

RESULTS SUMMARY

Peace Caravans restoring peace in South Sudan

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PROJECT	<i>Title:</i>	Peace Caravans restoring peace in South Sudan
	<i>Partner:</i>	Oxfam
	<i>Country:</i>	South Sudan
	<i>Period:</i>	2022 - 2025

CHANGE



Social cohesion and harmony have been rebuilt among one-time warring communities of Rumbek East and Rumbek Central Counties. Introducing Peace Caravans running a range of social events and cultural activities have engaged young men who were previously perceived as prime aggressors. Now they have initiated social and cultural interactions which increases trust and confidence and benefits the wider community. Restoring the lost social fabric across generations and ethnicity has brought recognition and financial support from local authorities.

CONTEXT

After Rumbek communities signed a peace accord with support from peace partners and government, the communities have called on peace partners to initiate social cohesion interventions. The geographical focus of the activities are Rumbek East and Centre. Rumbek East is known to have been extraordinarily prone to conflict, history showing many years of conflict, characterized by cattle raiding, honour and revenge killings, road ambushing, widespread crime and an abundance of weapons.

CONTRIBUTION

Oxfam has provided conceptual and technical support, designing the Peace Caravan intervention in Rumbek East and Central. The approach and design of the concept draw upon Oxfam's pilot of a similar initiative and wider peacebuilding experience. Monitoring and compiling of lessons learned have contributed to a validated concept that can be replicated. Also, Oxfam has supported outreach to media outlets, sharing the messages of successful restoration of social cohesion and harmony as a result of the Peace Caravans.

IMAGES	 <p>MC Anyarjur Wrestling Page</p>	 <p>MC Anyarjur Wrestling Page</p>
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

The Peace Caravan's activities have rebuilt confidence and trust. The activities have been strategically selected to maximise impact, being traditional and culturally cherished activities. Such activities literally bring people close together. Peace Caravans and tournaments often come with sleep over at night which further works to consolidate good intentions and curb fear. The cultural activities include traditional wrestling which mainly for young men has become prestigious. Wrestling tournaments have become widely adopted and as an added value, healthy food and abstaining from alcohol among young men in East Rumbek have become an ideal to practice in order to stay a strong wrestler. As a result of the activities, young men have regained mobility. Previously, despite the formal peace agreement, young people from different communities did not move around for the fear of attack and revenge. Dancing, singing and various games are also significant activities for the Peace Caravan gatherings and such activities are intergenerational and for both genders.

LESSONS

Despite being a novelty to the area of East Rumbek, the project was successful in re-establishing trust among one-time warring communities. A lesson learned is that the success was highly dependent on the focus on young men who are by many perceived as prime aggressors. Another lesson is that the engagement of participants improved when selecting cultural activities that are highly cherished by locals. Sustainability has proven remarkable as a result of the tangible benefits, including that local government now contributes with funding. However, most importantly, step by step the activities are increasingly being organised by volunteers. Lessons also tell that it is important with the trauma healing of young men that these caravan activities bring about in order to avoid relapses. Lessons also indicate the vital role of media coverage in cascading the initiative. Peace Caravans have become known and other communities now call for Peace Caravans, thus enabling scaling up and replications.

EVIDENCE

Based on its merits in respect of building peaceful co-existing, to date, traditional wrestling has spread rapidly in Lakes State and has increased social cohesion. This is corroborated by the Director General, Ministry of Peacebuilding, Lake States, Mr. Zacharia Kuoi. Communities from as far as Mundari, Central Equatoria State came all the way from Juba to wrestle with communities of Lakes State, confirming the importance of the activities. Apart from providing evidence in project reporting, including the annual report to Oxfam Denmark, the success of the intervention has been solidly documented on Facebook, in particular by the Pesahiko South Sudan Media. The governor to the Lakes State, Mr. Mabor in December opened a wrestling event, attracting thousands of spectators, conveying to people the importance of cultural activities as a signifier of co-existence and the importance of civic engagement in peacebuilding. This event is also reported on various media outlets.

DOMAINS

<i>Development strategy priorities:</i>	<i>Insert strategy priority</i>
<i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	x
<i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	-
<i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i>	x