

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

WITH FUNDING FROM

 AUSTRIAN
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

 HORIZONT
3000

AUSTRIAN ORGANISATION
FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

CONSORTIUM PROJECT "CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS & POLICY DIALOGUE" IN EAST AFRICA June 2019



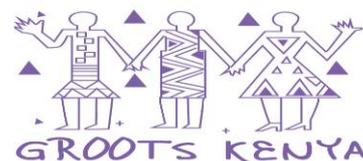
Austrian Partners: HORIZONT3000; CARE Austria; Red Cross Austria; SOS Kinderdorf Austria; CARITAS Austria

East African Partners: SOS Children's Villages Uganda; Kenya Red Cross Society; Rwanda Red Cross Society; MIONET; DESECE;
WORUDET; SOS Children's Villages Tanzania; CARE Uganda; GROOTS Kenya

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CONSORTIUM PROJECT "CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS & POLICY DIALOGUE" IN EAST AFRICA

This publication was produced for review by partners under the consortium project "CSOS & Policy Dialogue" in East Africa



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Supporting evidence based high impact health and development policies and programs in Africa

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Austrian Agency for International Development or those of the Austrian Government or those of HORIZONT3000.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Austria Development Agency
ALDEF	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Development Focus
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
APROCEL	Ankole Private Sector Promotion Centre
CARE	Comprehensive Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CEWIGO	Care for Women in Governance
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CV TZ	Children's Village Tanzania
CV UG	Children's Village Uganda
GWEDG	Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization.
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DECESE	Development Education services for Community Empowerment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EA	East Africa
EUR	Euros
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GI	Group Interviews
GROOTS	Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood
GWED-G	Gulu Women Economic Development Agency
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KRCS	Kenya Red Cross Society
LC	Local Council
LOE	Level of Effort
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIONET	Marsabit Indigenous Organization Network
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACIDA	Pastoralist Community Initiative Development and Assistance.
PD	Policy Dialogue
RRCS	Rwanda Red Cross Society
SAF	Small Action Funds
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TOT	Trainer of trainers
TWG	Technical Working Group
WORUDET	Women and Rural Development Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Consortium Project “CSOs & Policy Dialogue – Further strengthening capacities of CSOs engaging in Policy Dialogue” is a three years programme funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Phase II (Jan 1st 2017 – Dec 31st 2019) succeeded the pilot phase (Dec 1st 2014 – 30th Nov 2016), and is implemented by a Consortium of five Austrian NGOs and their local partners in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda), with a total project budget of 495.000 EUR. Specific project objective is to “Further strengthen capacities of East African CSOs regarding their policy dialogue engagement”. Expected results included: i) Capacity development and cross-learning plan for partner CSOs is developed; ii) The ability of East African CSOs to engage in policy dialogue has been further strengthened in their field of work; iii) Recommendations/guidelines for CSOs engagement in Policy Dialogue are further complemented and used/ applied. The project implemented two approaches: i) Collective training workshops, as well as cross-learning and organization-focused Capacity Development activities, guided by a capacity development plan; ii) Partner Organizations plan and implement their own Small Action Fund Initiatives, aiming at influencing policy making spaces, and allowing them to develop their own Policy Dialogue Strategies, and to test and consolidate different methods and approaches for effective engagement along the Policy Cycle.

The Objective of this evaluation was to assess the design and implementation, fulfilment of objectives and achievement of expected results. The evaluation assessed the intervention logic of the project by addressing a series of guiding questions concerning relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability

Methodology

This was a performance evaluation study. The evaluation was retrospective and prospective, looking backward to examine the changes from the beginning of the project to date, while maintaining an eye towards making recommendations on how improvements can be made in the remaining project period (up to December 2019) and how similar projects can be improved in future. Primary data collection was through qualitative methods: key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and group interviews (GIs). Data was also gathered from secondary sources through desk review of project documents. A validation workshop was held through virtual interaction with partners to discuss the findings with the consortium steering committee and EA partner representatives. HORIZONT3000 led the mobilization process and introduced the evaluation team to the partner organizations who on the other hand were responsible for mobilization of project beneficiaries. Voluntary informed consent was obtained from the study respondents. The research team observed three universal ethical principles, including respect for participants, beneficence and justice.

Findings discussions and conclusions

Relevance

Relevance of project objective: The project aligns to international development commitments, focusing on the sustainable development goals (SDG) 16 and 17. Its focus on capacity building for EA CSOs depicts a lot of relevance in the context of developing countries, where PD is an important tool for influencing policies and legislations. The project did not focus on channeling resources and providing technical assistance to CSOs engaging in policy work, as is characteristic of many advocacy programs, rather, it addressed existing capacity gaps as a way of strengthening CSO engagement in advocacy. Policy dialogue (PD) is generally considered a superior approach for effective policy engagement, compared to combative approaches traditionally used by many CSOs.

Project design took into consideration the fact that EA CSOs are in touch with the realities on issues affecting communities, and that they are better placed than international CSOs, to engage in policy processes within the countries where they operate. Involvement of the EA CSOs in the needs assessment and in the process of developing the capacity-building plan ensured that the local priorities were integrated into the design. The pilot phase aimed at testing the proposed intervention, and served as a platform for continued engagement of EA CSOs in providing input to refine the proposed approaches.

Relevance of project approaches: The project exhibits Global North- South partnerships and collaborations, an arrangement that is receiving a lot of interest among development partners, specifically with the aim of skill transfer and strengthening the Southern CSOs. Result 1- “Capacity development and cross-learning plan for partner CSOs is developed” aimed at establishing a roadmap for achieving the other results. Planning was undertaken as the first step, and through a participatory approach involving EA CSOs and Austrian partners, attracting ownership and commitment from partners. Result 2- “The ability of East African CSOs to engage in

policy dialogue has been strengthened in their field of work” was to be achieved through three key activities: trainings, cross learnings, and small action funds (SAF).

Trainings: Trainings focused on cross cutting capacity gaps manifest across the consortium membership, and did not include areas that were unique only to a section of the organizations. This evaluation did not identify any relevant areas of PD requiring capacity building other than what was already covered. Combining the training with experience sharing was relevant for knowledge and information sharing, and in making the learning process enjoyable for participants. Inclusion of guest learners not only enriched experience sharing but also expanded learning to non-member CSOs. Training duration was long enough to cover the content and short enough not to hold the trainees for long. TOT model, though suggested by a section of stakeholders, was noted to pose many challenges concerning: a lot of efforts required to organize and implement TOT; issues of sustainability as trained trainers tend to leave their employers faster or sooner; lengthy and resource intensive phases of cascade training.

Cross learnings: Integrated ongoing learning through the cross learning platforms was very relevant in enabling consortium partners to learn from each other. CSOs in the consortium were at different levels of PD knowledge and experience; they faced challenges and responded to address these challenges using different approaches that they could share for learning.

Small action funds (SAF): Interventions under the SAF were designed by the EA partners to foster locally set and locally driven agenda. Policies, plans and legislations pursued under the SAF fell within the government priority areas, and addressed priority issues affecting communities. There was adequate flexibility in the implementation of the SAF, allowing the implementers to shift and respond to changing priorities. SAF also provided opportunity for the CSOs to put into practice, the knowledge and skills acquired through various trainings and learning platforms. They were relevant in expanding space for citizen participation and endearing them to engagement in policy, legislative and strategic planning processes.

In regard to Result 3 “Recommendations/ guidelines for CSOs engagement in Policy Dialogue are further complemented and used/ applied”, these recommendations were relevant in providing guidance to the CSOs on contemporary issues in PD.

The phased implementation, as used in this project, provides opportunity for reflections and learning before moving to another phase. The project was also adaptive in tapping emerging opportunities. KRCS for example became proactive in supporting other CSOs and appeared more of a technical service provider than an ordinary partner in the consortium - something that was not foreseen in the design.

That the project design (an issue of relevance) did not include an exit strategy, was however a major threat to the continuity of the project initiatives (an issue of sustainability) in the event that phase III of the project did not materialize.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness towards achievement of objectives and results: The fact that EA CSOs were at different levels of PD knowledge and experience, faced challenges and responded differently in addressing these challenges created a favorable gradient for experience sharing and for knowledge and skill transfer. A combination of these, together with the trainings, led to improved capacity for PD engagement across the EA CSOs, as reflected in media engagement, use of research data to generate evidence for policy engagement, resource mobilization, and strategic planning for PD. Influence of EA CSOs on local and national development plans and other legal/ policy processes was observed across board, taking diverse forms including: influencing citizen participation; holding dialogue meetings / forums with key stakeholders; contributing / provision of input in drafting and reviews of strategic, legislative and policy documents.

EA CSOs were better placed to engage more effectively in the four stages of PD, as depicted by the fast-paced accomplishment of some of the initiatives. Examples include: agenda setting, policy negotiation and formulation for the by-laws against child marriage by SOS CV Uganda; agenda setting, policy negotiation and policy formulation leading to finalization and adoption of DRM policy for Marsabit County by MOINET; fast tracking finalization and adoption of national DRM policy by KRC; agenda setting for the Rwanda Red Cross Act by RRC. All the EA CSOs had either established or strengthened their PD partnerships at the time of this evaluation. Partnerships were mainly between consortium partners, and a few between consortium and non-consortium members. EA CSOs were at different stages in developing their respective PD strategies – either

draft in progress (DESECE, RRCS, GROOTS, SOS CV Uganda) or completed (MIONET, KRCS, SOS CV Tanzania), with optimism for completion by December 2019.

Effectiveness of project approaches: Improvements in capacity to engage in PD has been attributed to a combination of approaches that included trainings, cross learnings, and experience sharing. CSOs benefited by accessing and learning from experiences of others, through peer support, and by tapping on others' creativity and innovations.

Each EA CSO established partnerships for cross learnings, guided by own assessment and identification of opportunities for potential synergies. Through experience sharing platforms, the CSOs were able to identify the strengths of each partner and to determine the benefits that can be derived from partnerships. According to the stakeholders, documentation of the strengths of each partner, when shared with consortium members, would provide an opportunity for better decision making when selecting partners for cross learnings.

Bureaucracies within organizations may have affected the cross learning activities, with some partners refraining from organizing learning visits due to lengthy formalization processes required by the host. Additionally, forums such as the WhatsApp group formed to facilitate cross learnings did not attract optimal use, in spite of its high potential to support information sharing across the partnerships. Suggestions to improve cross learnings included: having guidelines for exchange visits; allocation of more funds to support cross learning activities; having them more structured and better coordinated; adequate involvement of senior management teams of the respective CSOs.

As an approach, the SAF enabled the EA CSOs to implement the acquired PD skills while addressing local issues already highlighted under the section on effectiveness towards realization of project objectives.

Efficiency

Coordination and management: Successful coordination and management of the project was attributed to consistent engagement of one overall coordinator from the start of the project. The role of the coordinator may have been hampered however by limited funds that did not allow travels to East Africa to perform coordination as well as M&E roles. By design, and due to limited resources, the Austrian partners did not indulge much in most of the project activities and mainly engaged at critical points of reporting and financial management. This may have led to occasional delays by partners in responding to some of the requests made by the consortium, causing some turbulence in the coordination role. The level of effort (LOE) allocated for the task of the coordinator was also limited and this called for flexibility, with the coordinator putting in a little more time to ensure the project succeeded.

Resource use efficiency: According to all the stakeholders interviewed, financial resources were generally limited for the entire project. The project devised innovative approaches to achieve optimal results with limited funds. These innovations included: 1) Riding on other funding mechanisms to integrate project activities (pushing initiatives through other ongoing activities of the partners). 2) Target of opportunities (partners had to identify strategic opportunities to engage in the processes). 3) Circumventing the processes (while it is ideal to work with the county assemblies, this proved to be an expensive venture and CSOs in MIONET opted to only engage with the committees). 4) Kept training costs low: The project relied mainly on local consultants, saving on travel and accommodation costs, and on high consultancy fees charged by expatriates. Some of the consultants were drawn from the consortium membership, through institutional arrangement with KRCS. 5) Cross learnings and experience sharing were far more enriching than typical classroom trainings and according to interviewed stakeholders appeared to have yielded far much better results with minimal resources. Overall, it is apparent from this evaluation that the project achieved the most results it could with the available resources.

With the little funds available for the project, the Austrian CSOs working with more than one EA partner may have spread thin, reducing chances for high impact due to resource constraint. These partners indicated they would review and adjust the number of partners, with a possibility of retaining only one partner in phase III.

Planning and reporting: Planning for the project was a participatory process, with individual Austrian partners working with their EA partners. Financial resources were availed to partners in time, except in a few cases of delayed disbursements of funds – an observation attributed to issues of late submission of reports by the EA partners and fixed disbursement schedules that occurred only within specific calendar dates.

Some of the partners experienced low burn rates under their respective SAFs. Reasons included: 1) delayed startup and the fear of spending all the “small action funds” long before the project ends. 2) Targeting opportunities may have contributed to low burn rate, with the CSOs expecting to use the funds where they can have greatest impact, considering that the monies could not achieve much if not invested with tact. 3) Changes in priority activities. 4) Effects of community/ school calendar.

Staff transitions: Staff transition was not only manifest among the EA partners but also among the Austrian partners. Staff transitions may have affected smooth implementation, considering the time it takes to replace staff and to provide full orientation into the new position.

Impact

Project impact is manifest in improved capacities of CSOs to play the vital role of influencing policies, strategies, laws and other plans in their domains of work. Improved capacity is evident in faster processes in the realization of PD objectives pursued under this project. These impacts are attributed to better relationships established with government partners; improved trust, increased collaborations and information sharing, and strengthened capacity of citizens to engage with governments. Use of evidence to guide agenda setting and policy engagement enabled CSOs to engage effectively in these processes. The effects of the project within the target beneficiaries already started spilling over to other communities, as evident in the case of DRM policy in Marsabit County in Kenya, where neighboring counties sharing the same classification of arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) already began pursuing DRM policies.

Sustainability

Partner CSOs involved in the project existed long before the formation of the consortium and are likely to continue with its initiatives. The project responded to evident needs guided by needs assessment, a pilot phase, and was designed through a participatory approach involving the beneficiaries. There was effective engagement of EA CSOs in planning and implementation. EA CSOs already benefitted from trainings on resource mobilization and the effect of capacity improvement in resource mobilization already begun to manifest. Also, the CSOs established partnerships that, if well utilized will ensure continued communications and experiential sharing among partners even post project period.

Staff benefitting from the trainings were from local CSOs and in many cases, more than one staff was trained from each CSO. The implication is that, even in the face of staff exits/ transitions, it will take some time for a CSO to lose all trained staff. Besides, many CSOs already initiated the processes of cascading learning to other staff – existing and new. An opportunity for sustainability is also seen in the availability of the PD manual, that once finalized, will be used by individuals and organizations working in PD.

Small action funds focused on policy and legislative frameworks, and on long term and medium term plans and strategies. These long-term frameworks will likely guarantee continued derivation of benefits by the target populations even long after the project ends. Communities have equally become knowledgeable of their rights to effective engagement, and that it is an obligation of the government to ensure citizen participation, hence will continue to demand for space to participate in relevant processes.

Lessons learnt

1. A combination of trainings, cross learnings, experience sharing and documentation and sharing of lessons learnt helped achieve better results than could be achieved by any single of these approaches.
2. Working closely and collaboratively with government entities leads to better results within a short period.
3. Communities are well placed to push their agenda when they work jointly. Women in Nyandarua and Nakuru counties achieved policies on potato packaging in short time after they began to work together.
4. Government transitions affect policy and legislative processes. To minimize the effect of election cycles, it is imperative to begin such processes when new governments just come into place.
5. The approach of using memoranda to present positions regarding PD issues has proven effective in guaranteeing integration of input by CSOs and communities into the final products/ documents.
6. Use of action/model men and women as champions proved an effective approach in stimulating action by communities and by duty bearers.
7. Media presence and reporting on PD meetings or events compels duty bearers to act.
8. Media (both mainstream and social media) is the best approach for reaching the masses with information.
9. When the media officers are knowledgeable, inspired and motivated about an issue, they find a lot of interest in capturing and reporting on such issues without being pushed or paid to do so.
10. When the community members are properly prepared especially in engaging with the duty bearers, they will demand for space to participate and for services themselves.

11. Organizations focusing on different themes of PD can effectively learn from each other. The principles and practices underlying PD engagement are the same, regardless of the sector of focus.
12. Joint engagement of CSOs in PD has potential for better results than when CSOs engage individually.
13. Local CSOs are better placed than foreign CSOs to engage directly in pursuing local policy issues.

CONCLUSION

Overall, findings of the evaluation indicate that the project is on course towards achievement of its objectives and results. There is good progress and significant gains that can be consolidated. Institutionalization of capacity building initiatives however still remains elusive. The lessons learnt during this phase and in phase I remain vital in guiding the remaining period of phase II and in planning for phase III.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for remaining period of Phase II

1. Each Austrian partner to engage closely with the EA partners to finalize the PD strategies. This can be achieved by engaging professionals, either as consultants, or by tapping expertise within the consortium.
2. Develop modalities for spending the small action funds on actions that contribute to the objectives of the project, and emphasize close monitoring for SAF in the remaining period
3. Address issues of delayed financial disbursements that are associated with late reporting and requests.
4. EA partners must focus on the pursuit of policies and laws that they have been involved in, especially to ensure there are relevant laws that will support implementation of policies already developed.
5. The draft PD manual should be reviewed by professionals and finalized before July 2019, to be followed by dissemination to the consortium members, including orientation on use.
6. Each EA partner must keep a file that can be used for reference by the current and new staff. This will ensure continued availability, access and use of documentations and materials produced within this project
7. Phase III planning should start early enough to allow adequate engagement of all partners in the process.
8. The project should consider increasing funding to human resource positions to enable the partners engage effectively in some of the PD processes initiated under the SAF.

Recommendations for phase III

1. Engaging KRCS in provision of consultancy services for the project will position KRCS to play a role that they are best placed to. Embed this role in the proposal for phase III.
2. Phase III of the project should focus on individualized support to the partners, include coaching and mentorship on implementation of the acquired skills in the capacity areas covered in phase II.
3. Implementation of the PD manual should be prioritized in phase III. CSOs should be sensitized on the guidelines for using the manual, and should be comfortable using it by the time phase III ends.
4. Phase III of the project should not introduce any new areas of capacity building but instead work towards institutionalization and consolidation of what was already achieved in phases I and II. Trainings and cross learning activities should focus on the areas that were addressed under Phase II of the project.
5. Emphasize well-structured cross learning activities, with clear objectives and actionable plans. Map and document strengths and opportunities for learning within each member of the consortium. Integrate staff exchange for participation in partner programs to reinforce experiential learning.
6. A well thought out exit strategy should be included when designing phase III. Institutionalizing resource mobilization and encouraging diversification of funding sources should be part of the exit strategy.
7. CSOs must delve into mapping potential data sources, developing partnerships and networks for information sharing, and establish databases for relevant information.
8. Support EA CSOs develop appropriate indicators to measure progress and achievements in advocacy work. The indicators should focus on measuring use of knowledge and skills acquired from each of the capacity development areas of; media engagement; research use;

I.0 BACKGROUND

The Consortium Project “CSOs & Policy Dialogue – Further strengthening capacities of CSOs engaging in Policy Dialogue” is a three years programme funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Its current phase (Jan 1st 2017 – Dec 31st 2019) is the second phase of the project succeeding its pilot phase (Dec 1st 2014 – 30th Nov 2016) and is implemented by a Consortium of Austrian NGOs and their local partners in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda), with a total project budget of 495.000 EUR. This external evaluation focusing on the design, implementation and results of the project, aims to inform the planning process of its follow-up phase.

I.1 About the Project

An independent evaluation of ADA, Danida and SIDA from year 2012 drew important lessons on why Civil Society engagement in policy dialogue in the Global South is not effectively working, especially when it comes to topics relevant for marginalized population groups. The evaluation team recommended devoting more resources to build CSOs’ capacities and to come up with adequate supporting and financing tools for their engagement in policy dialogue. The Austrian Development Agency took on the recommendations of the independent evaluation and invited Austrian NGOs collaborating with CSOs in the Global South to develop a project on CSOs’ engagement in Policy Dialogue.

From Nov 2014 to Dec 2016, a Consortium of 5 Austrian NGOs implemented a pilot project with the objective to strengthen capacities of East African NGOs regarding policy dialogue. In the 2 years of implementing the project, seven East African organisations were trained on different tools and ways of engagement in policy dialogue, evidence based research and media engagement, while, at the same time, gaining various experiences from implementing small action funds for policy dialogue activities.

The second project phase of the consortium project started in January 2017 and will end in December 2019. It continues with proven approaches and activities by providing tailor-made capacity development of East African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), financial support of partner organisations for their policy dialogue engagement as well as room for capitalizing experiences and spreading recommendations.

I.2 Specific project objectives

The specific objective of the present project phase is to “Further strengthen capacities of East African CSOs regarding their policy dialogue engagement”. The long term change process the project envisages is that a more effective engagement of Civil Society in Policy Dialogue leads to a stronger reflection of the population needs, especially the ones of the most marginalized, in national and local policies.

I.3 Expected results

1. Capacity development and cross-learning plan for partner CSOs is developed
2. The ability of East African CSOs to engage in policy dialogue has been further strengthened in their field of work
3. Recommendations/ guidelines for CSOs engagement in Policy Dialogue are further complemented and used/ applied

I.4 Implementation approaches

In order to strengthen the abilities of the partner organizations to engage in Policy Dialogue two main components complement each other:

- The capacity development plan consisting of collective training workshops as well as cross-learning and organization-focused Capacity Development activities is implemented.
- Partner Organizations plan and implement their own Small Action Fund Initiatives, aiming at influencing policy making spaces, and allowing them to develop their own Policy Dialogue Strategies and to test and consolidate different methods and approaches for effective engagement along the Policy Cycle

The target group of the consortium project is the staff of 9 selected local partner organizations in East Africa (as well as other East African CSOs who benefit as guest learners from training workshops, experience exchange and shared products in the policy dialogue field). Capacity Development measures are based on a needs assessment at focused CSOs and treat a variety of topics, such as strategy development and risk management for PD engagements, research, documentation, resource mobilization and M&E concerning PD initiatives, stakeholder engagement as well as networking for PD.

The **Small Action Fund initiatives** for Policy Dialogue of these partner organizations benefit more than 7, 000 persons directly, while the envisioned change in policy frameworks benefits potentially up to more than 2 Million persons indirectly. The initiatives are focusing on a variety of topics and regions such as:

- preventing child marriages and pregnancies in Karangura, Uganda;
- budget allocations for most vulnerable children in 6 regions in Tanzania;
- disaster risk management in Marsabit, Kalifi and Lamu Counties, Kenya;
- mandatory first aid training for licenced drivers in Rwanda, prevention of GBV and land tenure security for women and girls in Northern Uganda;
- just and fair trade for women farmers in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties, Kenya;
- good governance and rule of law in Bungoma County, Kenya.

I.5 About the Consortium

The Consortium is composed of the following 5 Austrian NGOs: HORIZONT3000, Red Cross Austria, SOS Children's Villages Austria, Caritas Austria and CARE Austria. The consortium partners in Austria steer and coordinate project implementation via a steering committee meeting regularly in Vienna to discuss the programme's progress. HORIZONT3000 is the lead agency, which coordinates the project and is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reporting towards the main donor, the Austrian Development Agency.

Nine local partner organizations of the Austrian Consortium benefit from project components (capacity development), and implement project activities (Small Action Fund Initiatives). The partners are the following: DESECE and GROOTS Kenya (partner of HORIZONT3000); Kenya Red Cross and Rwanda Red Cross (partner of Red Cross Austria); SOS Children's Village Uganda and SOS Children's Village Tanzania (partner of SOS Children's Villages Austria); MIONET (partner of CARITAS Austria); CARE Uganda and its local implementing partner WORUDET (partner of CARE Austria).

I.6 Purpose of evaluation

The intention of the evaluation is to contribute to internal learning, the accountability towards stakeholders and to provide recommendations for a possible future phase of the project.

Learning: insights and knowledge gained through the evaluation will contribute to the steering and implementation of the ongoing and planning of a follow-up phase of the Consortium Project.

Accountability: the outcome of this evaluation will deliver insights on how the Consortium Project achieves results. It will be crucially important for the accountability towards stakeholders, especially the Austrian Development Agency.

Recommendations: this evaluation report will be valuable in terms of recommendations on how to increase positive impact in the field of policy dialogue engagement of local CSOs as well as possible improvements of the management, steering and coordination processes involved in the implementation of the project.

I.7 Objective of evaluation

The main objective of the evaluation is to assess the design and implementation, fulfilment of objectives and achievement of expected results of the Consortium Project “CSOs & Policy Dialogue” in East Africa.

I.7.1 Focus and Scope

The evaluation assessed the current phase of the project (01-2017- 12-2019), while also taking into account the pilot phase (12-2014 – 11-2016). The evaluation assessed all there mentioned results while emphasis was on *Result 2: The ability of East African CSOs to engage in policy dialogue has been further strengthened in their field of work* by assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of two main aspects of the project:

- Capacity development measures benefitting CSOs supported in this project
- Small Action Fund Initiatives implemented by CSOs supported in this project

I.8 Evaluation questions

The evaluation assessed the intervention logic of the project and the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project by addressing a series of guiding questions concerning relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

This was a performance evaluation study. The evaluation adopted the OECD criteria that include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Data was gathered through qualitative data collection methods and from secondary sources through desk review of documents. The evaluators looked at the approaches used within the project and the activities associated with these approaches. This evaluation was retrospective and prospective, looking backward to examine the changes from the beginning of the project to date, as well as maintaining an eye towards making recommendations on how improvements can be made in the remaining project period (up to December 2019) and how similar projects can be improved in future.

2.2 Data Collection Methods

The methods of data collection included comprehensive desk review, including a review of relevant literature and project data. Primary data collection was through qualitative methods, specifically involving key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and group interviews (GIs). A validation meeting was further held with project team/ stakeholders. Participants for the evaluation were purposively selected relying on the expertise and knowledge of the project implementation team in the project areas to identify credible sources of information on the implementation of the project. In covering the project implementation regions/ areas, the process focused on the purposively sampled interviewees representing the diversity of stakeholders in the relevant sectors targeted by the project. Study tools together with list of interviewees and documents reviewed have been included as attachments to this report.

2.3 Study Sample

Key informant interviews with project staff and consultants

Organization	Respondent	Title
HORIZONT3000	Kristina Kroyer	Consortium Project Coordinator
CARE Austria	Claire Laurent	Steering Committee
SOS Austria	Randles Claudia	Steering Committee
CARITAS Austria	Raphael Thurn-Valsassina	Steering Committee
Austrian Red Cross	Köck Mathilde (OeRK)	Steering Committee
CARE Uganda	Annet Kandole	Program Officer
	Janepher Taaka	Program Coordinator
WORDUET	Betty Akullo	Program Director
	Brenda Akot	Project Officer/ Training Beneficiary
SOS Uganda	Irienge Damalie	Program Officer/ Training beneficiary
SOS Tanzania	Ally Mpelly	Program Coordinator
MIO-NET	Mamo Abudo	Program Manager/ Training Beneficiary
	Ibrahim Ibrae	Training beneficiary
Kenya Red Cross	Sarah Nduku	Advocacy Officer/ Training Beneficiary
Rwanda Red Cross	Emmanuel Ntakirutimana	Program Coordinator/ Training Beneficiary
GROOTS Kenya	Jael Amati	Program Coordinator/ Training Beneficiary
DESECE	Emmanuel Kizito	Program Coordinator/ Training Beneficiary
Training Consultants	Carol Linturi	Training consultant
	Ahmed Idris	Training consultant

KIIs and FGDs with beneficiaries

Organization	Beneficiary Category	Data collection method
MIONET	Community members participating in DRM policy processes	FGD
	Participants of the County Steering Group (CSG) meetings	KII
	1 Representative of the local media engaged in the project	KII
	Community leaders involved in the project	GI
GROOTS	Women champions	FGD

	Representatives from the country ministry of agriculture	GI
DESECE	Leaders drawn from local administration school boards and political parties, and community opinion leaders	FGD
	CSOs representatives	KII
	Media representatives from local media stations involved in the project	KII
SOS CV Uganda	Participants of awareness workshops on early/child marriage	FGD
	2 Representatives of the local media engaged in the project	GI
WORUDET-Uganda and CARE Uganda	Women leaders coached on leadership skills and the national and international legal framework of women's rights	GI
	District Council Representative	KII
	Local Area Council representatives	KII

2.4 Mobilization

HORIZONT3000 led the mobilization process, communicating about the evaluation to the consortium partners and their partners distributed across the East African countries. HORIZONT3000 introduced the evaluation team to the partners. Study schedule for each country was shared with the partner organizations to allow them adequate time for mobilization of respondents, and to prepare and share documents required by the evaluation team. Partner organizations were responsible for mobilization of project beneficiaries, using a recruitment criteria developed by the consultants, in consultation with the partners, at the inception phase.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Voluntary informed consent was obtained from the study respondents. The research team observed three universal ethical principles, including respect for participants, beneficence and justice. In this regard, all participants were consented by fully explaining details of the study and the fact that their participation was voluntary. In addition, all information received were kept confidential and personal interviews remain confidential. As an issue of propriety, we believe HORIZONT3000 and partners, and other stakeholders will distribute any benefits emanating from this study in an equitable manner.

2.6 Validation of the Evaluation Report

Due to the wide distribution of partner locations, zoom facilities were used to facilitate a validation forum through virtual interaction to discuss the findings with the consortium steering committee and EA CSO partner representatives. In addition, the draft report was widely shared with partners for review and input before it was finalized.

2.7 Evaluation Results/ Report Dissemination Plan

This evaluation is an important undertaking in strengthening the evidence base on which decisions about similar interventions are premised. It will be important in guiding modifications and in prioritizing resource partitioning for similar projects in future, based on lessons learnt. The success of this study in supporting the learning agenda will depend on the extent to which the resultant information is analyzed, shared widely, and applied appropriately in decision-making. The primary audience for the survey report are the consortium project partners.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Relevance

3.1.1 Relevance of objectives

The project was founded on a research study commissioned by Austrian development agency- and further by a pilot phase. The design of the project was guided by evidence from the independent study and refined using lessons learnt during this pilot phase. The project aligns to the contemporary global development agenda, as depicted by its overall objective “to increase effectiveness of CSO engagement in policy dialogue and to contribute to implementing SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals)”. The specific objective (SO) of the project is “Further strengthening capacities of East African CSOs regarding policy dialogue”. The role of CSOs in policy and legislative processes cannot be over-emphasized, especially in the context of developing countries. CSOs act as a voice for majority of the population who are not able to speak on issues that affect their lives and livelihoods. Historically, foreign CSOs have been at the forefront in advocating for changes in the developing countries and have encountered certain challenges. First, foreign CSOs are seen to drive their own interests when they engage directly in advocating reforms in policy, legislative, institutional frameworks. Secondly, foreign CSOs are perceived to be out of touch with the realities on issues affecting the countries where advocacy work is undertaken. As a result, the focus countries have not always provided favorable climate to enable foreign CSOs engage in advocacy work.

To overcome these challenges, foreign CSOs doing advocacy work devised new approaches of working in partnerships with National CSOs to engage directly with policy makers. However, these collaborations have often been more focused on financial and technical support to local CSO and less (near zero) on capacity building. Donors have also focused more on funding policy engagement activities and less on capacity building for CSOs working in policy processes. Where implemented, traditional capacity building initiatives have focused more on improving the leadership and operational management of advocacy CSOs, and less on building their technical capacities on policy dialogue.

As a result, many CSOs working in the policy arena have lacked the necessary skills to engage effectively with duty bearers/ policy makers. From the needs assessment report, and from the interviews conducted during this evaluation, lack of skills to engage in these process often led to limited success in CSO work, in spite of the respective governments incrementally (though slow paced) opening up political space for CSO engagement. As a result, there has been manifest mistrust between CSOs and the government, not because any of the partners is disinterested in the issues addressed, but as a consequence of ineffective approaches to advocacy advanced by the CSOs.

Relevance of the project can therefore be seen as follows:

- It aligns to international development commitments- the sustainable development goals 16 and 17.
- Capacity building of CSOs is inevitable if they have to engage effectively in influencing policies where they work. The project was unique in the sense that it did not focus on channeling resources and providing technical assistance to CSOs engaging in policy work, without taking into consideration existing capacity gaps, rather, its core focus was on capacity building.
- Policy development and implementation are political processes that can only succeed where there is political good will. Combative approaches cannot win in such circumstances and policy dialogue prevails as a superior approach to effective policy engagement.
- Strengthening East African CSOs implies the design took into consideration the fact that local CSOs are in touch with the realities on issues affecting communities, and that they are better placed than international CSOs, to engage in policy processes within the countries where they operate. Involvement of the EA CSOs in the needs assessment and in the process of developing the capacity-building plan ensured that the local priorities were integrated into the design. The

pilot phase preceding phase II of the project was not only aimed at testing the proposed intervention, but also, to provide a platform for continued engagement of the CSOs in providing input and refining the proposed approaches.

3.1.2 Relevance of approaches

The project exhibits Global North- South partnerships and collaborations, an arrangement that is receiving a lot of interest among development partners, specifically with the aim of skill transfer and strengthening the Southern CSOs. All the Austrian partners have several years of demonstrable experience in their areas of work. Red-cross movement for example, is stronger in Europe than in Africa, having been in operation in the former for several years. According the East African partners, this collaboration was very relevant in to their work. While providing the necessary support, the Austrian partners did not maintain a grip on control of EA CSO activities, and instead transferred some level of autonomy in planning and decision-making. The role of Austrian partners - mainly administrative and technical backstopping- was largely at the startup period, ceding as the project progressed to allow the EA partners take active role in implementation.

“The project respected our values. We were able to incorporate women from the communities into the trainings. We value these women and we seek to empower them so that they are able to play active roles in most of the processes. We look upon them to be at the forefront so that they are able to sustain the project initiatives even after we exit”. - Project Coordinator (EA CSO partner)

The specific objective of the project is underpinned by three intermediate results that are largely deemed adequate to support the achievement of this objective. The interventions under these results were demand-driven, guided by capacity needs assessment preceding implementation.

BOX 1: Project Results

Result 1: Capacity development and cross-learning plan for partner CSOs is developed

Result 2: The ability of East African CSOs to engage in policy dialogue has been strengthened in their field of work

Result 3: Recommendations/ guidelines for CSOs engagement in Policy Dialogue are

Result 1- “Capacity development and cross-learning plan for partner CSOs is developed”, aimed at establishing a clear roadmap that would be followed to achieve the other results. Logically, this was the initial step in this phase and was undertaken through a participatory approach involving EA CSOs and Austrian partners, attracting ownership and commitment from partners.

Result 2- The ability of East African CSOs to engage in policy dialogue has been strengthened in their field of work was to be achieved through three key activities: trainings, cross learnings, and small action funds (SAF). The evaluation found relevance in these activities as follows.

a) Trainings

By design, the trainings focused on cross cutting capacity gaps that were seen to be of priority across the consortium membership. Separate action plans were however developed and implemented by individual organizations, and each partner was mandated to plan for one multiplication activity after each training. This way, the participants found the training topics relevant to their needs, and that the topics covered did not include areas that were unique only to a section of the organizations. Additionally, the trainees were asked to suggest other topics to be covered in subsequent trainings and the responses almost always resonated with what had been identified by the needs assessment and lined up to be covered.

Combining the training with experience sharing was not only relevant for knowledge and information sharing, but also in making the learning process enjoyable for the participants. Participation of guest learners was relevant in increasing reach to other organizations that were not

part of the consortium, and also in enriching learning through additional experiences shared by the guest learners.

The duration of each training was purposively designed to be long enough to cover the content and short enough not to hold the trainees for long. It was an issue of balancing between having adequate time for effective training delivery while also not affecting other operations of the partners. Stretching the trainings for too long would imply holding the trainees longer, with a likelihood of interfering with other operations of the organizations, especially in view of the fact that most of the organizations operate on lean staff and work in partnerships with other development partners that may also engage them in other trainings. According to most beneficiaries however, the schedule for trainings did not provide ample time especially for experience sharing that was highly valued by the participants.

Divergent views emerged during this evaluation regarding the training model. Some respondents suggested the TOT model as a more suitable approach to the trainings. The proponents of this model argue that it would ensure availability of skilled experts within the CSO networks, to be able to cascade the trainings to a wider population and ensure continued availability of trainers even after the project ends. Opponents of the TOT approach argue that the model is resource intensive and not very sustainable due to potential staff fluctuation at partner organizations. Also, the TOT model is seen to require indulgence of high cadre staff who should have attained other trainings, and who should have gathered a rich experience in applying related processes/ approaches prior to PD training. This cadre of staff may not be available within all partner organizations in the consortium.

b) Cross learnings

Integrated ongoing learning through the cross learning platforms was relevant in providing opportunity for experience sharing and enabling consortium partners to learn from each other. CSOs in the consortium were at different levels of PD knowledge and experience. These CSOs faced challenges and responded to address these challenges using different approaches that they could share for learning. Cross learning activities therefore posed an opportunity for tapping expertise within the network, with smaller CSOs positioned to benefit from the expertise of bigger CSOs.

For the five Austrian partners, the project aimed at providing opportunities for learning from each other based on their respective country experiences. According to the representatives of the Austrian partner organisations interviewed during this evaluation, there were no known projects in Austria, where partners worked together in such a big consortium. This arrangement was valuable therefore in helping Austrian CSOs to harmonize their work, especially considering that their interventions often received funding from the same donors.

c) Small action funds (SAF)

Interventions under the small action funds (SAF) were designed by the EA partners to foster locally set and locally driven agenda, making them very relevant to the local context. SAF provided an opportunity for the CSOs to put into practice, the knowledge and skills acquired through various trainings and learning platforms. For well-established consortium members such as KRCS who operate with large funds, the SAF may seem insignificant. However, from interviews with KRCS and Red Cross Austria, it was apparent that the funds provided an opportunity to engage in some of the policy processes for which the organization had not allocated funds.

SAF provided opportunity for effective engagement of citizens. Public participation forums organized by the government were usually crowded, leading to ineffective engagement of citizens. The forums were often held as a way of fulfilling constitutional requirements, and not necessarily with the aim of achieving meaningful engagement of citizens. The SAF were therefore seen by the stakeholders to be relevant in facilitating citizen participation in policy processes.

The project did not substitute the activities of the EA CSOs but instead builds on ongoing initiatives of the partners. Initiatives under the SAF were within the CSO's core areas of focus, ensuring continued relevance of the CSOs to their respective mandates. The same is implied in regard to alignment with the government development agenda. Policies, plans and legislations pursued under the SAF fell within the government priority areas. Equally, these policies resonated well with the priority needs of the communities. As it emerged from the interviews, communities tended to appreciate local bylaws more than the national laws, since they are able to hold local leaders accountable for enforcement. Most of the policies and laws pursued under the SAF were at the devolved government levels- an indication that they appealed to the plight of the local communities.

There was adequate flexibility in the implementation of the SAF, allowing the implementers to shift and respond to changing priorities. This way, it was possible to focus on the most relevant issues, unlike in cases of rigid plans, where implementers have to stick to the plan even when circumstances and priorities change.

In regard to Result 3- "Recommendations/ guidelines for CSOs engagement in Policy Dialogue are further complemented and used/ applied", these recommendations were relevant in providing guidance to the CSOs on contemporary issues in PD. The recommendations were backed by evidence, making them the most appropriate in guiding EA CSOs to align their programs as appropriate

Project duration and sequencing of phases was found to be ideal for tangible results to be achieved. Capacity building is a long-term process that cannot be effectively achieved within short periods that are characteristic of many donor-funded projects. The phased approach as used in this project provides opportunity for reflections and learning before moving to another phase. Three phases totaling nine years of follow- up is a good opportunity, and a period long enough to consolidate and show tangible results for such a project.

Although it was not envisaged in the design phase, KRCS became proactive in supporting other CSOs and appeared more of a technical service provider than an ordinary partner in the consortium. Some of the stakeholders opined that KRCS was likely overwhelmed, judging by the large number of CSOs that sought partnerships with KRCS. This tilt in the role of KRCS did not however affect the project in anyway and is mentioned here as a matter of fact.

Omission of an exit strategy may have been the main gap in the design of the project. The project design did not include an exit strategy, perhaps because phase III was highly anticipated. This posed a serious threat to the continuity of the project initiatives in the event that phase III of the project did not materialize.

3.2 Effectiveness

3.2.1 Effectiveness towards achievement of objectives and results

The effectiveness of the project was assessed based on its objectives and results, and using corresponding indicators under each of these. Overall, capacity improvements have been seen in regard to media engagement, use of research data to generate evidence for policy engagement, increased capacity of CSOs to undertake resource mobilization, strategic planning for policy dialogue, among other areas. Knowledge and skills acquired in these areas have translated into measurable results as reflected in the key project indicators. Overall, findings of the evaluation indicate that the project is on course towards achievement of its objectives and results. Institutionalization of the capacity building initiatives however still remains elusive. Stakeholders suggested a shift from a more generalized approach, towards an individualized approach that responds to address the specific needs that are relevant within the context of each CSO. This is not to imply the previous approaches did not work, rather, it is seen as a way to consolidate and concretize the gains that have been made. The progress made so far is impressive and there is need to consolidate the gains, building on the accomplishments already attained.

Specific Objective: Further strengthening capacities of East African CSOs regarding policy dialogue

OI 1.1 Influence of targeted CSOs on local or national development plans and other legal/ policy documents

Influence of EA CSOs on local and national development plans and other legal/ policy documents was observed across board. At the time of the evaluation, each CSO was either involved in an ongoing process of influencing plans, policies and laws, or had already achieved significant milestones in these processes. The influence of the CSO took diverse forms including: influencing citizen participation; holding dialogue meetings/ forums with key stakeholders; contributing / provision of input in drafting and reviews of strategic, legislative and policy documents; among others. Examples include:

- Involvement of CARE Uganda in international forums addressing GBV; and in discussing implementation of peace, security and cooperation framework and resolution 1325 in particular
- Involvement of SOS CV Uganda in the pursuit of bylaws on child marriage
- DESECE was involved in influencing CIDP and Public Participation Bill
- GROOTS led women from Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties in influencing the potato policy and the development of Bills to support its implementation
- RRCS involvement in advocating establishment of the Emergency Medical Services.
- KRCS led the process of developing National Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy for Kenya
- MIONET involvement in the development of DRM policy and DRM Bill for Marsabit

The work of SOS CV Tanzania led to increase in budgetary allocation for vulnerable children. In Mufindi district the budgetary allocation for children services increased from Tanzanian Shillings Twenty million to forty million, while for Iringa and Pemba districts, the allocation increased from zero allocation to Twelve million and Six million respectively. There was also an increase in staffing for children department when the government recruited more social protection officers. According to interviewed stakeholders, the reason it was possible to achieve these results was that the project staff of SOS CV Tanzania were better placed than before, to engage with duty bearers in advocating for issues of child protection. In Kenya, GROOTS was able to engage with women farmers from Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties to influence potato policy. Initially, women from the two counties, separately, gave input into various processes but their views were not reflected in the final products. Through GROOTS, they were better engaged in the process and managed to have the policy finalized and adopted. More of these initiatives can be found under the case studies included as annexes to this report.

OI 1.2 Until end of 2019, 9 East African CSOs have successfully engaged in 4 policy cycle stages.

Four EA CSOs- GROOTS Kenya, DESECE, and CARE Uganda had already engaged in all the 4 stages at baseline. It was however apparent from the interviews with staff from these organizations that the three organizations acquired new knowledge and skills that helped improve their engagement in these stages. There were also new entrants to the different stages of policy cycle. SOS CV Uganda for example had not engaged in any of the four stages at the time of baseline, but managed to engage in agenda setting, policy negotiation and formulation for the bye-law against child marriage, during this project. While MIONET engaged in two policy stages prior to the start of the project, the Network managed to engage in three stages during this project. The stages included agenda setting, policy negotiation and policy formulation leading to finalization and adoption of DRM policy for Marsabit County. The same applies to KRCS- managing to have the national DRM policy finalized and adopted. On the other hand, RRCS had not engaged in any stage but managed to set agenda for the Rwanda Red Cross Act, and was at the stage of legislative formulation at the time of the evaluation. SOS CV Tanzania already engaged at two stages of Policy Implementation and Policy Review. The organization continued with its engagement in implementation during this project.

Opportunities for engagement in policy implementation and policy review are not as common as for the first two stages. This is due to slow or scanty implementation of most policies. In certain cases, the lifespan of certain policies ends even before laws are established to support their implementation.

OI 1.3 At least 3 partners within the consortia project have established and strengthened partnerships for policy dialogue engagement until end of 2019

All the EA CSOs managed to establish and strengthen partnerships for PD. Majority of the partnerships established during this project were those between the consortium partners. There were however cases where partnerships were established between consortium and non-consortium members. The project provided opportunity for RRCS and KRCS to work together through exchange learning, an interaction that had not occurred between the two organizations before this project. In Kenya, the project provided an opportunity for other CSOs to understand the operations of KRCS. Many CSOs assumed KRCS was an arm of the government and not a civil society organization, hence did not consider the organization a potential partner in PD. Some of the partnerships established or strengthened during this project included:

- KRCS and DESECE: developing an advocacy strategy for DESECE; KRCS and GROOTS: training GROOTS' staff on communication for PD;
- KRCS and GROOTS Kenya: cooperation to strengthen GROOTS work on DRM Bill for Isiolo County,
- GROOTS and DESECE: training for DESECE on evidence based advocacy and resource mobilization.
- CARE Uganda and WORUDET: CARE Uganda supported WORUDET to enter into formal agreements with the districts of Pader, Agago, Kitgum and Lamwo.
- SOS CV Tanzania is collaborating with C-SEMA for the effective implementation of the SAF initiative in Tanzania.

The target for this indicator has been surpassed, with an approximate number of seven EA CSOs having established and strengthened their PD partnerships. It is imperative to note however, that the extent to which the partnerships were strengthened cannot be quantified. CSOs may have formed the partnerships with the purpose of achieving a one-time objective in a specific area, for example, to gain from an expertise of another CSO in strategic planning.

RI. Capacity development and cross-learning plan for partner CSOs is developed

RI 1.1 Until April 2017, a plan for capacity development and cross-learning measures for CSO engagement in Policy Dialogue is available and agreed upon

The plan was developed in 2017 and its implementation was in progress at the time of the evaluation. The plan was developed through a participatory approach involving both the Austrian and the EA partners.

R2. The ability of East African CSOs to engage in policy dialogue has been strengthened in their field of work

RI 2.1 Until August 2018 at least 5 local partner organisations have their clear (written) strategy on how to engage in Policy Dialogue in their field of work

At the time of this evaluation, the EA CSOs were at different stages in the development of their PD strategies- draft in progress or completed. All the CSOs that were in the process of developing their PD strategies were optimistic these strategies would be finalized by December 2019. A section of the CSOs including CARE Uganda and WORUDET however developed their strategies in the first phase of the project and were due for review. WORUDET's PD strategy ends in 2020, less than one year after the current phase comes to an end. There were already discussions around beginning the review process for this strategy, during the remaining period of the current phase. Summary for the status of the PD strategies are as outlined below.

- Three organizations (DESECE, RRCS, SOS CV Uganda) were in the process of finalizing their PD strategies.
- GROOTS Kenya together with their advocacy champions already started developing strategies for each county in line with the the different issues they engaged in.
- Three organizations (MIONET, KRCS, SOS Tanzania) already finalized their PD/advocacy strategy.

Although this evaluation did not include a review of the PD strategies, it noted there was a variation in content, specifically in regard to budgeting for implementation of the strategies. Some of the PD strategies were costed and included budgets, with some having resource mobilization strategies. In some cases, however, the strategies did not have budgets, and the partners indicated that the strategic pillars would be funded through the different projects implemented by the organization.

RI 2.2 Each East African partner CSO is capable to use and has applied at least 1 new method/ approach for Policy Dialogue until end of 2019

The new approaches for policy dialogue that were used by the EA CSOs were as outlined below:

- RRCS: Strong use of social media; organized a first of its kind public first aid training to further set the agenda for access to first aid skills.
- DESECE strengthened its organizational approach to PD, as all staff members were made aware of what is happening in policy dialogue and jointly engage in lobbying and influencing duty bearers to deliver goods and services to the community members.
- MIONET: successfully used media to create awareness and report on the PD progress;
- GROOTS Kenya: for the first time worked together with the women advocacy groups, on memorandum to bring in their view on the policy under development.
- SOS CV Uganda; stronger media engagement
- CARE Uganda: : increasingly documenting lessons learnt on land advocacy to improve policy work
- WORUDET: increasingly documenting lessons learnt on land advocacy to improve policy work; developed a resource mobilization strategy.
- SOS CV Tanzania: use of social media platforms with greater and faster reach to masses at minimal cost.

R3. Recommendations/ guidelines for CSOs engagement in Policy Dialogue are further complemented and used/ applied

RI 3.1 At least 10 good practices/ learning from failure examples of partner CSOs engagement in policy dialogue are documented and shared until June 2019

This has not been achieved. It will partly be guided by the findings and recommendations from this evaluation.

RI 3.2 The guidelines/ recommendations for CSOs engagement in Policy Dialogue are shared with at least 50 relevant stakeholders outside the consortia (donors, other CSOs in East Africa and Austria, government bodies, parliamentary committees, MPs, research bodies, etc.) until November 2019.

The Video: “Learning Guide for Civil Society Organizations and Policy Makers”, elaborated in the pilot phase was shared via the HORIZONT3000 Blog, the HORIZONT3000 knowledge management platform KNOW-HOW3000, the CARE Austria Homepage, and the MIONET homepage. Since the beginning of this project phase, the video and/or guidelines/recommendations were shared with:

- Members of County Assembly, department of administration, of water, environment and natural resources, all 12 members of MIONET and other NGOs in Marsabit County
- 58 organizations involved in a CSO exhibition in Bungoma County
- 18 HORIZONT3000 partners in East Africa during a training workshop

- 13 members of WIDE – Austrian Network for women rights and feminist perspectives, representing different Austrian institutions
- 3 SOS platforms in Tanzania
- 6 network partner of CARE Uganda (namely: Uganda Women Media Association, Akina Mama Wa Africa, GWEDG, COVIOD, APROCEL, CEWIGO)

The guidelines and recommendations were used as a basis in order to develop a Policy Dialogue Manual. Based on the outline elaborated in 2017 and in collaboration of 7 partner organizations, a first draft was elaborated in 2018, which is in review stage by the Austrian consortium members, consultants and the other partners within the partner community.

RI 3.3 At least 10 organisations in East Africa and Europe use the guidelines/recommendations for their work by the end of 2019.

This has not been achieved. It will partly be guided by the findings and recommendations from this evaluation.

3.2.2 Effectiveness of project approaches

Improvements in capacity to engage in PD has been attributed to a combination of approaches that also included trainings, cross learnings, and experience sharing. For networks, through guest learners approach and through partnerships, the benefits went beyond individual organizations to inter-organizational networks. Relationships between the EA partners enabled mobilization and sharing of capacities. CSOs benefited by accessing and learning from experiences of others, through peer support, and by tapping on others’ creativity and innovations. Experience sharing during trainings and during biannual workshops enriched cross-country, cross sector and inter-organizational learning.

It came out in the evaluation that the PD manual is a highly valued document by the consortium partners and that will serve as a reference material even after the project ends. There were however concerns that the partners may not have given ample time for the development of the manual. From the interviews and from the reviewed reports, it was apparent that the manual had a lot of copy-paste work and needed a lot of improvement. There was good progress however in the review already initiated by the coordinator and the stakeholders were confident the manual would be finalized in time, before the project ends.

This evaluation did not identify any additional areas of PD requiring capacity building other than what was already covered. According to the stakeholders, the capacity building areas covered by the project were adequate and may only need strengthening, and there is therefore no need to introduce any new areas of training.

“I worked in several projects before but did not have an opportunity to be trained on policy dialogue. I have learnt a lot. We have invested the skills that we gained from the trainings in working with our network members to engage in policy processes within our county.” Key Informant EA CSO, Kenya

Experience sharing during trainings and during biannual workshops enriched cross-country, cross sector and inter-organizational learning. Country workshops were found to be very valuable, and effective since the workshops focused on issues that were specific to the contexts of the respective countries. Some CSOs however participated in workshops outside their countries, and while they were able to learn from these forums, it may not have been as helpful as it was to CSOs from the host countries that formed the central focus of such forums.

Each of the EA CSOs established partnerships for cross learnings. In Kenya, KRCS was already working with the county governments on issues of DRM policies. MIONET and its network members engaged with KRCS to learn from experiences of KRCS in the DRM policy processes and to guide their indulgence in the process of developing a similar policy framework for Marsabit

County. Beyond the consortium partners, MIONET worked with ALDEF to benchmark on climate change policy in Wajir County. Cross learnings were not only impactful on the EA partners. The Austrian CSOs had an opportunity through this project, to network, and to know some of the organizations and their staff, working in the PD sector. CARITAS Austria for example, owned to have learnt a lot on PD by working closely with its Kenyan partner- MIONET.

It was at the discretion of the CSO partners to identify potential partners for cross learning, based on own assessment and identification of opportunities for potential synergies. It was through the experience sharing platforms that the CSOs were able to identify the strength of each partner and to determine any benefits that can be derived from partnerships. According to the stakeholders, a proper documentation of the strengths of each partner, when shared with the consortium members, would provide an opportunity for better decision making on selection of partners for cross learnings.

Bureaucracies within organizations may have affected the cross learning activities. GROOTS for example had planned a visit to CARE Uganda, but did not achieve this after the appointment was cancelled, citing breach of protocol for approval of such visits. Forums such as the WhatsApp group formed to facilitate cross learnings did not attract optimal use, in spite of its high potential to support information sharing across partnerships.

Some of the CSO representatives interviewed during the evaluation suggested having guidelines to facilitate cross learning through exchange visits. There were suggestions for allocation of more funds to support cross learning activities and to have them more structured and better coordinated, with adequate involvement of the senior management teams of the respective CSOs.

Approaches under the small action funds (SAF) that were identified to be most effective included: use of policy dialogue in place of combative approaches traditionally used by EA CSOs. The CSOs reported they realized results in shorter time when they engaged with the government partners through dialogue. CSOs also achieved results in shorter time, working in partnerships and through networks in pursuit of policy agenda. Nyandarua and Nakuru counties in Kenya had pursued the policies on potato packaging for a number of years, without success. This was however eventually achieved when the two counties came together and worked jointly, with support of GROOTS. Nearly all EA CSOs working at grassroots levels engaged action/model men and women as champions in stimulating action by communities and by duty bearers. The models, the CSOs reported, were very effective in driving the advocacy agenda. Engagement with the media was identified as an area that had a great potential for dissemination information on issues affecting women. Women exuded confidence in contributing to discussions on women rights aired through local radio stations.

“When journalists are trained as partners, they develop interest in the themes of our advocacy work [and] begin to report even without pay. We don’t have to go for advertising in the mainstream media, buying space in the local newspapers as this is very expensive. Instead, the trained journalists document very interesting stories on gender issues, to an extent that some media houses opt to pay for it. Besides, media is not only about print and voice, we must also embrace social media.” Key Informant EA CSO, Uganda

3.3 Efficiency

Coordination and management: All the interviewed stakeholders attributed the successful coordination and management of the project to consistent engagement of one overall coordinator from the start of the project. Ms. Kristina Kroyer was involved from the beginning and was able to engage the consortium partners in Austria as well as the EA partners. The role of the coordinator may have been hampered however by limited funds that did not allow travels to East Africa to perform coordination as well as M&E roles. According to findings from interviews with the EA partners, there was need for more visits by Austrian partners.

By design, and due to limited resources, the Austrian partners mainly engaged at critical points of planning, reporting and financial management of SAF interventions, as HORIZONT3000 played most of the project coordination roles. On the other hand, the project only partially funded human resource positions for EA CSOs. As a result, staff supporting the PD project had at least one or more other projects to support. This may have led to occasional delays by partners in responding to some of the requests made by the consortium, causing some turbulence in the coordination role. The level of effort (LOE) allocated for the task of the coordinator was also limited and the coordinator had to stretch to ensure the project succeeded.

Resource use efficiency: According to all the stakeholders interviewed, financial resources were generally limited for the entire project. Some of the initiatives under the small action funds (SA) such as citizen participation were however resource intensive, and required more funds that was available. In the context of most of the SAF under this project, this demand on resources was exacerbated by sparse distribution and heterogeneity of populations targeted for participation in the policy/ legislative processes.

While policy dialogue requires a lot of staff time in engagement with stakeholders, most EA partners allocated only a small percentage of the SAF budget as direct personnel cost. According to the funding agreement, local partners could allocate 30 percent of their overall SAF budget as direct personnel costs. Most monies were spent on, awareness creation, citizen participation/ community outreaches.

The project devised innovative approaches to achieve optimal results with the limited funds. Most prominent innovations included:

- Riding on other funding mechanisms: integrating project activities; pushing initiatives through other ongoing activities of the partners.
- Target of opportunities: partners had to identify strategic opportunities to engage in the processes.
- Circumventing the processes: While it is ideal to work with the county assemblies, this proved to be an expensive venture and CSOs in MIONET opted to only engage with the committees.
- Kept training costs low: the project relied mainly on local consultants, saving on travel and accommodation costs, and on high consultancy fees charged by expatriates. Some of the consultants were drawn from the consortium membership, through institutional arrangement with KRCS.
- Cross learnings and experience sharing were far much enriching than typical classroom trainings and according to interviewed stakeholders appeared to have yielded far much better results with minimal resources.

For the SAF focusing on policy and legislative processes, it was apparent that the interventions could achieve far much greater milestones, if it were not for the delays associated with bureaucracies, corruption and limited commitment of political stakeholders. According to MIONET for example, the small action funds was enough to support the process of drafting through to enactment of relevant bills to support the DRM policy and climate change policy adopted by the county.

“The project was thinly spread, focusing on so many issues and activities, and with little resources. The army declined to participate in our meetings because we provided low allowances. We had to change tactic, resorting to one on one meetings with the officers instead of bringing them together for joint meetings, a process that took longer and with limited impact. Also, due to limited resources, we were not able to follow up on commitments made by duty bearers.” Key Informant EA CSO, Uganda

With the little funds available for the project, the Austrian CSOs working with more than one EA partner found it difficult delivering effectively in their respective mandates. They acknowledged working with more than one EA partner might have led to overstretching of already limited

resources. Splitting the limited resources between two or more partners implied spreading thin, with low potential for high impact. This observation was echoed by other partners, with suggestions to reduce the number of partners to one each for every Austrian CSO. Austrian Red Cross already gave an indication during the evaluation that it will retain one partner in phase III of the project.

Planning and reporting: Planning for the project was usually undertaken through a participatory process, with individual Austrian partners working with their EA partners. Austrian partners meet every three months to review performance progress, follow up on emerging issues and coordinate upcoming capacity development measures. According to CSO representatives, reporting was a lot easier in year two of the project after HORIZONT3000 streamlined reporting requirements and tools, and after the partners developed plans with clear activity milestones and outputs.

Financial resources were availed to partners in time, ensuring that activities did not delay due to late disbursement of funds. In a few cases however, there were delays in disbursements of funds – an observation attributed to issues of late submission of reports by the EA partners and fixed disbursement schedules that occurred only within specific calendar dates. In addition, there were hiccups at start up leading to delays in implementation. The delay was expected, considering the diversity of organizations coming together under the project- each organizations had unique management styles, and the contracting processes for multiple partners would definitely consume some time.

Some of the partners experienced low burn rates under their respective SAFs due to varied reasons. Cross cutting reasons included delayed startup and the fear of spending all the “small action funds” long before the project comes to an end. Targeting opportunities may have contributed to low burn rate, with the CSOs expecting to use the funds where they can have greatest impact, considering that the monies could not achieve much if not invested with tact. In the case of RRCS, it was an issue of changes in priority activities after it was noted late into the project, that the initial activities prioritized under the project were too ambitious. This led to changes in planned activities. In the case of DESECE, lumping of activities during certain periods in line with community/ school calendar was cited as a cause of delay in implementation of certain activities

Staff transitions: Staff transitions may have affected smooth implementation, considering the time it takes to replace staff and to provide full orientation into the new position.

Trainings: Training participants included staff who took part in phase I trainings, and those that were not trained in that phase. Generalized trainings for those in phase one and phase II implied repeat training in the same area, in some cases, so that the new participants could be at the same level with those previously trained. Also, some partners consistently sent the same staff to the trainings while some brought in completely new staff. These scenarios, to some extent may have affected the efficiency in time use, considering that the trainees in the same training events were at different levels and had to be brought to the same level before covering new training items.

3.4 Impact

Project impact is manifest in improved capacities of CSOs to play the vital role of influencing policies, strategies, laws and other plans in their domains of work. Improved capacity is evident in faster processes in the realization of PD objectives pursued under this project. EA CSOs reported better relationships, increased collaborations, information sharing and more trust between CSOs and governments. Policy makers opened up and were more accommodative to the CSOs, providing platform and creating space for CSO participation. There was an observed increase in the ability of the CSOs to mobilize and engage various stakeholders in policy processes. It emerged from the FGDs with the communities, that the project strengthened the capacities of communities to demand for their rights, including right to inclusion in government processes. The project empowered the communities to continue engaging in discussions around policies, laws, strategies, and other issues affecting their lives and livelihoods.

Individual beneficiaries (staff) and their organizations were better placed to undertake agenda setting for policy dialogue, including problem identification, evidence gathering, prioritization of issues, and identification of advocacy targets. CSOs were more confident engaging in PD because their agenda was guided and backed by evidence.

The effects of the project within the target beneficiaries already started spilling over to other communities, as evident in the case of DRM policy in Marsabit County in Kenya. Neighboring counties sharing the same classification of arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) already began pursuing DRM policies. Because of skills acquired from this project, the organizations were better positioned to replicate similar models and expand their influence beyond their initial geographical areas of focus. MOINET already developed a proposal for donor funding to support peer exchange between Marsabit and Isiolo- an arrangement that would see MIONET provide support to CSO partners in Isiolo, to develop County DRM policy.

For case studies on how improved capacities at partners were put into practice to achieve impact, please refer to the case studies provided as annex to this report.

3.5 Sustainability

Partner CSOs involved in the project existed long before the formation of the consortium. These organizations had their vision, goals and objectives that resonated well with what the project aimed to achieve, implying that they will continue with the pursuit of these goals and objectives even after the project ends. This is cemented by the fact that the project engaged with organizations and not individuals.

Local CSOs played a central role in planning and implementation of the project. The project responded to evident needs guided by needs assessment, a pilot phase, and was designed through a participatory approach involving the beneficiaries.

Staff benefitting from capacity building initiatives were drawn from local CSOs. This pool of human resources is likely to be retained within the CSO sector for a long period even after the project ends. Staff transition poses potential threat to sustainability within the partner organizations, as is already witnessed in a number of organizations where some of the trained staff left. Training more than one staff in each partner organization will potentially offset the impact of staff exit- not all will exit at the same time. Again, while the risk of staff exit is likely to affect individual consortium members, the fact that trained personnel will still be working within the beneficiary countries and likely in positions that involve PD, is an indication that the PD capacity will be sustained in country. Overall, exit of quality staff is a challenge that the CSOs have to live with, and they must put in place appropriate measures, not necessarily for staff retention, but to ensure such exits do not affect quality of PD engagement by the partner CSOs.

Partner CSOs have already initiated the processes of cascading learning to other staff – existing and new. This will ensure that learning continues and that PD skills are retained within the organizations even if the primary beneficiaries of the trainings exit. Institutionalization of this learning within the organizations has however not been well articulated and enforced, posing threat to sustainability.

In certain cases, like in the case of DESECE, the partners have planned to conduct TOTs to community champions to equip them with skills in PD. Competing life demands may however impede continued engagement of community champions in project initiatives. This potential threat to sustainability emerged in all the FGDs with the communities, and also from the key informants. Focus group discussants were concerned that the community champions only engage as volunteers and do not receive any compensation for their time. Having to fend for their livelihoods, the champions may not sustain their engagement in volunteer work, for long.

Once finalized, the PD manual is a very important tool that will be used by individuals and organizations working in PD.

Small action funds focused on policy and legislative frameworks, and on long term and medium term plans and strategies. These long-term frameworks will likely guarantee continued derivation of benefits by the target populations even long after the project ends. Inadequate commitment by political leadership however poses threat to the sustainability of these initiatives, with a possibility that some of the developed policies may not have relevant legislative frameworks to support their implementation. There may also be inadequate institutional capacities within the government entities to enforce some of the legislative measures aimed at supporting implementation of these policies.

Communities have become aware of their right to effective engagement, and that it is an obligation of the government to ensure citizen participation. As a result, the citizens will likely demand to be involved in demanding social accountability from the government.

CSOs already benefitted from trainings on resource mobilization. The effect of capacity improvement in resource mobilization has already begun to manifest. CSOs were already using the acquired skills to mobilize resources and diversify sources of income. All the EA CSOs reported engaging in proposal writing, and exuded confidence that they will continue to use their newly acquired skills to mobilize resources for PD. Notwithstanding, diminishing donor funding is a major threat, an indication that the CSOs must expand their net beyond the traditional donor funding approaches.

Established partnerships will ensure continued communications and sharing among partners even post project period. Commitment of the CSOs in using some of the existing platforms will however be key if they have to continue benefitting from these partnerships. There are already indications that some of the platforms such as the WhatsApp group is not well utilized.

“CSOs already won trust/ social capital: DRM policy development process in Marsabit County attracted development partners, with WFP supporting write-shop and stakeholder consultative meetings. PACIDA and Concern Worldwide on the other hand supported community participation. Because of successful completion of this process, the likelihood of development partners supporting similar initiatives of such organizations is high” – Key Informant EA CSO, Kenya

“We have issues to push- that is an indication good enough, that we’ll continue to pursue the initiatives of this project. We have confidence, we can get into any office and engage our leaders. We have numbers, very many active women groups”. FGD Participant- Project Beneficiary, Kenya

4.0 LESSONS LEARNT

- Capacity building is not about individual activities, rather well orchestrated processes that involve a mix of activities. A combination of trainings, cross learnings, experience sharing and documentation and sharing of lessons learnt was very instrumental in capacity building for the CSOs. Sessions for reflections and experience sharing during the trainings were particularly very impactful in the learning processes, bringing out real life experiences of stakeholders working in PD across different sectors and in varied contexts.
- Working closely and collaboratively with government entities leads to better results in short period of time. As was envisioned for this project, and specifically in regard to PD training, EA CSOs learnt it was much faster realizing PD results and achieving key milestones when CSOs engage duty bearers in dialogue, compared to when combative and confrontational approaches are used. PD is about building bridges and CSOs are not “opposition parties” to the government. PD engagement should however be sustained if it has to achieve its results. A lot is lost when the momentum is lost, and picking up is not easy once this happens.
- There is power in numbers, and when communities join forces, they are better placed to push their agenda, than when they act separately. Nyandarua and Nakuru counties in Kenya had pursued the policies on potato packaging for a number of years, without success. This was however eventually achieved when the two counties came together and worked jointly, with support of GROOTS
- Government transitions, whether at local or at national levels affect policy and legislative processes. It is cumbersome engaging new leaders after every election cycle, on processes that were initiated with previous governments. For better results, it is imperative to begin policy/ legislative processes when new governments have just come into place. The momentum picks up early enough and is sustained for some time before transition, compared to when the process is initiated one to two years before another election.
- Most governments in East Africa have constitutional provision for citizen participation. Participation forums are however limited and often crowded, providing little room for effective engagement. For effective participation in government processes, CSOs such as DESECE and GROOTS have embraced the use of memoranda to present their positions regarding PD issues, an approach that has proven effective in guaranteeing their input and those of the communities they serve are integrated into the final products/ documents.
- Use of action/model men and women as champions proved an effective approach in stimulating action by communities and by duty bearers. Demonstrable influence of community champions on the community to join social movements was reported across board, with suggestions to have champions for both right holders and duty bearers, for better results.
- Media presence and reporting on PD meetings or events compels duty bearers to act. The impression that the media is keeping track on progress and would report back to the citizens compels the leaders to take action, not to be seen as not delivering on commitments.
- Media engagement is the best approach for reaching the masses with information. This should not however be misconstrued to imply mainstream media, rather, other forums such as social media have proven to be very effective in reaching communities with information.
- Effective engagement of the media can be achieved without necessarily incurring exorbitant expenses paid for media adverts. When the media officers are knowledgeable, inspired and motivated about an issue, they find a lot of interesting in capturing and reporting on such issues without being pushed or paid to do so.
- When the community members are properly prepared especially in engaging with the duty bearers, they will demand for services themselves. They will also demand for space to participate on issues that affect their lives as enshrined in the constitution and as committed in other policies, strategies and legislative frameworks.
- Organizations focusing on different themes of PD can effectively learn from each other. The principles and practices underlying PD engagement are the same, regardless of the sector of

focus. In this project, CSOs working in different sectors were able to learn from each other and to adopt some of the best practices within the consortium.

- Networking, partnerships and joint engagement of CSOs in policy dialogue has potential for better results than when CSOs engage individually. Strength of numbers is evident in CSOs working as a network to push advocacy agenda. It makes them less vulnerable to government clampdown, compared to when they engage individually.
- It is better working with local small partners rather than trying to do it yourself. According to the Austrian partners, it was more effective engaging with the local EA partners than the option of engaging directly to pursue the policy issues.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Relevance: In terms of relevance, the objectives of the project are closely aligned with the contemporary priorities in strengthening capacity of CSOs as watchdogs and advocates in holding governments accountable for fulfilling local and international commitments. The gaps addressed under this project, specifically in regard to combative approaches used by CSOs engaging in advocacy work, are consistent with those suggested by available evidence that indicate such approaches jeopardize chances of realizing tangible results, and that policy dialogue is a superior approach with quick wins if embraced by CSOs. EA CSOs, like many other CSOs, however lacked capacity for effective engagement in policy dialogue, a gap that this project sought to address. Capacity building activities such as trainings, cross learnings, exchange visits, and experience sharing are tested and proven approaches to capacity building that have been used in similar contexts. Small action funds, as used in the context of this project, is uniquely designed in the sense that it complements the capacity building initiatives, as an add-on practical arm that enables the CSOs to implement the acquired skills. The project was relevant in terms of its objectives and approaches.

Effectiveness: Findings of the evaluation indicate that the project is on course towards achievement of its objectives and results, with most of the targets already achieved or surpassed. All approaches implemented were effective in contributing towards the achievement of results- albeit, taking into consideration contextual factors such as bureaucracies that characterize government processes and resource constraints, especially in regard to the small action funds. Key contributors to effectiveness include good coordination, participatory planning and engagement of partners, community involvement under the SAF, and use of policy dialogue in pursuing policies and legislations under the small action funds. Overall, there project manifests good progress and significant gains that can be consolidated. Institutionalization of capacity building initiatives however still remains elusive.

Efficiency: In unanimity, all partners- and the consultants are in consensus that the project could not have achieved any better results with the same resources. The project embraced innovative and cost effective approaches that helped achieve more with less. Reservations in spending the small action funds and staff turnover are cross cutting issues that may have affected project efficiency.

Coordination and management of the project was efficiently executed. With a little more resources, M&E activities of the project could be scaled up, and more field visits by the Austrian partners would be undertaken. Timeliness in reporting and financial disbursements was not 100 percent efficient across the consortium partners, and may have affected project delivery.

Impact: Project impact is manifest in improved capacities of CSOs to play the vital role of influencing policies, strategies, laws and other plans in their domains of work; faster processes in the realization of PD objectives pursued under this project; better relationships, increased collaborations, information sharing and more trust between CSOs and governments; empowered communities able to engage in policy processes, among others. The effects of the project within the target beneficiaries already started spilling over to other communities.

Sustainability: The project initiatives are likely to be sustained owing to the fact that it addresses issues that are relevant to the target beneficiaries. The region will continue to tap on the capacities of CSOs and staff benefitting from the capacity building initiatives, even as issues of staff exit threaten to rip the EA CSOs off these resources. Other factors that will likely uphold sustainability include involvement of local institutions and local communities, and the fact that the SAF addressed policies, legislations, strategies, and plans that remain integral parts of governance systems. In spite of good indications that the sustainability of this project is viable, an exit strategy remains key- though this was not included in the design of the current phase.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recommendations for remaining period of Phase II

1. *PD strategies for EA partners:* The project will have to fast track the finalization of the PD strategies that are in the process of development. Each of the Austrian partners must engage closely with the EA partners to finalize the strategies. The process may involve engagement of professionals, either as consultants, or by tapping expertise within the consortium through cross learning to support the review and finalization of existing drafts. In the case of WORUDET where the PD strategy lifespan ends in 2020, it is imperative to initiate the review process so that the project does not begin the new phase with strategies that are either in draft form or that are due for review.
2. *Small action funds:* In spite of the many reasons that led to the low burn rate of small action funds, it will be very difficult to convince any external stakeholder that for any good reasons, not all the allocated funds were utilized during the project. For the period ending December 2019, each Austrian partner must immediately engage with the EA partner and come up with modalities for ensuring the funds are spent within the remaining period, and on the most appropriate actions that contribute to the objectives of the project. Close monitoring for SAF should be emphasized in the remaining period of phase II, and should be undertaken by all consortium partners, with leadership of HORIZONT3000.
3. *Timely reporting and financial disbursements:* The project should emphasize timely submission of reports and requests for financial disbursements so that no more time is wasted as a result of delay in financial disbursements. Acknowledging the fact that the consortium members are independent entities with own internal policies and regulations, it is important for each partner to undertake a reflection on how internal systems affect implementation and how these can be addressed. This is particularly in regard to partners that have rigid schedules for financial disbursements that can only be effected during specific periods in the calendar.
4. *Continued pursuit of ongoing legislative and policy frameworks:* The EA partners must remain focused in the pursuit of policies and laws that they have been involved in. To achieve the relevant laws that will support the implementation of policies that have been developed, the CSOs must continue with the momentum and ensure the processes do not stall.
5. *Finalization of the PD manual:* The draft manual should be reviewed by professionals and finalized before July 2019. This should immediately be followed by dissemination to the consortium members' including orientation on use.
6. *Documentation for learning:* To ensure continued availability, access and use of documentations and materials produced within this project, each partner in the consortium must keep a file that can be used for reference by the current and new staff coming on board.
7. *Phase III planning:* Planning for phase III should start early enough to allow adequate engagement of all partners in the process.
8. *Spending on human resource:* The project should consider increasing funding to human resource positions to enable the partners engage effectively in some of the PD processes initiated under the small action funds.

6.2 Recommendations for phase III

1. The suggestions to engage Kenya Red Cross in provision of consultancy services for the project will position KRCS to play a role that they are best placed to. It will also ensure continued availability of a local service provider in PD capacity building, and that other CSOs can benefit from. KRCS will gain visibility as a provider of training services in this area, potentially attracting wide client base, and generating more income that will go a long way to sustain its operations in the region. The institute of humanitarian affairs that is already run by KRCS stands to benefit immensely from this arrangement.

This new role of KRCS should be embedded in the proposal for phase III. For the benefit of the consortium, KRCS should also consider providing discounted rates for the use of its training

facilities. This discount can be included in the proposal as a cost share or as a resource that will be leveraged by the project.

2. Phase III of the project should focus on individualized support to the partners. This support should focus on coaching and mentorship on implementation of the acquired skills in the areas of research and documentation, media engagement, resource mobilization, risk analysis among other core areas. An individualized approach takes into consideration the individual capacities of partners; and the diversity in organizational culture hence likely to be very effective. This approach incorporates a wide range of factors and issues in the context of each partner organization.
3. Implementation of the PD manual should be prioritized in phase III. CSOs should be sensitized on the guidelines for using the manual, and should be comfortable using it by the time phase III ends. This will provide an opportunity to test the manual, learn, review and improve the PD manual. Mechanisms should be established for ongoing reviews and update of the manual even after the third phase of the project ends.
4. Phase III of the project should not introduce any new areas of capacity building but instead work towards institutionalization and consolidation of what was already achieved in phases I and II. Trainings and cross learning activities should focus on the areas that were addressed under Phase II of the project.
5. Cross learnings and experience sharing should be emphasized in phase III. Cross learning activities should however be well structured, with clear objectives and actionable plans. There should be a documented mapping of strengths and opportunities for learning within each member of the consortium. This will make the consortium a market place where each partner is able to assess and identify organizations best placed as a learning partner. Approaches such as staff exchanges within and between countries should be encouraged. Cross learning activities should integrate staff exchange for participation in partner programs to reinforce experiential learning.
6. There was no clear exit strategy for phase II, perhaps because phase III was highly anticipated. A well thought out exit strategy should be included when designing phase three. A very important component that should be included in this strategy is resource mobilization as a way of sustaining the activities of the EA partners. As already recommended above, walking through the process of proposal development, institutionalizing resource mobilization within the organizations, encouraging diversification of funding sources and exploring alternative resource generation activities should be part of the exit strategy.
7. Having acquired skills in use of research information for evidence based advocacy, CSOs must now delve into mapping potential data sources, developing networks for information sharing, and establish databases for relevant information. Networks should be established with research and academic institutions, and with other CSOs that collect and/ or use information in the thematic areas of focus. As a matter of fact, the CSOs can not engage in research and at the same time as implementers of advocacy programs, primarily due to resource constraints and technical capacity gaps.
8. At the planning stages, the CSOs should be supported to come up with appropriate indicators to measure their progress and achievements in advocacy work. It should be noted however, that, not always, should the success in advocacy for policy and legislative processes be measured in quantitative terms. Again, there should be a shift in the focus of capacity development indicators towards measuring use of knowledge and skills acquired from each of the capacity development areas of; media engagement; research use;

7.0 ANNEXES

7.1 Annex I: Case Studies

7.1.1 Case Study I - GROOTS

Under the small action funds (SAF), GROOTS worked with women from Nyandarua and Nakuru counties in advocating for the potato-packaging bill. The process had previously stalled after the bill failed to go through. There was also minimal participation of women in the previous bill, in spite of its potential impact on the lives and livelihoods of women. Barriers to women participation included high poverty levels, ignorance/ low awareness, and limited exposure. Women thought it was the responsibility of men to engage in such processes, and that participation in PD was a reserve of highly educated women in the society. From the FGDs with women champions, they previously thought that the policy-making processes did not require their participation, and that the process required involvement of policy- makers only.

Women learnt good lessons when the bill did not go through the previous time, and that were helpful in the second trial. One of the lessons was on need for extensive involvement of stakeholders. The first bill did not go through because brokers in the potato value chain were not



Figure 1: Women champions of Nyandarua and Nakuru counties in Kenya

involved, and they opposed the bill. GROOTS linked women farmers with Potato Council, a government entity that was deeply involved in the process. Potato Council was very supportive to the farmers- always provided an invited space for engagement. The Council also supported in the interpretation of terminologies used in the bill, which were too technical for the farmers to understand. Working with relevant government entities was identified as one of the success factors in this process. Bringing together women stakeholders from Nyandarua and Nakuru

Counties was another success factor. The two regions are regarded as the potato-growing giants in Kenya and were seen to form a formidable force, working together. In addition, the two counties previously pursued the same bill separately, and accused each other of sabotaging the process when the bill failed to go through.

GROOTS engaged women through the entire process including sensitization of women on the bill, drafting, review, M&E, facilitation of logistics for participation, and engagement of technical consultants to support the process. GROOTS did not only work with women champions, but men champions as well. Through the “men for women approach”, men were integrated into the activities of women farmers, and were involved in championing women issues among men. Inclusion of men as champions helped demystify the perception among men that “women usually gathered to discuss them”.

Women farmers were impressed that the bill went through, and that their views were picked and those of the government dropped when the bill was discussed. The farmers’ preferred option of

online registration got its way into the bill, instead of registration at the county offices that was proposed by the government. The farmers also lobbied for penalties that are more stringent for those who defied the provisions of the bill, and they had their way.

Women champions taking part in the FGDs indicated having better understanding of the responsibilities of the duty bearers, exuded high self-esteem and that they are able to engage them in dialogue. Women farmers already established an M&E technical working group that is involved in, among other tasks, monitoring the progress in the implementation of the bill. At the time of this evaluation, the TWG was preparing a memorandum to petition why the Potato packaging Act had not been enforced. Besides involvement in the process of developing the potato package policy, women became more engaged in the processes of developing county budgets.

“Prior to the project, we usually learned about the county budget after it has been approved. These days, we engage in the process from the start to the end.” FGD Participant- GROOTS Beneficiary

This process had its share of challenges. First, sensitization could not be done in all the potato growing areas due to limited funds, and the views of sections of women were likely not captured. Second, the previous county government officials (specifically the governor) were seen to be supportive to potato farmers. This support was noted to have reduced when the 2017-2022 government came into place.

7.1.2. Case study 2 - DESECE

DESECE worked with local administration, politicians, media, and the general community to strengthen good governance, emphasizing bottom up approach to address issues affecting beneficiary communities. This was in response to gaps identified in community participation. Notifications on



Figure 2: Evaluation team with leaders working with DESECE in Bungoma County

public participation forums were not adequately disseminated. Due to limited resources, public participation forums were held at the Sub county levels and not at the ward and village levels, leaving out a good number of community members. Besides limited resources, inefficiencies in the use of available resources allocated for public participation further exacerbated non-participation of communities in policy, legislative and other planning processes. According to the

communities and as echoed by CSO representatives, there was eminent gross misappropriation of funds meant for public participation. Also, forums for such participation did not effectively include stakeholder diversity, rather, it targeted invitees that would not critique government proposals, regardless of whether the opposite appeals to the interest of the community.

“County budgets for citizen participation is a cash cow for the executive. Two hours of an ineffective engagement and half a million Kenyan shillings is gone. In some cases, they invite 20 people and in the accounting documents, it is indicated that 200 people participated. We believe that available resources, if well utilized, can achieve more results.” KII- CSO representative (Bungoma County)

DESECE's approach to community mobilization involved using local leaders, radios and other mass mobilization channels. The organization used partnerships and networks to identify and engage the community in ongoing initiatives that required their participation. Local leaders and community members were trained on social audit to enable them track development issues in their respective areas and to petition the government.

According to focus group discussants from the community, they learnt not to use combative approaches when engaging with leaders, but instead adopted the approach of going as a group to the offices of the leaders and engaging in dialogue. This approach earned them recognition and won them attention of duty bearers - to an extent they were able to summon leaders to social and religious gatherings to address issues of interest to the community. Through non combative approaches, there was improved bonding, cohesion and joint efforts by the communities. The communities became more knowledgeable on the relevant government institutions mandated to provide respective services. Youthful discussants reported better relationships with local leaders and that they interacted more freely with them than in the past.

“Community living in Mount Elgon was able to write a memorandum to the county government. The memorandum went through the county assembly and the community was supported in creation of new villages, splitting Chemase into Kaplama and Chemase” FGD Participants- DESECE Beneficiary

Engagement of community structures was an indication that the community will likely continue to benefit from project initiatives. Village leaders are in touch with the communities and are likely to continue enjoying community good will in pursuing issues of interest to the community. In empowering the young generations, sessions were held with school going children to enable them understand their constitutional rights and engage with local leaders. DESECE implemented civic education alongside PD – this parallel approach empowered the communities with knowledge on their civic rights, enabling to hold the government accountable for these rights. Power of community approaching issues from a communal perspective, and not as individuals, was noted as one of the success factors for effective engagement with the government.

Some sections of leaders expect pay / allowances when they engage with the communities. In addition, some leaders are elusive and not easy to reach. Community group discussants suggested having joint forums that bring together political leaders and the community and that would be used for ongoing engagements. On the other hand, access to information remains a challenge to effective engagement of communities in the region. Political leaders and county executives were noted to be holding critical information from citizens, information that would otherwise be helpful in holding the government and service providers accountable. In line with government policies on public participation and access to information, billboards should be publicly displayed and should have all the necessary information. DESECE worked with CSO partners to sensitize communities on their right to demand for such information.

“We are not able to access information that we require to monitor some of the development processes. We, for example, need information on contractor details including contacts, value of contract among others, to be able to hold contractors accountable for quality service delivery.” FGD Participant- Local Community Leaders- Bungoma County

The community still holds a lot of trust on DESECE, with fears that the gains may be lost if the project ends, since there will be no more follow ups with communities. Competing demands may also wear out committed community leaders, when they continue to split their time between pursuing issues of community interest and at the same time pursue livelihoods for their families/ households.

7.1.3 Case Study 3 – SOS TZ

SOS TZ sought to respond to issues of little resources allocated by the government to address issues affecting children. Relevant policies and regulations were in place but were not implemented as a result of limited resources. While the communities were aware of the existence of these policies and regulations, they were not aware of budgeting process and the points of engagement through which they could raise these issues with the government. On the other hand, child protection committees expected to lead policies, plans, systems that respond to child protection did not engage effectively in pursuing resources and enforcement of existing policies and guidelines.

As a result of the capacity building initiatives of the project, the staff of SOS Tanzania were equipped with knowledge and skills to engage with duty bearers in advocating for issues of child protection.



Figure 3: SOS TZ- Training session for child protection stakeholders

SAF interventions targeted mainly local government authorities (District, Regional, Ward), but also the national government. At the national level, SOS TZ led an advocacy for more budget allocation. A task force was formed to spearhead policy implementation and communities sensitized on issues social accountability

SOS TZ undertook a risk assessment and noted that direct

engagement with the national government would not yield much success since the government was not receptive to issues interrogating resource allocation. SOS therefore decided to engage directly with the relevant ministry- drafted a concept note committing to provide technical staff to support the assessment that mapped resources from internal and external sources. In this arrangement, a study, “assessment of financial gates in implementation of child related issues, to support implementation of child development policy of 2008” was implemented.

The work of SOS Tanzania led to increase in budgetary allocation for vulnerable children. In Mufindi district the budgetary allocation for children services increased from TSh. Twenty million to forty million, while for Iringa and Pemba districts, the allocation increased from zero allocation to twelve million and six million respectively. There was an increase in staffing for children department as a result of government initiatives in recruiting more social protection officers.

SOS TZ already started strengthening CBOs to minimize costs of implementing PD, noting that PD activities may be costly if the project engages directly with all communities in all location. CBOs’ presence provided an opportunity that can be leveraged. Like other EA CSOs, SOS TZ reported adopting PD instead of combative advocacy and that the approach was very productive- one of the main reasons these interventions were successful. Media presence and reporting on stakeholders’ meetings compelled the duty bearers to act- media was watching and reporting on their actions- stewardship/ accountability/ watchdog. The organization was also exploring the possibility of having the Media as part of their network, to strengthen the role of media in reporting child protection issues. Involvement of partners in child protection committees was likely to ensure the continuity of project initiatives. The community was also likely to continue benefiting from established systems such as the child protection helpline that was in place, managed by C/Sema- an IP in TZ.

The project, at some point, faced challenges in engaging with the media. Media staff felt intimidated as they were required by political leaders not to report on any issues perceived to portray the government on negative light. As a result, advocacy teams engaged directly with the target groups instead of using mainstream media that would otherwise be effective in reach. It is also at this point that the organization engaged target audience through social media and noted it was a very powerful tool in social mobilization, that is relatively cheap and user friendly. Like in the case of DESECE, MIONET and other CSOs, changes in government always interfered with smooth running of SOS TZ's initiatives on advocating resource allocation for child protection. This was likely to jeopardize chances of sustainability, considering that most of the Local Authority leaders engaged may not be available after next round of elections. A design gap, the project did not involve children, who are the victims, contrary to the expectations of global best practices in advocacy.

7.1.4 Case Study 4 – SOS Uganda

The problem of early marriages was identified as a major issue in Western Uganda. Child marriage was more of a norm than a societal ill. Communities attached greater values to the boy child and paid little attention to the plight of the girl child. From the focus group discussions, low levels of education and socio cultural norms were noted to exacerbate child marriages, with a lot of repercussions on the girls and their parents. The discussants, noted that early marriages led to birth complications and sometimes death. It also pushed the parents to economic hardships, considering that the parents had to continue providing for some of the needs of their married daughters. Local



Figure 4: FGD with community champions SOS Uganda

communities observed these challenges but did not have the capacity to intervene.

“We had no knowledge and could only watch the problem manifest- without taking any action” FGD discussant- SOS UG project beneficiary

In response, SOS UG worked with Change Agents who were trained and engaged to identify cases of child marriage and report to SOS, LC I, and police. Change agents were allocated a number of households, that they targeted with awareness creation and counseling on

issues of early marriage. The project supported information dissemination to the community on the effects of child marriage and on relevant laws through: posters, radio, and messaging through reflector jackets for bodaboda operators. The project engaged school administration through series of sensitization activities, empowering head teachers and school management committees to be gender responsive and to provide supportive environment for girls. School girls were targeted with interventions on life skills, while the general community was targeted through trainings to empower them to be able to prevent and to respond in addressing cases of child marriages.

Use of local media, specifically the local radio station, and using local language understood by majority of the population was singled out as one of the most effective ways of information dissemination. The discussants liked the timing of the radio program, noting that the messages were aired when people were already at home, and after the community members were done with most of their daily activities.

In influencing policies and strategies, SOS UG engaged with stakeholders in the national summit discussing how to eliminate child marriage, and where a declaration was made- “No to child marriage”. The organization was also involved in a series of PD activities leading to the development of local bylaws that align to the national laws against child marriages.

As a result of the trainings, SOS UG was able to improve on its approaches to policy dialogue. Some of the areas of improvement that were highlighted during this evaluation included: Agenda setting (SOS UG was able to undertake a baseline study on child marriage and used the baseline findings to develop a policy brief; partnerships (the organization was able to engage more strategically and more effectively in partnerships); Resource mobilization (learnt how an organization can position itself for funding by creating a niche rather than pursuing all funding opportunities even in areas beyond an organization’s capacity and scope). SOS UG was able to undertake donor mapping, focusing on local and international levels, and specifically in areas that were relevant to the organization’s work. Research and documentation (from research and documentation training, the trained beneficiaries cascaded the training to other staff and to the community, empowering them to identify issues and gather relevant evidence for advocacy work). Training in research and documentation came out prominently as one of the key areas that impacted on the organization’s PD work, with improvements cited in: documenting success stories/ most significant changes; better placed to oversee outsourced research consultancies; and improved ability to use simple M&E tools. After the training on risk management, SOS UG was able to undertake an assessment of potential risks and threats to the organization’s work on child protection. Key issues emerging from this assessment included: limited resources allocated by the government, for child protection; and resistance from cultural leaders who benefit from dowry paid when girls are married.

“Most of these things, we have always been doing them but not effectively. PD has enabled us to do them more effectively”.

SOS visited Care Uganda and WORUDET to learn about WORUDET’s approaches to volunteer engagement. WORUDET trained and empowered volunteers to monitor issues and bring them to the attention of the Sub- county child protection officers. Although this model is yet to be fully established, it is seen to have great potential on sustainability. Local communities appreciate local bylaws more than the national laws and are bound to pursue continued enforcement of the bylaws already established.

During the implementation of the SAF, the project established an advocacy network that engaged both at the community and at the higher levels. The network involved male and female community champions. This approach did not only emerge as an effective model in achieving advocacy objectives, but was equally recognized as a sustainable model that would enable communities to engage in advocating issues even after the project ends.

Cases of child marriage are no longer negotiated out of the legal provisions. There were observed reduction in cases of bribery of local administration and the police, and the perpetrators were instead arrested and prosecuted through the legal channels. Girls were found it a lot easier reporting on issues of abuse, to the gatekeepers such as teachers and local administration.

As a result of these measures and associated penalties, in addition to increasing awareness on issues of child protection, there was an observed increase in enrollments and retention of girls in schools. As a complementary effort, other partners such as Save the Children constructed additional schools- an initiative that was instrumental in responding to the rising demand.

Communities established mechanisms for tracing and reintegrating young girls that were already married off. Among other cases of reintegration, are the cases of three girls who were married off at

teenage, but were reintegrated back to their parents. With support of SOS UG, the girls successfully went through vocational trainings.

In the view of the consulted stakeholders, the project could attain better results if certain impediments did not come into play. High expectation for allowances emerged as one of the impediments under the SAF. County government officers and political leaders expected high allowances beyond what the project could afford; resistance among cultural leaders

On the other hand, and in spite of the good progress made under SAF, some parents and caregivers who harbored intention of marrying off their daughters resorted to the option of frustrating the girls by not providing their basic needs, leaving them with a feeling of neglect and withdrawal. Also, strategies for supporting reintegration and to improvement livelihoods for girls coming out of early marriages were not factored in the design of this SAF, though emerging as an area that requires focus.

Lessons learnt include: It is imperative to work in harmony with government and local leaders to achieve results- building personal relationships with relevant government officers involved in the policy processes is especially important; working; use of action/model men and women to present project ideals to stakeholders and to talk about the laws / bylaws in the community is an effective way of achieving results; use of media is an effective way of reaching the masses with information; aligning local bylaws to the national laws requires technical expertise and takes time; Aligning local bylaws to the national laws requires technical expertise and takes time

Some of the proposals to be explored include: 1) engaging caregivers in signing commitments that they will not marry off their daughters and that they will continue to provide for their basic needs; 2) continued sensitization of law enforcement officers to enforce the laws on child protection; 3) engage local leaders to establish and update village registers for all girls of school going age, and use the register to monitor the progress of each girl child; 4) engage child marriage survivors to be ambassadors of change; 5) emphasize on engagement of male and female role models, as this has proven to be more effective than working with a single gender; 6) scale up counseling services for girls; 7) establish/ strengthen vocational education for girls; 8) advocate for more schools to reduce the distance covered to school and that increases the risk of girls becoming victims of early marriage

7.1.5 Case Study 5 – WORUDET and CARE Uganda

Under the small action funds (SAF), WORUDET aimed at responding to the plight of women in regard to their rights. This was a buildup on the interventions previously implemented in collaboration with CARE Uganda. The small action fund was received when the project was planning a closeout and at a point when it had not consolidated its gains, with glaring gaps on the ability of the community to continue benefiting from the gains made.

In spite of the high number of cases of human rights abuse in the region, presence of human rights activities and government interventions was limited in Northern Uganda, as issues affecting women did not attract much attention. CSOs did not engage on rights issues and especially on issues touching on security, for fear of victimization.

Few women participated as contestants for elective positions, and only a limited number of those participating ever got elected. Women only engaged in elective positions at lower levels of governance, and shied from participating in higher levels that were considered a reserve for men. Even at these lower levels, elected women were often timid and did not engage effectively in raising and discussing issues affecting women. Reasons for limited participation of women as contestants in elections included harassments of female opponents, resistance by husbands, and retrogressive community perceptions about women in leadership. Low levels of education and high poverty levels were also highlighted as major contributors, noting that majority of the electorate preferred to elect the rich.



Figure 5: Women champions- WORUDET

At the community level, the project focused on improving women rights especially in regard to land rights; GBV and participation of women in governance. Project approaches included working with role models in the community to engage as champions for human rights; provision of trainings for psychosocial support groups to provide counseling services to victims of human rights abuse; and capacity building for advocacy groups, including neighborhood

associations. The project supported community dialogue through community barazas, working with local leaders to create space for community participation to give views on issues of local and of national interest, like in the case of women participation in the budgeting process, starting from the village levels to the higher governance levels. Also, the project involved training and mentorship for women to strengthen their participation in governance issues and to participate as contestants for elective positions.

At the national level, CARE Uganda convened regional forums to address women issues, jointly with other stakeholders, and undertook an assessment on women participation in issues of national interest that also affect women. From this assessment, CARE Uganda supported the process of developing a framework for women participation. For effective engagement, and to build an evidence base, the project supported desk research studies to generate and share data with stakeholders engaged in various forums convened at the national and regional levels. Such data was also used to develop policy briefs and position papers, and to engage with citizens through Websites,



Figure 6: Uniformed women officers in a marching procession on GBV- WORUDET

Facebook, WhatsApp and through other media channels. An example is the policy brief about women evictions and that focused on changing traditional gender norms. This particular policy brief culminated into a number of actions that led to 300 women provided with land title deeds in Northern Uganda. CARE Uganda worked with the Ministry of Gender and other stakeholders in the review of national gender action plan that is responsive to national and international commitments.

The project convened regional roundtable meetings to discuss issues of women, peace and security; and role of government in refugee protection. Some of the forums included the regional platform for security under the Great Lakes Advocacy Initiatives. In domestication of Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR1325), the two organizations worked with other stakeholders in performance review of the national strategic plan III for implementation of the resolution. The project facilitated consultative meetings with the women uniformed officers (police, prisons, wildlife) to provide a platform through which the women uniformed officers could channel their views to be integrated into planning.

As a result of the combined effect of these initiatives, there was an observed increase in the number of GBV cases reported and recorded by the police. Reported cases were not only on GBV against women, but also against men, indicating increasing trends in men opening up and reporting on GBV. While it is debatable whether increase in reported cases implied increase in GBV, findings from the key informant interviews pointed that most GBV cases were previously unreported and that the trends observed within the communities show a general decline in GBV.

Early signs of success were seen in reversing the dominance of men in leadership positions, with an upsurge in number of women elected into political offices. Local Council (LC) II, for example, was a position reserved for men, but that has been taken up by women in a number of areas. A deviation from the norm, women were elected as chairpersons for local council committees.

“This project enabled us to know that women can be leaders, just like men. We now have many women in elective positions. The project involved mentorship for women both at the household and at the community levels.” Key informant- Women Leaders

Grass roots advocacy groups were already strengthened and engaged even without involvement of WORUDET. The fact that more women were elected into leadership positions implies they will continue to fight for women rights. National plans already integrated women issues and the government begun to implement some of the initiatives, including gender focused budgeting. Besides the strengthened referral pathways, there was an established toll free line for reporting GBV cases, and which will continue to be in use even after the current project ends. Another element of sustainability was seen in reported increase in number of men who agree to the idea of empowering women.

Notwithstanding, potential threats to sustainability include failure by government to implement some of the commitments that form part of the developed plans. Low levels of education and low self-esteem among women, coupled with intimidation by some sections of cultural leaders may retard gains even when political space for women opens up. Disjointed efforts involving CSOS working in silos may jeopardize chances of winning in their engagement in advocacy work. CSOs in Uganda, according to the local leaders, are seen to be acting individually and to be exhibiting competition for resources rather than pulling together for joint pursuit of PD agenda.

“We need to have joint efforts in advocacy. Here in Northern Uganda, we only have CARE Uganda which works through WORUDET. The other organizations work individually, fighting for resources, and not addressing the problems affecting the populations.” Senior Staff- WORUDET

In the words of WORUDET staff, their ability to engage in advocacy work was improved as a result of capacity building initiatives of the project. WORUDET staff for example began to collect and use information from the target communities to inform their advocacy work. WORUDET also improved its M&E practices and project staff was able to put in place mechanisms for measuring the causal logic in its interventions, specifically in monitoring how its training activities translated into knowledge and practice. WORUDET was able to develop a resource mobilization strategy, after its staff underwent training on resource mobilization. Risk analysis was undertaken that mapped the

potential risks to which persons disclosing human rights abuse were exposed. WORUDET already developed advocacy strategy 2016-2018. The organization did not however have enough resources to implement the strategy. The fact that the strategy was ending in 2018 also implied it is due for review and development of another strategy. Project documentation was identified as another weak area that required strengthening. Interviewed staff acknowledged however, that the organization did not have in place effective documentation practices and highlighted the need for further capacity building in this area. According to CARE Uganda, the beneficiary EA CSOs have gained knowledge and skills to engage in PD, but may still require mentorship to achieve capacity building objectives.

“Many of the beneficiaries of the capacity building initiatives gained knowledge and improved their PD skills. Our East Africa CSOs may not have taken off however, and should be supported through ongoing mentorship. The organizations should also not expect to be hand held for ever, but instead undertake initiatives of moving to the next level.”- KII EA CSO Partner

7.1.5 Case Study 6 - MIONET

Marsabit County is one of the Kenyan Counties classified under the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALS), and that is subjected to perennial disasters, mainly in form of alternating droughts and floods. The County, like all other ASAL Counties did not have relevant policies and legislative frameworks for disaster management. Under the SAF, MIONET supported the processes of developing Disaster Risk Management Policy and Disaster Risk Management Bill for the County.

Coming out from this evaluation as credit to MIONET is the effectiveness in the process of public participation. It emerged in the focus group discussions- that communities were involved right from the grassroots, and that the level of engagement was well structured, enabling the public to give input into the draft policy and bill. While public participation is a constitutional right, public participation in similar processes was often limited partly due to resource constraints and also due to inefficiencies in government processes. This was exacerbated by limited community awareness on this constitutional right, and inability to hold the government accountable as a result of ignorance. Pastoralist lifestyle was cited as a major contributor to ignorance since it affected school enrollment, attendance and completion rates. Issues affecting the community were discussed in the *Manyattas* but the deliberations did not reach policy makers since there were no structures for communication and linkages with policy makers.

“We did not know about issues of governance and citizen engagement. We thought it was the responsibility of the government.” FGD participant- MIONET Beneficiary

While the interviewed government officers indicted that public participation organized by the county government was often conducted at the Ward level, public participation supported under this SAF was at the village levels for all the Wards involved. Mobilization was mainly through social media, road talk shows, and through announcements in social and religious gatherings. According to the interviewed community representatives, this participation raised awareness on issues of governance and constitutional provisions for citizen participation. It provided an opportunity for community members to give their views on issues that directly affect their livelihoods. In addition, communities were able to understand resources available within their localities and how these could be used to avert/ cope with disasters.

The community was involved up to the time the final draft of the policy was submitted for approval. The focus group discussants exuded confidence that their input was adequately integrated into the policy document. The discussants were particularly happy with the fact that traditional climate prediction methods were included as part of the policy.

“The draft policy document incorporated our inputs. We are happy for example that the document emphasized the use of traditional methods of climate prediction. Although we have not seen the final product

that was approved by the county assembly and signed off by the county government, we were satisfied by the draft.” FGD Participant- MIONET

The community did not however have an opportunity to interact with the approved policy document, and were not certain whether the approved document reflects their input. Weak feedback mechanisms emerged as one area that required improvement, notably since stakeholders working with communities often engaged them in upward processes but failed to disseminate final products at the community levels.

Even before the DRM Bill was enacted, early signs of policy implementation already begun to manifest. Communities already started reducing livestock population to manageable levels as a precautionary measure, and as provided in the DRM policy. Various stakeholders, including CSOs and government were working with communities to strengthen rain water harvesting practices. Both the government officers interviewed as key informants, and community members taking part in the FGDs reported an observed improvement in coordination of stakeholders leading to reduction in duplication of efforts and increase in number of NGOs responding in times of drought. Also, the county government and other stakeholders already begun to provide training for fire fighters in line with the provisions of the DRM policy.

Across board, stakeholders were optimistic the community will continue with the initiatives, owing to the knowledge and experience they acquired in this process, and because the community is more aware of their rights to participate in similar processes.

The county already established a kitty for disaster response, and donors did not have to channel resources through the government, in responding to disaster. From the FGDs, community members indicated that they witnessed improvement in response by non-State actors, an observation attributed to better coordination of donors and other stakeholders as a result of the DRM policy.

Capacity building for MIONET and its members led to increase in knowledge and skills that if well utilized will likely enable the network members to continue with PD work. After the trainings, MIONET developed a risk evaluation and mitigation matrix that is used by the network in all its PD work. Policy dialogue strategy developed under this project will be used by the network members. Members of the network have adopted the strategy and are already implementing activities aligned to the strategy. As a result of training received on resource mobilization, MIO-NET was able to write proposals and attract funding for policy engagement on issues of child protection. Growing recognition of MIONET in the county will continue to position the network in the radar of other stakeholders who may want to engage in similar projects. MIONET represents CSOS in the Marsabit County Steering Group and participates in deliberations on issues of priority to the county.

“If the consortium ends, we have had a lot of experience that will allow us to continue. We also have the skills to mobilize resources”. Key Informant- MIONET