



***Development of South Sudan
Community Media Sector as a
platform for peace and reconciliation
and promotion of gender equality***

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Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	Republic of South Sudan
Duration (in months):	24 months
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Partner(s) institutions:	South Sudan Community Empowerment for Progress, Organization(CEPO), South Sudan Media Support Working Group(MSWG), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Union of Journalists of South Sudan(UJOSS) and Association of Media Women in Southern Sudan (AMWISS).
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	US\$1,400 000

Rationale and background

1.1 The impact of South Sudan conflict on media and access to information

On 14 July 2011, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly admitted the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd member of the UN becoming African newest country. Amidst various social and economic challenges, within a few years, the country had reached the point of departure from humanitarian assistance to sustainable economic growth. This has however been reversed and greatly affected by the conflict that broke on 15th December 2013. What began as a political power struggle has now evolved into conflict with ethnic character and claiming the lives of combatants and innocent civilians alike. Consequently, this has

triggering waves of violence that has spread across the country, affecting seven out of ten states and resulting into a serious political, economic and humanitarian crisis.

The potential for the South Sudan media to be a dynamic and fast growing sector has also been compromised greatly since the conflict broke out. Journalists have found it very difficult to do their work due to insecurity, intimidation and difficult access to information as well as heavy government control over the kind of information to report on. Lack of community owned and managed media that gives a non-censored platform to the rural communities to engage one another as well as with their decision makers with no external influence, has left the rural communities cut out from contributing to peace building. They lack a communication channel they can use to freely discuss and provide home grown solutions to solving the current conflict at the local, regional, national and international level. There is glaring marginalization of women in journalistic professions and absence of women's leadership in media executive functions partly due to insecurities faced by women journalists especially in the mainstream media but also due to societal attitudes towards the role of women.

While the Government of Republic of South Sudan has increasingly recognized the importance of improving public access to information and the freedom of expression, the country's media sector still faces immense logistical, economic, social and political challenges. There is a wide rural-urban division in terms of access to media and telecommunications, and a high level of illiteracy among the population reaching 70% among males and 90% among females. Rural based communities access to print and televised media is extremely low or non-existent, coupled with low ICT and media literacy. Few households own televisions or computers and Internet access is extremely limited. The production and distribution of print media occurs mainly in the national capital and the poor state of infrastructure also makes the print media inaccessible to the majority of the population especially those based in the rural areas.

1.2 Radio concentration and ownership in South Sudan

Although a number of FM radio stations have been established nationwide, most of the FM stations are funded and controlled by churches, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or as private businesses. A few online news sources have sprung up as well, but web access is similarly limited to the main towns, and diaspora members tend to be the most active social media users. The largest radio networks in South Sudan besides state radio are also supported by foreign grants. There are four such networks: Radio Miraya, founded by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Foundation Hirondelle which has recently stopped its funding leading to laying off staff and reduction of the range of programs broadcasted, Catholic Radio Network founded by the Roman Catholic Church and currently managing and controlling 9 radios, Sudan Radio Service, a US-funded network originally based in Nairobi, and the Internews -supported radio network.

Furthermore, due to the lack of a legal environment and framework that would provide a platform for transforming the state broadcaster into a public broadcaster, Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) which is the ruling and governing party retains tight political control of the government radio and TV broadcasts namely the 9 South Sudan Radio Stations and TV.

1.3 Community Owned and Managed Media in South Sudan

While UNESCO recognizes that the presence of community radio is a sign of media pluralism, diversity of content, and the representation of a society's different groups and interests, the concept of Community media that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community is lacking in South Sudan. Local community participation, both in management and program production aspects is evidently

absent. Furthermore, individual community members and local institutions are not the principal sources of support for the existing media operations and especially in relation to control of editorial policies and in the board of management. It is in view of this, that the Ministry of information has issued CEP who are they key partner in this project with three frequencies for community radios establishment.

On the other hand, lack of ICT facilities especially internet access outside the urban areas of South Sudan is contributing to the worsening digital divide between the rural and the urban communities. As the current conflict and crisis persists in South Sudan the majority of the rural communities have no idea of what is happening locally, national, regionally or internationally. They do not have a community radio or TV that focuses and addresses their information needs, or internet where they can seek or access relevant information. Newspapers are published in urban areas and address the needs of the urban dwellers hence they are not only out of reach but also not in the local languages understood by rural communities. 90% of articles are also written by men, making it more important for the project to strategically empower women as active contributors of media due to literacy challenges.

There is evidently an urgent and great need for establishing a platform that gives a voice to the voiceless South Sudanese and provides an opportunity for the communities living in rural areas to contribute to peace and reconciliation of their country through various forms of community based and managed communication channels. This platform should also provide access to local, regional, national and international news as well, to ensure that the rural people especially the youth have access to educational and developmental information.

According to the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action¹, addressing gender equality and women's empowerment begins with participation. Women and girls continue to struggle to make their voices heard and are increasingly marginalized by the overall humanitarian response. This is despite the fact that majority of the displaced people are women and children, and in some sites female-headed households far outnumber male-headed households. Leadership structures remain male dominated so that any of the community consultations on needs identification and programme plan programme planning that do take place therefore mostly neglect the specific concerns, priorities, and solutions for women and girls. This project will use UNESCO Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media to ensure that women, regardless of age, are not neglected in the planning and implementation phase.

Why UNESCO?

UNESCO gives high priority in strengthening communication and information capabilities including in post-conflict and post-disaster countries. Many inclusive and pro-poor strategies have been successfully piloted by the Organization at the height of the new information technology boom including in post-conflict countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, East Timor and Cambodia among others. The pilots include the Community Multimedia Centers model, which addressed community participation and local business communication needs, and more recently, Empowering local radios with ICTs, which focuses on upgrading the IT capacity of individual radio stations.

In promoting pluralism and media diversity through community radio, UNESCO continues to address the needs of the community radio sector in Africa and works closely with civil

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<http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2014/IASC%20Gender%20Reference%20Group%20%20Gender%20Alert%20South%20Sudan%20May%2013%202014%20Refo%20%20%20pdf.pdf>

society, academic and government actors. Stakeholders look up to the Organization for leadership within the framework of its unique mandate on Communication and Information in the United Nations System. UNESCO's convening power, facilitates consultative dialogue between wide-ranging stakeholders and beneficiaries. Donors have a high regard for UNESCO, which has played an active role in facilitating the peace process in South Sudan.

The Organization has a large compendium of tools that can be used at all stages of project planning, implementation and monitoring within the context of a post-conflict country including the following: the media development indicators, gender-sensitive indicators for media, media and information literacy curricula, community radio curricula, and journalism curricula, among others.

Given the transformative effect of the information and communication technologies (ICT) and its potential to propel development, UNESCO has been taking lead globally through the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and by paying closer attention to the continued growth in Internet and mobile penetration within African cities and rural areas. This is with the recognition that the possibilities for the access, preservation, creation and sharing of educational, scientific and cultural content as well as other information-based services are wide-ranging. UNESCO also does recognise that improved access also promotes transparency and empowerment of citizens leading to democracy and peace. This being the case, UNESCO is best placed to take lead in replicating this kind of community based communications channels in South Sudan with a view to contributing to development and a stronger national platform for diverse, constructive, and non-violent dialogue that promotes tolerance and lays the groundwork for national reconciliation.

This project also complements the UNESCO Juba education project on Literacy and Basic Life Skills for Women and Girl in South Sudan aimed at empowering vulnerable female youth in addressing key developmental and societal challenges posed by high illiteracy rates combined with the lack of basic life skills for self-sustainability.

Overall Goal/Objective

The overall objective of this project is to increase pluralism and diversity of information and enhanced community capacities through media particularly community media by enabling inclusion and participation of the citizens in peace and reconciliation. This will be achieved by ensuring that community based media serve the needs of all the groups in the society by producing and promoting activities, programmes and dialogue on peace, reconciliation and non-violence, development and focusing on educational issues that advance democracy, foster a culture of respect to human rights and promote social justice, peaceful co-existence and equality to all gender.

Main expected results

- I. ICT-enhanced community radio stations are introduced
- II. Women and men of all ages are able to access information through community radio.
- III. Communities are equally represented in the governance and practice of community radio and related services
- IV. Increased freedom of expression through provision of discussion and advocacy platform that offers equal representation at community level.
- V. Alternative opportunities provided for the rural communities especially the youth to meaningfully engage in and contribute to development of South Sudan.

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

(i) Establishment of 3 ICT enhanced community radio stations in South Sudan

This intervention aims to promote community empowerment and narrow the digital divide by introducing ICT enhanced community broadcasting. For trust building as well as voluntary participation reasons, this output also includes the phase-in strategy, bearing in mind the lack of basic computer and internet services for community members (see implementation strategy for details) .

(ii) Establishment of 9 listeners clubs and provision of Radio sets

To ensure that the content generated is locally relevant and responds to the needs of all the targeted communities, this activity proposes to also establish at least 9 listeners clubs for the three community radio stations to be established in the 3 states. These listeners' clubs will target the youth, women and the traditional local leaders from the communities around the radio station's signal reach. Each listeners club will be provided with at least 3 radio sets to ensure that all the voices and views of the communities are well represented and needs addressed. The model of women listeners clubs already established by UNESCO Juba in cooperation with the Association of the Media Women in South Sudan (AMWISS) will be replicated.

(iii) Training of and equipping of community radio

To ensure that locally relevant content is also gathered and packaged professionally, UNESCO will draw from the experience and results gained from the SIDA funded Project "Empowering Local radios with ICT's by working with local partners especially the Union of Journalist Association of South Sudan (UJOSS) and the South Sudan Community Empowerment for Progress organization which is the most well established community based organization with its presence throughout the 10 regions of South Sudan, to select and train at least 20 community members per each radio as correspondents. While the project will not provide salaries for correspondents, incentives such as training opportunities, reporting equipment, airtime and travel will be provided. ICTs facilities especially the internet will be provided and used for gathering news that are beneficial to local communities.

(iv) Capacity building of the community media volunteers, staff, board members, Community leaders and Community mobilization and advocacy

Training to be provided to community media volunteers and staff to equip them with the required capacity in undertaking basic community media management, including community involvement in gathering information, packaging, production, broadcasting, resource mobilisation, financial management and technical knowledge on handling and maintaining radio equipment. A refresher course on this same to be carried out after six Training for community board members and Community leaders to equip them with knowledge and skills on community media establishments, leadership, financial management, communication and community mobilisation skills.

(v) Community forums

These will be convened by the local traditional leaders and the CMC board members and held in each of the states, bringing together communities living in these states with the aim of mobilising community support and ownership of the CMC's, their participation in content generation of the radio and day to day volunteership at the radio stations. The forums will also sensitize the communities on the need to utilise the telecentres facility as a development platform for the communities.

(vi) Basic ICTs lessons to be offered to the community members.

Focus will be on how to use the telecentre. These lessons shall be carried out at the telecentre once a week. The lesson will be offered free of charge during the first one year from the inception of this project. During the second year, basic computer packages shall be offered at a fee and the generated income ploughed back to maintain the running costs of the telecentre. The telecentre will also be used for training the youth on ICT skills that's building their capacity to engage in more meaningful activities as an alternative to the current engagement on arms trade, under age recruitments by warring parties in the current conflict, cattle raiding and other community based crimes to earn a living.

(v) Production and broadcasting of educational and culturally relevant programmes.

This activity will focus on oral history archives, culture and handicrafts, traditional knowledge which will contribute to psychosocial therapy and building community skills as an alternative to conflict. This will be achieved through community radio programming by packaging and airing locally relevant content and in local languages. The telecentre facility will also be established in a way that it can be used for by the community for adult learning and skills building. Early warning programmes on conflicts, diseases outbreak, and gender based violence disasters e.g. flooding and disaster management skills programmes will be broadcasted through this community platform. Hence this project will provide the much needed intersectoral collaboration and other UNESCO sectors will leverage on the community based structures that will be established through this project

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

(i) Rural based communities: This project targets rural based communities in particular the youth, local traditional leaders who are key and influential in decision making in the states, women and children as well the displaced and non-displaced communities. Immediate beneficiaries are estimated at least 3million people living in the 3 states namely Central Equatorial, Lakes State and Western Bahr el Ghazal. After the successful implementation of the first phase, the second phase of this activity will be replication of the same model nationally considering that the need is spread country wide.

In the first phase, the first targeted community in Lakes state-Rumbek is affected by the high level of the cattle raiding that is claiming lives of youth. These communities especially the youth require an alternative engagement and skills to earn a living and also be sensitized through a local platform that uses local languages on critical issues such as human rights protection, and non-violent approach and rule of law. The second community is Mundari community of Terekeka county of Central Equatoria state bordering Dinak Bor at Bor county of Jongeli state. Here the CMC will be an important tool for conflict transformation between Mundari and Dinka Bor. Both tribes will be involved in running the radio program jointly as an approach of establishing joint activities for peaceful co-existence. The third community is Keopat county community of Eastern Equatoria state bordering Kenya and located at angle of cattle raiders between South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda

(ii) Women: This project will ensure that at least a 50/100 of the beneficiaries in all the activities are women and the most marginalised in the society. Community media especially the radio in particular can be a remarkably effective gateway for women in disadvantaged communities to approach the new information technologies. The self-confidence and skills gained with low-technology radio offer a bridge for these women to the high-tech of ICTs. It is often the women who express the greatest communication deficit when feasibility and baseline studies are conducted prior to the introduction of community radio. Their motivation and sense of empowerment are, consequently, particularly high when they learn to use local broadcasting. The participatory approach of community radio (collective ownership, listening

groups, etc.) provides a supportive framework for women as they go on to tackle the challenges posed by effective use of ICTs.

(iii) **Adult:** The CMC facilities will provide a platform for adult literacy lessons through broadcasting locally package programmes in local languages which demonstrate the practical uses of written material and also stimulate interest of the adults in using ICTs, productions and airing of culturally relevant programmes e.g. oral history archives, culture and handicrafts, traditional knowledge.

The key stake holder is the South Sudan Community Empowerment for Progress organization which is the most well established community based organization with its presence throughout the 10 regions of South Sudan. As has been the approach by UNESCO in such initiatives, by the end of the two years, capacity will have been built within the communities especially through well constituted and trained board of management to ensure the activities are managed and owned by the communities. CEPO will assume the overall coordination and follow-up and work closely with all the local partners.

Implementation strategy

The first phase of this project will be implemented within a period of 24 months. UNESCO will be the overall coordinator, working closely with the members of the South Sudan Community Empowerment for Progress organization (CEPO). CEPO is the most well established community based organization with its presence throughout the 10 regions of South Sudan, and has a good working relationship with key donors and the government of South Sudan. CEPO has secured three community radio licenses and is ready to have them used for this project interventions. CEPO in close collaboration with the Union of Journalists of South Sudan, will also play a crucial role in mobilization and coordination of the community members, to fully support and participate in the activities to be undertaken within the framework of this project.

UNESCO will also enlist the support and coordination with the like-minded partners from the South Sudan Media Support Working Group (MSWG) which brings together all the media development partners in South Sudan including the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Association of Media Women in Southern Sudan (AMWISS) in close collaboration with the ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, will undertake the activity on establishment of women listeners clubs, gender mainstreaming thus ensuring that the content being broadcasted, staff and volunteers, community representatives and the training programmes, do reflect equal representation of both genders and youth. Consultations on implementation of this project will be carried out continuously with the South Sudan Media Sector working group (MSWG), to ensure coordination, support and no duplication of efforts. UNMISS support will be enlisted in providing local transport through UNMISS flights to and from the 10 states.

A physical space with basic computer facilities and internet technology will be linked to the community radio station at the initial stages of the project. This is the CMC approach that offers a strategy for addressing the digital divide in the poorest communities of the developing world and also among countries in transition. Implementation of this model in South Sudan is now even more appropriate than ever before. This is because it will provide the much needed communication flow to contribute to advocacy for peaceful co-existence, reconciliation and for non-violence. The Community Multimedia Centre (CMC) combines local radio by local people in local languages with a public telecentre facility offering public access to information and communication technology (ICT) applications in a wide range of social, economic and cultural areas. While the CMC model combines community radio facility and a telecentre (computers with Internet and e-mail, phone, fax and photocopying services), due to lack of television sets in South Sudan rural home, each telecentre will be equipped

with television sets to ensure that community members have access to TV facilities. The radio-in-a-box supplied by In a Box Innovations, which is cost effective and easy to install and operate will be most ideal for this intervention. The three South Sudan states proposed for the first phase of this project are Eastern Equatorial, Lakes State and Western Bahr el Ghazal. These states have been selected owing to the strategic position they hold in reconciling the different South Sudan warring communities. Depending on security situation and assessments at time of implementation, the locations might change to some of the conflict zones where the need is acute.

Sustainability and exit strategy

UNESCO serves as secretariat to the Media Sector Working Group whose objective is to increase the relevance and effectiveness of media development partners' cooperation in South Sudan, in harmony with the various partners' mandates and areas of expertise. Through coordination with the following partners; South Sudan Community Empowerment for Progress, Organization(CEPO), South Sudan Media Support Working Group(MSWG), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare , United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Union of Journalists of South Sudan(UJOSS) and Association of Media Women in Southern Sudan (AMWISS), stakeholders and other actors on the ground, as well as through visibility actions, local capacity will be build and strengthened, contacts will be established and/or strengthened with other potential donors, thereby increasing the likelihood that the activities will continue even after the end of the funding phase of this project.

As indicated above, the South Sudan Community Empowerment for Progress organization (CEPO) is the main implementing partner of this project. CEPO is a well-established and respected community based organization in South Sudan and with extremely good working relationship with donors based in South Sudan, a key partner with UNMISS and other UN agencies and has good working relationship with the government. As has been the approach by UNESCO in such initiatives, by the end of the two years, capacity will have been built within the communities especially through well constituted and trained board of management to ensure the activities are managed and owned by the communities. CEPO will assume the overall coordination and follow-up and work closely with all the local partners thus ensuring sustainability of this initiative.