**COMPARATIVE**

**FIELD**

**EVALUATION**

**OF THREE**

**FOOD SECURITY PROJECTS**

**BY RESPECTIVELY**

**MARY HELP ASSOCIATION – WAU, SOUTH SUDAN**

**BISHOP GASSIS RELIEF & RESCUE FOUNDATION – AGOK, SOUTH SUDAN**

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WITH SUPPORT FROM

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THROUGH

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADRA Adventist Development and Relief Agency

AGEH Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe

ASAA Abyei Special Administrative Area

CR conflict resolution

DMI Daughters of Mary Immaculate

DRC Danish Refugee Council

FA Farmer’s association

FGD focus-group discussion

GIZ Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit

HHI household interview

HRM human resource management

IDP internally displaced person

IEC information, education, and communication

IFRC International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IOM International Organization for Migration

JAM Joint Aid Management

KII key informant interview

LWF Lutheran World Federation

M&E monitoring and evaluation

MEAL monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning

MHA Mary Help Association

MSF Médecins sans Frontières

MUAC middle-upper arm circumference

NFI non-food item

NGO non-governmental organization

OCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OPM Office of the Prime Minister

POC protection of civilian site (camp)

PBC Peacebuilding committee

PRC peacebuilding and reconciliation committee

PSN person with special needs

PTA parent-teacher association

ReHoPE Refugee and Host Community Empowerment

RRC relief and rehabilitation commission

UN United Nations

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNMIS United Nations Mission in Sudan

UNMISS United Nations Mission in South Sudan

VEC village education committee

VSLA village savings and loan association

WFP World Food Programme

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2011, South Sudan became independent. In December 2013, a vicious armed conflict broke out, which has caused severe human suffering and a crisis in which many forms of violence – armed, ethnic, criminal, looting, and gender-based – have been shockingly common. South Sudan’s economy has been devastated and food insecurity has worsened considerably. In 2014, the UN Security Council adapted the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to the new situation by giving it a protection mandate, in particular to help the many internally displaced persons (IDPs). In addition, about 800.000 South Sudanese have fled to northern Uganda. In 2018, peace negotiations took place and the security situation stabilized somewhat in some parts of the country, while it deteriorated in others.

This field evaluation evaluates three projects supported by Caritas Germany, which in turn, has received funding from Phineo. The Phineo program started, after some delays, in May 2018. The three projects differ in their set-up and regional focus, but all aim to enhance food security. The overall objective of the current evaluation report is *to assess the degree of realization of the objectives of the three food security projects.* In addition, it examines what the three implementing organizations, the Mary Help Association (MHA), the Bishop Gassis Relief and Rescue Foundation (BGRRF), and Caritas Gulu, can learn from each other in both their humanitarian and developmental work in order to achieve their goals and strengthen their management.

Overall, target communities are now better equipped to enhance food security, but full food security has not been achieved, and will, in fact, likely be very hard to achieve as climate change, insecurity, and poverty will continue to pose almost intractable challenges to these communities. Nevertheless, there is a widespread desire on the part of the people in the target communities to restore and uphold their livelihoods, which has resulted in a great pent-up demand for more services. The three projects could easily triple in size, and the full demand would still not be met. In this sense, the relevance and impact of the three projects are very high. Nevertheless, their sustainability is not yet ensured.

It is not clear when and whether the armed conflict will end, but it would be wise for the three organizations, in cooperation with Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI) Juba, Caritas Germany, and Phineo to prepare contingency plans, which could include occasional emergency food aid projects. The organizations can also build capacities in the cross-cutting areas of climate change adaptation and reforestation, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL), and establish linkages (e.g., with markets, banks, and transport companies). In terms of professionalization, the organizations can also learn much from each other, for example with joint training and mutual field visits or joint evaluations. This could become part of the Phineo capacity-building—or better capacity sharing—project.

In sum, the three organizations and projects have shown promising results under the adverse conditions of insecurity and climate change, and much work remains to be done.

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

South Sudan gained independence from the Republic of the Sudan in July 2011 after a referendum in line with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended the long armed conflict between the Arab-dominated regime in Khartoum and the mostly Christian black majority in the South led by the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army. In the same month, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) as a continuation of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The original mandate of UNMISS was to promote capacity-building of the new national institutions, to carry out relief and rehabilitation, and where possible to work on development.

In December 2013, armed fighting broke out in the capital Juba between troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar. A bloody war ensued. As a consequence, the Security Council reviewed the mandate of UNMISS, adapting the Mission to better respond to the protection and humanitarian needs of the South Sudanese population. Essentially, UNMISS now has a protection mandate.

Despite an initial peace agreement in 2015 and a “revitalized” one in 2018, the conflict, which to some extent follows ethnic fault lines, has not stopped. Although South Sudan has achieved some stability over the last twelve months, peace negotiations seem to have stalled once again, and observers fear that violence may rise in the next few months.

Soldiers and police have not received their wages for a long time, and have started preying on the population. Gangs and other armed groups raid the country, and efforts to fight crime have ceased in all but name. South Sudan has a warlord economy, where violence sustains itself through the expropriation of resources.

Since 2013, thousands of lives have been lost due to direct violence and many more through the breakdown of social services (e.g., health and education), agriculture, transport, and markets. Currently, out of a population of more than 12 million people, approximately 2.8 million people have become refugees in the region (Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Democratic Republic of the Congo), and nearly 2 million have become IDPs. Malnutrition remains shockingly common throughout the whole country. Food insecurity is high. In 2019, out of 7.1 million people in need, the Humanitarian Response Plan only targeted 5.7 million.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Both international and local humanitarian organizations are attempting to address the emergency and needs of the refugees and communities in the affected areas. Recently, the government has issued its National Development Strategy and the UN System is working on its Cooperation Framework.

Execution of these plans is not as strong as with the Refugee and Host Community Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy in Uganda, where the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Bank lead the international aid community. In line with the Uganda National Development Plan II, ReHoPE focuses on progressively enhancing social service delivery in refugee hosting areas, with the aim to integrate services with local government systems and to empower refugee hosting communities. Uganda hosts almost 800,000 South Sudanese refugees.

## Food Security

This report studies the food security projects of three organizations: Mary Help Association (MHA) in Wau, South Sudan, Bishop Gassis Relief & Rescue Foundation (BGRRF) in Agok, close to the border with Sudan (still regularly referred to as the North), and Caritas Gulu in Uganda.

A person, household or community, region or nation is food secure when all members at all times have physical and economic access to buy, produce, obtain or consume sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active life.[[2]](#footnote-3)

|  |
| --- |
| **Food availability** in a country, region or local area means that food is physically present because it has been grown, processed, manufactured, and/or imported. For example, food is available because it can be found in markets and shops; it has been produced on local farms or in home gardens; or it has arrived as part of food aid. This refers to all available food in the area, and includes fresh, as well as packaged, food.  Food availability can be affected by disruptions to the food transport and production systems, due to blocked roads, failed crops or changes in import and export tariffs, amongst other factors. Such occurrences can influence the amount of food coming into an area. In addition, food availability is dependent upon seasonal patterns in food production and trading.  **Food access** refers to the way in which different people obtain available food. Normally, we access food through a combination of means. This may include: home production, use of left-over stocks, purchase, barter, borrowing, sharing, gifts from relatives, and provisions by welfare systems or food aid. Food access is ensured when everyone within a community has adequate financial or other resources to obtain the food necessary for a nutritious diet. Access depends on a household’s available income and its distribution within the household, as well as on the price of food. It also depends on markets, and on the social and institutional entitlements/rights of individuals.  Food access can be negatively influenced by unemployment, physical insecurity (e.g. during conflicts), loss of coping options (e.g. border closures preventing seasonal job migration), or the collapse of safety-net institutions which once protected people on low incomes.  **Food utilization** is the way in which people use food. It is dependent upon a number of interrelated factors: the quality of the food and its method of preparation, storage facilities, and the nutritional knowledge and health status of the individual consuming the food. For example, some diseases do not allow for optimal absorption of nutrients, whereas growth requires increased intake of certain nutrients.  Food utilization is often reduced by factors such as endemic disease, poor sanitation, lack of appropriate nutritional knowledge, or culturally-prescribed taboos (often related to age or gender) that affect a certain group’s or family member’s access to nutritious food. Food utilization may also be adversely affected if people have limited resources for preparing food, for example due to a lack of fuel or cooking utensils.  Any imbalance in the above-mentioned factors can lead to food insecurity. |

Table 1: Food security components: availability, access, and utilization

Source: International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2006) *How to Conduct a Food Security Assessment: A Step-by-Step Guide for National Societies in Africa*, IFRC, Geneva, Second Edition, p. 7.

This study focuses mainly on food availability and access. Food utilization will only be discussed to the extent that cultural barriers, limited resources for preparing food, and a trade-off between eating or storing seeds exists.

## Organizations

The program funded by Phineo for a period of three years focuses on emergency and transitional aid. It provides relief for the hunger gap and fosters agricultural development in the hope of making the communities food secure. As stated, three local organizations with whom Caritas Germany has collaborated for a long time participate in this program.

## Mary Help Association, South Sudan

Mary Help Association is an NGO set up by Sr. Gracy Adichirayil, an Indian-Salesian sister, in 2000. MHA works closely with the Catholic Diocese of Wau. In 2007, MHA established the first Nursing and Midwifery School in South Sudan. In 2016, together with the governmental Western Bahr el Ghazal University, it also started offering degree courses in Nursing and Midwifery. Importantly, it has also been building a hospital in Zogolona just outside of Wau. Several departments of the hospital will be completed in the coming years.

## Bishop Gassis Relief & Rescue Foundation, South Sudan

The Bishop Gassis Relief & Rescue Foundation was founded in 2014. It has its Head Office in Nairobi, Kenya. This organization has grown out of the pastoral services and humanitarian and development programs implemented through the Diocese of El Obeid in both Sudan and South Sudan. Emeritus Bishop Macram Max Gassis established this foundation in order to continue the humanitarian work in the Diocese, as well as to be able to respond to other areas of humanitarian need. BGRRF has been responding to the conflict in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan with a large-scale emergency program. It also continues to run development, humanitarian and pastoral service activities in the Abyei Special Administrative Area (ASAA), and in Twic State in South Sudan. Its activities include Health, Education, Women’s Groups, a radio station, WASH, and food aid and security.

## **Caritas Gulu, Uganda**

Caritas Gulu, the Emergency Relief and Development arm of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Gulu has become one of the operating partners involved in providing life-saving relief and livelihood projects to the refugees and host communities in the Amuru, Nwoya, Omoro, Adjumani and Lamwo districts. It has branch offices in Kitgum, Gulu, Pader, and Adjumani. In addition, it also continues its more developmental work for Ugandans in Northern Uganda.

## The three projects

This field evaluation compares three projects of these three organizations, namely:

1. Mary Help Association: “Agriculture Training and Nutrition Support for 9 villages North of Wau, South Sudan, 2018-2021.”
2. Bishop Gassis Relief & Rescue Foundation: “Food Aid Relief and Food Security Project – Agok, Abyei Special Administrative Area and Turalei, Twic State and South Sudan – 2018, 2019, 2020.”
3. Caritas Gulu: “Integrated Post-Conflict Support for South Sudanese Refugees in Adjumani and Lamwo Districts, 2018-2020.”

All three organizations carry out several other projects and activities.

## Objectives of the Evaluation

At a meeting with Simon Tremmel, the then-project officer in the Africa Department of Caritas Germany in Freiburg, we agreed that the objective of the evaluation was

*to assess the degree of realization of the objectives of the three food security projects in terms of availability, access, and utilization.*

In addition, I examined what the three organizations can learn from each other about food security in order to achieve their goals and strengthen their management. Subsequently, I have attempted to indicate where and how the three organizations can learn from each other and perhaps cooperate with each other.

At least two follow-up evaluations will take place in the coming two years. This evaluation will be both an input and starting point for these follow-up evaluations.

## Scope of the Evaluation

Two months before flying to South Sudan, I had a preparatory meeting and several phone conversations with Simon Tremmel on the scope and questions for this field evaluation. I also exchanged several calls and emails with Pedro Gonzalez, his temporary replacement, and emails with Jürgen Prieske, the Caritas Germany regional manager in Nairobi. In line with its objective, this evaluation:

1. assesses the challenges the organizations and projects face in bringing about their intended outcomes and what the unintended consequences are;
2. provides recommendations for strengthening the three organizations and their projects;
3. identifies areas in which they can learn from each other;
4. prepares the next two evaluations.

## Acknowledgements

In South Sudan and Uganda, I carried out the evaluation independently with support of the three organizations. In addition, Chris Alhayi from the Caritas Germany office in Juba played a crucial role in South Sudanese part of this evaluation. He is an excellent travel companion, who really knows South Sudan. I also learned a lot from the staff-members of the three organizations, who enabled me to have a close look at their daily practices. Fortunately, the sisters of DMI provided a place to sleep on stop-overs in Juba. I even met one of my PhD students there.

The intensive research for this field evaluation has greatly benefited from the openness and strong support of the three projects’ target groups. Sitting together under a tree is a great way to have a focus group discussion or an interview. Looking at community gardens, storage facilities, and *tukuls*/houses showed how innovative many people are and how important the bonds of culture are. The respondents did not just answer my many questions, but also provided insights into their lives and livelihoods, including such challenging and painful issues as war, displacement, loss, and hunger. I am impressed by their initiatives and would like to thank them very much.

# METHODS

## Introduction

The methodology of this study is mainly based on the IFRC guide *How to Conduct a Food Security Assessment: A Step-by-Step Guide for National Societies in Africa*.[[3]](#footnote-4) I selected these guidelines because of their practical utility and depth. First, I used the guide to select the data collection methods of this evaluation. The main data collection methods were a desk review of secondary data and project documents, and field visits to the project sites, in which I carried out community focus group discussions (FGDs), usually with separate male and female groups, individual key informant interviews (KIIs) with local leaders, observation tours of the project sites, and household interviews (HHIs). In addition, as a limited form of participant observation, I also worked in the offices of the three organizations, participated in some of their meetings, and travelled and ate meals together with their staff members. I always triangulated data from these data collection methods. Second, I used the guide in combination with the Sphere Guidelines to formulate a semi-structured questionnaire on food security.

## Desk Review

The desk review, which partly took place in Germany, consisted of reading scholarly literature on food security and livelihoods, and project documents from Phineo, Caritas Germany, and the three participating organizations. I also reviewed scholarly literature on the current political and economic situation of both South Sudan and Uganda. In addition, the review focused on updates, policy or strategy documents, and evaluations of international organizations involved in the country, in particular from UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). I also reviewed documents from my 2017 mid-term evaluation of the Caritas Gulu refugee projects in Northern Uganda, my 2018 project evaluation of DMI in Juba, South Sudan, and the 2018 Caritas Gulu humanitarian strategy.

## Participant Observation

I tried to work in the offices and compounds of the three organizations, but this was only possible to a very limited extent. The visits were only for short periods of time. Moreover, in both Wau and Gulu, I stayed in a hotel, but in Agok I stayed at the BGRRF compound. Upon arrival, I would start with unstructured interviews of one or two staff-members based on questions that came up while reading the project documents of the three organizations. Subsequently, we would plan the field visits. I also had many brief, informal conversations with staff-members and people from the projects’ target groups in the villages (South Sudan) and settlements (Uganda).

## Field Visits to the Project Sites

The field visits enabled me to gain an insight into the respondents’ workplaces, cultivation and living areas. For example, farmers showed their fields, irrigation and planting methods, produce, and tools, as well as some of their harvests. I used four data-collection methods:

1. *Community Focus Group Discussions* (FGD), which are useful to collect a considerable amount of relevant data in a relatively short time. They also functioned as my introduction to the (heterogeneous) communities. Usually, I would hold separate male and female FGDs, because this would allow me to understand the overall situation of the community and debate different assumptions and preferences. In virtually all cases, the FGDs took place under a tree.
2. *Key-informant Interviews* (KII) with people with specific knowledge of and perspective on the community and the ability to express these. It was not possible to hold many of these, but where possible I spoke with the village leader (*sultan*) and a priest/reverend, a women’s leader, or a teacher.
3. *Household interviews* (HHI), mostly with women, because men were less often present, with questions on how they make a living, whether they were selected for food aid, coping mechanisms, and consumption patterns. People would often show their household, *tukuls* (local Arabic for grass-thatched houses/huts), storage facilities, family members, and activities to make a living.
4. *Observation tours* through the community/village, which helped to double check or further explain what people said during the FGDs and both types of interviews; for example, I looked at school-feeding at schools, storage facilities, land-use (e.g., the sorghum fields, community/vegetable gardens, demonstration garden, stored seeds, irrigation, fencing, planting methods, livestock, boreholes, pests and insects, and yields). We also looked at the settlements and the conditions of two nearby rivers.

## Questionnaire

For the questionnaire, I essentially simplified questions from the IFRC food security guide—and combined them with information from the Sphere guidelines on food security—to save words and facilitate understanding of the respondents. This semi-structured questionnaire was used for the community FGDs, key-informant interviews, and household interviews (See Appendix 1).

As the questions were open-ended, I was able to ask more probing and specific follow-up questions during the FGDs and interviews. For example, at one community we noticed that a blind woman, who was helped by her six-year old granddaughter had not received any food aid, because she was begging in Wau when the registration of food aid took place. She explained about her life and how she attempted to take care of her grandchildren, who were without parents, and the limited degree of support that she received from the community.

At the three organizations usually only one respondent at a time replied, but when we would work with the communities, we usually had several respondents, so we carried out focus-group discussions. Whenever possible, I carried out the interviews and FGDs alone, but usually a staff-member would introduce me to the FGD members and would help as a translator. Although this was suboptimal, as it could influence the openness and answers of the respondents, it was usually the only available option. Most FGDs started with 4 to 7 participants, but during the course of the discussion more people would come in and participate in the focus group. I always allowed this to happen. In total, I completed 18 FGDs (9 male, 8 female, 1 mixed), 12 key-informant interviews, 11 observation tours, which included 6 visits of agricultural sites (e.g., vegetable and demonstration gardens), and 8 household interviews. Appendix 1 contains the semi structured questionnaire.

## Schedule

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Activities** | **Data Collection Methods** |
| Monday, 22 April 2019 | Bochum | Departure |  |
| Tuesday, 23 April 2019 | Arrival in Juba | Introduction to the Juba Caritas office, preparation of questionnaire | 2 unstructured interviews with Caritas staff |
| Wednesday, 24 April 2019 | Arrival in Wau | Introduction to Caritas Germany-funded AGEH Emergency Advisor, Wau, preparation of questionnaire | 1 unstructured interview with Caritas Germany-funded staff, 1 unstructured interview with MHA staff, observation tour of Wau |
| Thursday, 25 April 2019 | Nyanpath | Brief visit of MHA  Field visit | FGD with women and men  Observation tour (*tukuls*, storage, fields, as well as hospital and demonstration garden in Zogolona)  2 HHI  2 KII |
| Friday, 26 April 2019 | Nyanpath  Khartoum Jedid | Field visit  Field visit | 2 KII  FGD with men  FGD with women  2 KII  Observation tour (houses, storage, fields, and comm. garden, (dry and working) wells). |
| Saturday, 27 April 2019 | Marial Agith | Field visit | FGD with women  FGD with men  2 KII  1 HHI  Observation tour (fields, economic activities, wells, cash group, Jur river) |
| Sunday, 28 April 2019 | Wau | Visit MHA  Short debriefing | 3 KII MHA  1 KII Caritas Germany-funded AGEH Emergency Advisor, Wau  Observation tour (Project facilities in the hospital) |
| Monday, 29 April 2019 | Wau to Juba | Travel and background reading |  |
| Tuesday, 30 April 2019 | Juba to Agok | Travel and visit BGRRF | FGD with 5 BGRRF staff-members |
| Wednesday, 1 May 2019 | Abyei | Field visit | FGD with male leaders  FGD with women  Observation tour Abyei |
| Thursday, 2 May 2019 | Agok and  Mayak | Field visit in Agok  Field visit in Mijak, incl. the Kiir river | Pre-, primary and secondary school visit & school feeding program  Observation tour of vegetable garden  FGD with women  FGD with men  1 HHI |
| Friday, 3 May 2019 | Myom Nok and Ganga | Field visit Myom Nok  Field visit Ganga, incl. the Kiir river | FGD Women  FGD Men  Village tour (borehole)  FGD Men of the Ganga and Yemeni vegetable gardens,  Observation tour of Ganga vegetable garden, pump, and river Kiir (incl. fishing) |
| Saturday, 4 May 2019 | Romamer | Field visit Romamer, incl. the Kiir river | FGD with women  Observation tour of vegetable garden  FGD with men  Observation tour through village  2 HHI |
| Sunday, 5 May 2019 | Agok | At BGRRF compound | Several informal conversations, debriefing |
| Monday, 6 May 2019 | Agok to Juba | Return flight to Juba via Wau | Background reading |
| Tuesday, 7 May 2019 | Juba to Gulu | Visit Adjumani | Planning and background information with Caritas Gulu leadership team  Unstructured Interview at the Office of the Prime Minister / Adjumani  Staff discussion at Caritas Adjumani office |
| Wednesday, 8 May 2019 | Maaji 2 | Visit Maaji 2 refugee settlement camp | HHI with Child-headed household  FGD with women from different blocks  FGD male farmers  FGD male block leaders  2 HHI |
| Thursday, 9 May 2019 | Lamwo | Visit Lamwo refugee settlement camp | Unstructured Interview at the Office of the Prime Minister / Lamwo Refugee Camp  FGD with men (leaders)  FGD with women  FGD with men (farmers)  Observation tour |
| Friday, 10 May 2019 | Gulu | Debriefing | Visit Gulu University  - Faculty of Agriculture and Environment  - Peace and Strategy Department  Debriefing at Caritas Gulu |
| Saturday, 11 May 2019 | Gulu to Entebbe |  |  |
| Sunday, 12 May 2019 | Arrival Bochum |  |  |

Table 2: Travel and research sites

## Data Analysis

The qualitative information from the observations and questionnaires was analyzed during desk research in the “field” and Bochum. I focused on the description of the project activities, their results, strengths and weaknesses in implementation, and possible improvements. In line with the scope of this evaluation, I also looked at some general opportunities and threats for the three projects and the management of the three organizations.

The staff-members of the three organizations, as well as Caritas Germany from Juba, reviewed the first draft of this report and provided feedback. Staff from Caritas Germany from Juba, Nairobi, and Freiburg gave feedback on the second version of this report.

## Limitations

The main limitation of the research was the short period of time (20 days) to carry out field research and travel. With a longer research period, there would have been more time to develop and test the questionnaire, to crosscheck the outcomes with staff, partner organizations, and beneficiaries, and to provide feedback. I could then also have held more focus group discussions, observation tours, key informant interviews and household visits. It also would have been useful, but too expensive, to have my own independent translator. In addition, I would have liked to attend one or more cluster meetings.

Another limitation is that none of the three projects has a base-line study, and due to the early stages of the activities in all three projects, I cannot say anything definitive about their eventual impact yet. Instead, I focus mainly on a comparative assessment of the current degree of realization of their objectives.

# FINDINGS

## Introduction

This chapter will describe the objectives of the three food security projects, their implementation processes and results, as well as their main challenges and recommendations. It will also compare the three projects to see what they can learn from each other.

## The Mary Help Association

The overall objective of Agriculture Training and Nutrition Support for 9 Villages North of Wau, South Sudan, 2018-2021 is *to contribute to the survival, food security, and improvement of health status of the most vulnerable communities in the Greater Wau area*. The 9 villages lie in a predominantly Dinka area. Traditionally the Dinka were pastoralists. Yet, their pastoral lifestyle is increasingly under threat. Many have become agriculturalists; some already for several generations. But this cultural sea-change has proven very challenging for them.

**Objective 1: 720 farmers in 9 villages around the settlement of Alel Chok north of Wau successfully commence with sustainable agriculture and are able to feed themselves and their 450 most vulnerable individuals throughout the year**

*Implementation Process*

Every year, this project aims to provide 240 families (approx. 1680 individuals) and 150 vulnerable individuals (some with dependent children) equally spread over three villages with food aid (sorghum, beans, and cooking oil) during the hunger gap, which lasts from April to July.[[4]](#footnote-5) This hunger gap is the most critical nutrition period of the year, and the local population calls it “the terrible months” before the first harvest takes place. In the hunger period, people often eat only one meal a day or less.

The decision to start the project was delayed by 4-months (January-May); when the money was finally transferred, the planting season had already begun.

The 2018-2019 project villages were Nyanpath, Khartoum Jedid, and Marial Agith. They are located relatively close to the Hospital, so they were easy to reach even though the project facilities (truck and office) were not fully operational at the beginning of the project.

Whereas the food aid to the 150 weakest individuals, generally disabled people, follows the humanitarian principles, food aid for the 240 families is intended to enable these villagers to start their labor-intensive field work. It concentrates on those farmers that can be successful pioneers in farming and can become examples for other villagers. In other words, it has a development goal.

A selection committee identified the actual farmer families for each village. The committee consists of the chief of the village, a farmer representative, a women’s group representative, a youth representative, a teachers’ representative, a local church representative, and an MHA representative. The representatives are chosen every year. MHA hopes that the selection committee can evolve into a rural development committee, that also functions as its counterpart at the village level.

Due to the great interest in participation, the number of selected farming families was increased during project execution. Financially, this was possible because the prices of sorghum and beans were lower than expected. Instead of 80 families per village, 100 families were able to participate in each village. Similarly, the number of vulnerable persons also turned out higher than the anticipated 50 per village; in Nyanpath 121 vulnerable people were selected, in Khartoum Jedid 79, and Marial Agith 101.

After the harvest the 240 (now 301) farming families are supposed to support the weakest individuals with food. In addition, the families are expected to produce and store seeds for the next planting season and to replace damaged tools.

In March 2019, the work in the next three villages, Bariyar, Zogolona and Malwil, started. In contrast with Zogolona, which is located close to the hospital, the other two villages are a bit further away from the hospital than the first three villages.

*Results*

The project seems to be on course to achieve the first two indicators of this objective. As indicated, substantially more people participated for the same costs. After the selection of the families, MHA successfully provided food relief, so that the farmers had enough energy to start farming their fields. Vulnerable persons and their dependents also received food aid.

However, looking at the third outcome indicator—“90% of the most vulnerable, targeted households state that they receive sufficient food aid through MHA during the hunger gap and this support was satisfactorily continued by the trained farming households of the village”—only the first half, receiving sufficient food aid through MHA was likely to be achieved successfully. Realizing the second half is extremely challenging because the farming households barely have enough food for themselves. This is due to the delay in approval of the project, as a result of which MHA had to accelerate the first project steps, and especially the dry spell of, which led to lower yields from the harvest.

*Challenges and Recommendations*

The dry spell and irregular rains are commonly reported, and in all likelihood related to climate change, which is a *force majeure*, but with an impact that can be expected to occur more regularly.

* *Caritas Germany and MHA should discuss the impact of the dry spell and irregular rains on this project, because such spells and rains tend to occur more frequently;*
* *MHA should develop a climate change policy (e.g., including reforestation, drought resistant crops, energy-saving stoves, water harvesting, and solar panels);*
* *Caritas Germany should develop a climate change policy. This could include temporary relief projects to strengthen or maintain the benefits of ongoing development-oriented projects.*

In principle, the idea of developing a rural development committee is very useful.

* *Assess how the selection committee is functioning, particularly the extent to which it has functioned or has the ability to function as a rural development committee.*

No baseline study has taken place partly because needs were high and were partly known through a nutrition study from the nursing school.

* *Check what information could constitute a baseline (for example, a set of indicators on the number of persons participating, nutrition, dietary diversity, number of meals a day, land area under cultivation, harvest yields, increased income, water availability, or seeds produced for the next season). The set of indicators should help assessing both the main obstacles to and components of food security.*

**Objective 2: 720 farming households have significantly improved and broadened their skills and agricultural techniques and measurably increased their food consumption and the variety of consumed food.**

*Implementation process*

MHA established its demonstration garden in its hospital compound in Alel Chok, relatively close to the three villages. It has a staple food section (e.g., sorghum, maize, millet), a vegetable garden, and a fruit tree nursery. Although this is not part of the project, it also has a chicken and duck farm in the compound.

MHA provided seeds (sorghum, maize, groundnut, sesame, and millet), tools (maloda, hoes, axes, machetes, spades, and rakes), and training on soil preparation and planting, tree planting and nursery, most of which took place at the hospital compound, and a pilot on ox ploughing, which took mostly place in the village of Nyanpath. After the ox-plough training, “two ox-ploughs were handed over to each village for promotion purposes.”[[5]](#footnote-6) The training on entrepreneurship took place in the first and second week of October 2018.

The farmers were generally able to participate in the trainings and to apply their new knowledge. Ox ploughing was supposed to be introduced during the second project year (2019). However, MHA went ahead in providing training. It also attempted to purchase the intended number of ox ploughs (20 per villages, 60 altogether) during the first project year. However, when the US-dollar rate suddenly dropped in mid-2018, just at the time of the intended purchase, the originally agreed prices in local currency were in USD equivalents not affordable anymore. MHA decided not to finalize the intended purchase of 60 ploughs, instead it purchased only 6 ploughs for demonstration purposes: 2 ploughs for each of the three firstly considered villages. The training with oxen will be intensified this year. The farmers were enthusiastic about the possibility of using ox-ploughs in the future. Those who had received training appreciated it. This year, MHA also needs to buy seeds for the “new” villages and it seems that due to currency fluctuations the cost-estimates for both ox-ploughs and seeds in the original budget have been too low.

Many farmers indicated that they lack veterinarian services and the means to fight pests and diseases that afflict their crops, which decreased their production. Moving herds were generally not considered a problem, as long as they did not come when the crops were growing. When the land is lying fallow, their manure can fertilize it.

The local respondents in the villages of Khartoum Jedid and Marial Agith, along the road to Kwajok, noted that World Concern had provided complementary services for a limited number of villagers. It had introduced a simple savings scheme, and its staff had provided goats and chickens to vulnerable people. At the same time, the respondents highlighted that many animals died of illnesses associated with the heat/dry spell.

Finally, lack of water, even drinking water, has become a general problem. Many wells are running dry. The Jur river was once permanent, but you can now cross it without getting your feet wet.

*Results*

Farmers were able to participate in the training and visit and learn from the demonstration site. With the seeds the farmers were able to increase the number of vegetables and staple crops, but with less success than originally hoped for due to the dry spell.

Farmers also increased the land area for cultivation: in Nyanpath with almost 60 percent more than last year, in Khartoum Jedid about 25 percent, and in Marial Agith about 40 percent.[[6]](#footnote-7) If the dry spell had not destroyed so much of the harvest, this project would have been extremely productive.

In terms of food access and availability, the farmers were able to increase the amount and variety of their food consumption, but by less than originally hoped for. Nevertheless, a comparison of nutrition surveys from November 2017 and 2018, which were based on measuring the middle-upper arm circumference (MUAC), shows that the global acute malnutrition in the three villages was reduced from 22 percent of the children from 6 to 59 months old to 10 percent.[[7]](#footnote-8) In addition, the feeding center at the hospital was closed, because there was not enough demand anymore.

*Challenges and Recommendations*

The project should continue to assess the project outcomes in Nyanpath, Khartoum Jedid, and Marial Agith over time. More generally, it would be wise to check the evolution of agriculture and food security in the first three villages in the coming two years. The relatively simple nutrition survey should be continued in both the first three and the second three villages.

* *Conduct a follow up study on agriculture and food security in the villages, including the nutrition surveys.*

Ox-ploughs increase agricultural production in two ways. First, production per unit land increases through better soil preparation. Second, more land can be cultivated and thus planted until a new bottleneck (e.g., weeding or fencing) comes up. It would be useful to take these two factors into account, when measuring the increase in harvest.

* *Assess to which extent an increase in harvest due to ox-ploughing is the result of better soil preparation of existing plots or of an increase in cultivated land.*

MHA and Caritas Germany have to

* *Check whether the budget can be updated with better cost-estimates of both ox-ploughs and seeds.*
* *Discuss with World Concern how the respective projects can mutually reinforce each other (and possibly on how to work together more closely).*

Pests and diseases are a serious problem reducing the harvest and hampering food security.[[8]](#footnote-9)

* *Teach the target groups natural and low-cost methods of pest and disease control.*
* *Assess whether veterinary services can be provided on a regular basis.*

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| **Example: Daniela** (not her real name)  Daniella stood out in a focus group discussion, because she dared to speak out against alcohol abuse of a local sorghum brew. I decided to ask her for an individual household interview. When I asked her why she had spoken out, she replied matter-of-factly that her husband was drinking. As a result, she had to take care of her five children alone.  Fortunately, she had become cook at an elementary school close by. In addition, she had been selected to take part in the joint-vegetable garden and had her own plot of land. She told how she had received seeds, a rake, a maloda, and a hoe, as well as training in for example ox-ploughing, land preparation, using seedbeds, and planting seedlings. She was satisfied with the quality of the seeds, although the dry spell had reduced the harvest of groundnuts, sorghum, millet, and maize. Her children helped with planting, weeding and harvesting, but they were still too young to fetch firewood. If she needed more help, people from the village would come in, for example to plough or restore the roof of her tukul, in a traditional mutual aid system. When people receive help, they cook for the people who have come to their aid. Daniela was good at such cooking.  After the harvest, she was able to sell groundnuts, and invested the money earned in sheep. She was happy that she did not have to rely on wild leaves for food anymore. Although, she had also produced some seeds for the next planting season, these were not enough, which was a common complaint in the village. Except for her youngest child, her children were of school age. As the school cook, she was able to pay their fees for their elementary school.  Daniella does not have an easy life, but she felt that it was getting better. She is proud that the she is the cook of the elementary school and is able to take the initiative to improve things. |

Table 3: Daniela

**Objective 3: The participating farmers generate surpluses and successfully market a part of their products**

*Implementation process*

The farmers have harvested and sold a small part of their produce on the market, either in their village or in Wau. It seems that they usually can fetch a somewhat better price in Wau.

*Results*

The farmers judged the fact that they could sometimes sell their produce at the market positively. For example, rigila could be harvested quickly and regularly, and then sold for a good price. Some farmers indicated that it was difficult to determine the right price for their goods. The sold produce helped them pay for school fees, school uniforms and materials, as well as buy things on the market, such as clothes, shoes, salt, soap, or meat.

Still, although food diversity has increased and they could occasionally buy a few more products on the market, the farmers were often unable to produce enough seeds for the next planting season or to produce enough food to bridge the whole hunger gap. Similarly, some families still cannot afford the school fees. Nor are the farming families able to support the most vulnerable people in their communities throughout the year.

*Challenges and Recommendations*

* *Check whether the most vulnerable people, as well as farmers, require additional emergency aid due to the ongoing drought;[[9]](#footnote-10)*
* *Assess whether there are any unmet training needs (on pest and disease control or entrepreneurship training (e.g., setting an optimal price, packing, transport, and presentation of the produce));*
* *Explain whether or to which extent the first three villages will receive follow-up now that the focus has shifted to the next three villages.*

**Objective 4: MHA as an institution has improved institutional/physical structures to support future (intended or intensified) agricultural activities (e.g., in addressing more villages/villagers or introducing more advanced technologies, like irrigation)**

*Implementation process*

MHA had to start the project very quickly, because the planting season had already started. All in all, it did a good job of adapting to the circumstances. During the first project year the cruiser and small truck arrived; this allows for some of the next villages targeted by the project to be located a bit further away from the hospital.

Several changes to staff have also occurred. Sr. Ruby will now replace Sr. Gracy as project coordinator, but she is still in the process of learning the local language. In addition, the field officer left, and was partly replaced by a local agriculturalist, who had already once worked as field officer.

The offices for the project are almost ready, but need to be finalized quickly. MHA has ordered the motorbike, bikes, and laptops. Having a dedicated office will facilitate project work (e.g., writing computer reports) and meetings, including with the Caritas Germany-funded AGEH Emergency Advisor. Some staff remarked that their remuneration was lower than expected, but that this was being addressed in line with the project proposal.

MHA has expanded and diversified over the years; its food-security projects, educational programs, and the hospital, in particular, have grown impressively. As a result, it needs to professionalize its operations further, in particular its strategy formulation, accounting, and human resource management. Recently, an accountant from India has come on a temporary assignment and Dorcas International will also support its management. At the time of writing, it is not yet clear whether or how a student strike at the School of Nursing will influence this project. In addition, Sr. Gracy would like to go on a spiritual retreat. These changes in staff reinforce the importance of professionalization of the remaining staff members and sisters.

*Results*

MHA worked flexibly to achieve its objectives; for example, when it responded to the delay in starting the project. As stated, it was even able to help more people than planned. It has made progress with setting up the structures for this project, but still needs to finalize them. It can also professionalize further. Once it has done so, the organization is well placed to extend its activities to other villages and to include new techniques, for example in irrigation.

*Challenges and Recommendations:*

Importantly, MHA should discuss with Caritas Germany how it can professionalize further, because this would also help maintaining and expanding the project benefits once funding has ended.

* *Finish the project premises and office;*
* *Ensure payment of staff as planned/agreed;*
* *Hold regular team meetings;*
* *Assess the areas for capacity-building and professionalization within MHA, such as human resource management (HRM) and accounting, and include a time-schedule for implementation.[[10]](#footnote-11)*

## The Bishop Gassis Relief and Rescue Fund

Abyei Town was destroyed in 2008 and 2011. Many IDPs, mostly Ngok Dinka, settled in Agok, which grew into a town of 130.000 people with administrative facilities, a large market, a Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)-supported hospital, and several schools. Twic state borders on the Abyei Special Administrative Area.

The overall objective of the Food Relief and Food Security Project for the Agok & Abyei Administrative Area and Turalei, Twic State in South Sudan (2018-2021) is that *targeted households have improved access to essential food requirements at household level through provision of food and agricultural inputs in both areas*. BGRRF works with three project objectives.

**Objective 1: 350 households from Agok/Abyei and Twic state (including returnees) have improved health and wellbeing through access to essential foods.**

*Implementation Process*

This objective essentially entails a relief operation for 2,450 (= 350 \* 7) people. The local relief and rehabilitation commissions (RRC), which were set up in a 2012-2013 project with Cordaid and Catholic Relief Services, together with BGRRF staff selected the 150 beneficiary households in 5 villages in Abyei and 5 in the Agok area. They received a basket of sorghum (50 kg), lentils (25 kg), cooking oil (7.5 ltrs), and 1 kg of salt in both July and August, which are the worst hunger months.

10 percent of the relief goods are distributed by the Missionaries of Charity (Sisters of Mother Teresa) in Turalei. The sisters verify “their” households, but reporting is done by the BGRRF.

As the first objective entails relief, it needs to be repeated each year of the project, but as the economic status the beneficiaries of the first year may change, the actual beneficiaries may also change in the next two years.

*Results*

BGRRF sampled 50 beneficiaries for interviews.[[11]](#footnote-12) They all confirmed that they had received the items, which helped them to get through the hunger period and improved their health and nutritional status, as they had had enough food and did not go hungry. Children were also able to stay in school.[[12]](#footnote-13)

The focus groups and household interviews of this evaluation showed that many people currently struggle and only have one meal a day.

Moreover, several communities reported that they were raided by the Misseriya Arabs and the Nuer. As a result, they lost their cows and goats. Occasionally, people were murdered, for example when they went to fetch firewood. The raids severely threaten lives and livelihoods and worsen the already insecure food situation.

*Challenges and Recommendations*

BGRRF supplements World Food Programme’s (WFP) food for assets program (e.g., building dykes and roads) that is being reduced. WFP also helps BGRRF with school feeding. In Twic and the ASAA, WFP works through its partner organizations, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Joint Aid Management (JAM).

* *Discuss the future plans of WFP and its partner organizations, because WFP seems to be in a slow withdrawal process*.

**Objective 2: 100 households are provided with ox-ploughs to support increased capacity for food production to improve household level food security.**

*Implementation process*

Only small pilot training projects with oxen from the parish have been held in the first year. Several FGDs showed that there are still cultural barriers to using oxen. People used such arguments as “you should not enslave cows” and “cows are for dowry, not for ploughing.” BGRRF will intensify its training in the coming two years.[[13]](#footnote-14)

*Results*

The project will only see the full-scale results from working with ox-ploughs starting in June 2019. Nevertheless, by comparing plowed plots with plots that were traditionally cultivated with a hoe, the pilot showed that the “ox-plough” areas had a 50 percent increase in harvest. After the pilot, three farmers said that they will bring their oxen next year. Training is very important to overcome cultural resistance to ox-ploughing. BGRRF argued that to achieve the agreed outcome is not impossible but it will be a challenge.[[14]](#footnote-15)

*Challenges and Recommendations*

* *Start early enough with training and discuss cultural barriers to ox-ploughing with participating households/farmers.*

Just as with MHA, it is useful to assess the different effects of ox-ploughing.

* *Assess to which extent an increase in harvest due to ox-ploughing is the result of better soil preparation of existing plots or of an increase in cultivated land.*

**Objective 3: 1000 households are provided with seeds and tools to support increased capacity for food production and provide a more nutritionally diverse household food basket**

*Implementation process*

This goal consists of two components: sorghum production and joint vegetable gardens.

During house-to-house visits in June 2018, BGRRF staff, RRCs, and community leaders identified 350 vulnerable HHs. They were located in 8 different villages. Each of them received 15 kg of sorghum seeds and two hoes. Beneficiaries in four villages received training on land preparation, spacing of seeds, weed control, and harvesting. Close monitoring ensured that they followed the right planting methods to obtain good yields. Due to rains, the four other villages became inaccessible, before they could receive the training.[[15]](#footnote-16)

The joint vegetable gardens were established close to the river Kiir, wells, or boreholes, so that they would always have enough water.[[16]](#footnote-17) Starting in November 2018, after the rainy season, BGRRF formed 17 local groups (with a total of 350 healthy individuals[[17]](#footnote-18) that were able to work). Just as in the MHA project, participants each have their own plot in the joint garden. BGRRF provided okra, egg-plant, and tomato seeds, as well as chicken wire for fencing, hoes and spades. Watermelon seeds will be distributed in June 2019, as the fruits would have withered away if planted earlier due to a lack of rain. Two trainings took place: one on the economic importance of vegetables, garden planning, land preparation, seed varieties, planting dates, spacing, and planting methods, and one on irrigation methods, weed and insect control, harvesting, storage, distribution, and sales. The actual implementation was led by the BGRRF agricultural officer, who helped with fencing, land preparation, plating and irrigation, weeding and monitoring of project progress.

Several respondents mentioned that the chicken wire was not strong enough and that goats and other cattle could still come in. Hence, they needed better and more chicken wire. Some farmers actually slept in the garden to prevent cow herds from coming in at night. They also would like to have pumps and more water-cans, because fetching water from the river is heavy labor. In addition, people frequently mentioned pests and would like to use insecticides. All participants mentioned the late rains and intense heat (above 40°C) as serious problems. They seem to help some pests survive, make crops whither, and make animals and people become seriously ill. The Kiir river is now also at a lower level than ever before, and coping mechanisms, such as hunting hippos and crocodiles, are simply not feasible anymore, as these animals have left the river for most of the year. Fishing, however, continues. In the final analysis, BGRRF could use a minor relief project with food distribution similar to the one that is being discussed for Wau.

Respondents close to Abyei indicated that they could not collect enough seeds for the next planting season themselves. As long as seed storage facilities are not rebuilt and seed markets do not function, they will need seed provision by organizations like BGRRF.

BGRRF is also changing its management, both Fr. Biong and Ydo Jacobs have left the organization as of the end of May 2019. Their replacements are already working in Agok and Nairobi. In addition, BGRRF seems to be shifting some of its work (and staff) from Nairobi to Agok. It also needs to think strategically about how much the organization should focus on Agok and how much on Abyei. Somewhat similar to MHA, this would be a good moment to review its strategy, accounting, and HRM in order to determine how BGRRF can professionalize further.

*Results*

In 2018, heavy and relatively early rains washed away and submerged most of the sorghum, so that the harvest was poor and hunger struck early. As a consequence, most of the households need food relief. Unfortunately, currently rains are late, so that the next harvest may also disappoint.

Just as with the MHA community gardens close to Wau, the vegetable gardens in this project seem to have a diverse impact on income, food access and food availability. There are participants, who mention that they have enough food for their households and can sell some surpluses, and use the money either for school fees, medicine, clothing or shoes, or to buy other types of food. Others indicated that the harvests so far were rather poor (also due to the heavy rains, pests, and goats or other animals that enter due to weak fences), so that they could only feed their families and not sell any surplus., “Beneficiaries are able to harvest more than four times from their gardens,”[[18]](#footnote-19) but there are differences among the households. In other words, access and availability have increased, but not enough for all participants.

With food utilization, the respondents felt that they could not yet produce enough seeds for the next planting season. They faced a hard choice between immediate consumption and saving seeds.

*Challenges and Recommendations*

* *Discuss with Caritas Germany the possibility of relief food distribution and pest control;*
* *Assess the functioning of the borehole gardens. Which of these gardens do not have enough water for the whole dry period?*
* *Develop a climate change strategy (e.g., reforestation, fruit trees, water harvesting, drought resistant crops);*
* *Assess the areas where BGRRF should professionalize further;*
* *Determine how BGRRF will support both Abyei or Agok and whether trade-offs are necessary.*

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| **Example: Farmers from two community vegetable gardens**  In one FGD, farmers from two vegetable gardens participated. Their gardens were on opposite sides of the river. One garden had 30 participating families, the other 20. Each family gets its own plot in a garden.  The respondents told that their grandfathers already grew sorghum at the site of the gardens, so they could easily create a community vegetable garden. Most farmers have some livestock, but keep them away from the community garden. To prevent other cattle from entering the garden, people sleep there at night to be present when the animals come, so that they can immediately chase them away. During day-time, there are always some people working in or close to the garden. However, keeping animals away would be easier with better fences. The chicken wire they had received was not strong enough.  The farmers had not received food hand-outs, because they already had vegetables. They did receive tomato, okra, and eggplant seeds, as well as hoes and spades, which they liked. One of the gardens also had an old diesel-pump, which made irrigation less labor intensive. These two groups also would like to work with ox-ploughs to raise productivity, but did not have oxen. Simultaneously, they were afraid of armed raids by Misseriya Arabs, who would not hesitate to steal their oxen.  If it was not for the weak fence, they felt they could grow enough vegetables to even sell some during the “terrible months”. All in all, the project did help them, before they took part in the project, they were never able to sell vegetables, but now they do. Eating more vegetables is also better for their health. It now rarely happens that they only have one meal a day.  They also indicated the negative effects of drought, which causes late planting, and occasional flooding that wash away some of their plants. Moreover, they would like to get better at pest control and be able to produce more seeds for the next planting season. |

Table 4: Joint vegetable gardens

## Caritas Gulu

Uganda is well-known for its relatively liberal refugee policies, in which refugee households receive a small plot of land for agriculture. However, these “individual arable plots of land … do not produce enough yield for refugees to become wholly self-reliant.”[[19]](#footnote-20)

The overall goal of this project is *to contribute to addressing the humanitarian needs of the South Sudanese refugees in Adjumani and Lamwo districts through an integrated approach by improving welfare and ensuring minimal living conditions*. In line with the official government strategy 70 percent of the project resources go to the refugees and 30 percent to the host community.

Caritas Gulu has carried out similar projects since 2013. As a result, it knows the project components very well and its staff has considerable experience in implementing them.

**Objective 1: Empowerment of 360 South Sudanese refugee youths through offering short vocational skills training**

*Implementation process*

Each year, 120 youths receive 4-month intensive vocational training in seven thematic areas:

1. Block laying and concrete practices;
2. Hair cutting and hair dressing;
3. Tailoring and garments;
4. Carpentry and joinery;
5. Driving and basic motor vehicle mechanics;
6. Metal fabrication;
7. Catering and hotel management.

Entrepreneurship is a cross-cutting theme in the curriculum of the vocational skills training.

Demand for this training, and secondary education in general, is high, so that Caritas in cooperation with local leaders can select promising students. Caritas Gulu and the Junior Express Vocational School in Adjumani and the Ogili Vocational School in Palabek offer the skills trainings to the youths. Arrangements are underway to bring the trainings closer to the community members through COSMERR Uganda-Adjumani in the near future, so that those, who also need to be in the settlements (e.g., breastfeeding mothers, participants that need to take care of dependents or have agricultural work) can also participate.

Upon graduation, each student receives starting capital and a start-up kit. Most settlements now have enough tailors, so that in the next round of vocational skills training, there will be less tailoring students. In addition, Caritas would like to lengthen the vocational training to six months to be able to deepen the knowledge and enhance the skills of the participants.

*Results*

From mid-August to December 20, 2018, 64 men and 56 women took part in this training course. Half of them studied in Adjumani, and the other half in Palabek. Most of these students are now able to make a living from their new livelihoods. Although it is likely that those graduates that are able to earn enough money can also improve access and utilization of food, there is only anecdotal evidence, but no impact assessment has been done to confirm this.[[20]](#footnote-21)

*Challenges and Recommendations[[21]](#footnote-22)*

* *Assess how and to which extent the graduates benefit from the start-up kits and start-up capital.*
* *Assess the extent to which these students after graduation can establish a livelihood and improve their food security.*
* *Discuss how to create more opportunities for secondary education with partner organizations, OPM, and UNHCR.*
* *Develop vocational skills training further. Which new types of vocational skills are necessary (e.g. digitalization and transport)?*

**Objective 2: To strengthen 360 refugees and host community members in peacebuilding and conflict resolution**

*Implementation process*

The training of community leaders (84 refugees and 36 host community members so far) has the goal of building bridges between leaders (of ethnic groups among the refugees, as well as between refugees and host communities) in order to empower them to promote peace and reduce violence. Community development officers from Adjumani and Lamwo provided the training with backstopping from Caritas Gulu staff. Representatives from OPM were also present. Topics included understanding of different types of conflict, conflict causes and effects, steps and methods of conflict resolution, mediation, and referral pathways (e.g., to the police), and activities to promote peace.

Together with sub-county leaders and the community development officer, these leaders engage in so-called peace dialogue with the 840 refugees and 360 host community members on the conflicts between their communities. The dialogues entail understanding context and root-causes of conflicts and tensions, acknowledging abuses and crimes on both sides, and mitigating (or preventing potential) conflicts. At the end of the dialogue, the participants pledge to address tensions surrounding such issues as water point use, fire-wood sites, food distribution centers, stone quarries, gender-based violence, alcoholism, and land conflicts, in a peaceful manner. In addition, Peacebuilding Committees (PBC) are set up to address: 1) Domestic violence; 2) Land wrangles with host communities; 3) Drug abuse in the settlements; and 4) Theft and violence at water points

In cooperation with OPM and UNHCR, Caritas also contributes to the peace weeks, in which refugees from different ethnic and religious backgrounds carry out joint activities in which they imagine what a peaceful future in South Sudan would look like.

In addition, Caritas produces information, education, and communication (IEC) materials, as well as radio spot messages. The IEC materials consist of 500 T-shirts, banners, and flyers on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. A nearby radio station broadcasts the spot messages in two local languages to 1,500 refugees and host-community members.

*Results*

The peacebuilding and conflict resolution training bring together people from the various refugee groups and host communities, who get to know each other better and focus on issues of joint importance, such as responsible use of natural resources, sustainable development, and mitigation of existing conflicts. Given the high level of violence that many refugees have experienced before their flight and the high level of violence in the camps, which hampers in particular food access, this is an important but indirect way to enhance food security. Peacebuilding and conflict resolution require continuous attention.

*Challenges and Recommendations*

In all likelihood, the impact of the peace activities can only be assessed in cooperation with the other organizations, especially UNHCR and OPM, that engage in these activities.

* *Carry out a joint impact evaluation of the peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities with OPM/UNHCR and their implementing partners (DRC and WLF).*

The effect of the radio broadcasts on peace and IEC materials is not clear.

* *Assess the impact of the radio-spot messages and IEC materials.*

**Objective 3: Support 3,600 South Sudanese Refugee Persons with Special Needs**

*Implementation process*

Each year, 1,200 persons with special needs (PSN) receive non-food items. The PSNs are either identified when they cross the border, or during the annual joint PSN survey under the leadership of UNHCR.

Each PSN receives several non-food items (NFI), namely 1 jerry can, 1 blankets, 1 saucepan, 1 bed-net, 1 basin, 3 assorted used clothes (for men, women and children), 2 plates, 2 laundry soap, and 2 cups.

During the observation tour, a household interview and FGD in Maaji 2, it appeared that the PSN system does not work well when the head of household changes (e.g., passes away). In one case, a single parent died, but the remaining four children did not succeed in getting on the list of PSNs. As only the head of household is allowed to receive goods (e.g., food and NFI), this severely complicates their already difficult lives. Although this research could not identify how frequently this happens, several respondents suggested this happened regularly.

*Results*

According to Caritas, these “essential household items [go] a long way to reduce the vulnerability of particularly unaccompanied girls, women, and male youth.”[[22]](#footnote-23)

*Challenges and Recommendations*

Caritas should address the issue of change of heads of households, in particular for PSNs that do not receive aid:

* *Identify why these persons do not get on the PSN list. Is the problem caused in the settlement or should Caritas enroll these PSNs at the UNHCR office in Adjumani?*

|  |
| --- |
| **Example: Helena** (not her real name)  During household interviews, I met Helena, who was seventeen years old. Her mother had been killed in South Sudan. Her father had taken her, her two younger sisters, and little brother to Uganda. However, he had been killed there. Helena missed her father very much and had to take care of her younger siblings. They were all still in school, where only one of them was able to obtain some meals through the school feeding program. Together, Helena and her siblings had also planted maize, but the seedlings had already been attacked by pests. In addition, their best jerry-can had just been stolen.  Unfortunately, Helena and her siblings had not been able to register yet as PSNs. As a result, they only receive food aid from WFP.  In the weeks after the HHI, Caritas helped Helena to register as a PSN from a child-headed household, so that she could obtain non-food items and other goods. The four children are still able to attend school. |

Table 5 Helena

**Objective 4: To support 3,600 refugees and host-community members with agri-based enterprises for sustainable food security and livelihoods**

*Implementation*

With support from refugee leaders, Caritas identified 56 refugee and 24 host community farmers for training on agronomic best practices regarding the seasonal calendar, land preparation, nursery bed preparation, watering and moisture retention, transplanting, weed control, thinning, pest and disease control, and post-harvest handling. These farmers established their own demonstration gardens in order to transfer knowledge and practices to other community members. In addition, 26 lead farmers and 4 Caritas staff members visited two demonstration farms to learn more about growing crops and raising animals. As part of food security, special attention was paid to sun-drying vegetables as additional food stuff for the off-season.

A total of 3,600 farmers (1,200 per year) receive support during the project period. They are all supported with agricultural inputs, in particular vegetable seeds, farm tools, and trainings. They also visit and learn at the demonstration gardens of the farmers that have received the agronomic best-practices training.

Many farmers mentioned that the long dry spells, pests, and diseases make gaining a livelihood far more difficult than before. Moreover, several refugee farmers indicated that they had rented uncultivated land from host communities to make it ripe for agriculture. However, when they had done so, sometimes even before they could harvest, the local owners would terminate the rent, so that the refugee farmers could not reap the benefits of their work. Lack of water and late rains, as well as small plots also hamper agriculture.

*Results*

New and effective agronomic practices have been introduced, but due to problems beyond the scope of the project (small plots, rent, etc.) food access and availability have improved less than intended.

*Challenges and recommendations*

Caritas should identify how it can help refugees claim land that they have started working on

.

* *Contact DMI in Juba to learn from the ways that this organization has used the negotiations and group contracts to ensure that displaced and marginalized people can continue cultivating on rented land they have started working on.*

Help farmers to diversify further and identify additional crops and/or uses of crops. As stated in the 2017 Adjumani evaluation and 2018 DMI Juba evaluation:

* *People eat dodo (amaranthus leaves), but do not seem to realize that amaranthus seeds can be eaten with cereals and are in principle a marketable product, or could be preserved for lean times. Caritas should identify whether and how these seeds could be harvested and consumed.*
* *Check which crops local farmers are profitably growing and selling (e.g., red chili peppers, sunflowers, and avocados).*
* *Check which farmers are interested in establishing medicinal herbal gardens.*

Similarly, in other parts of Africa, people improve their protein intake with guinea pigs and rabbits, which they can tend close to their homes. As these are rodents, they procreate quickly, but require relatively little space and food.[[23]](#footnote-24) If specific groups (e.g., pregnant women) suffer from a protein deficiency or anemia this would be a possible durable solution.

* *Introduce guinea pigs and rabbits or other sources of animal protein.*
* *Carry out a study on the incidence of malnutrition in the refugee and host communities over the course of the year. If there is malnutrition, the reasons for it should be determined, so that the food security program can respond and will achieve its objectives.*

This type of study is also important in a more general way for Caritas Gulu, because it will help the organization to study the outcomes of its work more regularly, in particular as they relate to behavioral changes in the target groups, which are harder to assess than the direct outputs. In particular, it is not yet clear how the logframe indicators (in percentage points) will be measured. This issue will come back during impact assessment. Hence, such studies would also improve monitoring and evaluation.

The effectiveness of agronomic training is hard to measure because it is an outcome, and not an output. A separate study could measure the impact that the training has in changing agricultural practices towards sustainable farming, diversity, quantity and quality of the food intake, and marketing of surpluses.

* *Carry out an evaluation study of the impact of agronomic training, which can help to identify how the training can be improved in the future and will simultaneously explain to Caritas Germany and Phineo the impact of the project.*

This study could be linked with the study of malnutrition similar to those that MHA is carrying out.

# COMPARING THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS

All three organizations are Roman Catholic organizations that provide relief and development services to displaced South Sudanese and local communities. The number and magnitude of their activities are growing, and they receive support from Caritas Germany. All three need to professionalize further, and a comparison of their similarities and differences shows ways in which they can learn from each other to do so. Moreover, if—one day—the refugees from Northern Uganda can return to South Sudan, these three organizations should be in close touch to exchange information about the refugees, their needs and return plans.

As the three organizations focus on displaced South Sudanese and host communities, their activities overlap considerably. All three projects address crucial needs of the population related to food security and forms of social organizing (e.g., vocational training, peacebuilding, and integrating displaced people). In this way, they link development with relief, and they emphasize food security as a form of self-reliance.

In other refugee projects, Caritas Gulu works more with village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), metal and mud energy-savings stoves, and cash-based assistance. MHA and BGRRF can introduce VSLA for more income-generating activities, as well as cash-based assistance. They can also introduce energy-saving stoves, so that people do not need to go (far) to fetch firewood, which enhances their security. In the end, people can then spend less money and time on firewood or charcoal, inhale less smoke that causes respiratory infections, and deforestation is slowed.

As indicated in the Recommendations section, there are strategic areas in which both organizations plan to become more active: climate change adaptation, reforestation, and establishing linkages with other actors, such as (public) transport companies and banks. The ways in which both organizations are doing so requires careful comparison to tease out what works best.

As explained in more detail in the next section, the three organizations are professionalizing their management MHA with a temporary accountant from India and Dorcas International, BGRRF with new staff-members, Caritas Gulu with the help of the Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit [GIZ] and Caritas Germany) and can learn from each other in terms of substance and process. In their program management, all three organizations can become more outcome oriented. In terms of professionalization, they could strengthen their monitoring and evaluation (M&E), HRM, and reporting and accounting systems. In addition, they can carry out more needs assessments, baseline and impact studies. They can also consider joint training for their staff members, and *learning visits* to each other on all topics that are mentioned in this section. It will be useful to have learning visits regularly, for example once a year, to observe and discuss which changes and learning have taken place.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Return of displaced people** | Continue/expand food security and other programs | Continue/expand food security and other programs  Discuss strategic choice to which extent it should help people return to Abyei, as this may also affect activities in Agok | Help refugees with their return | Continue/expand food security and other programs | Develop contingency plans  Exchange information and experience in case of peace and return to help refugees prepare the return and/or help them upon arrival. |
| **Professionalization / Capacity-building** | Continue working with Dorcas International and share experience with the Caritas Germany and the other organizations  Develop and execute a plan for further professionalization | Use changes in staff and leadership could be used for further professionalization  Develop and execute a plan for further professionalization | Works with consultants from Caritas Germany and GIZ on strategy formulation, strengthening M&E and more generally organizational development. | Works with consultants from India and Plan International Khartoum, as well as with Caritas Germany, to improve M&E, HRM, and finance and accounting. | Compare strategy, M&E, and organizational change.  Work with Phineo capacity-building project and link organizational change to (improving) service delivery |
| **Social organizing**  **(to strengthen livelihoods and self-reliance / resilience)** | Promote joint community gardens and ox-ploughing | Promote joint vegetable gardens and ox-ploughing | Works with PBCs, VSLAs in other projects, and farmers that train/disseminate best agronomic practices | Works with women’s groups, FAs, peacebuilding and reconciliation committee (PRCs, health promoters, and local teacher’s incentives, PTAs, and village education committee (VECs). Especially within women groups, FAs and PRCs, it has also promoted savings. Also works with women’s and farmers’ federations. | Compare different forms of social organization. Focus especially on FAs, women’s groups, PRCs/PBCs and saving/VSLAs and identify agronomic best practices |
| **Health** | Has set up a hospital, and nursing and midwifery education, and feeding center  Carries out MUAC studies that are relevant to study the impact of the food security project | Not relevant | Works less in the health care sector | Works with medical camps, including health promoters.  Carries out health and hygiene education at schools.  Carries out counseling. | The organizations can learn from each other, but the degree to which they want to work on health is a strategic choice |
| **Food security**  **Agriculture** | Food security project (food relief, seeds, tools, training, demonstration garden, ox-ploughing) | Food security project (food relief, seeds, tools, training, ox-ploughing)  Boreholes need to be well-fenced  School feeding | Food security project (seeds, tools, training,)  Has limited experience with joint cultivation areas.  Agricultural work increasingly linked with VSLAs., but not in this project. | Works with joint cultivation area, training fields, seed and tool distributions, boreholes, demonstration site, and vocational agricultural training  Employs contract approach to obtain and develop land for IDPs and other marginalized landless people | Many similarities, which means that the various differences in execution offer important learning opportunities  Expand working with small livestock (e.g., guinea pigs or rabbits)  Compare the utility of the different combinations of seeds provided |
|  | **MHA** | **BGRRF** | **Caritas Gulu** | **DMI** | **Learning Opportunity** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Education** | School of Nursing and Midwifery  Degree courses in Nursing and Midwifery | Primary and secondary schools in Agok | Considerable experience with vocational training (in combination with VSLAs), less with schools. Sees need for more secondary and adult education | Expands vocational training beyond masonry and beautification.  Expands schools further.  Plan secondary and/or adult education | Compare vocational training activities with each other; Caritas Gulu has the most experience in this area. MHA has important experience in nursing and midwifery education, BGRRF and DMI have more experience with primary education. BGRRF also with secondary education. |
| **NFI and cash-based assistance** | Could introduce soap production, NFIs and cash-based assistance | Could introduce soap production, NFIs and cash-based assistance | Distributes soap and other NFIs; also has experience with cash-based assistance | Education on different forms of soap production very popular. Limited experience with other NFIs. No experience with cash-based assistance | MHA, BGRRF, and Caritas Gulu can introduce local soap production. Compare need for and work on NFIs. Cash-based assistance could become a new service-delivery modality. |
| **Safety and security**  (also with effects on deforestation and health) | Has no experience with energy-saving stoves and/or explaining how to make (and protect from rain) energy- saving mud stoves | Has no experience with energy-saving stoves and/or explaining how to make (and protect from rain) energy- saving mud stoves  Severe problems with raids by Misseriya and Nuer | Has experience with different types of energy-saving stoves | Has no experience with energy-saving stoves and/or explaining how to make (and protect from rain) energy- saving mud stoves | Learn more about best practices with different types of energy-saving stoves, so that women and children need to fetch less firewood |
| **Climate change** | Wants to do more on climate change adaptation | Wants to do more on climate change adaptation | Would like to do more on reforestation and climate change adaptation, e.g., in agriculture and in reforestation | Wants to do more on climate change adaptation | Compare new and already established methods and activities  Develop a reforestation approach |
| **Synergies** | Synergies health, education, and food security | Synergies education, and food security (e.g., school feeding) | Displays important synergies, especially with VSLA | Many synergies through social organizing and combining activities | Compare synergies among the projects |
|  | **MHA** | **BGRRF** | **Caritas Gulu** | **DMI** | **Learning Opportunity** |

Table 6: Comparison of MHA, BGRRF, Caritas Gulu (and DMI Juba)

As Caritas Germany also works with DMI on food security and this organization has already cooperated with (some of) the other three organizations, I have included DMI in the table above to enable a better comparison. Such a comparison will be a useful component of further meetings, trainings, and learning visits, because it enables the organizations to learn from each other. During such meetings and visits, members of these organizations could work out parts of this comparative table in more detail, for example on soap production, irrigation, demonstration gardens or seed storage. It is important to note that the organizations execute more projects, but that this report only refers to the projects that have been studied for this and previous evaluations.

# STRENGTHENING THE ORGANIZATIONS

## Introduction

What does the preceding description and analysis mean for building capacity of the three organizations? There are four cross-cutting themes that all of the organizations can work on, namely climate change and reforestation, capacity-building and sharing, contingency planning, training, and linkages. Generally, it is important to search for the optimal combination of short-term humanitarian aid and more long-term development activities. These cross-cutting themes are important for enhancing food security, but also have a broader relevance.

## Climate Change and Reforestation

Two related issues stood out that the three organizations are not working on at the moment, but influence their projects and will require more attention in the future: *climate change adaptation* and *deforestation/tree planting*. This study is not a climate survey, but respondents mentioned many points that may indicate climate change:

* Irregular and late rains and intense heat (above 40°C), but also uncommon heavy rains. It seems like the rainy season is starting later and getting shorter;
* More dry winds from the Sahara, less humid ones from the Indian Ocean;
* Later harvests due to later rains means less optimal use of second planting season;
* Army worms that are not washed away by the rain and reduce the harvest;
* Wells running dry;
* Crops that are less productive (“They are withering away”);
* Armed raids in the ASAA now occur over a longer period of time, because they normally cease during the rainy season;
* Rivers at a very low level and river vegetation is disappearing;
* Some coping mechanisms, such as hunting crocodiles or hippos, are not possible anymore.

Deforestation intensifies the negative effects of *climate change*, in particular droughts, and is also a manifestation of the *general lack of resources* that can contribute to local conflicts. These two issues lead to greater vulnerability of the population and could reduce, or even wipe out, the gains of the three projects.

Climate change will deeply influence farming over the next several decades (if not longer). The three organizations and Caritas Germany could set up specific programs to plan for and address climate change.

* *Develop a strategy for climate change adaptation:*
  + *Use motorized irrigation, for example based on diesel motors or solar panels;*
  + *Introduce more drought-resistant crops;*
  + *Implement new irrigation techniques (e.g., drip irrigation);*
  + *Identify drought resistant crops and techniques to deal with drought (e.g., rain harvesting);*
  + *Introduce fast-growing trees for reforestation and fruit trees for close to home;*
  + *Identify ways to have more food during longer dry spells (e.g., sun-drying vegetables);*
  + *Discuss the possibility of short, small emergency food emergency aid/relief projects that accompany the food security projects in cases of extreme weather, such a drought and floods;*
  + *Identify experts who can further develop and implement this climate change adaption strategy.*

## From Capacity-building to Capacity Sharing

MHA and BGRRF are growing rapidly. Caritas Gulu has also expanded over the years and the number of refugees is still increasing. This growth should be accompanied with a professionalization/capacity-building process, if the organizations want to maintain and increase the quality of their work.

*MEAL, Baseline and Indicators*

None of the three organizations had a baseline for its project, because the needs were obvious. Nevertheless, it is important to think about a set of indicators that could provide a baseline for impact assessment. A few possibilities are

1. MUAC measurement of malnutrition as MHA has done;
2. Increase in ox-ploughing;
3. Land area under cultivation/the increase in cultivated land;
4. Number of all year usable wells/water availability;
5. Number of persons participating,
6. Dietary diversity,
7. Number of meals a day;
8. Harvest yields;
9. Increased income;
10. Amount of seeds produced for the next season.

The current indicators of the three organizations and the food security projects are mostly output-oriented. Such indicators are useful, because they show whether the project activities have been carried out. However, and especially in more development-oriented programs and projects, it is also useful to include more outcome-oriented indicators. This implies that measures of quality and behavioral, or institutional change should be included. For evaluations, such indicators would provide more information on effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Other examples include graduated vocational skills students who train their employees or farmers who train others in ox-ploughing or employ other people, or measuring the impact of agronomic training in terms of output.

Although the overall project objectives and most sub-project goals are in all likelihood being reached, the three organizations cannot sufficiently prove yet that they are doing so, or how specific external factors are influencing their operations. It is insufficiently clear how they are going to measure their indicators, especially when they are indicated in percentage points. This issue should be clarified in the near future.

In their logical frameworks, they could include colons with the baseline value, the current value, and the goal value of such indicators so that the value of (key) outcome indicator can be tracked over time.

More generally, the three organizations can develop their M&E further into monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL). As they differ in their reporting, but work on similar issues, they can actually learn a lot from each other.

Over time, they could establish a (joint?) MEAL position or even a MEAL unit. As the organizations grow, their target groups, donors, and local partners will become more interested in the ways their programs and projects function, as well as in their impact. Overall, working further on the internal capacity issues above can make the organizations more effective in obtaining funding in particular with diversifying their donor base.

*Other Organizations*

This evaluation could not study in detail what other organizations are doing on the issues of food aid and food security. But as food relief plays a role, it would be useful to know the plans of WFP and its partners for the future. Similarly, I did not have time to study the role and impact of the three organizations in the coordination clusters. A subsequent, broader evaluation should take the other organizations and their implications for capacity-building and the project activities of the three organizations into account.

Finally, the linkages, cooperation, and impact of the whole aid system for the displaced people and host communities should be studied more often. The three organizations can evaluate each other and/or carry out (joint) evaluation(s) of the forms and effectiveness of cooperation by the organizations in communities they serve.

*Conclusion on capacity-building*

Taken together, these measures on internal capacity building will make these organizations more accountable to their donors and target groups. In all likelihood, they will foster organizational learning, when they are integrated into their daily work.

## Contingency planning

Nobody knows when the war will stop and how many of the IDPs and refugees can return. It is possible that violence will flare up again. The communities served by BGRRF are especially susceptible to ongoing raids. Simultaneously, it is not known how exactly climate change and its effects will evolve. Hence, the organizations need *contingency planning*.

In the *worst-case scenario*, climate change and the security situation worsen and more people will require aid. The organizations can then intensify their projects and see whether they can help introduce more food security activities, in particular establishing joint cultivation areas. This may also include the execution of emergency aid projects.

If the *current level of insecurity* continues the organizations should carry out projects similar to those from the worst case scenario but at a smaller scale. After all, it is not clear when refugees and IDPs will be able to return. The emergency aid and climate change projects under this scenario can piggyback on the development projects.

In the *best-case scenario*, peace will be established and hold. In that case, the three organizations can, in cooperation with its partners and the clusters, help ensure that the refugees and IDPs can return. They should then build further upon their social organizing in its food security and other programs. The effects of climate change will require long-term activities.

## Linkages/Connections

Through their social organizing, the organizations attempt to realize long-term synergies among their various activities. An important part of such organizing involves establishing linkages among participants, for example between experienced and less experienced farmers. Such activities can be taken a step further to enhance local self-reliance (compare Humphrey 2019).

*Markets*, for example for seeds and other products, are hard to establish, but could improve food access and availability. There are organizations working on creating markets in camps in Northern Uganda, which could offer a learning opportunity for all three organizations.

Similarly, the lack of *transport* hampers income-generating activities for the participants in vocational training and farming. The organizations could see whether they could work with regular bus companies. In addition, they could determine whether they would like to work more with banks to access financial services, including saving schemes and VSLAs.

As indicated above, this report does not discuss in detail the relationships with other organizations, such as World Concern or WFP and its partners. These organizations may also have ideas or activities that the three organizations and their target groups can benefit from.

In addition, many people move regularly among camps searching for jobs or looking for family members. It would considerably help them mentally and practically—perhaps even financially—if they could trace and contact their family members either in South Sudan itself or in neighboring countries.

In general, establishing linkages among displaced people, actors, activities, and markets is a strategic question about what the organizations can do in-house and what they can leave up to other actors, including private enterprises.

## Training

Training is an important part of capacity-building and professionalization. It can take place in courses, but also on-the-job and during learning visits.

Although each organization can work alone to implement the recommendations in this report, they can also do so together. They could show and compare progress reports on the different recommendations, go on field visits with the aim of improving existing activities or take up activities that the other two organizations are already working on (usually with a slightly different approach). The comparative table 2 provides an initial framework for working together, but staff should work out the activities and learning opportunities in more detail. To give a small example, all organizations provide seeds, but they all differ in the types of seeds that they provide. Would it be wise to learn about the types of seeds other organizations provide, and the subsequent problems and successes in enhancing food security, so that they can offer more types of seeds and accompany or monitor the farmers better?

Staff from the different organizations may also carry out evaluations together or exchange staff-members (temporarily). It is crucial that they learn more about *reporting*, *indicators, baselines, and impact assessment*, in particular in the area of food security.

They can also discuss how they write their project reports, because their reports are set-up differently, but deal with many similar topics. They could think through, for example during joint training, which reports or parts of reports they like most, and come up with the optimal reporting procedures and outlines.

In general, the organizations should learn more about food security and climate change. This can be combined with courses on (participatory) *proposal development, M&E/MEAL, accounting, HRM, and reporting*. Together such utilization-focused training and evaluation would help these organizations build their capacities and report in a more professionalized manner, which is also important in order to think about follow-up projects.

## Recommendations

This evaluation indicates many challenges and recommendations for the three organizations. They should determine which ones they prioritize for immediate action, and which ones they will take up as part of their next strategy, and which ones they will simply not address:

1. *Evaluate the degree of realization of the projects’ objectives. There is no baseline data, yet the organizations use percentage points to measure change with their indicators. How they are going to measure the degree of realization is not clear yet. Explaining why, how, and to what extent these objectives have been realized is as important as achieving them because this helps to draw the relevant management lessons.*
2. *Incorporate comparative lessons from the other organizations.*
3. *Determine in which areas the organizations need to work, lobby, or advocate with other aid organizations, embassies, donors, or local actors (e.g., WFP). Prioritize areas for cooperation with other organizations (e.g., protection).*
4. *Start with formulating a contingency approach, which could become part of a long-term strategy.*
5. *Establish whether and how IDPs and refugees can contact their source communities and/or look for family members, for example with family tracing services and telecommunications (e.g., with Telecommunications Without Borders or the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement tracing services).*
6. *Select specific areas of expertise where the organizations can learn more from each other, for example in the areas of relief, development, climate change adaptation or linkages.*
   * *Think about the optimal combination of short-term humanitarian aid and more long-term development activities.*
     + *Determine to which extent short-term and long-term programs can be integrated and evaluate the synergies among the activities.*
   * *If they would like to add new areas, climate change adaptation and reforestation would be important candidates.*
7. *Indicate where and how the organizations want to build their capacities:*
   * *Professionalize further in M&E/MEAL, HRM, and reporting and accounting;*
   * *Training program for staff-members in the area of food security;*
   * *Combine this professionalization with a training program;*
   * *Use broader (joint) evaluations;*
   * *Use learning visits.*

# CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation has *assessed the degree of realization of the objectives of the three food security projects in terms of availability, access, and utilization.* It has also provided recommendations to strengthen the organizations and their projects. In addition, this evaluation has identified areas in which MHA, BGRRF and Caritas Gulu can learn from each other in their humanitarian and developmental work. They appreciate the Phineo/Caritas Germany projects, because the three-year funding cycle makes longer term investment and capacity-building possible. For the next two evaluations impact assessment, in particular the extent to which the indicators of the logframes can be measured should receive more attention, preferably already in advance of the next comparative field evaluation.

In general, the displaced South Sudanese and host communities lack resources, skills, and linkages with other actors and markets, so that they struggle with their lives and livelihoods. If the current level of insecurity continues, or actually improves, the three organizations will probably reach most of their objectives, but this will nevertheless be occurring against the background of many unfulfilled needs of the displaced people and host communities. The three projects have a very high relevance, and are in the process of realizing most of their objectives, especially food availability and access are improving (e.g. with more vegetables and better yields). Food utilization is also improving, but these projects focus more on availability and access. Nevertheless, climate change, ongoing insecurity, and other forms of violence can wipe out project gains at any time.

MHA and BGRRF can also cooperate with Caritas Gulu (and DMI) on learning visits and training. In this respect, this report provides several ideas for further capacity-building and professionalization. As no one knows how the conflict in South Sudan will develop, the organizations need to adopt a contingency approach. They need to plan for longer-term capacity and institution-building for refugees, IDPs, and host communities and themselves in the areas of climate change and reforestation, establishing linkages, contingency planning, and training.

It is important to note that many of the above issues cannot—and should not—be addressed by the three organizations alone and require cooperation with other humanitarian organizations, embassies and donors, as well as local IDP, refugee and host organizations.

# Appendix I: Semi-Structured Questionnaire

Personal introduction

Introduction of the research

**Composition of community (demographic profile)**

**History and sequence of events**

**How do people make their living (Livelihoods)?**

1. Is cash production in agriculture possible?

* Before the project?
* After the project?

1. If there are surpluses, where are they being sold?
2. Any problems with land-ownership?
3. Do you have livestock? Which ones?
4. Do herds move here?
5. Have people received aid?
   * From MHA?
   * From other organizations?
6. Do people earn money? How?
   * Agriculture?
   * Pastoralism?
   * Casual labor?
   * Wage labor?
   * Mix?
   * Other?
7. Has this changed due to the project? Other reasons?

**Agriculture (more specific)**

1. What effect did the seeds and tools have on your harvest?
2. How was their quality?
3. Did you have more food for the hunger gap?
4. What agricultural problems do you face?
5. Have you worked with Ox-plough?
   * If not, would you like to work with it?

**Livestock (more specific)** See question 4

1. What livestock do you have?
2. Who owns them?
3. What do they produce?
4. Any problems with your livestock?

**Income**

1. What are your sources of income?
2. Are they changing?
   * Due to the project?
   * Other reasons?

**Expenditures**

1. How do you spend your income?
2. Is this changing? How? Why?

**How do people obtain their food?**

1. How do people obtain their food?
2. Are you able to produce seeds for the next year? How? If not, why?

**Labor (for wages or food)** See question 7

1. Is it difficult to obtain work? How?
2. Do children work? What work do they do?

**Food consumption patterns**

1. What kinds of food did you eat before the project?
2. What kinds of food do you eat now?
3. How much food do you produce yourself?
4. What food comes from the market?
5. Other food sources? Fishing?
6. Have there been any changes to your diet due to the project? Other reasons?
7. How many meals a day are you eating? How does this change over the year?

**Market prices and evolution**

1. Do you sell your agricultural surpluses on the market?
2. Do you have shortage in production that you can address on the market?

**Perception of the main problems (related to the project)**

1. How do you obtain firewood or charcoal?
2. Are there changes in the prices of firewood?
3. Are there changes in the prices of charcoal?
4. Do your children attend school?
5. Can you pay the school fees for your children?
6. Is the climate changing? How?
7. Do you feel safe?
8. Is theft an issue?
9. What about corruption?
10. Is security improving? Why?
11. Do people leave the village? Why?

Do you have any questions?

Thank you

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3. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. As late rains are becoming more regular, harvesting is also taking place late, so that the hunger gap currently extends into August. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Interim report, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Interim report, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The surveys were carried out by students of the Mary Help College of Nursing and Midwifery. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. One farmer, who did not participate in the MHA project, mentioned during an HHI hyenas as the main threat to his cattle. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Caritas Germany approved an emergency aid project to this end in June 2019 with the aim to compensate for the weaker than expected harvest and to bring the project back on track. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Another Caritas Germany partner organization, Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI), in Juba is going through a similar internal capacity-building process. Consultants from India are helping the organization. MHA and DMI can learn from each other, and perhaps even share some of the same consultants. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. The sampled beneficiaries did not include any of the beneficiaries of the Missionary of Charity sisters. As indicated in the project proposal, Fr. Biong has been in constant touch with the sisters and often goes to Turalei to meet them and discuss the distributions. Additionally, BGRRF staff normally meet the sisters who then provide details on how they conduct the distributions and their impact. According to BGRRF staff, in many cases, the number of beggars who come to seek the sisters’ support drastically drops. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Notice that many schools also have child-feeding programs, so that children receive more often food aid than their parents. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Interestingly, when during focus groups and interviews, I also asked questions about protein intake and whether guinea pigs could be a useful additional food source, people responded skeptically: “We also don’t ride cows.” [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. 2nd Interim Report, P.163-004/2018, May 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Rain cannot seep away in the local soil, called black cotton soil, which becomes very muddy so that cars cannot ride. Transport then comes to a virtual standstill. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. I was unable to visit any boreholes gardens during my visit. I heard that one borehole garden had functioned very well until recently. By mid-May it was completely bare, because as alternative water-sources had dried up, more and more people had come to the borehole until no water remained for irrigation. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. 190 women and 160 men. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. 2nd Interim Report, P.163-004/2018, May 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. UNHCR (2019) South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, January 2019-December 2020, Nairobi, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. A 2018 impact evaluation indicates that the vocational skills graduates from an earlier project are generally better able at making a living than before their training. See Caritas Gulu Archdiocese (2018) Integrated Post Conflict Support for South Sudanese Refugees in Adjumani District 2017-2018. Final Evaluation Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. For more information on this topic, in particular on problems during execution, see Dijkzeul, D. (2017) ‘Report of the Project Mid-Term Evaluation of the Integrated Post-Conflict Support for South-Sudanese Refugees in Adjumani District (March 2017-February 2018) and Strategy Development for Caritas Gulu with Support from Caritas Germany; Adjumani, Gulu and Bochum,’ 27 August -11 September 2017, in mimeo, pp. 1-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
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23. This is also important upon return to South Sudan. The nomadic tribes that rear cattle accept such small animals as being appropriate for “agricultural” tribes, but regularly steal goats and cows. Cattle-raising tribes vs farming tribes is a complicated issue. Farming tribes such as the Madi and Acholi (tribes in Northern Uganda, and Southern South Sudan) live mainly from agriculture though they may also have some goats and even a few cows. As a rule, they do not fence their fields; they are held responsible if their animals damage somebody’s crops, so they keep the goats tied and cows need a careful shepherd. The cattle keeping tribes as a rule let their animals roam freely; if they cultivate they have to spend a lot of energy and time on fencing their plot. Agriculture has a low status and is sometimes left to the women. Apart from this, there is a wide variety in the economy of the cattle keeping tribes. On one extreme, there are the nomadic ones who to a degree (especially the young people, but sometimes whole families) trek with their cattle and then live from the milk and blood of the cattle. At the other extreme are sedentary families and the cattle usually go out for grazing in the mornings and return home in the evenings: Dinka Ngok and Dinka Twic belong to this category. Agriculture here is often a secondary, but necessary source of living. Owners of large herds may look down on agriculture: they may sell some cattle to purchase the necessary grain to eat. In farming tribes, cattle may be stolen and is then comparable to and treated as any other type of stealing. It may well be a result of poverty, lack of protein, etc. In the cattle tribes, raiding of cattle is an integral part of the culture. A successful raider has a high status: he has proven his manhood and has gained enough dowry to marry. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)