

# USAID/South Sudan Strategic Framework Results Framework Summary Paper

## March 2020

**Goal: *Strengthen the foundation for a more self-reliant South Sudan***  
(measured through averted humanitarian need in at least four parts of the country)

**Strategic Rationale:** The USG has a long and rich history of supporting the people of South Sudan, investing almost \$7 billion in foreign assistance since 2011.<sup>1</sup> Today, our humanitarian assistance keeps millions of people alive by providing emergency food, shelter and health services to those in need. Despite our significant financial assistance, over half of the population still depends on emergency aid to survive.<sup>2</sup> Even with the bilateral donor community disbursing over \$605 million in humanitarian assistance in 2019 and the multilateral community almost \$650 million; more than two million people need assistance and are not receiving it.<sup>3</sup> Continued conflict, disease outbreaks, and increasing frequency of environmental shocks (e.g. floods, draughts, and locusts) will further increase the need for emergency assistance over the next three years.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, recent work in the area of resilience shows an opportunity for progress. Each \$1 USD invested in resilience and early response, yields nearly \$3 USD in reduced humanitarian spending and avoided asset losses.<sup>5</sup>

Given this evidence, it is time to rethink our approach in South Sudan. We need to reduce humanitarian need and carefully lay the foundation for self-reliance, as current levels of assistance (from the USG and other donors) are neither sufficient nor sustainable. Despite recent political progress, this means South Sudan's Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR) starts at the community level.

**What's Different:** To measurably decrease humanitarian need, we must shift how and where we work; prioritize substance over quantity; and nurture partnerships that make assistance more efficient and less costly. It will require using evidence and best practices to shape how we provide basic services—as most people lack access to functional schools, clinics and financial services, as well as the resources needed to diversify livelihoods. It means being deliberate about who we work with, particularly at the community level, to help communities provide for themselves and resolve local conflicts more peacefully. Most importantly, it requires intentional, sectoral coordination to ensure households and individuals benefit from multiple USAID sources of funding and interventions.

**The Proposal:** USAID/South Sudan's three-year, \$1.8 billion<sup>6</sup> Strategic Framework is scenario-based, rooted in evidence and integrates humanitarian and development assistance to promote household and community resilience. We will continue to support the people of South Sudan, but differently—helping households in at least four parts of the country move beyond a critical need for humanitarian aid and assume greater responsibility in shaping their own future. Key principles include:

1 Includes all USG foreign assistance for South Sudan since FY 2011

2 As of January 2020, 7.5 million people (67%/population) need humanitarian assistance to survive, February 2020 OFDA Fact Sheet.

3 <https://explorer.usaid.gov/donor/south%20sudan/disbursements/2019>

4 UNDP Human Development Report (2018)

5 <https://resiliencelinks.org/thematic-area/value-money>, Statistic assumes a 15-year time-horizon.

6 Assumes a general flat line of FY2019 levels.

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1. Geographic focus & sectoral coordination: Coordinated programming can yield positive results beyond intended outcomes and create a more cohesive enabling environment among USAID, our implementing partners, program participants and other stakeholders.<sup>7</sup> For this reason, USAID will select four focus areas, which are receiving Food for Peace (FFP) assistance (Phase 3 or worse on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Scale). In these areas and at the household level, USAID will coordinate sectoral investments to ensure families have access to a suite of USAID (or other provider) interventions to make them more resilient to future environmental and man-made shocks. At least two of the targeted areas will be Partnership for Recovery and Resilience (PfRR) locations to leverage other donor investments and take advantage of positive local leadership.
2. Connecting household beneficiaries to expanding community support systems: Investing in local systems -- in the same targeted geographies -- such as community markets, water, school and health management groups (e.g. parent-teacher associations, community disease surveillance teams; water management committees); dispute resolution groups; and women's savings and loans groups, are the first step to building capacity and commitment in South Sudan. We want to go beyond helping individual households—and set up systems that enable beneficiaries to tap into and become part of local social safety nets. These systems and connections are also a critical step to reducing local conflict.
3. Being explicit in how we approach trauma, conflict and other cross-cutting issues in our programs: USAID will go beyond adopting a conflict and trauma-informed lens to embedding specific trauma, conflict and cultural norm language into our intermediate results, awards and activity work plans. We will also be explicit about where and how we target women and youth. By making the Mission and our partners accountable to reporting on cross-cutting issues, we expect to see greater programming effort on addressing gender and youth disparities and providing psycho-social support.

Expected Results: At the end of the three years, we anticipate having a replicable model for building household and community resilience that can be expanded to reach committed communities in other parts of the country. Specifically, we expect to see households that require less humanitarian assistance when they are faced with adversity. At the community level, we expect to see increased commitment and capacity (documented in community-level J2SR roadmaps), that enables communities to better support the most vulnerable and manage future development investments. Finally, should the GoSS demonstrate their increased commitment to helping its people, USAID has identified opportunities to more directly support the Transitional Government of Unity's implementation of peace agreement reforms and a transition to democratic elections in 2023.

Scenario Planning: South Sudan is a highly dynamic environment, so we must be able to work in different health, security, and political contexts over the next three years. Key factors likely to influence USAID's programming include the scale and scope of violence; climatic shocks that increase need and hamper access; depth and breadth of epidemic impacts, shifts in the political context; and the level of USG financial and human resources available. To promote adaptability, we are adding crisis modifiers and other language into new awards to ensure greater flexibility in

<sup>7</sup> USAID/Malawi's Experiment in Integration to Foster Collaboration and Improve Programmatic Decision Making.  
<[https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/cla\\_case\\_competition\\_casestory\\_28\\_usaidmalawi\\_final.pdf](https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/cla_case_competition_casestory_28_usaidmalawi_final.pdf)>

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where and how we work. The use of rolling assessments, pause and reflect sessions, and more frequent implementing partner meetings will help us to track changes in the operating environment and adjust programming as needed. The three scenarios built into the strategy are:

1. **Worst Case:** widespread violence or outright war, environmental shocks or infectious disease epidemics that make it difficult to access most of the country and limits the USG footprint in Juba—potentially impacting USAID’s management capacity.
2. **Status Quo:** chronic, localized conflict and periodic larger pockets of violence, environmental and health shocks that cause internal displacement and/or increase vulnerability. Most South Sudanese and development partners share a general pessimistic view of the Unity Government and USAID partners are able to access at least some parts of the country.
3. **Best Case:** USG assessment of GoSS political will and governance improvements lead to a shift in USG policy that enables USAID to work with the central government and more directly support the implementation of the renewed peace agreement and government capacity building.

### **Rationale for Development Objectives (DOs) and Intermediate Results (IRs)**

**1. Meeting Basic needs of communities in crises, while decreasing aid dependence** (shifts in our humanitarian assistance): South Sudan will continue to need emergency assistance in the next three years. The U.S. has already programmed over \$4.6 billion dollars in humanitarian assistance in South Sudan since independence--investments that save millions of lives, but without local systems to take over service delivery, created a culture of aid dependency. We’ll continue providing life-saving assistance--but with a greater emphasis on strengthening beneficiary accountability, using local systems, and partnering with key stakeholders, to help avert the humanitarian need over the next three years. To the extent possible, we will build in disaster risk-reduction interventions and systems strengthening components into emergency aid.

- **IR1.1 - Beneficiaries’ sense of agency enhanced:** Decades of war, abject poverty, forced migration, and reliance on aid have impacted many South Sudanese’ sense of agency and left them feeling powerless.<sup>8</sup> Aspirational thinking about one’s future is critical to stopping the negative coping mechanisms to environmental and manmade shocks that foster aid-dependency.<sup>9</sup> Going forward, USAID will use its aid to positively impact individual agency with whom we work. This includes helping people understand, react to and manage trauma and involving beneficiaries more widely in the planning, implementation and assessment of our assistance.
- **IR1.2 - Assistance boosts the capacity of local systems:** USAID has the ability to leverage and strengthen nascent, local systems instead of bypassing them. Currently, South Sudan imports most of its food from neighboring countries, which, coupled with inflation, has caused local food prices to rise dramatically.<sup>10</sup> By purchasing food from

<sup>8</sup> USAID/South Sudan defines agency as both aspirations, a key source of resilience, coupled with an individual sense of responsibility to strengthen communities.

<sup>9</sup> During the 2014/15 drought in the lowland pastoral and agro pastoral areas of Ethiopia, a survey revealed that people with a higher sense of control over their own lives are less likely to engage in negative coping strategies and that these people had a better actual ability to recover from shocks. <https://resiliencelinks.org/source-of-resilience/aspirations>

<sup>10</sup> "Understanding Land Investment Deals in Africa: South Sudan" (PDF). The Oakland Institute. 2011. Retrieved 2012-01-15

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local markets and utilizing more South Sudanese in the implementation of assistance, USAID can continue to work toward humanitarian and development objectives while also developing the capacity of local systems. Fully utilizing all of USAID's influence and convening power, USAID will foster this same systems-centric ethos in its partnerships, like PfRR, and leverage other donor investments to share the burden of development and humanitarian assistance.

**2. Household resilience increased in targeted areas** (household level interventions): There is a nexus where humanitarian and development assistance overlap. We intend to embrace that nexus under this objective by reimagining the manner in which assistance is delivered. Resilient households have the ability to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces vulnerability. Improving household resilience requires coordinated programming that ensures targeted households have access to nutritious foods, education opportunities, health services and psycho-social support that increase individual aspirations and help people move beyond the need for emergency assistance. USAID will target households in at least four parts of the country that have received Food for Peace assistance to better ensure we are helping people graduate from needing humanitarian aid. These households will receive access to health, education, and food security interventions.

- **2.1: Food security and nutrition improved:** Food insecurity is a ubiquitous risk in South Sudan, entangled in warfare, conflict and climate variabilities. The declining agricultural production and the reliance on expensive foreign food supplies have contributed to a severe food shortage in the country.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the proportion of people facing severe food insecurity (Phase 3 or worse on the IPC Scale) in South Sudan increased from 19% in September 2014 to 54% in mid-2019. Around 860,000 children are estimated to be acutely malnourished. Less than 15% of the population has access to improved sanitation, and 41% to safe water--key factors in nutrition levels. USAID will focus on increasing the production of nutritious foods and ensuring it is available to targeted households in need, along with improved water, sanitation and hygiene practices to improve nutrition at the household level.
- **2.2: Foundation laid for individuals to expand livelihood options:** Having an education opens up opportunities for individuals to diversify or alter livelihood choices in the face of particular types of shocks or stressors. Most South Sudanese never had the opportunity to enroll in school and fewer than 10% of primary school learners remained at school long enough to attain functional literacy and numeracy.<sup>12</sup> Of particular concern are the vast number of out of school youth including internally displaced peoples, returnees, and ex-combatants who have little working skills and market access. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), lack of support structures, limited social skills, hinder youth (re)integration into post-conflict economic, social and civic life.<sup>13</sup> USAID will focus on accelerating youth's access to education to improve functional literacy and numeracy rates, especially among girls; as well as equip young South Sudanese with soft

11 FAO. IFPRI. UNDP. UNICEF. WFP. Report on Resilience and Vulnerability in South Sudan. 2019.

12 Back to Learning Activity Update (October 2016); Update #2

13 USAID Education in Resilience White Paper (2019)

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skills that will help households become more financially sound.

- **2.3: Improved health of families:** 70% of deaths in South Sudan are caused by curable diseases such as malaria, respiratory tract infections and diarrhea. Access to quality healthcare remains a challenge with only 20% of the population able to reach a hospital in 24 hours and less than half of the country's health facilities deemed functional.<sup>14</sup> Domestic violence is common and GBV within the marriage is not a criminal offense. In addition to supporting health service delivery via the Health Pooled Fund and advancing the battle against HIV/AIDS, USAID will help ensure targeted households have greater access to immunizations, life-saving commodities, and family planning services, even in the absence of functioning health facilities, and build awareness of healthy behaviors that improve the wellbeing of families, especially that of mothers and small children.

**3. Improved social cohesion in targeted areas:** This development objective intends to strengthen the community's ability to address the root causes of poverty through increased social cohesion and by encouraging communities to assume greater responsibility for their own development in the absence of a functional government. In the South Sudan context, USAID views social cohesion as the bonds that hold communities (bonding capital), and groups of communities (bridging capital), together, often through common values, beliefs, and behaviors. These common principles facilitate the development of formal and informal networks that enable residents to support each other in times of need and there is evidence to suggest that increased social capital has the ability to positively influence conflict management practices.<sup>15</sup> Given the rending of the social fabric in South Sudan after decades of war and instability, we acknowledge that this will be an incremental process. USAID's priority will be to rebuild, expand and strengthen networks in targeted areas. At the community level, we will work with household beneficiaries, community leaders and local service providers to build trust in one another and strengthen their capacity to provide for community members. Connecting local leaders and organizations to national civil society movements will also help to ensure that local issues are considered and advocated for at the highest level.

- **3.1: Drivers of inter/intra communal conflicts mitigated:** Conflict at communal levels often revolves around resources (natural, economic and human) and local competition for power, with cycles of retaliation that increase violence, atrocities, and displacement. For example, cyclical cattle raiding, historically small-scale and a traditional practice among pastoralist communities in the region, has become more violent and exacerbated by multi-causal factors such as the proliferation of arms; exploitation by political elites of ethnic divisions; erosion of traditional authorities' power; and rising bride-prices.<sup>16</sup> Communal conflicts increasingly do not happen in isolation from national politics and formal power structures. USAID will continue to work to mitigate conflict and address the underlying drivers through community driven approaches, working with and empowering local actors to facilitate meaningful dialogue and actions in order to promote

<sup>14</sup> SIDA South Sudan Humanitarian Crisis Analysis 2019

<sup>15</sup> Sanginga, P. C., R. N. Kamugisha, and A. M. Martin. 2007. The dynamics of social capital and conflict management in multiple resource regimes: a case of the southwestern highlands of Uganda. *Ecology and Society* 12(1): 6. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol12/iss1/art6/> (Based on a qualitative review of 700 dispute cases in Uganda).

<sup>16</sup> Idris, I., (2018). 'Livestock and Conflict in South Sudan', (GSDRC) University of Birmingham, 29 October 2018, pp. 2-4

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a more peaceful coexistence.

- **3.2: Inclusive community networks strengthened:** At a community level, strong involvement and engagement from a range of stakeholders in supporting emergency preparedness, contingency planning, recovery efforts, and the oversight and implementation of basic services is an important step to building community self-reliance. USAID will work with existing informal and formal community structures and work to strengthen the linkages and interdependence between and among them. USAID will foster greater community participation and ownership in the delivery of health, education, and food security services and the management of local resources—contributing to the sustainability of life-saving services.
- **3.3: Enhanced civil society capacity for inclusive civic engagement, particularly for youth & women:** South Sudan defines a civil society organization (CSO) as an NGO and a non-profit organization that has presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others. CSOs play a constructive role in public affairs in South Sudan. They contribute to the search for peace and stability, public policy formulation and implementation, protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and information dissemination and delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to targeted populations in the country. USAID will continue to support key CSOs and citizen leaders to take collective action to positively engage in restoring social peace at the community and national level. Helping connect local organizations and champions to civil society groups working nationwide will

**Special Objective: GoSS more responsive to its citizens:** The Strategic Framework is aligned with the timeframe for the standing up of the South Sudan Unity Government and preparing for national elections in 2023. Currently, the U.S. is prohibited from supporting the GoSS. Should that change and should the GoSS take measurable steps to demonstrate their increased commitment to addressing drivers of conflict and promoting more democratic and accountable institutions, then we could support interventions that help address some of the priorities set forth in the Revitalized Peace Agreement. This assistance could include: 1. supporting national elections planned and managed by the GoSS; 2. fostering more transparent, accountable and inclusive budget systems, accessible to citizens; 3. strengthening transitional justice mechanisms to better address victims' grievances; 4. developing a constitution that reflects priorities of citizens, including basic freedoms and human rights; and 5. enhancing government capacity for evidence-based and inclusive decision making.