicting families.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, all the project partners engaged in awareness campaigns and spreading of prevention messages in the communities though the PAs. It was learned that partners distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) to community health centers in their program locations. Despite the restrictions for physical meetings, PAs were provided with megaphones for conveying messages about the COVID 19 and prevention. Besides, psychosocial support services were provided to teen pregnant girls and their families, victims of domestic violence, and advocacy for girls to return to school after delivery post-COVID lockdown etc., as these needs became critical. The project registered remarkable outcomes in addressing these cross-cutting themes. For example, in Bugando Parish in Ntoroko District the evaluation established that about 50% of those affected teen mothers have since returned to school and have been provided with baby nursing room equipped with kits in schools. The local leaders (Parish Chief & CDO, Bweramule Sub-county) offered hearty complements to CDRN for the work the PAs have performed along these themes (girl child education, domestic violence, VAWG). Participants across the spectrum echoed appreciations for the COVID 19 response.

There were also some specific challenges faced by different partners and the evaluation examined how the partners resolved them during the project. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic distorted original project activity plans when lockdowns and other restrictions on public gatherings were imposed in order to manage the spread of the disease. All partners got engaged in the sensitization and awareness raising in areas where they were working alongside the key peace messages on conflict prediction, communication and prevention; and they continued to do so throughout the project when the infection waves were still strong. The adaptive mechanisms employed by partners ensured that services were rendered to the communities uninterrupted. For
example in Uganda the adoption of the use of Megaphones for community sensitization by CDRN/KRC instead of physical meetings proved even more effective and additional community members were actually reached in a given period of time than could have originally been possible. Unfortunately in Kasese district Uganda, the evaluation learned that the megaphones were later confiscated by the authorities due to claims that the noise was interfering with security systems in the area and also affecting the wild animals.

In Cameroon, the security situation changed in some parts of the project locations during the project implementation period. The socio-political armed conflict in the North West Region running since October 2016 limited implementation and project effectiveness due to several lockdowns and limited access to some key hotspots. Instead of meeting community members in their places of residence, RECODH/MBOSCUDA had to transport participants to a common place that was safer in order to pass awareness messages to the community. This increased project cost for these community activities. This adaptive mechanism was nevertheless essential as the project had to reach to the communities with the essential peace messages but simultaneously “do no harm” and not put participants at unjustifiable additional risk.

In Marsabit Kenya, political violence was very high as the general elections were approaching in August 2022 and involving the Borana and Gabra. “The conflict was taking a worrying trend whereby people were killed in an interval of 3 minutes in different locations within the hotspot area”. In response to these, IGW and duty bearers decided that it was necessary to recruit additional PAs in the hotspot areas; increased their collaboration with other network peace actors; PAs moved to the communities in a team rather than individually and were cautioned to be vigilant not to expose themselves; brought political aspirants to commit to peace during their campaigns & sign peace pacts, organized peace tournaments between the youth and the police officers, engaged more with the County Commissioner to allow the PAs to pass peace message in meetings among others. As a mitigation measure, MRGA dispatched the rapid response fund in order to support the EWM, engage communities in dialogues and enable quick response for the security institutions whenever alerted. The evaluation investigated and found that these measures contributed to the reduction in the ever raging political conflict in the hotspot town as the elections continued to draw nearer. In Kenya still the impact of climate change induced prolonged droughts increased resource based conflicts in project locations, but MRG/IGW intensified efforts including increasing resources/rapid response fund to counter escalation of conflicts.

In Uganda, the influx of refugees from Eastern Congo DRC increased pressure on CDRN PAs as there were loads of community sensitizations in areas where the refugees were entering and mixing with the local population in Ntoroko. The PAs were tasked to sensitise the Batuku community not to mingle with the Congolese given the COVID 19 infection rates were among the refugees. Since the Congolese were also crossing with large herds of cattle, it was obvious that conflict over grazing and water resources were certain. CDRN together with the district authority engaged UNHCR to come in and join hands in dealing with the crisis. As a mitigation measure, the refugees were only allowed to stay in a holding center as UNHCR prepares to transfer them to the designated refugee camps. This eased the tension that was mounting in the community.

3.3 Impact
The ‘networks for peace’ project, despite having served for only three (3) years, has led to multiple impacts in among the MIP communities in all the project countries. Community participants have indicated that the frequency of conflicts have substantially declined compared to the previous days before the project was started.

In Cameroon the project has generated significant impacts on the lives of the community members especially those living on the frontlines of conflict hotspots. Incidents of farmer–herder identity based conflicts and resource based conflicts have greatly reduced as testified by
community members, Dialogue Committee members and the project Peace Ambassadors. A duty bearer, Mr. Mbouandi Emile, who has served for over 9 years in Kuptamoh (West Region) as Sub Divisional Delegate for Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industry testified that the project has been mutually beneficial to farmers and herdsmen who now work and coexist. According to him, reported cases of conflict have dropped ("have dropped to about 5 in 2021 compared to over 13 conflicts") handled by his office and the administration before 2019, he recounts. On the other hand, a farmer in Tingoh, Nji Solomon, confirmed that indeed co-existence is thriving in his area something that used not to be.

The members of the dialogue platforms and communities interviewed have attested that the amount of time taken to find an amicable solution, the cost of pursing justice and the lingering of further deepening of conflicts as it used to be, have reduced considerably as they now prefer to seek and resolve their conflicts amicably through the established dialogue committees. Members of the dialogue communities interviewed indicated that on average, the platform could resolve a conflict in less than 1 month often with one party bearing the cost burden. In the formal structures the minimum duration to find a solution is about 3 months and both parties are obliged to pay field visit costs to assess the damage and analyse facts within a range of £167 - £417 which ironically is more than the likely or typical charge for damages to be paid. The evaluation also learned that following the first Track diplomacy meeting organized by RECODH, the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development initiated the process of reviewing the laws governing Farmer – Herder Conflict Resolution Processes by engaging the Ministry of State Properties, Surveys and Land Affairs to come up with reforms in the laws.

On the other hand communities are now integrating more sustainable ways in order to maintain peace with the neighboring community in prudent ways, while increasing the chance of maximizing climate change adaptation. Another respondent stated that the project has helped in knowledge change and positive transformation for sustainable living.

Members of dialogue platforms met by the evaluation confirmed that the awareness and sensitization sessions have greatly contributed to breaking down longstanding prejudices, presumptuous attitudes and behaviors that fuel conflicts and division between pastoralists and farmers. Community members attested that those who acted as perpetrators and or victims of identity based conflicts are now put at the center to manage the conflicts. This helps in protecting their interest and needs as well as promoting ownership of the process and sustainable peace outcomes.

In Kenya, conflicts have become minimal and communities embrace the peace dividends of the project. The last year of the project was implemented in an electioneering year (2022), which is usually marred with local politico-ethnic violence, banditry, cattle rustling among others. Because of the ‘networks for peace’ project, the youths usually used by politicians to advance conflicts were managed differently as the August 2022 general elections approached. IGW organized youth sports tournaments, and used the platform to mobilise the youths to preach and embrace peace, shun ethnic violence and refuse influence of politicians to divide communities along ethnic lines for votes. Politicians were also denied opportunity to address communities in meetings of IGW. Five women from Isiolo and Marsabit also received presidential accolades for the peace mission spearheaded by IGW. One such beneficiary is the IGW Director, Grace Lolim.

In Kenya still, a total of 25 conflicts were reported in the project target communities since it started (9 – Isiolo and 16 – Marsabit) although some conflicts might have gone unnoticed in the communities due to lack of reporting given the diverseness of the two counties. Since the launch of the EWM, a total of 109 conflict triggers were reported and defused. The number of human deaths reported has greatly reduced since the project begun, for example in 2019 alone a total of 241 lives were lost from violent conflicts, while in 2020 and 2021 combined only about 102 deaths
were registered. In 2022 until the time of the evaluation only 29 human deaths (21 - Marsabit, 8 – Isiolo) were reported. Other than the human deaths in conflicts, it is worth noting that losses registered in livestock and property also declined by more than half from the year when the project started. It was approximated that livestock worth about £997,270 were lost during the identity based conflicts in 2019 alone compared to the £416,297 in 2022, according to data from the County Commissioners of Isiolo and Marsabit counties, although the approximations could have a high degree of margin of error.

Through the networks created with security organs, the EWM, and community dialogues conducted, the evaluation learned that several stolen livestock were recovered and reinstated back to their rightful owners. For example in Ngaremara, Isiolo County a dialogue meeting led to the recovery of 100 animals that were stolen from the neighboring Meru County. The awareness and sensitization of communities by the PAs and the consistent use of the EWM also led to recovery of guns/ammunitions, explosives and grenades on several occasions by the security agents, these being transit counties from Ethiopia and partly Somalia to the Kenyan capital Nairobi. The security forces have credited the EWM and the cooperation of the communities courtesy of the project.

In Uganda, the project has impacted significantly on identity based conflicts and other conflicts that have historically been a challenge to the MIPs. Interviews with the Basongora community suggest that conflicts with their neighbors the Bakonzo have reduced substantially and would have remained the same if not for the project, owing to the bitter historical relations and perceptions. Since the time of the project start, not more than 5 conflicts have occurred (however one of these was the high profile attack on the Basongora cultural king. The Bakonzo do not like another kingdom in Kasese is the reported reason as to why the attack on the Omukama Rwigi’s palace took place). The community awareness, the use of the EWM and coordination with duty bearers and decision makers has proved impactful to the current peace witnessed in the region. KRRC’s reconciliatory innovation dubbed “Diet for Peace” that brought together the Basongora and the Bakonzo communities for a cooking competition and to dine together opened opportunities for the two communities to eliminate historical cultural prejudices held towards each other. A community interview with the Basongora community in Kahendero highlighted that the two communities for the first time sat to eat together, and discovered there were a lot of common values in each other’s culture and livelihoods. The partner used the occasion to sensitise the agriculturists on the importance of livestock products for nutrition, and the interdependencies of crop production and livestock keeping for manure; and likewise sensitized the pastoralists on the importance of crop production and the interdependencies, additional to the dietary values of both livelihoods. The Basongora community group, the Nyakundire group and the PAs interviewed stated that this cultural gala was one in many, that for the first time the two communities sat together to learn and appreciate each other’s cultural heritage. Intermarriages are starting to happen between the two communities that never used to happen.

The Deputy Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Kasese Uganda further affirmed that Kasese is usually a hotspot for violence during general elections. However, in the 2021 general elections there was relative calm and peace due to the peace messages and civic education passed by the Nyakundire group, the PAs and radio sensitisations on Peace. It was learned that the KRRC EWM was heavily relied upon for alerts and the Regional Police Commander (RPC) used these alerts for case monitoring and response to the emerging tensions, not only in Kasese but the Rwenzori region harboring 6 districts. It was also observed that the peaceful trend was maintained during the recent by-elections (August 2022) held in Kasese, as communities have started changing ethnic-based politics to issue-based politics while electing leaders. It is believed that the situation would have remained unchanged had it not been for the civic education of the PAs, and the use of the EWM to report political conflicts, and the rapid response duty bearers. Political leadership in Kasese had always been based on ethnic dominance, and thereby marginalizing/depriving the MIPs perpetually in elective representations at both the local/district and national levels.
From the time that the EWM was upgraded (mid-2020) to the time of the evaluation, a total of 293 conflict cases had been reported of which only 3 were identity-based conflicts, all in Kasese district (Basongora Vs Bakonzo). A total of 9 conflict triggers were reported from 2020 and were responded to jointly with duty bearers/ institutional actors which if were not detected early would have led to violent conflicts between the two communities. About 30 natural resource based conflicts were also reported (of which 5 were human-wildlife conflicts, over 20 land conflicts of which (20 - boundary related & 5 - land grabbing)), 3 Sexual & Gender Based Violence, 17 governance & service conflicts (5-education, 4-water, 3 - agriculture, 5 - road), 110 - political/election conflicts (22 – leadership, 8 campaign & election conflict, 1 - security agencies), and 2 internal armed conflict. Compared to the baseline year and annual rates before, there has been a remarkable reduction in identity based conflicts although quantitative figures could not be fully verified but the evaluation participants place the reduction at slightly above 60%.

As far as conflicts with UWA and the Batuku/ Basongora communities surrounding and also surrounded by the game reserve/ park, there have also been significant reductions. As alluded to by the communities interviewed, the relationship with UWA has significantly improved. In Ntotoroko District Uganda it was thought that since CDRN begun to invite UWA delegates headed by the Warden Community Conservation (Cap. John Tugume) to community dialogue meetings, their knowledge on their role as communities in safeguarding the wild animals in the Tooro Semliki Game Reserve has improved. They are now able to understand that they are permitted by law to utilize the resources of the game reserve/ park such as accessing firewood, harvesting medicinal herbs, and cutting fencing posts from the reserve, etc., only if they are permitted by UWA upon prior request.

The community also stated that they have not registered incidences of youths disappearing in the park/ reserve since the project reconciled them with UWA. They also narrated how their livestock impounded in the park were recovered using the legal channels, unlike before where the owners would be tortured/ harassed by the law enforcement rangers. The communities placed the recovery charge at roughly UGX50,000 (£11.7) per animal. Follow-up interview with the UWA Warden Community Conservation acknowledged that it is the illiteracy and ignorance coupled with fear of courts by the Batuku people leaving them to be exploited by enforcement officers (UWA Rangers & Uganda Police) when ideally the rate for getting back the animals is only UGX50,000 (£11.7) irrespective of the herd size caught. In the Queen Elizabeth National Park, it is the same story and the community appreciates the work done by KRRC in restoring calm and peace between UWA and them. Since the interventions of the project, retaliatory tendencies towards UWA rangers has drastically declined. UWA is now erecting fences and digging of trenches to prevent human wildlife conflicts as a first step to preventing human wildlife conflict.

3.4 Efficiency

In terms of timeliness, the project activities were completed according to schedule. The use of peace ambassadors who are local community members ensured faster value realisation in the target communities; and at low cost since the PAs are not fulltime project staff to be paid salaries but voluntary community peace workers who are only facilitated with transport for community outreaches. This made field activities quite affordable for the project partners, while concentrating resources on networking activities and developing/ improving of the EMWs. The fact that partners in Cameroon and Uganda shared their EWM also implied that there was resource use maximization (while avoiding duplication) especially that they were working in similar contexts. In Cameroon, RECODH and MBOSCUDA carried joint activities where budgets were very fixed.

Even though spending was adjusted to meet the COVID 19 response, partners still managed to accomplish all project activities at no additional injection from the donor. This was commendable
both financial and time spent since no partner requested no cost extension to finish their planned project activities. Partners also maximised the use of funds for activities by combining field activities of the “Networks for peace” project with activities of sister projects in the same locations. It was learned that the use of the same field vehicle and driver for combined activities saved logistical expenses.

Despite the COVID-19 lockdowns the project innovated and adopted the use of megaphones to reach to more communities as was observed in Uganda. Therefore the awareness/outreach missions met more beneficiaries. Besides, PAs took on added roles by including COVID-19 messages to the Peace Message, as well as VAGW awareness messages, domestic violence, girl child education messages among others. These were accomplished at no additional cost, therefore the project maximized the use of its financial and human resources to reach objectives.

The project originally planned to reach to 25,000 direct beneficiaries with a budget of £996,167, but managed to accomplish more than 30,619 (>15,000 - Kenya, >11,000 - Uganda and >3700 – Cameroon) which translates to 122% of the original project target. In the case of Kenya there were more beneficiaries because the geographical coverage was diverse and the magnitude of the identity based conflicts very high coupled with complex insecurity incidents that necessitated reaching out widely and aggressively. MRGA extended an additional budget supplement in the form of the “Rapid Response Fund” to cope with these demands. The positive impacts registered have only been possible within a period of 3 years. It managed to achieve benefits per participant at a lesser cost than was originally planned (£39.8 versus £31.5). A unit cost expended benefitted more beneficiaries, therefore there was value for money given impacts were realized at less cost, under the close guidance of MRGA/MRGI.

In terms of field staffing the evaluation notes that the project recruited and trained 28 PAs in Cameroon plus 250 frontline dialogue committee members to complement the PAs efforts given the geographical spread of the conflict hotspots; in Kenya, 60 PAs were recruited (29 in Isiolo and 31 in Marsabit); and 44 in Uganda (30 – KRC, 14 – CDRN). To cope with outreach expenses, PAs were put to work in pairs and this reduced the budget pressure due to the rise in cost of fuel caused by COVID 19 and the Ukraine – Russia conflicts.

In Cameroon, despite significant delay in project take off due to administrative bottlenecks to release funds, the team was able to set up a dynamic adaptive system that relied on the local capacities to fast track planning and implementation of activities. Cooperation, mutual respect, project pertinence, awareness and sensitization for strong community engagement were cited as factors behind the success. The trained and deployed 28 Peace Ambassadors set up and strengthened 34 dialogue platforms in farmer – herder conflict hot spots with each platform having at least 10 members (5 famers and 5 herders). The North West Region under MBOSCUDA has 17 of these platforms, Adamawa Region - 8, West Region - 5 and East Region - 4. The dialogue platforms are active in receiving and managing conflicts with over 50 cases handled. These were found to be efficient as far as the partners’ activities in the hotspots.

Staff efficiency was maximised by the continuous capacity building they received and the frequent inter partner networking meetings organized to learn, share challenges, and improve their operations throughout the project. This was very helpful as these interactions helped make sure that no single partner felt left behind. Equally, the PAs were trained and regularly monitored very closely by the partners. Additionally, the linkage with duty bearers/institutional actors played a big role in ensuring services reached communities in a timely way.

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The regular and continuous monitoring of implementation progress by MRGA, and the capacity building in all areas including financial management and reporting increased staff service delivery and reporting. The expert advice and reliable presence of MRGA in journeying with the partners
was attributed to be a factor in the big success that has been achieved from across the 3 countries. Funds were dispatched for the most part on time and planned activities were delivered

3.5 Sustainability

In terms of capacity to extend peace missions beyond the project life, the project recruited, trained and skilled local community members as peace ambassadors, and also formed dialogue committees to complement the work of the PAs. To have carried out their tasks voluntarily without financial support during the last 3 years of the project is symbolic to sustainability. Their presence in the community beyond the project life is almost guaranteed and essential since they remain part of the community to advance the already good progress achieved by the project. All agreed that they will continue with the peace mission unless in cases where logistical challenges prevail.

The community dialogue platforms that have been created in project communities shall continue to serve as their role in promoting peace through alternative dispute resolution has been well acknowledged by the communities. Being locally led initiatives, there is limited support required for these dialogue committees to thrive and the evaluation concludes that it is likely that their activities will sustain beyond the project life. With knowledge of the EWM and through the help of the PAs, the local/ district/ county duty bearers will continue to face demands for accountability in the face of conflicts and triggers.

The already established EWMs will go beyond the project life as partners have rallied support to extend the use of this rich resource. The PAs will continue to provide support in the effective use of the EWM. Communities are now knowledgeable about conflict prediction, reporting to the EWM and can seek help from the PAs and Dialogue committee members too. The knowledge from awareness and sensitization missions in both the MIPs and the dominant groups is likely to sustain beyond the project life. The study communities have affirmed that they are willing to continue on this trajectory of embracing peace and good neighborliness. The local leadership and the district/county administration have shown willingness to support the community initiatives moving forward.

The EWMs that have already been developed by partners in each country are relatively new, and viable for extension to users beyond the project life. Their maintenance is almost certain, as almost all partners have already secured some resources to advance the peace cause beyond the project life. In Cameroon, RECODH has obtained funding from the EU and one of the expected results is to continue to strengthen the EWS developed in the East and Adamawa Regions. In the West region, a collaboration agreement has been formed with GIZ that will make use of the Peace Ambassadors. The consortium is also sourcing some funding from the Canadian High Commission to continue with peace actions in the West and North West Regions. In Kenya, climate change, which is a major contributor to conflict in Marsabit and Isiolo, is being tackled by IGW. Through the ‘network for peace’ project, IGW struck a partnership with the Evangelical Churches in Africa to implement and address climate injustice in the same locations, and the project will make use of the already existing EWM. Further, IGW has partnered with the county administration and established a response center which will exist past the project life. This will ease handling of emerging issues by the community through the EWM and will ensure faster response by the administration police. In Uganda, through the experience of the ‘networks for peace’ project, KRRC wrote a proposal to EU and won a grant to extend similar activities in the Rwenzori sub-region, and the communities in Kasese are top in their priority. CDRN on the other hand is lobbying for funding to extend their presence in Ntoroko, where they would like to integrate peace with governance since they have seen that there is big gap in the young district that needs to be addressed in order to serve the MIP communities better. On the other hand, UWA affirmed that the community PAs are resourceful in dialoguing with the communities and would wish to continue
involving them in the future. The Ntoroko and Kasese district local administration are equally intending to integrate the PAs in their community development work as volunteers with basic facilitation to continue with the peace mission.

The continuation of peace missions by PAs in the communities is likely to extend beyond the project life, gauging from the fact that partners have secured funding support from development partners (except CDRN and MBOSCUDA) to extend similar activities in the completed project locations. The local government administrations (county governments / district) have appreciated and expressed confidence in the capabilities of the PAs, and have &/ or are planning to integrate them into their community programmes. For example in Kenya, the PAs have been integrated into the conflict management network missions of the county governments of Isiolo & Marsabit. In Uganda, as a result of project ownership by community, KRRC promised to continue supporting Peace Ambassadors to do the work even beyond the project districts. In Cameroon, RECODH project funded by EU will make use of the Peace Ambassadors and those in the West and North West will be involved in future similar projects. In the West region, a collaboration has been developed with GIZ that will make use of the Peace Ambassadors in that area. Therefore PAs have a high chance of being absorbed into future projects of the partners & local government administrations to continue Advocacy and Dialogue mission in hotspots.

The network of partners is still likely to continue beyond the life of the project as all have felt the importance of keeping up with the network. The relationship between MRG and implementing partners & duty bearers/ institutional actors has grown. The partners will continue to explore these networks in the future whenever there are opportunities. For example in Kenya, Action Aid Kenya collaborated with IGW to train women in Village Saving Loans Association (VSLA) model as one way of forging relationship among women who come from different ethnic groups. In Cameroon, RECODH strengthened its collaboration with the GIZ program on pastoralism and the cross-border dynamics, and have participated in a GIZ conference in collaboration with ECCAS and ECOWAS regional governments, and RECODH was among the actors mapped in the field of pastoralism in Cameroon. In Uganda, UNHCR/ CDRN with the help of the district/ regional duty bearers played a big role in ensuring conflicts are avoided between the host community & the Congolese refugees over resources by holding them in temporary verification and registration centers, & relocated them to designated refugee camps on a rolling basis.

3.6 Lessons Learned

There are many positive lessons from this project (more than negative ones). The evaluation documents in this section only the most remarkable lessons especially from each country given the contextual variations and scale of implementation.

In Cameroon it has been learned that the communities in the hotspots that benefited from the project now clearly know they don’t have to take conflicts to the military units nor yield to their pressure to have them resolve the community conflicts, as they used to exploit their ignorance in the past especially in the East and Adamawa Regions. The population has been sensitized to know the different official channels responsible for resolving farmer – herder conflicts and how to approach them. It was also found that the communities are fully aware of some public officials who instigate and propagate farmer- herder conflicts to make personal gains from it. They set up farmers against herders and demand that the matter be brought forward, for possible extortion from the victims. The communities have learned that it is easier to resolve conflicts through the dialogue committees or through mediation as well as the use of EWM, which they realized is cheaper and more effective than the formal court process.

In project countries, the conflict mapping and conflict analyses activities, coupled with sensitization of the communities has created a level of awareness amongst the populations that they were simply suffering from a long standing identify based conflict that is likely to continue
and even deepen if they do not take the necessary precautions to halt it by themselves. The project thus contributed significantly in building tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and enhanced capacities of local structures to direct actions to managing conflicts. The spirit of marginalization, exclusion and mistrust between communities is being eroded and there is willingness to access and share resources of common interest. In Cameroon for example, the practice of **alliance farming** where farmers and cattle keepers collaborate in measures that are mutually beneficial in accessing areas for pasture or night paddocking while at the same time manuring the land for crop farming was reportedly successful, and is expanding in Sabga, Akum and Kouptamo. Equally in Kasese the **alliance farming** is working since the two communities (Bakonzo and Basongora) were brought together in the **diet for peace** cultural gala organized by KRC. The Basongora community now browses the fallow lands of the Bakonzo farmers during the dry season, and the farmers freely offer their crop residues as fodder to the pastoralists. The two communities that used not to even share each other’s cultural meals have started to embrace their neighbour’s delicacies since the nutritive knowledge was disseminated in the diet for peace conference. Intermarriage is beginning to happen between the Basongora and the Bakonzo.

The dialogue platforms and the EWMs set up by the project for reduction and management of identity based conflicts were also used for reporting and resolving many other conflicts in the communities. For example in Cameroon the incidences of gender variables such as VAWG, sexual related conflicts, early marriage, cattle theft and other harmful behaviours were reported to the dialogue in Sabga, Akum, and Kouptamo. In Kenya similar incidents were also reported to the EWM and brought to the dialogue fora for resolution that comprised of both gender types, which the communities found to be very useful especially in a community that is culturally male opinionated and dominated. Further, the EWM became a very useful forum for reporting on cattle theft and other thefts, and since then communities have recovered lost animals once reported to the system which they said was difficult before. Some stated that the security agencies would at times claim the animals and do not release them to the owners. In Uganda, the dialogue fora and the EWM were also heavily relied upon for similar incident reporting and the PAs got deeply involved in addressing multitudes of these domestic conflicts, early marriage, boundary disputes and land fencing among others especially in Ntoroko. More interestingly, addressing human-wildlife conflict and conflict with the conservation authorities (UWA) became one of the greatest achievements of the project even though identity based conflicts was the main objective. Through the project, multiple conflicts and misunderstandings were resolved between UWA and the communities neighboring the park and the game reserve in Kasese and Ntoroko. Attempted attacks on the authorities were averted in time because of the existence of the EWM.

What was very significant in the project was also the empowerment and involvement of women in dialogue processes, which ensured that the voice of the voiceless was heard in decision making unlike in the traditional settings. It was also found that female PAs were among the most proactive and top performers in the peace mission compared to some of their counterpart male participants. Women’s empowerment and representation was significantly felt in the project communities, and they played key roles in advancing peace in fragile contexts and ensuring dialogue prevailed.

The networks for peace project across the 3 countries has had positive impact on connecting the CSOs/implementers to duty bearers/institutional actors, regional and international peace agencies/experts such as IGAD, AU, the UN and national level peace and dialogue institutions which would have otherwise been impossible. As the project exits, the implementing partners have been left in better positions to further network and attract further funding support from willing donors as is the case currently where almost all have received some support for continuation of critical activities. The bonds between the implementers and the local/district/national leadership has grown stronger over time and there was positive reception in all the countries and the respective communities.
The project has also broken historical barriers mainly due to ignorance between the MIPs and their neighbors (dominant ethnic communities) by raising awareness on the cultural myths and misconceptions about each other, which had actually been the main obstacle to peaceful cohabitation for centuries between the communities without a lasting solution. The project created excellent opportunities for MIPs to reconcile with their counter parts as well as their duty bearers through an open, honest and trustworthy process without doubts to either parties, and is the reason why project succeeded while previous attempts by government and other agencies had failed on multiple occasions. The project has also enabled duty bearers to learn and become more responsible/accountable for addressing MIP concerns and this is very useful for project sustainability.

The project was able to solve adequately a big bunch of community problems using the same resources basket beyond the plan for resolving identity based conflicts in project countries. Most of the MIP communities reached by the project had not many opportunities with other agencies doing similar activities. The networks for peace project therefore solved what most governments and other NGOs/CSOs would have easily bypassed. The mechanisms to solve such conflicts were innovative and proved successful, and as a result the project yielded impacts within a short span of time (3 years) unlike other projects where impact would start to manifest much later like 5 years after a project started.

4. **CONCLUSIONS**

The “Networks for Peace Project” through its EWM effectively addressed the noxious ‘identity based conflicts’ among the Mbororo traditionally herding community and the farmers in Cameroon; between the Samburu, Turkana, Rendille, and Borana pastoral communities in North Eastern Kenya; and between the Basongora and Bakonzo, and the difficult conflicts that existed between the authorities (UWA) and the Batuku minority ethnic group as well as the Basongora communities in the Rwenzori region in Uganda. The project has registered significant reductions in the rates of identity based conflicts in all target communities, and this achievement has been attributed to the project’s insistence on strengthening of Civil Society advocacy actors and through the CSOs empower the MIP communities to hold their duty bearers accountable. The deployment of the EWMs by CSO actors for beneficiary communities to report any early signs of conflict aided the response mechanism and speed of duty bearers/institutional actors to respond in timely ways to identity based conflicts and other crises faced by the MIP communities living in the fragile conflict prone contexts in the hotspots. The elaborate networking structures horizontally and vertically created by MRG/implementing partners further aided conflict prediction, communication, response coordination and affirmative actions as was witnessed in the project. As a result of the advocacy activities in communities, negative perceptions and prejudices that had been fueling most of these identity based conflicts have begun to decline among the conflicting communities across the project countries. The project’s efforts to address related conflicts such as resource based conflicts and other unrest proved effective. As a result there are now improved relationships between communities themselves; communities and authorities (e.g. UWA in Uganda); duty bearers and CSOs to mention but a few.

In terms of participation, there were wide consultations across the board of all stakeholders concerned from the beginning to the end of the project, and the project made deliberate efforts to ensure women participate in all activities like taking part in meetings and provide suggestions where expected. This led to reasonable engagement of women in advocacy awareness raising in communities. The recruitment of the Peace Ambassadors was also sensitive to gender balance (with over 40% female participation) and many female PAs contributed significantly to spreading Peace Message in their communities and sharing information with duty bearers/institutional actors. The project also contributed to the reduction of early child marriage, improved girl child enrolment in school, returning of adolescent mothers to school, reduced domestic violence
among others, improved awareness among communities against harmful cultural practices such as alternative rites of passage (e.g. FGM) among the pastoral communities (Kenya), even though these were not the core focus of the project. The project’s response to the COVID 19 response in project communities also heightened communities coping capacity even though the crises were devastating.

The evaluation concludes that the interventions suggested and the activities implemented for reducing identity based conflicts in the conflict hotspots in all countries were very relevant and were generally effective in contributing to both its desired outcomes and expected impacts on the target MIP communities. The project also maximised the use of financial and human resources and as a result, it reached to more than the planned total direct beneficiaries (more than 30,619 from targeted 25,000). Several dynamics played a role in realizing these efficiencies and the dedicated support extended by MRGA to implementing partners. The project outcomes and growing impact has a very high possibility of sustaining past the project life, and implementing CSOs have created sufficient networks across the board to continue supporting the communities. Whereas this is the case, there is also a general feeling that the project needed to stay a little longer than the 3 years it has spent since most of the structures it has created have not matured and the communities feel vulnerable that they might relapse if the project withdraws support now.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations concerning the Completed Project:

- The inclusive and participatory approach and methodology used in this project offered plenty of room for community ownership and proved cheaper in terms of human & financial resources than would otherwise be possible if it were entirely in the hands of the project staff. Owing to its success, it is recommended that such innovation should be replicated in the future and into other projects of partners.
- In Cameroon, the dialogue meetings as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism has proven efficient, cost effective and reliable than the formal judicial mechanisms for justice. It is recommended that the project initiative that has succeeded should be continued & the dialogue committees capacities be strengthened further as they can do a lot more, given the trust that the communities in conflict have vested in them.
- The UWA and communities surrounding the game reserves/ parks have started on a positive note in this project. It is highly recommended that the relationship should be further strengthened in order to sustain the harmony between the two conflicting entities.
- The networking structures and links established in Kenya were generally very strong, and resulted in halting the multiple conflicts in many hotspots and other insecurities. Network partners from Cameroon and Kenya could continue to learn from IGW in order to make their impact even bigger within those geographical regions. The “Food for Peace” innovation introduced by KRRC for removing cultural prejudices between the Bakonzo and the Batuku could be replicated in other communities with similar context e.g. the Cameroon besides the already successful Alliance Farming they are practicing. Partners could explore the Peace Sports Tournaments already tested by IGW to bring the communities closure to the authorities in addressing ethnic based conflicts.
- More innovations on how conflict communities can embrace each other are needed, and the networking platforms as well as the EWM should be continued. Successive phase of the project should recruit more PAs per unit area in project locations for efficient and more effective services, and complemented with improved field welfare given the economic times owing to their significance in the communities right now.
In Uganda, there is a push for compensation of lost property to wildlife which UWA has never addressed. Future interventions could take up their advocacy to ensure the responsible ministries and the parliament take action to compensate the MIPs. There are outcries that UWA takes too long to respond to human wildlife conflicts especially when a human is injured. This approach does not work in the likely event that the person injured is in critical condition and needs urgent medical attention beyond the basic first aid offered by trained community guards. There is dissatisfaction why UWA and the district authorities respond instantly to conflict sites where a wild animal has been injured or killed, but the same is not applied when a human life is hurt. This lopsided duty bearing by UWA and the district administration should be rectified urgently because human life is more precious. The anomaly in recovering lost livestock in the park needs further engagement with the responsible institutions (Ministry of Justice & Constitutional Affairs of Uganda, Uganda Police, UWA, RDCs and Local Government).

A next phase of the project (if any) could ensure communities understand the full use of the EWM, and are comfortable in using than vesting the user responsibility entirely to PAs alone. The PAs could travel out of their locality and may not be accessible while crisis looms on their backs. Future interventions could pick the lessons learned from this project and improve on their design and implementation strategy for higher impacts.

**Recommendations concerning the continuation of the work/ future projects:**

- The designed EWMs were generally effective and accessible by the communities. However, it was noted that the system could not send acknowledgements to users who submitted/sent messages to it. Project participants interviewed in Uganda expressed uncertainty about whether their messages have been received in the EWM, and when the response or action will be taken by the responsible entities. Although it was also confessed that they could see actions been taken on the issue been reported even when they did not receive confirmation upon successful submission. It would have been better if the system was designed with the ability to send acknowledgement text to the senders/subscribers to lower anxieties if the conflict is bound to happen but rapidly.

- Some community members also felt that they were never taught on how to send and access information from the system other than the PAs. It was never clear who is (and who is not) entitled to use the EWM in the community, other than the PAs. It was going to be better if the project had clearly defined what the community users “can do” and “cannot do” with the EWM system.

- Communities and duty bearers have praised the important role the project has played in their communities; however, there is a general feeling that the project was too short-lived and is exiting at a time when they have just begun getting the benefits. The consultants recommend that partners use the well-laid foundation of the completed project to extend their presence in the project locations to prevent beneficiary communities to relapse into conflict & hardships.

- The data from communities & duty bearers reveals that PAs were overstretched and were not adequate in number to reach comprehensively to all parts of the communities who happened to equally be in need in the same project geographical settings. Some PAs also lacked complementary transport facilities to get to hard to reach communities. Based on this evidence, the consultants recommend that the number of PAs be stepped up in future projects to manage more effectively and efficiently the project targets in each location. Owing to the geographical expanse and poor road infrastructure in some of the locations, it would be wise if future projects could rethink the means of transport & fuel allowances including choosing to compensate their fuel expenses (either prior-/ post- field outreach).